

building  
a caring  
future  
HOSPITAL | COMMUNITY | HOME

Northumbria Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust



Making seven days work in emergency care

THE NORTHUMBRIA WAY



# A BIT ABOUT US

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO...

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust delivers care to 500,000 people in North Tyneside and Northumberland, covering over 2,500 square miles and one of the largest geographic and most rural areas of any NHS organisation in England. Over 9,000 staff provide both hospital and community-based care, including adult social care in Northumberland.

The trust runs three main district general hospitals in Hexham, North Tyneside and Wansbeck, as well as six smaller community hospitals in Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth, Haltwhistle, Morpeth and Rothbury, as well as an outpatient facility in Wallsend. In June 2015, Northumbria opened a new dedicated, purpose-built specialist emergency care hospital – the result of several years' work to deliver consultant-led emergency care seven days a week.

# THE NORTHUMBRIA SEVEN DAY STORY WHERE IT ALL STARTED...



**Northumbria Healthcare has been at the forefront of seven day working in the NHS for over a decade, focusing its efforts on consultant-led emergency care.**

The very first moves towards seven day consultant-led working started in 2003 when the trust's three consultant-led maternity units merged onto one site (then at Wansbeck General Hospital, now at the new Northumbria hospital). This changed the working pattern for consultant staff – firstly for obstetricians and then for surgical and anaesthetic consultants to provide dedicated seven day emergency cover.

In 2004, in part driven by increasing emergency admissions, but also more frail, complex patients coming through the doors, consultants working in acute medicine at Northumbria realised that having senior clinical decision makers up front and at the very start of a patient journey, could play a hugely important part of care. They decided it was time for change.

Consultant rotas were adjusted to ensure a seven day consultant presence across acute medical admissions to the trust's general hospitals. In A&E this meant a seven day consultant presence during the day with overnight on call arrangements, as well as acute care physicians working from 8am until 10pm, seven days a week, to care for acutely ill patients being admitted as medical emergencies, again with overnight on call arrangements.

Following these changes, the conversation had begun amongst clinicians at Northumbria about how emergency care could continue to be improved. This signalled the start of Northumbria's journey to completely transform urgent and emergency care and establish full seven day consultant working across all major specialities for patients in need of emergency hospital-based care.

The development of specialty based emergency admissions was seen as the natural next step at Northumbria. By combining rotas from across the trust's three general hospital sites, this would allow the development of seven day specialty working in emergency care, providing early access to specialist consultant-led care for emergency patients.

This involved very detailed discussions with clinicians about the specialities where a seven day consultant presence for emergency admissions was critical in order to improve patient outcomes. Equally, discussions took place about those specialities where more traditional on call arrangements would still provide the best service to emergency patients. Consultants in rheumatology and diabetes and endocrinology, for example, do not work seven days in their own speciality as part of emergency care arrangements, as the volume of emergency patients in these areas does not require a seven day shop floor specialty presence. Instead, they work at weekends as part of wider teams of consultants who are qualified in general medicine.

Over ten years later, with full support from the trust's leadership team, consultants at Northumbria have now made their clinical vision for improving emergency care a reality for patients. The new Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital has put a purpose-built, physical structure around the Northumbria way of providing seven day emergency care and has been entirely designed by frontline teams to support their innovative clinical systems and pathways of care.

"BEFORE WE MADE THESE CHANGES THERE WAS TOO MUCH OF THE WEEK – PARTICULARLY AT NIGHT TIME AND AT WEEKENDS – WHEN ONLY JUNIOR DOCTORS WERE PRESENT IN OUR HOSPITALS. SERVICES WERE RUNNING FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SYSTEM, NOT FOR THE BENEFIT OF PATIENTS."

MR DAVID EVANS, MEDICAL DIRECTOR

# OUR CLINICAL VISION FOR SEVEN DAY CONSULTANT-LED EMERGENCY CARE...

For Northumbria, 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 to return to home much sooner.

