



South of Tyne and Wear

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Getting Better Together

A Public Consultation
Acute health services for children and young people

*Working together to make
South of Tyne and Wear healthy for you*

Gateshead Primary Care Trust • South Tyneside Primary Care Trust • Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust



Getting better together

NHS South of Tyne and Wear covers Gateshead Primary Care Trust (PCT), South Tyneside Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust (TPCT) and is the name given to the integrated management arrangements which exist across the three PCTs.

Our vision is to work together to make South of Tyne and Wear healthy for all. We aim to achieve this by improving the health of local communities and ensuring excellent patient care through the wise and effective use of public money.

Following an in-depth clinical review, it has become clear that we need to improve local services for sick and injured children. These services have served the community well for many

years, but advances in medical treatment and prevention and the nature of childhood illness means that they no longer meet the needs of children, young people or their families.

That is why we would like to make a number of changes to the way services are delivered across South of Tyne and Wear. We are very keen to hear your views on our plan.

"I support the plan to enhance local services for children and young people. It will ensure that fewer children need to be admitted to hospital for long periods."

Geoff Lawson, Consultant Paediatrician/Clinical Director, Child Health, City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

Why do the services need to change?

These days, advances in paediatric medicine mean that serious childhood illnesses are very rare and children and young people seldom have to stay in hospital overnight. This means that at times, fewer than half of the overnight beds for children in the South of Tyne and Wear area (covering Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside) are occupied each night.

However, children and young people suffer from more chronic illness now than in the past; for example, conditions like asthma and diabetes. These types of childhood illness can be managed safely and more appropriately in the child's own home with support from healthcare staff.

It is often the case that children attend hospital when they could have been treated closer to home by their own general practitioner (GP) or in a walk-in service – for example, children with gastroenteritis. What's more, some of these children are admitted overnight when their medical needs could actually have been resolved without a hospital stay. We know that unnecessary admissions can disrupt family life and children's education.

Last year, more than 12,000 children and young people were admitted to local hospitals. Many of them could have been managed in the community.

As a result, we believe that we are not providing the type of services that acutely sick and injured children and their families need. It is also important to consider value for money and to ensure that we offer the best care in the most cost-effective way. That is why we would like to make a number of changes to the way services are delivered across the South of Tyne and Wear area.

Acute refers to illness that is often sudden in onset and can be severe, but generally lasts only a short time before the patient recovers fully.



What changes are being proposed?

We want to see more children and young people receiving care closer to home or in their own home and fewer presenting at hospital and being admitted for overnight stays. To ensure that this is possible, we plan to increase the range of services available in the community.

For those children who do need hospital support, we will establish assessment units within Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead, South Tyneside District Hospital, South Shields, and Sunderland Royal Hospital.

A small number of children will need to be admitted for overnight stays or longer periods.

To meet their needs, we plan to create a single, dedicated paediatric inpatient unit to serve the South of Tyne and Wear area. This would be located at Sunderland Royal Hospital. Children and young people would also be able to use the service provided by the Great North Children's Hospital at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle.



Options for the future

Option one:

Implementation of a range of service developments including:

- walk-in services available to children of all ages
- children's community nursing team support for acutely ill and injured children and young people
- children's short-stay assessment units in hospitals in Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside, available for **limited hours**, eg 8.00am - 10.00pm
- inpatient care available at Sunderland Royal Hospital and the Great North Children's Hospital at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle.

Option two:

Implementation of a range of service developments including:

- walk-in services available to children of all ages
- children's community nursing team support for acutely ill and injured children and young people
- children's short-stay assessment units in hospitals in Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside, available for **24 hours** each day
- inpatient care available at Sunderland Royal Hospital and the Great North Children's Hospital at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle.

Option two is our preferred option. It provides a good balance between community and hospital services and means that the small number of children who attend during the night can be managed within their local area.



Why will this ensure better services?

We believe that we can improve the services available to acutely sick and injured children and young people and their families across NHS South of Tyne and Wear.

Our plan will deliver:

- high-quality care closer to home for the majority of children
- support within the family home from the children's community nursing team
- a comprehensive hospital service that is better staffed and resourced than at present
- a more joined-up approach to the care and treatment of acutely sick and injured children.

How can I have my say?

You will find the full consultation document and questionnaire on our website at

www.sotw.nhs.uk/yoursay/consultations/

Alternatively, you can call us for a copy of the full consultation document and questionnaire on **0191 529 7374**.

We will be holding a number of public meetings during the consultation period. Details can be found on our website or by calling the number above.

This consultation ends on **31 March 2012**.

