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Test to speed up diagnosis of lung cancer

A new diagnostic test has been introduced at South Tyneside District Hospital for patients with potential lung conditions, including lung cancer.

Endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS) allows for quicker diagnosis close to home for South Tyneside patients who previously had to go to another hospital to have the same test, or to have a surgical procedure. It involves using a thin, flexible tube called a bronchoscope, with a small camera and ultrasound probe attached to it. This is passed through the mouth, down the throat and into the airways of the lungs, enabling the doctor to see the lungs and lymph glands and to take samples.

As well as diagnosis of certain conditions, such as lung cancer, EBUS can help when deciding which treatment, such as surgery, radiotherapy or chemotherapy, is best for the patient. It is also useful in the diagnosis of infection such as TB, other cancers and rarer lung conditions.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's EBUS lead, Consultant Respiratory Physician Dr Liz Fuller, explained: "We are very pleased indeed that we have been able to improve the service and enhance the care we provide for patients by offering EBUS in South Tyneside. The images allow us to view difficult-to-reach areas and to access more, and smaller, lymph nodes for biopsy, leading to a speedy diagnosis. The procedure is also minimally invasive and only takes about 30 minutes. As it is performed under sedation, it can be suitable for some patients who are unfit for the general anaesthetic needed for surgery."

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Pictured above: Dr Liz Fuller, right, with other members of the EBUS team at South Tyneside District Hospital

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

For press enquiries on this release, contact 0191 404 1128 or email kay.jordan@stft.nhs.uk