



**South Tees
Clinical Commissioning Group**

19th June 2019

Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee
c/o Caroline Breheny (Scrutiny Officer)
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Dear Chair,

Breast Radiology Diagnostic Services in South Tees

Thank you for your letter dated 26 April 2019 regarding the above from Councillor Eddie Dryden who was Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel at that time. Following the period of purdah we wanted to write to outline how we plan to take forward the Breast Radiology Diagnostic work.

The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) completely understands the rationale set out in your letter for the referral of Breast Diagnostic Services to the Secretary of State. The current arrangements at North Tees were put in place as a temporary measure due to a significant shortage of breast radiologists.

The aim was to maintain access to breast diagnostic services in the Tees Valley area. What was thought to be a temporary measure has lasted considerably longer than anticipated and the position regarding the recruitment of breast radiologists has not improved during that period.

The CCG would like to formally apologise that consultation on the temporary re-location of Breast Diagnostic Services to North Tees and an exploration of other viable options has not been undertaken to date.

We have recently shared a Breast Services Review report provided by the Northern Cancer Network in 2017. The report provides an appraisal of breast diagnostic services across the region at that point in time. The report also sets out a number of options in regard to service sustainability in light of the workforce challenges. We regret and apologise that this report was not been shared sooner. We would agree that this is not a satisfactory position and wanted to advise you of the next steps.

We plan to refresh the Northern Cancer Network report. This is to ensure that the information contained in the report is reflective of the current situation in terms of prevalence, activity data, workforce information and any advances in technology or guidance since the report was produced. We will also consider the options set out in the original report to ensure that the evidence base for each option is up to date, sets out how

the needs of women will be met, any benefits and risks. There may be other options to enable service sustainability that were not identified at the time of the original report. Any such options that are viable will be considered and incorporated into the refreshed report. To support this work we have established a task and finish group with representatives from South Tees NHS Foundation Trust, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, CCGs and the Northern Cancer Alliance.

We aim to build on any engagement work undertaken to date and will advise of the timelines to formally consult on the refreshed report and options. Following consultation we plan to work with partners to implement the preferred option that is agreed.

We would welcome the opportunity to come to a future Health Scrutiny Committee to discuss and share our plans and timelines.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil O'Brien', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Neil O'Brien
Chief Clinical Officer

cc. Nicola Bailey, Chief Officer - South Tees CCG
Michael Houghton, Director of Commissioning Strategy and Delivery, South Tees CCG (Project Director, Breast Diagnostic Services)