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Public can help ease pressure on NHS this Winter

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is calling on people to 'Keep calm and look after yourself' this winter to help ease pressure on their local NHS services.

The Trust, which provides hospital services in South Tyneside and community services in South Tyneside, Gateshead and Sunderland, is among NHS organisations in the region which have joined in the campaign, launched by the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) across the North East.

Steve Williamson, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Chief Operating Officer, said: "During the Winter months, the demand for NHS services increases significantly. Cold weather leads to more slips, trips and injuries. Generally, more of us feel unwell as we spend more time indoors and coughs and colds are passed around family, friends and work colleagues. We want to encourage people who can self-care, or who are able to visit their local pharmacist for advice on the ailments which are common at this time of year, to do so.

"By staying at home and treating themselves with pain killers, rest and plenty of fluids, people are also helping to reduce the spread of viruses to vulnerable patients in NHS waiting rooms and leaving appointments available for those with serious health conditions who need to see a doctor or nurse."

Mr Williamson added: "We really appreciate the public's support in helping to relieve the pressure on vital services so that our staff can focus on seriously ill patients and emergencies. A&E is for patients whose condition is critical or life-threatening: those with injuries that are over 48 hours old, or who have had low level pain for a few days, should see their GP first."

The Keep Calm campaign includes adverts on regional TV and buses, social media alerts and printed materials in GP practices, pharmacies and other venues. There is also a dedicated website with information on common winter illnesses, what the symptoms are, how to treat them and how long they will last, as well as advice on what to keep in your winter medicines cabinet so you can be ready to treat illnesses as they start. Visit keepcalmthiswinter.org.uk for further information. You can also follow the campaign on Twitter @keepcalmne
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Pictured above: South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Chief Operating Officer Steve Williamson.

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

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