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National award for health staff

Health staff at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust are celebrating a major national award. A project which looked at boosting the weight of older South Tyneside patients won the Value and Improvement in Medicines Management category in the Health Service Journal (HSJ) Value in Healthcare Awards, which recognise excellent use of resources and improvement in outcomes in the NHS.

Trust Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert said: "This is wonderful news and I am so proud of our nutrition and dietetics team. It is a fantastic achievement and it demonstrates that they are leaders in their field."

The winning entry was in response to the high, rising cost of the nutritional supplements often prescribed for patients who become malnourished due to a variety of reasons, from dementia and depression to long-term medical conditions which affect breathing or swallowing and make eating difficult.

The work involved assessing, reviewing and monitoring patients taking nutritional supplements to ensure they were receiving the right, high quality care regarding their diet. A training programme was also set up in local care homes, resulting in more than 1,000 carers being trained in the course of a year to ensure residents receive a high energy, high protein diet. 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 nutritional supplements.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust was also a finalist in the Value and Improvement in Telehealth category of the Value in Healthcare Awards. Telehealth technology is used to help patients in Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside to live independently at home for longer. Most recently, the innovative 'Florence Simple Telehealth' personalised texting service was introduced. This gives patients prompts to help them manage their health care needs at home. It is also now being used to proactively prevent illness, as well as to manage a range of long-term conditions.

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Pictured above: The photograph shows Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert.

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

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