

# TEES VALLEY JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

29 January 2021

The meeting commenced at 10:00 am via Microsoft Teams.

### Present:

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council: Councillors Sandra Smith (Chair) and B Clarke.

Darlington Borough Council: Councillor B Donoghue.

Hartlepool Borough Council: Councillor B Harrison.

Middlesbrough Borough Council: Councillors A Hellaoui and E Polano.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: Councillors J Bright (substituting for Councillor L Hall), E Cunningham and C Gamble.

Also Present: Angela Armstrong & Joan Stevens, Hartlepool Borough Council  
Caroline Breheny, Middlesbrough Borough Council  
Hannah Fay, Darlington Borough Council  
Gary Woods, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
Dave Gallagher & Janet Walker, Tees Valley CCG  
Mark Cotton & Victoria Court, North East Ambulance Service  
Jo Cook, Middlesbrough Borough Council  
Dominic Gardner, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

Officers: D Boville & L Noteyoung, RCBC Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officers  
A Pearson, RCBC Governance Manager

### 16. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted for Councillors I Bell and W Newall (Darlington Borough Council), G Hall and B Loynes (Hartlepool Borough Council), J Rathmell (Middlesbrough Borough Council), D Rees (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council) and L Hall (Stockton Borough Council).

### 17. Declarations of Interest

None.

### 18. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2020

The minutes were approved.

## 19. North East Ambulance Service Performance Update

The Deputy Chief Operating Officer and Assistant Director of Communications for the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) gave a presentation on the activity and performance of the service over the past 12 months. The presentation highlighted the following issues:

- There had been an increase in 999 calls during the first few weeks of lockdown and during periods where the lockdown had been eased.
- There had been a significant increase in violent attacks against ambulance crews. Substance misuse had been an underlying theme to these attacks. There had been a significant campaign over the summer to combat this resulting in legislation which doubled the maximum jail sentence for the assault of an emergency services worker.
- Service pressures on NEAS were now back to a pre-pandemic state.
- Response times had improved from last winter, although covid protocols meant that crews were at each incident for an additional 4 minutes on average.
- Delays in hospital handovers were now much lower than at the start of 2020.
- Staff vaccinations were progressing well.

As part of the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- NEAS staff had done wonderful work during a very challenging time.
- The Committee felt that, for offences against emergency services staff where a custodial sentence was not given, the possibility of community service within NEAS should be considered. This should be explored with the probation service.
- Support was available for NEAS staff and this was accessed when necessary:-**NOTED**

## 20. Covid Update

The Chief Officer and Medical Director of the Tees Valley CCG presented an update on the local covid response from both the NHS and its partner organisations. The update highlighted the following issues:

- Cooperation between partner agencies across the Tees Valley had

been fantastic.

- The creation of a virtual ward, allowing patients to be monitored at home, had been a huge success.
- Primary care practices had done an excellent job of supporting each other.
- Balancing covid and non-covid issues was a challenge, particularly managing infection control and social distancing whilst keeping priority services going.
- All Tees Valley hospitals had increased their critical care capacity.
- Mass vaccination centres were planned to be operational within the next few months.
- Vaccinating the top 4 cohorts would prevent 99% of the covid related deaths that occur.

As part of the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- The University Hospital of Hartlepool had been used to really good effect and had allowed covid and non-covid patients to be located in sperate buildings.
- The more people willing and able to access a mass vaccination centre meant that more resources were available for residents who were vulnerable or were unable to travel.
- Patient feedback on the virtual ward has been extremely positive. The scheme was being evaluated nationally and lessons learned would be carried into future service development.
- Residents could not be forced to take the vaccine, but myth-busting work was ongoing.
- Guidance on when the second dose of the vaccine would be available was changing constantly. The current thinking was that it was important to get as many people the first dose as possible:-  
**NOTED**

## 21. Tees Suicide Prevention Plan

The Tees Suicide Prevention Officer presented the Tees Suicide Prevention Action Plan. The plan aimed to reduce instances of suicide by focusing on the following 7 priorities:

1. Sustain current funding for the Tees Suicide Prevention Taskfoce

group and activities.

2. Reduce the risk of suicide in high-risk groups.
3. Tailor approaches to improve mental health in specific groups.
4. Reduce access to the means of suicide.
5. Provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide.
6. Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour.
7. Support research, data collection and monitoring.

As part of the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- A lot of work had been undertaken to increase access to services.
- A lot of free training was available at the moment.
- The Tees Training Hub had adapted really well to working virtually. All training was available online with the exception of the resist training.
- James Cook University Hospital had started to undertake kindness calls to reduce loneliness.
- The Gazette was working closely with the Taskforce to ensure that appropriate terminology was used when reporting.
- There was no data at present to show that there has been a rise in suicides as a result of lockdown, however anecdotally, feedback was being received that stress levels in females was rising due to homeworking and home-schooling, and more targeted work toward this group was now being undertaken.
- It was good that Cruse Bereavement Care could be accessed across the Tees Valley:-**NOTED**

## **22. Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust: Our Big Conversation – Draft Strategic Framework**

The Director of Operations – Teesside for the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) presented draft strategic framework which was currently being consulted on. TEWV were committed to 3 big goals for the next five years:

1. To co-create a great experience for our patients, carers and families.
2. To co-create a great experience for our colleagues.
3. To be a great partner.

TEWV had also agreed to focus on 5 key areas:

- Co-creation at our core.
- Having a clear clinical approach.
- Being a great place to work.
- Playing a leading role in our systems.
- Having an empowering infrastructure.

As part of the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- The experience of service users appeared to be split almost evenly between okay to good and not okay to bad.
- A key focus of the consultation was to hear from service users who had not been heard previously.
- The strategic framework was designed to have a very simple set of standards that all staff could follow. There would be different approaches in different areas driven by patient need.
- It was brave and refreshing for a report to be so honest about the failings of a service. Only by recognising what had gone wrong could things start to be put right:-**NOTED**

## **23. Work Programme and Future Meetings**

The Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer presented the work programme for the coming municipal year:-**NOTED**