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Foundation for life-changing dementia care

Work has officially started on a new £9 million centre that will enhance the quality of care for older people in South Tyneside.

Preparatory works have been underway for a number of weeks on the Integrated Care Services Hub, which is currently being built in the grounds of South Tyneside District Hospital, but now the formal start on site has begun.

The hub is expected to be the biggest of its kind in the UK when it opens next year. South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is building it on behalf of South Tyneside Council, which sees it as a major part of its response to the Borough's ageing population and increasing numbers of people with dementia.

Trust Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert, who was at the sod-cutting ceremony, said: "The hub is an extremely exciting development and we are privileged to have been given this opportunity to provide the Borough with what I am certain will be a fantastic asset. Already, it is attracting interest from health and social care experts across the UK."

Chief Operating Officer Steve Williamson added: "Our Trust's vision is to be the premier combined hospital, community and wellbeing provider in the North East by 2020 and the hub is one of the first ground-breaking initiatives which will help us to realise this ambition. Working with South Tyneside Council and key health, social care and voluntary sector agencies including Age UK South Tyneside, we will create a centre of excellence for joined-up care to improve the health and wellbeing of our growing ageing population and the increasing numbers of people with dementia."

A key focus of the centre is about providing advice and support to older people and their families and carers to enable them to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. There will be 80 beds, with around 30 people living on the site and others accessing beds for short breaks, rehabilitation services before returning home or to prevent avoidable hospital admissions. There will also be rooms for medical consultations and assessments of people's needs.

Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Support Services at South Tyneside Council, Councillor Mary Butler, said: "It will be fantastic to see this facility start to take shape over the coming months.

“This state-of-the-art centre will allow us to offer better and more co-ordinated services for our older people – particularly those with dementia – as well as their carers and families.”

The Trust has appointed Robertson Construction, a company with extensive experience of delivering high quality healthcare programmes in the North East, as the contractor for the project.

The ultra-modern facility will bring together a range of services under one roof, streamlining access to information, support and services. It has been designed by P+HS Architects to offer a comfortable, welcoming, ‘home’ environment, featuring light-filled dining and social areas; spacious en-suite bedrooms; mini-kitchens; small, cosy spaces for quiet times and safe access to landscaped gardens.

John Briers, Chief Executive, Age UK South Tyneside, said: “We’re delighted to be working in partnership with South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and South Tyneside Council to drive forward integrated health and social care for older people living in South Tyneside.

“Older people want to experience health and social care as a single service, one that enables them to enjoy a good quality of life wherever possible, and that also ensures smooth transitions between home and hospital where it is not. Age UK South Tyneside puts the needs of each older person first, creating a tailored plan of support through our own and partner services. The new Integrated Care Services Hub will help us to achieve these goals and put our work-based practice at the heart of the community.”

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Pictured above: The traditional sod-cutting marking the official start of work on the integrated care services hub for older people with, from left to right, Trust Chief Operating Officer Steve Williamson, Trust Chairman Peter Davidson, South Tyneside Council Chief Executive Martin Swales, Coun Mary Butler, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Support Services, and Trust Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert

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

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