

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**03.05.2016**

**Public asked for views on “different approach” to health services**

The NHS Better Health programme is holding a series of 17 public engagement events across Darlington Durham and Tees during May, to talk to patients and the public about how health services could be provided in the future.

The Better Health programme is looking at how local hospitals will achieve the standards which local people have a right to expect from their services, and how the NHS meets its aspirations to provide more care in the home and in community based settings.

The Better Health programme is being led by clinicians including senior hospital consultants and GPs from the clinical commissioning groups and three foundation trusts operating across County Durham, Darlington and Tees.

Dr Boleslaw Posmyk, Hartlepool GP and lead clinician for Better Health says:

“As we get older, more of us will have one or more long-term health conditions – like diabetes, heart disease, respiratory disease, the effects of stroke or other illnesses.

“As more of us are living to an older age, more of us will have one or more long-term health conditions – like diabetes, heart disease, respiratory disease, or the ongoing effects of illnesses like stroke.

“In the past, much of the care offered by the NHS was in hospital. Caring for long term conditions needs a different approach, with more community based support and services provided by the NHS and partners.

“We want to talk to local people about how we achieve this.”

Mr Derek Cruickshank, consultant in gynaecological cancers and Better Health lead for hospital services said:

“In the past, most hospitals could offer people the best treatment available at the time for most conditions. Clinical practice has taken great strides forward in the last four decades, and this is no longer the case.

“Medical evidence shows that when patients are admitted to the specialist hospitals that meet high clinical standards their chances of surviving with good outcomes are increased e.g. Trauma Centres, Cancer Centres, patients with “heart attacks” & Stroke

“Our clinicians believe there are other patients who would benefit from treatment in a specialist environment, rather than being cared for in the hospital nearest to their home.”

As part of Better Health, clinicians are looking at how care could be provided in the future, and want to discuss this with patients and the public. The meetings in May will be followed by more engagement over the summer months, with consultation expected to start in the autumn.



*The NHS in Darlington,  
Durham and Tees*

Details of the 17 events and a background to the programme are available at [www.nhsbetterhealth.org.uk](http://www.nhsbetterhealth.org.uk) and at <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/nhs-better-health-programme-9505048832> or those interested can get in touch by emailing [necsu.betterhealthprogramme@nhs.net](mailto:necsu.betterhealthprogramme@nhs.net). Please come along and have your say.

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## **Notes to Editor**

For more information on the Better Health Programme please contact:

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