Making seven days work in emergency care

THE NORTHUMBRIA WAY

ONE YEAR ON...
In June 2015, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust opened England's first purpose-built, dedicated, specialist emergency care hospital, transforming urgent and emergency care services across Northumberland and North Tyneside.

The culmination of over ten years’ worth of discussion and widespread staff and public engagement, the changes were pioneered by frontline clinical teams with the collective vision and desire to deliver the best possible emergency care to patients who become seriously ill or injured.

Whilst the changes delivered have not been without challenges during the past year – including a very busy winter and huge increase in attendances, not only for Northumbria Healthcare but for the whole NHS – the early indications already show a very clear and positive impact on clinical outcomes for patients.
The Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital brings together all acute emergency hospital admissions from across the trust, centralising specialist medical expertise on one site so that, in a serious emergency, patients have access to senior clinical decision-making seven days a week, resulting in faster diagnosis, earlier treatment and improved clinical outcomes.

The new Northumbria hospital has seven specialty wards, meaning emergency patients can be admitted quickly and directly to the right specialty area where they will be seen by the relevant specialist consultant.

Emergency medicine consultants are on site 24/7, with specialty consultants working seven days a week from 8am until 8pm and dedicated emergency diagnostics, operating 24/7 with expert consultant interpretation 24/7. By the time a patient arrives on one of the seven specialty wards, the consultant specialist has the results of any tests and scans undertaken in the emergency department and can begin a treatment pathway.

With the opening of The Northumbria hospital, changes were also made to the trust’s former A&E departments at Hexham, Wansbeck and North Tyneside general hospitals. These have now become 24/7 urgent care centres, led by highly experienced emergency nurse practitioners who care for walk-in patients with less serious problems, minor injuries and ailments.

There are no emergency hospital admissions at the trust’s three general hospitals as these are now centralised at The Northumbria. Emergency nurse practitioners within urgent care centres are supported by GPs employed by Northumbria Healthcare. Staff also have direct links with clinicians in the emergency department at The Northumbria. Northern Doctors Urgent Care, who are commissioned to provide the out-of-hours service, are also based within the trust’s urgent care centres.

The separation of emergency care from the general hospital sites has created a much calmer environment and seamless experience for patients attending for planned operations, clinic appointments or diagnostic tests with no interruption from emergency cases. There is also now more space on general hospital sites to develop ward environments and enhance the surroundings for patients attending for planned care.
Why the change?

For Northumbria Healthcare, the ambition for delivering full seven day consultant working in emergency care was driven entirely by clinicians, reflecting on increasing global evidence that seeing a consultant early on in the care pathway leads to better outcomes for patients - not only improving chances of survival but also helping people return home much sooner.

The journey started as long ago as 2004, in part driven by increasing emergency admissions, but also the frail, complex patients coming through the doors. Consultant rotas were adjusted to ensure a seven day consultant presence across all acute medical admissions to the trust’s general hospitals but this was just the start. Clinicians wanted to establish full seven day consultant working across all major specialities for patients in need of emergency hospital-based care.

For Northumbria, an organisation which operates over 2,500 square miles, and a large geographical and rural footprint, offering a first class seven day specialised consultant-led service in emergency care could only be offered in a centralised way and by bringing our consultants teams together on one site. This meant a new purpose-built, specialist emergency care hospital located in a place which is accessible for as many North Tyneside and Northumberland residents as possible and close to major trunk roads.

Why a new build?
One Year On...

