



November 16th, 2015

## HELP for lung disease patients

Sunderland's community pulmonary rehabilitation service is raising awareness of a disabling lung disease, and the help that it can provide, to mark World COPD Day on Wednesday (November 18th).

People with COPD - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease - can find it difficult to breathe and often struggle with everyday tasks but living well with COPD is possible with the right support. World COPD Day is organised by the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) and supported by the British Lung Foundation (BLF). This year's theme - 'It's not too late' - emphasises that patients can take steps to improve their respiratory health at any stage of the illness.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's pulmonary rehabilitation team is based at Grindon Lane Primary Care Centre and comprises nurses, exercise trainers and an occupational therapist who provide HELP - the Healthy Exercise and Living Programme. HELP exercise and education courses are held at Grindon Lane, Bunny Hill and Washington Primary Care Centres, the Raich Carter Centre at Hendon and Houghton Wellness Centre.

One of the nurses, Patricia Heatlie, said: "Pulmonary rehabilitation can have a significant positive affect on a patient's health and improve their quality of life. We accept referrals from all healthcare professionals for our eight-week or 12-week group courses. For those people who do not feel comfortable in a group, we can offer one-to-one sessions in a gym. Our occupational therapist can also visit the housebound."

On World COPD Day, the team will have an information and advice stand in Bunny Hill Primary Care Centre. They have also organised a fundraising Big Breakfast for the BLF, which will be held at Silksworth Community Pool, Tennis and Wellness Centre, from 9.30am to 11.30am. To find out more about HELP and pulmonary rehabilitation, the team can be contacted on 0191 5252346.

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

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