

Joint Statement from University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust (UHNS); NHS Stoke on Trent and NHS North Staffordshire

The NHS along with the rest of the public services is witnessing a time of unprecedented challenge which means we have to meet the ever increasing demand on our services during a time when the whole country is facing economic recession.

Local NHS organisations are working together to make sure the best possible use is being made of the money that is available to provide services for the population of Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire. It is well documented that there are efficiencies that can be taken out of the NHS system, whilst still delivering high quality care that is more streamlined for patients. For us this means that finance and quality go hand in hand.

Clearly it is expensive for people to receive care in hospital and you can expect to see the progression of care being delivered in community settings, which will be closer to the patient's home and not require people to be admitted to or travel to the main hospital.

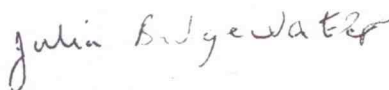
There will be further changes to the way the whole health care system works, which will include difficult decisions being made. We need to make the system more efficient and cut out the unnecessary steps that sometimes occur, for example:

- Patients having to have two outpatient appointments, because the first one didn't go to the most appropriate Doctor, will stop through work on referral quality.
- Follow up appointments based on clinical need and not time will reduce the amount of outpatient attendances.
- GPs and Consultants working together to get people out of hospital quicker and delivering care closer to home.

There needs to be a greater sharing of responsibilities between Consultants and General Practitioners in managing the needs of their patients and an agreement on how best to manage the individual's condition. We will stop doing things that are not clinically effective or proven to work and where there is limited value from a hospital procedure, we will need to have attempted other treatment methods first. This will mean for some patients who are already waiting for an appointment at UHNS, the GP and the Consultant will review the treatment options available.

Most people who use the NHS locally will not see any changes. People who need emergency treatment, urgent treatment or treatment for cancer will not be affected by these changes.

It is acknowledged that in the case of NHS Stoke on Trent, a 4.9 % growth in funding for next year has been allocated which is significantly beyond what was expected. This funding will be used to ensure that the change and efficiencies that are delivered in order that the system is sustainable in the future with the increasing demand and same envelope of money being available.



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