Northumbria Healthcare is one of only a handful of trusts nationally to meet the four hour 95% performance standard in 2015/16. This is against a backdrop of a 15% increase in urgent and emergency care attendances (152,750 attendances between June 2015 and April 2016 compared to 129,518 attendances between June 2014 and April 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Total attends</th>
<th>Ambulance arrivals</th>
<th>GP referrals (excluding ambulance arrivals)</th>
<th>Average waiting time (in minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Northumbria - emergency department</td>
<td>81,216</td>
<td>37,351</td>
<td>8,930</td>
<td>168.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Tyneside - urgent care centre</td>
<td>31,734</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>93.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wansbeck - urgent care centre</td>
<td>27,605</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>83.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham - urgent care centre</td>
<td>12,195</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

95% of Northumbria patients were seen within four hours of arrival during 2015/16.
Over 2,400 babies have been born at The Northumbria Birthing Centre

Of the 81,216 attendances at The Northumbria emergency department, only 37,516 resulted in an emergency hospital admission. Almost 54% of emergency department attendances did not require an admission to hospital.

Out of all patients directly admitted to The Northumbria:

- 76% were discharged directly home
- 22% were transferred to another hospital within the trust for ongoing care and rehabilitation

There were also:

- over 5,000 emergency operations performed
- over 800,000 urgent blood tests and over 8,000 blood transfusions
Reduction in Emergency Hospital Admissions

Despite the huge increase in urgent and emergency attendances during 2015/16, since centralising specialist emergency care onto one site at The Northumbria, the trust has recorded an average of a 14% reduction in emergency admissions to hospital. This is against a national context of increasing emergency hospital admissions for the whole population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>Numerical change</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency admissions (to the trust)</td>
<td>June – April</td>
<td>52,082</td>
<td>44,586</td>
<td>-7,496</td>
<td>-14.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This means 7,496 less people have been admitted to hospital and equates to a saving for the whole local health economy of over £6 million for 2015/16. This highly efficient emergency care system will continue to benefit the local NHS for years to come and ensure people are not admitted to hospital unnecessarily.

The reduction in emergency hospital admissions is largely as a result of the dedicated emergency diagnostics at The Northumbria, which include two CT scanners, four x-ray rooms, two ultrasound rooms, an MRI scanner, a cardiac catheter lab and an endoscopy room. Radiographers are on site 24/7 and work with specialist consultants to quickly interpret results.

The hospital also has a state-of-the-art pathology lab which operates 24/7 analysing samples from the emergency department and from ward teams. In the first 11 months since opening almost 80,000 radiology examinations have been performed (see table on next page).
A NEW MODEL OF PAEDIATRIC CARE

The emergency care changes have also improved the model of care delivered for seriously ill children and young people across Northumberland and North Tyneside, with a consistent level of high quality care now available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Children under 16 who are referred as an emergency by their GP, or who arrive directly to the emergency department, are now seen in a dedicated children’s facility situated adjacent to the main emergency department at The Northumbria.

Specialist paediatric staff work alongside staff from emergency care within the children’s facility to ensure that children and young people are seen quickly. Prior to the changes in June 2015, children attending the trust in an emergency had two separate assessments, one in the emergency department and then one in paediatrics. These improvements mean children and young people are now seen very promptly by the most appropriate experts so that decisions can be made very quickly about their treatment. Children who are predicted to need a short hospital stay of less than 24 hours and whose risk of deterioration is low, are admitted to The Northumbria.

Some children who, after assessment, may need to spend longer in hospital and have a high risk of deterioration, or who arrive very late at night when a specialist consultant is not physically on site at The Northumbria, are transferred to The Great North Children’s Hospital in Newcastle – the region’s major centre for children.
Improving outcomes for patients who are seriously ill or injured

The new model of emergency care at Northumbria Healthcare means that patients who are seriously ill or injured now receive a specialist consultant opinion much quicker than ever before, resulting in a fast diagnosis and treatment beginning much sooner.

Senior clinical decision making from consultants within the emergency department as soon as patients arrive and across a range of medical and surgical specialities happens every day of the week, with consultants doing twice daily ward rounds on a Saturday and Sunday – just as they do on weekday. The positive impact of this seven day model and consistent level of senior clinical staffing is helping to maximise chances of survival and a good recovery for serious emergency patients.

