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Double honour for health staff

Health staff at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust are in the running for two prestigious national awards.

The shortlisted projects focus on the treatment of malnutrition in South Tyneside patients and on the use of 'Telehealth' technology to help patients in Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside to live independently at home for longer. They were chosen from a record number of entries in the Health Service Journal (HSJ) Value in Healthcare Awards.

Trust Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert said: "It is a fantastic achievement to have reached the finals of these national awards against such strong competition and it demonstrates that our teams are leaders in their respective fields."

A one-year project, led by the Trust's dietetics department, is shortlisted in the Value and Improvement in Medicines Management category. It was introduced in response to the high, rising cost of the oral nutritional supplements often prescribed for patients who become malnourished. The condition can be due to a variety of reasons, such as dementia and depression, or long-term medical conditions, which affect their breathing or swallowing and make eating difficult.

The work involved a prescribing support dietitian assessing, reviewing and monitoring patients taking nutritional supplements to ensure they were receiving the right, high quality dietetic care. A malnutrition training programme was also set up in local care homes, resulting in more than 1,000 carers being trained in the past year.

As a result, 80 per cent of the patients seen by the dietitian showed an increase in their Body Mass Index (BMI) and there were substantial savings on the cost of oral nutritional supplements. The second shortlisting is for Value and Improvement in Telehealth. Telehealth has been used in Sunderland and Gateshead since 2009 and it was extended to South Tyneside in 2012.

The Trust is constantly updating the technology to offer the most up-to-date Telehealth solutions, matched to individual patient needs, thus ensuring that resources are directed where they will be most beneficial and cost effective, and clinicians are trained to integrate Telehealth into their everyday working practice.

Most recently, the innovative 'Florence Simple Telehealth' personalised texting service was introduced, which prompts patients to follow an agreed care pathway to support management of their health care needs at home. This is now being used to proactively prevent illness, as well as to manage a range of long-term conditions, in several service areas, including district nursing,



maternity and cardiology. Patient feedback about using it to support their care needs has been very positive. They say it provides reassurance and confidence to manage their condition and reduces the need for them to travel to follow-up appointments.

The winners of the HSJ Value in Healthcare Awards will be announced on September 23rd at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London.

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Pictured above: The photograph of Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert.

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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