

Health Scrutiny Committee 10th December 2019.

## 1. North Cumbria CCG

Caroline Rea from the CCG talked about PCNs (Primary Care Networks). Each covers a population of 30-50k. Alston is part of the Eden PCT. The standard of general practice in North Cumbria is very high with all practices getting awarded good by the CQC and nine outstanding, including Alston Medical Practice. Patient demand has increased by 33% in the last five years and GP vacancy in North Cumbria is 20% and 40% in the west. There was a discussion about North Cumbria Primary Care. A collective has been set up by Cockermouth GP, Dr John Howarth, to provide financial stability to practices. A large number of practices in the west of Cumbria have joined the NCPC.

## 2. Winter Preparedness

Peter Rooney from North Cumbria Integrated Care (Secondary Care) said the situation is more challenging at the moment than usual. There has been no increase in A/E activity as is the case everywhere else where there has been a 20% increase in A/E activity. Nor has been there been more people admitted. The problem is that the length of stay is longer with blocking of beds by elderly patients waiting for "packages of care" and residential/nursing care beds which are provided by the county council. Chris Whiteside, Conservative county councillor, commented that the move over the last 10 years to fewer beds created less resilience in the system. I agreed with him and reflected that there had been a big drop in Community and General Hospital beds in the last 13 years. I said that the bed cull had gone too far. Peter's response was that however many beds you had they would all be filled. Claire Driver suggested we review the situation a lot earlier next year, maybe in April.

## 3. Recruitment and Retention.

As mentioned above there is a huge shortage of doctors and nurses in Cumbria. Almost half of the GP posts in wet Cumbria are unfilled, causing massive strain on GPs and other practice staff. The situation is partly due to undervaluing of the caring professions. There has been a large number of people leaving the NHS due to massive stress levels. South Cumbria have a project called "Global Fellows" to attract hospital doctors from India.

## 4. IT Development of Secondary Care in North Cumbria.

All records in Primary Care are digitalised, hardly any of those in Secondary Care are. CIC relies on paper records. They have a huge warehouse of paper records with constant toing and froing of vans to get the records. Recently North Cumbria has changed things, it was the first in the country to introduce a digital maternity record. Overall, there has been a reduction of 1.4 million sheets of paper per annum. The current paper records will be scanned into the system and this will take 3-5 years.

Accounts and Governance Scrutiny Meeting 18.12.19.

This meeting was called to discuss the proposed change of scrutiny committees from 3 to 1. Apart from one member, all others voted to reduce the committees from 3 to 1. Full council will

vote on this on the 9th of January 20.