This positive impact is already becoming clear in cardiology where the number of people surviving heart attacks has dramatically increased since the opening of The Northumbria. This is despite the longer travel times and further distances that some patients may have travelled to receive specialist emergency care. The priority is about getting patients to the right place where they will be seen by the right expert for their condition. Consultant cardiologists are on hand seven days a week at The Northumbria to make quick decisions about treatment pathways. For most heart attack patients received at The Northumbria (and the large majority of heart attack patients generally) this usually means a course of blood thinning medication and onward referral for coronary angioplasty treatment (a stent). Those patients who need immediate intervention to clear any blockages in the heart continue to be taken directly to the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle.

For patients who are not suffering a heart attack, the cardiac catheter lab (cath lab) at The Northumbria also operates 12 hours a day, seven days a week using diagnostic imaging to visualise the arteries and chambers of the heart and treat any abnormalities found.
What have been the challenges?

Ambulance handover delays

Delivering such large-scale transformational change does not come without its challenges. The Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital is now the largest receiving emergency department in the North East and emergency ambulances, which previously attended three district general hospitals, now bring all emergency admissions to one centralised site where specialists are available seven days a week.

This centralisation has impacted on the performance of ambulance handover times and is something that the trust is actively working on with the ambulance service and other partners to make sure patients have a smooth transition into hospital, especially during times of peak demand. This work includes clinical advice lines for paramedics to call ahead and speak to consultants and senior triage on arrival. Work is taking place so that in future paramedics will be able to admit patients directly to certain departments within The Northumbria – for example surgical assessment and ambulatory care.
Average Wait for Ambulance Handovers at Northumbria Healthcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>June 2014 to April 2015</th>
<th>June 2015 to April 2016</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 15 minutes</td>
<td>24,248</td>
<td>19,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 30 minutes</td>
<td>4,248</td>
<td>6,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 60 minutes</td>
<td>1,286</td>
<td>2,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60 minutes</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total arrivals*</td>
<td>41,445</td>
<td>40,415</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average wait for ambulance handovers at Northumbria Healthcare.

North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust data

*Note – the time that the care of a patient is handed over from the ambulance service to hospital staff in the emergency department is not always recorded under times of extreme pressure, or when a patient is taken directly to a certain ward or department within The Northumbria.

Reduction in Ambulance Handover Delays (Jan – May 2016)
Introducing our new model of emergency care and separating out serious emergencies from the thousands of less serious injuries and ailments which have historically arrived at emergency departments across the NHS for the past 50 plus years, has involved extensive and continuous communication and education with the public and across local communities.

A widespread public awareness campaign ran throughout 2015 advising people where to seek help depending on their problem, including signposting to primary care and these messages continue to be embedded as part of routine communications and engagement work.

This awareness campaign has been largely successful and in the first 11 months since introducing the new model, around half of all urgent and emergency care attendances (47%) have taken place at the trust’s 24 hour urgent care centres at Wansbeck, Hexham and North Tyneside general hospitals. Of the 53% of attendances at The Northumbria, 57% arrived by emergency ambulance or after emergency GP referral, however, the number of walk-in attendances has been higher anticipated.

The reasons for this are complex and research undertaken during January 2016 with patients seated in the waiting area at The Northumbria showed that 30% felt a GP could satisfy their treatment needs and 68% had accessed other services in relation to their problem. Many of those attending as walk-in patients could have been seen in primary care and many had been referred by NHS 111 when an alternative service would have been better suited.

We recognise that changing public behaviour takes a long time and the trust continues to educate local people and work with health and care partners to make sure everyone understands the new model of emergency care.

The trust is also actively working with the whole health and care system to make sure patients are signposted to the right service, either when calling NHS 111 or seeking other urgent help from the NHS.

In addition, given the close proximity of the new Northumbria hospital to the town of Cramlington, the trust is working with local GP practices to refer any patients who, after walking in and being assessed, are deemed suitable to be treated by a GP, are provided with a GP appointment at a local practice in Cramlington. A number of appointments are being made available to offer patients at the weekends.
SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

Following a year of major change for the trust’s 9,500 strong workforce, the NHS staff survey 2015 showed Northumbria Healthcare achieving the highest score of all acute hospitals in England for the number of staff recommending the organisation as a place to work or to receive treatment with 95% feeling their role makes a difference to patient care.