As clinical teams and senior management began to focus on what a seven day consultant-led service in emergency care would mean for Northumbria, it became increasingly apparent that for such a geographically challenged organisation, a first-class specialised service could only be offered in a centralised way. For Northumbria, this meant a new purpose-built, specialist emergency care hospital which would:

Provide senior clinical decision making up front, maximising chances of survival, a good recovery and better outcomes for emergency patients

Provide better access to tests and scans to speed up diagnosis for emergency patients

Centralise consultant rotas to allow consistent levels of senior staffing expertise in one place, seven days a week, for emergency patients

Start people on the right treatment quickly by having consultants in a range of surgical and medical specialities working seven days a week

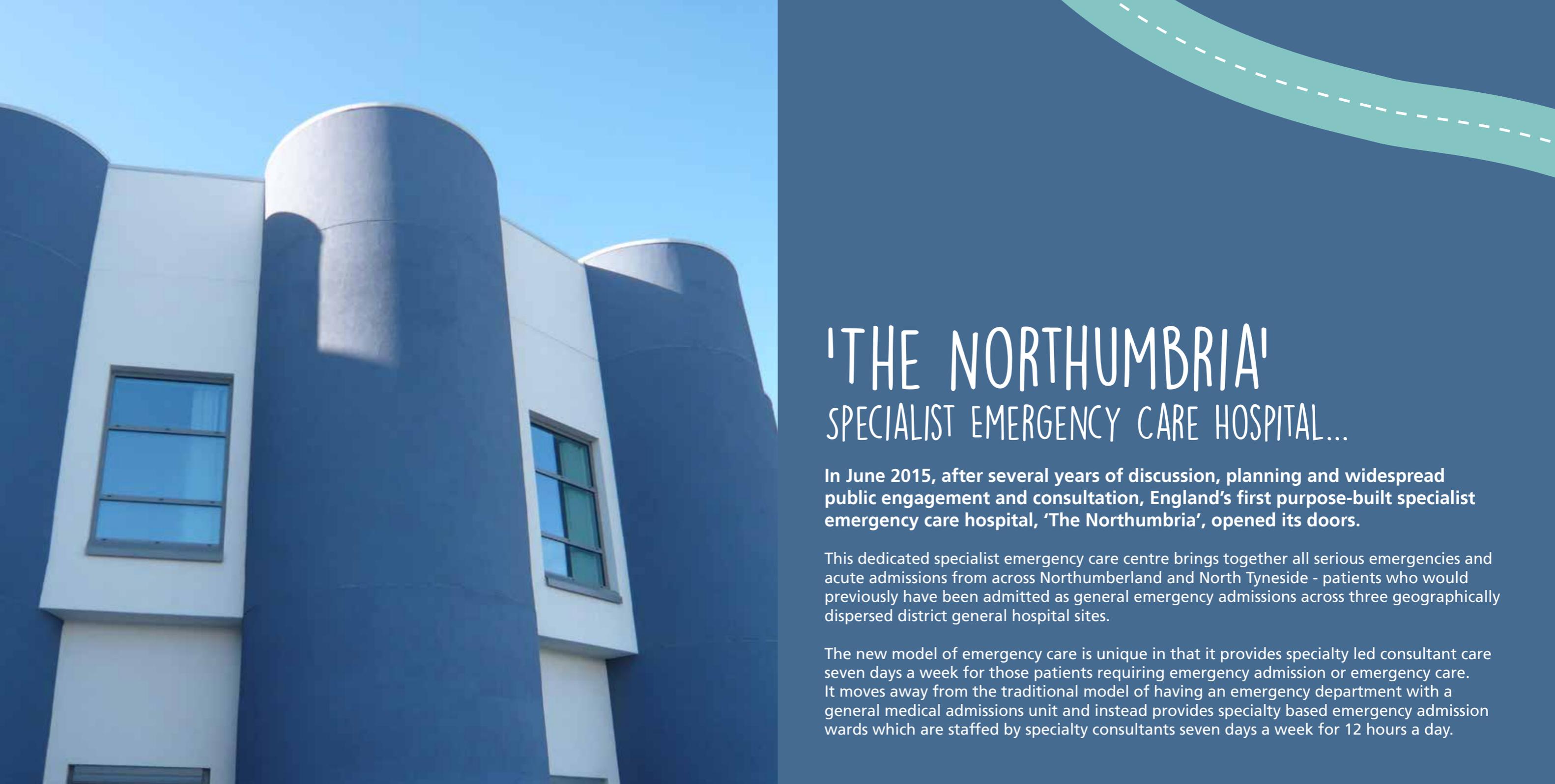
Ensure future sustainability of emergency care in the face of decreasing numbers entering medical training, changing demographics of the workforce and more clinicians moving abroad to work

