



March 21st, 2016

Time for A Better U

A programme which is inspiring the people of South Tyneside to take more control over their own health has now been launched at South Tyneside District Hospital.

A Better U aims to support people to look after themselves and achieve maximum independence whilst living longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives. It is a partnership between South Tyneside Council, health organisations - South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust and Healthwatch South Tyneside - and the local voluntary sector. First Contact Clinical is providing the training for the project.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Chief Operating Officer Michelle Arrowsmith said: "This self-care initiative is very exciting as it has the potential to have a major impact on a range of important issues, including improving people's wellbeing and reducing A&E attendances and admissions to hospitals and care homes. There is evidence that people who are proactive and motivated around their health have a better chance of staying healthier for longer and are less likely to use frontline health and social care services, thereby reducing demand on these services and also reducing costs.

"For A Better U to be effective, we need to work together with our partners to bring about fundamental cultural and behavioural change. Through their contacts with patients, and their families and carers, our staff, working in hospital and in the community, are ideally placed to play a vital role in promoting self-care and in supporting those who are able to manage their own conditions."

Amanda Healy, South Tyneside's Director of Public Health, said: "Small things can make a big difference and a simple conversation can be the first step towards A Better U. The programme is helping to achieve a culture shift by encouraging local people to take greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing by embedding a culture of self-care.

"Developing the workforce jointly to enable staff to have different conversations with people and strengthening the health and wellbeing support available is a large aspect of the programme. However, through engaging and also mobilising the third sector we can empower more people to become health champions and create a culture whereby you are in control of your own health and wellbeing."

NHS South Tyneside CCG'S GP Clinical Director Dr Jon Tose said: "Self-care plays a major role in the treatment of health conditions from coughs, colds and flu right through to long-term conditions like Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and lung conditions.

"We are committed to supporting people to help themselves to live healthily and prevent avoidable illnesses. We also want to ensure our services and staff can support people with long term conditions to have the knowledge and skills to manage the condition themselves where appropriate. This will not only improve quality of life for individuals but also mean NHS services are used more effectively."

A Better U was trialled in Hebburn and is gradually being rolled out across the Borough. Workshops are being held to support health and care professionals in having conversations with residents about taking a more active role in their health, for example by joining a local exercise group or managing their asthma at home. To find out more about A Better U, contact project manager Emma Hamblin, 0191 4246409, emma.hamblin@southtyneside.gov.uk

ends

Pictured above: Left to right, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Medical Director Dr Shaz Wahid, South Tyneside's Director of Public Health Amanda Healy and Dr David Julien, Chief Executive of First Contact Clinical at the South Tyneside District Hospital launch of A Better U.

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