Staff also voted the trust as the best acute hospital trust in the NHS on several other measures used to assess levels of staff engagement, including:

- staff feeling able to contribute towards improvements at work
- staff feeling that the organisation listens to feedback from patients and service users
- staff feeling secure about raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice
- fairness and effectiveness of procedures for reporting errors, near misses and incidents
- organisational interest in (and action on) staff health and wellbeing
- effective use of patient / service user feedback
- effective team working
- high numbers of staff believing the trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion
- very low numbers of staff experiencing discrimination at work in the last 12 months and / or harassment, bullying or abuse
- staff feeling the organisation takes an active interest in staff health and wellbeing.

The pressures as a result of the increase in urgent and emergency care attendances in 2015/16 have undoubtedly been felt by frontline staff and their commitment to delivering high quality patient care has been unwavering.

The welfare of staff, looking after their health and wellbeing and creating an environment where they can really enjoy their work is at the heart of Northumbria’s organisational values and the leadership team is absolutely committed to continuing to support, nurture and develop staff in their chosen career paths.
Northumbria Healthcare runs one of the largest and most comprehensive patient experience programmes in the NHS as well as a widely-publicised ‘We’re listening’ feedback channel to capture the views of both patients, staff and members of the public.

The trust also runs one of the most active community engagement programmes in the NHS and openly encourages people to share their experiences of services via its multiple social media channels, with all feedback shared with both frontline teams and the trust’s board of directors.

Since the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital opened, almost 3,000 patients have given their feedback about their care on the wards with 97% likely or highly likely to recommend their care to friends and family. In the emergency department, 9 out of 10 patients would rate their care as good, very good or excellent.

Out of 1940 inpatients interviewed during their stay at The Northumbria:

- 94% said their care was well coordinated
- 99% said they were treated with respect and dignity
- 96% felt they were kept involved in care decisions
- 98% had confidence and trust in our doctors and nurses
- 98% thought The Northumbria was kept clean
- 97% thought their pain was kept under control
- 95% thought the wards were quiet at night time
- 99% said they were treated with kindness and compassion

But not everyone was completely happy and we learned:

- 1 in 4 would like us to improve the hospital environment
- 6 out of 10 patients wanted more information about waiting in emergency care
- 1 in 4 would like improved communication between patients and staff

97% of patients who stayed in hospital would recommend their care to friends and family

9/10 patients using our emergency care services would rate their care as good, very good or excellent
WHAT OUR PATIENTS SAY...

“The staff are very consistent with information, and I get it when I want it. Fabulous cleanliness here, considering I’m a retired cleaner for a hospital, it passes my standards! It’s very quiet at night here. It’s my first time in this hospital and it’s great, very clean and the staff are very helpful. Everybody works so hard and respond to the call bells so quickly.”

“The treatment on this ward is excellent – I am very happy here. This is my first time in hospital and I am over the moon with the way I have been treated here. The room is lovely and I can get around my bed easily with my zimmer frame.”

“Our relative couldn’t be in a better place; he’s never left on his own and staff are very attentive. We know he’ll be looked after here. Everything has been talked through, including his medication, and we’re updated all of the time. It’s marvellous the way we’ve been kept informed. Everyone is so friendly, which helps, and it puts us at ease. It’s nice that they use their first names with us. They reassure us and tell us that we can ring at any time. The staff keep us calm and check that we’re ok- the customer care is fantastic.”

“It was the first time I had surgery so I was a little apprehensive. However all the staff were really good and made me feel as comfortable as possible, plus having my own room was a great help too.”