Provide an unparalleled experience for junior doctors in training

Whilst there continues to be much debate about mortality as a measure of quality, this was never the main driver for Northumbria's move to seven day consultant working in emergency care. In fact, like many others, Northumbria's data does differ at weekends and clinicians at the trust, who regularly and meticulously analyse weekend deaths as part of detailed case note reviews, are very clear that this is the result of lower numbers of patients being admitted, which greatly distorts the picture on weekend mortality.

"COMMENTATORS MUST EXERCISE GREAT CAUTION INTERPRETING MORTALITY INFORMATION WHICH CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED IN ISOLATION AS A MEASURE OF QUALITY. ANALYSIS IS DEPENDENT ON A NUMBER OF CRITICAL FACTORS INCLUDING THE TYPE AND NUMBER OF PATIENTS BEING ADMITTED, THE CLINICAL ACTIVITIES OF AN ORGANISATION, THE COMPLEXITY OF CARE AND, CRUCIALLY, THE RATIO OF ELECTIVE TO NON-ELECTIVE WORK AT WEEKENDS."

MR DAVID EVANS, MEDICAL DIRECTOR



# 'THE NORTHUMBRIA' SPECIALIST EMERGENCY CARE HOSPITAL...

**In June 2015, after several years of discussion, planning and widespread public engagement and consultation, England's first purpose-built specialist emergency care hospital, 'The Northumbria', opened its doors.**

This dedicated specialist emergency care centre brings together all serious emergencies and acute admissions from across Northumberland and North Tyneside - patients who would previously have been admitted as general emergency admissions across three geographically dispersed district general hospital sites.

The new model of emergency care is unique in that it provides specialty led consultant care seven days a week for those patients requiring emergency admission or emergency care. It moves away from the traditional model of having an emergency department with a general medical admissions unit and instead provides specialty based emergency admission wards which are staffed by specialty consultants seven days a week for 12 hours a day.

In addition, the new Northumbria hospital has emergency medicine consultants physically on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week within the emergency department. This means patients can be quickly diagnosed and referred to consultants from a range of specialities who are on site every day from 8am until 8pm:

- ACUTE CARE MEDICINE
- ANAESTHETICS
- CARDIOLOGY
- CRITICAL CARE
- ELDERLY CARE (INCLUDING STROKE)
- GASTROENTEROLOGY
- MATERNITY (OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY)
- PAEDIATRICS
- RESPIRATORY
- SURGERY — UPPER AND LOWER GASTROINTESTINAL TEAMS
- TRAUMA — UPPER AND LOWER LIMB TRAUMA TEAMS (ORTHOPAEDICS)



LET'S TALK

## CONSULTANT SEVEN DAY WORKING — HOW WE DID IT...

**The clinical vision for seven day working at Northumbria was driven entirely by the consultant body and their desire to transform services and deliver the best possible emergency care to the local population.**

Strong relationships which exist between clinicians and senior leaders at Northumbria paved the way for positive discussions with consultants about how seven day working could be implemented at specialty level for emergency patients.

Working patterns have evolved over time and the decision by clinicians in 2004 to provide seven day consultant cover in medical admissions resulted in many consultants moving to more flexible hours – this ensured they were on duty in the evenings and at weekends but did not change the number of hours worked.

