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Big improvements in lung cancer treatment

The lung cancer service for South Tyneside patients has improved considerably in recent years, with further improvements reflected in the latest figures.

The number of patients with early stage cancer receiving surgery at Newcastle's Freeman Hospital following referral from South Tyneside District Hospital improved from 37.5% in 2010 to almost 53% in 2014. This compares to the national average in 2014 of 43%.

In the same period, the number of patients with small cell lung cancer receiving chemotherapy increased from 50% to 75% (the national average in 2014 was 68%) and for those with late stage cancer who were fit enough to receive chemotherapy, the figure went up from 34% to almost 70%.

The District Hospital already has an outstanding reputation for cancer care. It was the top hospital in the country in the last league table for patient experience of cancer care, compiled in 2014 by Macmillan Cancer Support and based on research commissioned by NHS England.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's lung cancer lead, Consultant Respiratory Physician Dr Liz Fuller, said: "We are delighted that we have been able to improve our lung cancer performance for our patients. Surgery is the gold standard treatment for early stage lung cancer so it is great news that more local patients are being able to take advantage of this.

"In addition, our Oncology colleagues have been able to offer new forms of Radiotherapy, including SABR – stereotactic radiotherapy, which also has an excellent chance for a cure. Plus, we have been able to offer better access to chemotherapy, which improves outcome in lung cancer and can be especially of benefit in small cell lung cancer. We also now have an additional lung cancer specialist nurse who, with her colleague, is able to offer support to our patients, and we have increased our activity in research, taking part in many national studies for lung cancer and Mesothelioma.

"We continue to look at innovative ways of service delivery within the Trust and, in co-operation with the Northern Centre for Cancer Care in Newcastle, to improve timely access to cancer services and, generally, achieve the best outcome for our patients."

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Pictured above: Consultant Respiratory Physician Dr Liz Fuller

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

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