



January 8th, 2015

Work of falls prevention service in the spotlight

Health staff will explain how they are reducing the number of falls among older people in South Tyneside and Sunderland at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Medicine for Members meeting on Thursday, January 15th.

Falls can cause increased fear and isolation, injury, or even death, and one in three people over 65 and one in two over 80 will have at least one a year. The Trust's community falls team in Sunderland has evidence showing an 81 per cent reduction in the total number of falls among patients completing its rehabilitation programme, with 69 per cent going on to have no further falls.

For South Tyneside, an extended falls prevention team, based at South Tyneside District Hospital and made up of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and healthcare assistants, was introduced last year.

Falls specialist practitioner and physiotherapist Dean Metz and service manager Pam Vickers will explain at the meeting how patients are seen in a 'one-stop' clinic. They have all the necessary tests, such as blood pressure and fracture risk, and are offered joint assessments by a nurse and a physiotherapist to identify possible contributory factors to their falls and the best way to help them. Depending on their individual needs, they are then given physiotherapy and a tailored exercise programme.

Mr Metz said: "In many other areas, each health professional does an assessment and patients can become tired of repeating the same information and sometimes detail can be left out when answering the next clinician's questions. We felt that joint, concurrent assessment would give patients the best experience and that it was the best way of ensuring no information was lost or missed."

Miss Vickers added: "We know that the type of assessment we offer, coupled with the individually-tailored follow-up, works in terms of patient outcomes and patient experience. Patients who attend tell us they feel stronger, that their confidence is improved and that they have not had any further falls."

The Medicine for Members meeting on Thursday, January 15th, will be at 2.30pm in the Lecture Theatre in the Education Centre at South Tyneside District Hospital, with refreshments available from 2pm. These regular meetings are an opportunity to find out about the work of South Tyneside Foundation Trust. Anyone wishing to attend is asked to contact the membership line on 0191 2024121 during office hours or to leave a message. This is also



the number to ring if you are not currently a member but would like to find out more about joining.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust provides hospital services in South Tyneside and community health services in Sunderland, Gateshead and South Tyneside. Membership is free and is open to residents in all three areas who are over the age of 16. Members receive regular updates about the work of the Trust and are invited to events, meetings and presentations on health issues.

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Pictured above: Falls service team members

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

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