THERE WERE NO EDICTS FROM ON HIGH — THE SEVEN DAY PLAN WAS OWNED BY CONSULTANTS FROM THE OUTSET AND WAS VERY MUCH A BOTTOM UP APPROACH.

The existing consultant contract gave Northumbria the flexibility to reach an agreement locally and a healthy dialogue ensued with the consultant body who opted in for extended working across seven days in emergency care.

In simple terms, this means that the majority of Northumbria's consultants continue to be paid in line with the existing national contract for any scheduled work outside of 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday and a local agreement exists for work which exceeds the agreed average outside of these times. Appropriate rest periods are allocated with time off given during the week and work is now planned over seven days instead of five.

Seven day working gradually became part and parcel of routine job planning arrangements with extended seven day working in emergency care accepted by clinicians. It was simply felt to be the right thing to do for patient care and is now an integral part of the 'Northumbria way' of doing things.

There was also no mass recruitment drive. The consultant body at Northumbria has grown organically by around 40 per cent in the past ten years in line with the general expansion of services and growth of the organisation after achieving foundation trust status in 2006. Of today's 280 strong permanent consultant workforce at Northumbria, turnover amongst the consultant body is extremely low. On the contrary, the medical workforce speaks very highly of the Northumbria model.

**"The big advantage to physicians and their way of working – quite apart from the benefits for patients – is that when I am working in emergency admissions, I have no other responsibilities or distractions.**

**"It was just so self-apparent that this was the right way we should be working and we have been able to do it here without a fight and without any worry."**

**Dr Colin Doig, consultant cardiologist**

**"If you know you are going to be in from 8am until 8pm, but then after that you are home and with your family and you don't have any further call back to work, it's a system consultants appreciate."**

**Dr Mira Doshi,  
elderly care consultant**

**"HAVING AN EFFICIENTLY RUNNING HOSPITAL IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO A WORK-LIFE BALANCE BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT BEING ASKED TO DO THINGS UNEXPECTEDLY. THERE ARE NO LONGER UNFORESEEN PEAKS AND TROUGHS."**

**MR DAVID EVANS, MEDICAL DIRECTOR**



24/7 COVER

# THE JUNIOR DOCTOR TRAINING EXPERIENCE...

**As well as the obvious benefits for patient care, the provision of seven day consultant-led emergency care at Northumbria has brought benefits for hundreds of junior doctors in training in the North East over the past decade.**

