

Building a sustainable future for the Friarage



Wednesday 27 February 2019

Temporary changes to critical care services at the Friarage Hospital, Northallerton

Over the last 18 months, following public engagement, consultants at the Friarage have developed an innovative new model, to provide acute medical services in a small rural hospital. During this public engagement South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust stated its intent to go out to full public consultation on this model. However, the Trust has now been overtaken by events and needs to make some temporary changes to critical care services at the Friarage Hospital.

Dr Adrian Clements, Medical Director for the Friarage Hospital and Deputy Chief Executive of South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said:

“We need to make these temporary changes to provide safe services for the population we serve. Despite our many efforts to recruit key medical staff over the last 18 months, support from our partners and the hard work of my team to keep services running, we are now facing significant risks because of an imminent gap in staffing.”

The majority of services at The Friarage will remain unchanged, with around nine out of ten patients continuing to be seen there, including outpatient clinics and planned day surgery which make up the majority of the services.

The Trust will assess the appropriateness of all 999 and GP emergency activity prior to patients arriving at the Friarage. All complex critical-care-dependent surgery will be undertaken at James Cook University Hospital, where patients with major trauma and serious illnesses, such as stroke, head or spinal injuries are already treated.

The Accident and Emergency service will change to a 24/7 Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC), in line with clinical guidance. Going forward this will mean we will be able to treat children with minor illnesses (such as fever, rashes, asthma), rather than just minor injuries, which has been the case for a number of years.

Siobhan McArdle, Chief Executive of South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: “During recent public engagement on the Friarage Hospital, we committed to developing a safe and sustainable future for the hospital, and this absolutely remains our intent. Once we have stabilised our current services to ensure patient safety, we will be working in partnership with the CCG to deliver a full

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public consultation in order to agree the longer term sustainable future service model for the Friarage, something we all want to see.”

Dr Charles Parker for NHS Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group said: “We know from extensive public engagement how important the Friarage Hospital is to our local communities and we remain committed to sustaining services at the hospital.

“We are disappointed that workforce pressures have resulted in this temporary service change and support the Trust in their decision to make these changes as a result of significant safety concerns. We are working with the Trust, local GPs, the Yorkshire Ambulance Service and other system partners to ensure the impact of these changes is minimised for the majority of people.

“These are urgent temporary changes but there is still an underlying workforce problem. We will therefore proceed with a public consultation on the future sustainability of services at the Friarage in line with our statutory duty.”

We will continue to keep patients, staff and local communities updated.