



May 4th, 2016

One of the biggest conversations you'll ever have

Health staff are asking people in South Tyneside to have one of the most important conversations of their lives - about dying.

During Dying Matters Awareness Week, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's palliative care modernisation facilitators, Julie Newby and Louise Watson, will be in Alexander's Restaurant at South Tyneside District Hospital on Thursday, May 12th, offering advice and support to encourage discussions about what is, for many, still a taboo subject. The theme of the week, which runs from May 9th to 15th, is 'The Big Conversation - Talking about dying won't make it happen!'

Mrs Newby said: "Of those people who die in hospital, only four per cent have made an advance care plan setting out what they want for the end of life. None of us likes to think about dying but not talking about it won't make it go away or make it happen sooner and having the conversation about it can help people to live well and to make the most of life until the very end."

Mrs Watson added: "Every minute, someone in the UK dies but many of us still do not feel comfortable talking about dying. You may have strong views about your care and what happens after you die but if you don't talk about your wishes they are unlikely to be met. Only 18% of British adults say they have asked a family member about their end-of-life wishes. Not talking openly about death and dying affects our ability to die where or how we would wish. By talking through your thoughts, feelings and wishes with someone close to you, you can plan for a good death and also make your end-of-life experience the best it can be for your loved ones."

Simple steps people can take to make their end-of-life experience better include:

- Write your will to avoid leaving difficult legal problems for your family
- Make financial plans to ensure the people you care about are protected
- Record your funeral wishes so your family know what you would want
- Plan your future care and support e.g. by setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney; writing an advance care plan
- Register your decision about whether you want to be considered as an organ or tissue donor and share that decision with your loved ones



The national Dying Matters coalition's mission is to get people to talk openly about dying, death and bereavement. For more information go to www.dyingmatters.org

The event in Alexander's Restaurant, South Tyneside District Hospital, on Thursday, May 12th, will be from 9.30am-3.30pm.

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Pictured above: Left to right, Palliative Care Modernisation Facilitators Louise Watson and Julie Newby

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

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