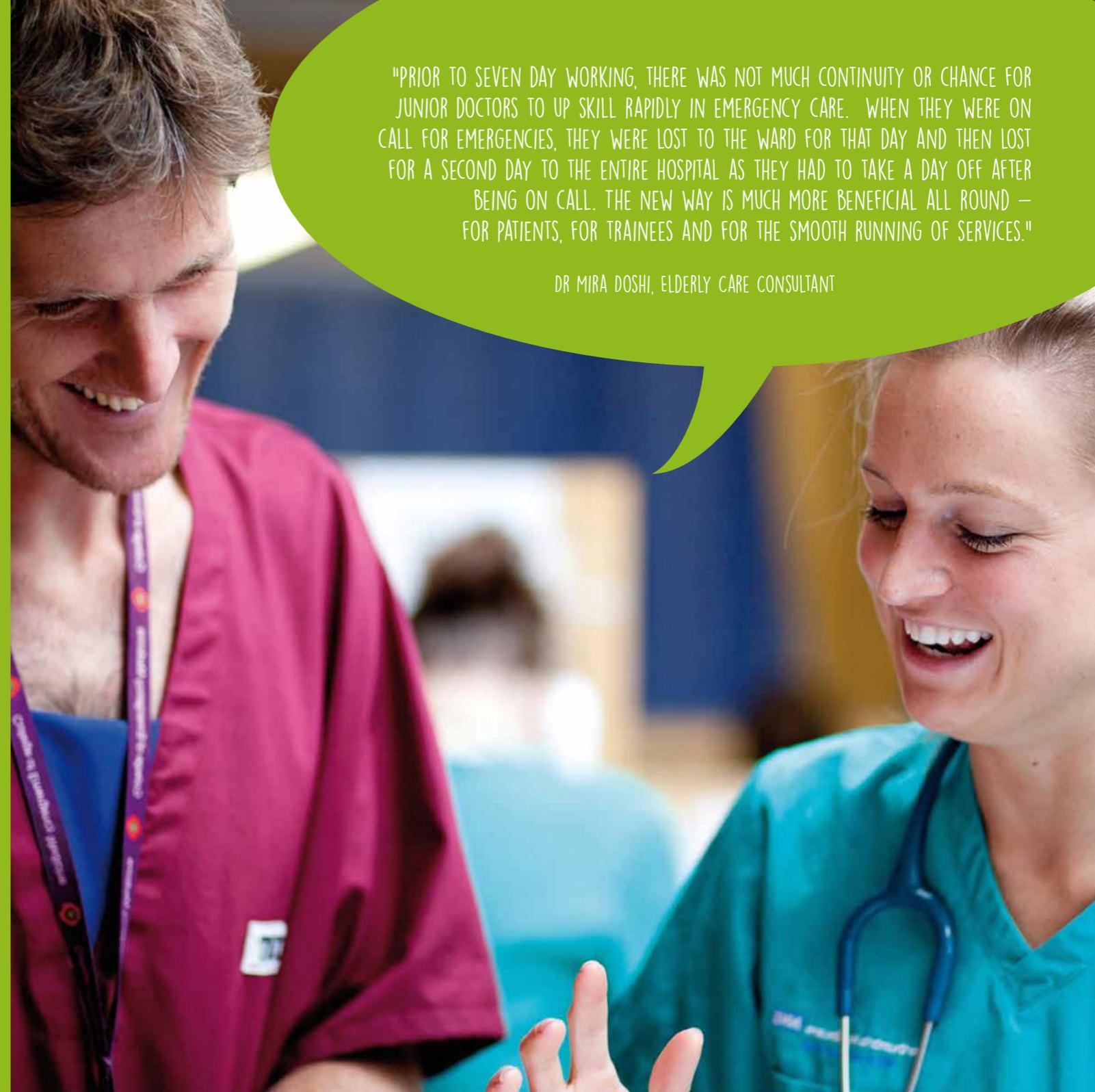
With the changes in acute medicine in 2004, the trust introduced a new way of working for junior doctors in foundation training which allowed trainees to spend an entire four month block period working solely in emergency care and acute admissions. During this initial four month period, junior doctors would carry out their on call commitment for the entire year with the comfort of working within a seven day consultant arrangement.

The opening of the new Northumbria hospital has enhanced this training experience in emergency care even further, with senior clinical advice available from consultants who are physically on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For the junior doctors, this way of working means they are able to skill up quickly in emergency medicine due to the intensity and pace of work, with lots of hands on experience and safe clinical supervision available around the clock.

The block training arrangement also brings benefits for the remaining eight months of the year as junior doctors are guaranteed the ability to study and attend all teaching assessments without the worry or interruption of a bleep going off. For the trust, it also means more junior doctors are available on the wards at peak times in the day and overnight any on call responsibilities are taken care of by consultants.

"PRIOR TO SEVEN DAY WORKING, THERE WAS NOT MUCH CONTINUITY OR CHANCE FOR JUNIOR DOCTORS TO UP SKILL RAPIDLY IN EMERGENCY CARE. WHEN THEY WERE ON CALL FOR EMERGENCIES, THEY WERE LOST TO THE WARD FOR THAT DAY AND THEN LOST FOR A SECOND DAY TO THE ENTIRE HOSPITAL AS THEY HAD TO TAKE A DAY OFF AFTER BEING ON CALL. THE NEW WAY IS MUCH MORE BENEFICIAL ALL ROUND – FOR PATIENTS, FOR TRAINEES AND FOR THE SMOOTH RUNNING OF SERVICES."