15 year old patient WILL AITCHISON from WOOLER was cared for at the NORTHUMBRIA
80 year old patient
Bernie Cowen from North Tyneside
was cared for at the Northumbria

“Our relative has had brilliant treatment. The teamwork is really good and fluid, and the staff change-over is smooth and comprehensive. They address our relative and talk to her directly, even though she can’t respond. We were asked if she has any allergies and her medication was explained to us. They ask her permission before carrying anything out, and they even phoned us at home last night to ask our permission for a procedure. The staff check that we know everything we want or if we need an update on each visit - we’re encouraged to ask questions. They have done everything possible and her care has been excellent.”

“This is a brilliant hospital and this ward is amazing – the way the staff deal with care for patients, the environment is pleasing to the eyes and satisfying to the senses. I am so pleased we have this hospital here and rightly so – with such facilities – free TV, currently free parking, the best hospital food menu – I say, rightly so because it is the people’s hospital – it was built and being maintained by tax payers monies.”

“The doctors and nurses are always talking with each other, they work very well together. If I have any problems the staff come and sort me out. It’s a spotless room, just like a hotel. I found the clock in the room noisy so the nurse took the battery out for me. I would recommend everybody here, it’s my first time and it’s lovely. The food is excellent, it’s like Gordon Ramsey has just cooked it!”

“I used to think all hospitals are the same until I came here yesterday and what an eye opener it is to see the facilities here and how caring the maternity staff are. If you have to give birth in a hospital this is the place to be – I feel safe and know that when my baby comes she will be well looked after.”

“The surgeon told me afterwards that they’d caught it just in the nick of time. So it’s only because of what they did and how quickly they did it that I’m here.”

“80 YEAR OLD PATIENT
BERNIE COWEN FROM NORTH TYNESIDE WAS CARED FOR AT THE NORTHUMBRIA
Evolving our health and care system

Work is also taking place across local health and care systems in Northumberland and North Tyneside to move towards respective Accountable Care Organisation (ACO) models for each area. This will help remove organisational barriers which have historically prevented true integration of services and would ultimately mean each area, for example all health and care organisations in Northumberland and North Tyneside taking joint accountability for the whole health and care needs of their local populations. For example:

- using simple, system-wide outcome quality measures that are not burdensome
- developing contracts that incentivise integration and patient self-management
- delivering solutions to data protection, legal and IT barriers that inhibit integration
- creating a culture to assist integration

Northumbria Healthcare is working with all partners and moving at pace in terms of developing ACO models for Northumberland and North Tyneside, however there are changes to the current legislative framework will be required in order to fully enable the collective vision for an ACO to be achieved. Local health and care systems in Northumberland and North Tyneside are working closely with NHS Improvement, NHS England and other on this with a view to implementing new models from April 2017.

Where next?

Opening The Northumbria and redesigning of urgent care services at general hospital sites, marked the first important phase of work in Northumberland to create a ‘primary and acute care system’. A key part of the Northumberland ‘vanguard’ programme is to make it even easier for people to access urgent help in primary care, for example through extended GP access, which will help to reduce reliance on hospital-based services even further.

Widespread engagement took place throughout 2015 with staff, patients and the public to discuss the idea of developing integrated care ‘hub’ models across Northumberland to help achieve a system-wide vision for better joined-up care and a seamless experience for patients. Further work to model and test the type and number of these hubs is now starting to take place, as well as exploring the potential for new networks of GP practices to work together. The vision for these integrated care ‘hubs’ will be to:

- deliver urgent primary care (booked appointments and walk-ins) over extended hours
- deliver planned care with locality-based, integrated teams of community nursing, mental health and home care staff, with medical leadership from GPs and consultants
- create locality-based integrated complex care teams to proactively manage those patients with the most complex needs in the community and provide a rapid response when a patient’s condition deteriorates
- provide timely specialist advice for both planned and urgent care, via local clinics and home visits, as well as cost-effective diagnostics close to home
- maximise use of existing resources across the system, including out-of-hours providers.

Our continuous journey of improvement