



October 10th, 2016

Sharing expertise nationally to benefit lung cancer patients

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust has been identified as a top performer for lung cancer patient pathways by a national programme aimed at achieving earlier diagnosis of the disease.

The Trust will now share its expertise and good practice to enable the NHS England Accelerate, Co-ordinate, Evaluate (ACE) initiative, which is supported by Cancer Research UK and Macmillan Cancer Support, to gain a better understanding of these pathways.

South Tyneside is one of 14 Trusts – and the only one in the Northern region – identified by ACE through 2014 data as performing well against the national cancer targets of patients waiting a maximum of 31 days for first treatment following diagnosis (on average the local wait is no more than 24 days) and waiting a maximum of 62 days to begin their first treatment following an urgent referral for suspected cancer from their GP. By contrast, the ACE survey will also include 14 Trusts which are not performing well.

Lung cancer patients benefit from a 'one-stop' clinic at South Tyneside District Hospital that not only streamlines the assessment process but also reduces the anxiety patients can experience in the lead-up to diagnosis and treatment. When an abnormal chest X-ray is identified or if a GP has concerns, the patient can be referred to the clinic for a consultation and, if necessary, a CT scan (showing detailed images inside the body) and a bronchoscopy (a procedure to look at the airway). All this can be done in a single day, if appropriate, and patients are always seen in the clinic within two weeks of referral.

Consultant Respiratory Physician Dr Liz Fuller, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's lung cancer lead, said: "It is an honour to have been given a chance through the ACE programme to share our best practice. The lung cancer service in South Tyneside has improved considerably in recent years with more patients being referred for surgery, which is the gold standard treatment for early stage lung cancer, and others being offered new, effective treatments. We have a small team but every member - from nurses, consultants and the multi-disciplinary team co-ordinators to the staff who track the patient's journey and the secretaries - cares about each individual patient and is always ready to go the extra mile. We are also fortunate to have fantastic support from the Radiology department and the Trust's management."

ends

Pictured above: Staff in the lung cancer multi-disciplinary 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