DR MIRA DOSHI, ELDERLY CARE CONSULTANT



# SEVEN DAY SUPPORT SERVICES IN EMERGENCY CARE...

**Northumbria's success story in delivering seven day emergency care is not just about consultant working. The whole new model is reliant on the expertise of highly skilled nursing teams caring for patients 24/7, as well as a whole complement of 'wraparound' support services which operate seven days from the new Northumbria hospital.**

## DIAGNOSTICS

A state-of-the-art diagnostic suite, dedicated to emergency patients, operates 24/7 in the new hospital and includes four x-ray rooms, two CT scanners, two ultrasound systems, a cardiac catheter lab, an endoscopy room and an MRI scanner. Results are interpreted by specialist consultants providing a 24/7 service which is rapidly speeding up the care pathway for patients.

## PHYSIOTHERAPY

Since 2009, physiotherapy teams at Northumbria have provided seven day care for patients, recognising the positive benefits in reduced length of stay through ongoing rehabilitation which does not stop at the weekend. The team works from 8.30am until 4.30pm seven days a week caring for emergency patients in the new Northumbria hospital and operates a 24/7 on call service for seriously ill respiratory patients. The team also provides seven day care for elective patients who have undergone planned procedures at Northumbria's general hospital sites.

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational therapy services at Northumbria have also provided seven day care for several years, helping patients adapt following a stay in hospital. The team works 8.30am until 4.30pm seven days a week, to help facilitate safe and timely discharge and has a dedicated facility in the new Northumbria hospital with specialist equipment to help patients regain independence and practice everyday tasks as they prepare to go home. The team also provides seven day care for elective patients who have undergone planned procedures at Northumbria's general hospital sites.

## HOSPITAL TO HOME TEAM

A dedicated multi-disciplinary team consisting of community nursing staff, social workers, occupational therapists and reablement co-ordinators, works seven days a week from the new Northumbria hospital to support discharge and help make any other necessary arrangements for ongoing care. If patients are medically fit and able to safely leave hospital at the weekend, then the system and processes are in place to arrange this with staff available from 8.30am until 4.30pm to make the necessary arrangements through a single point of access to co-ordinate care.



# WHAT NORTHUMBRIA PATIENTS SAY...

Whilst the new Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital only opened in June and robust data analysis will follow in due course, very early indicators are encouraging and demonstrate a positive impact on patient care. Having dedicated emergency diagnostics, operating 24/7 with expert consultant interpretation, already show signs of speeding up care and treatment for patients and reducing overall length of stay.

As the number crunching unfolds in the months ahead, messages about the new Northumbria hospital are already being received from patients, captured through a comprehensive patient experience programme and through open letters and comments to the trust. Feedback has been loud and clear in the first two months since opening.

## CONNIE BROWN

was one of the very first patients to benefit from the consultant-led care at The Northumbria hospital. She arrived by emergency ambulance shortly after it opened suffering a severe pain in her side. She was quickly assessed in the emergency department, had diagnostic tests and then moved to one of the speciality wards for treatment for both pneumonia and pleurisy. She stayed in The Northumbria until the next day when she was well enough to be transferred to Wansbeck General Hospital so she could be nearer her family for ongoing care. Connie said: "I'm a great believer in giving praise when praise is due and I was treated exceptionally well. The care was first-class and I cannot fault it at all. I was cared for on a beautiful ward with all en-suite facilities, I would go as far to say that I was treated like royalty. The doctor who saw me had an exceptional bedside manner and explained everything. I wasn't left on my own at all and there were lots of doctors and nurses around if I needed anything."



89-YEAR-OLD CONNIE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO BENEFIT FROM THE SEVEN-DAY CARE AVAILABLE AT 'THE NORTHUMBRIA'



69-YEAR-OLD MIKE HAD ONE OF THE FIRST OPERATIONS ON THE DAY 'THE NORTHUMBRIA' OPENED

## MIKE BRAY

had one of the first operations at The Northumbria hospital on the day it opened its doors. He had been suffering excruciating stomach pains and had attended his GP who had transferred him for specialist treatment. Following his scan in the diagnostics suite and operation to remove his gall bladder in one of the state-of-the-art theatres, he was cared for on the specialist surgical ward until he was well enough to go home the next day. Mike said: "The facilities including the scanner, en-suite room and the food were amazing and you can clearly see that a lot of thought has gone into designing a hospital which caters for patients' every need. We are extremely fortunate to have this facility in this part of the country and I think this is what ought to be happening across the country."

## PAMELA DYSON

had emergency surgery at the new Northumbria hospital in July. Following the surgery, she needed intervention by the specialist cardiology team at the hospital and everything was on hand for her to receive the highest standards of care, right there and then. Pamela said: "All the staff knew exactly what they were doing and just went into action. Everything I needed was there – scanners, equipment, specialist surgical teams, consultants – and thank God they were. Having seen it all work so well and so slick, I have no doubt that this is the way to go. You never know when you might find yourself or your loved one in an emergency situation but to know that we now have this expert facility with consultants there round the clock seven days is hugely reassuring."

## KATE ALEXANDRA

underwent emergency surgery at the new Northumbria hospital in July. Due to consultants being involved in Kate's care throughout, arrangements were put in place to avoid using one particular drug which had led to complications in the past. Kate said: "I cannot congratulate the trust enough on this marvellous facility for our region and praise everyone concerned. Northumbria has set the standard that others can only dream of and I hope other parts of the NHS see it as an inspiration. Every single aspect of my experience felt totally patient-centred and a real effort was made to make my experience as pleasant and as effective as possible, given the worrying circumstances. I've never had so much contact with the consultant surgeons before, I saw them three times a day, it was phenomenal. I felt completely listened to and reassured that I was in the best of hands."

# A RECAP ON NORTHUMBRIA'S SEVEN DAY MODEL...

(WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT ISN'T)

The vision and development of seven day services at Northumbria and the standardised seven day consultant working now in place, is focused entirely around emergency care and the stream of patients being admitted to hospital as emergencies. Consultants working seven days, in the evening and at weekends are doing so looking after the most seriously ill or injured patients, ensuring the highest quality of care around the clock for patients who have no choice as to when they might need such expert medical help.

The opening of the new Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital has allowed the trust to separate its emergency care, which now operates from one central location with seven day consultant working. The main bulk of planned elective activity and ongoing care continues to be delivered over five days, during the normal working week, across its three district general hospitals and community hospital sites. The positive consequences for the smooth running of these elective services are also expected in due course, with patients attending for routine tests, scans and operations more likely to have a seamless experience and no 'interruptions' from emergencies impacting on their own pathway of care.

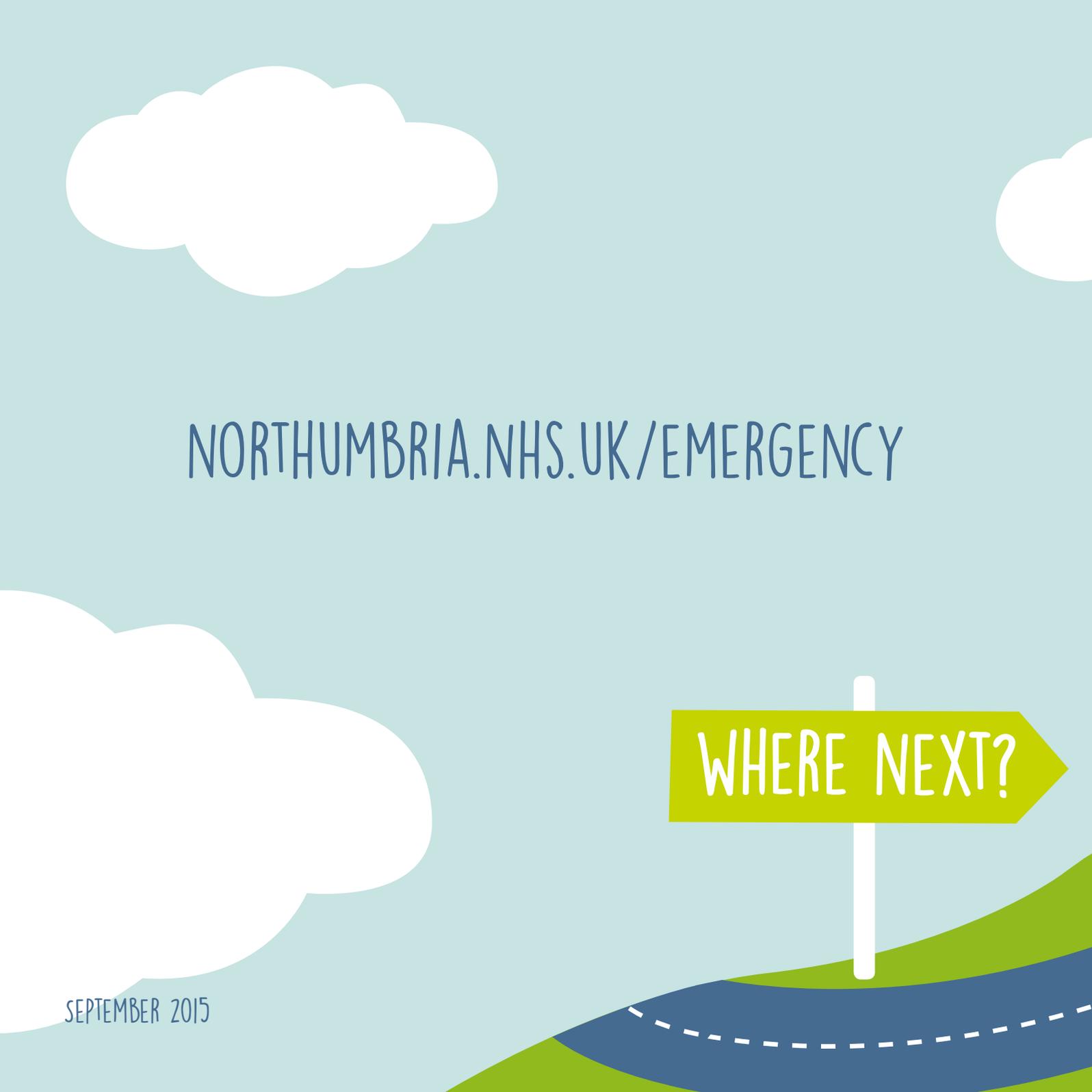
In reaching its seven day consultant working in emergency care, Northumbria has also experimented with the introduction of some seven day consultant-led services in elective care, but with patchy success. Over several years, the trust has offered a range of planned services such as endoscopy investigations, day case surgery and occasional outpatient clinics in areas of high demand. These efforts have, by and large, not been met with any real appetite from patients who continue to opt for more regular slots between Monday to Friday, even when a sooner appointment has been available at the weekend.

The drive for seven day consultant-led care nationally, is also one that is focused on emergency care and doing the right thing for patients in need of acute admission. Whilst consultants at Northumbria have been getting on and delivering seven day consultant-led emergency care since 2004, it just so happens the Trust now finds itself aligned with the national vision for the rest of the NHS.

OUR CONTINUOUS JOURNEY OF IMPROVEMENT

HEAR FROM  
OUR CONSULTANTS...



The background is a light teal color. There are three white, stylized clouds: one in the top left, one in the top right, and one in the bottom left. In the bottom right, there are stylized green hills and a blue river with a white dashed line representing a path or road. A white signpost with a yellow arrow-shaped sign is positioned in the lower right area.

NORTHUMBRIA.NHS.UK/EMERGENCY

WHERE NEXT?

SEPTEMBER 2015