



PRESS RELEASE – Tuesday 15 August

Major investment to improve patient care

An investment of more than £200,000 in cutting edge ultrasound technology is improving patient care and experience at South Tyneside District Hospital by enabling quicker, more reliable diagnosis.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is one of the first in the country to have bought the very latest ultrasound machines, which are smaller and more manoeuvrable than the older models, making it easier for staff to operate them. They bring investment this year in radiology services at the District Hospital to around £1.7m.

The four new machines are being used throughout the hospital, including radiology, the Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU) and the ante-natal department. One is a mobile unit which can be taken to the patient and is, therefore, of particular benefit in ITU as it prevents the need to move more seriously ill patients. In the radiology department, it is used by doctors to help guide certain procedures - such as inserting catheters - which entail only a very small incision, reducing recovery time and the risk of infection.

The two machines used in the ante-natal department monitor the unborn baby and aid in the detection of abnormalities. The fourth machine is in the radiology department where it is used for investigating undiagnosed 'lumps and bumps', which cause many patients anxiety and distress, and for musculoskeletal conditions, which affect the joints, bones and muscles. There are more than 200 musculoskeletal conditions and they affect one in four of the adult population, many of whom are young and of working age.

Consultant Radiologist Dr Richard Cooper said: "It is important that we take advantage of ever-improving technology for the benefit of our patients and our new ultrasound machines provide us with images of superb quality. They are extremely sensitive and allow us to see parts of the body in fine detail, including the brain and heart of the unborn baby. These very detailed scans can help us to arrive at a reliable diagnosis more quickly. Whenever possible, we try to put our patients' minds at rest by giving them the results of their scan immediately and the enhanced images can help us to do this in more cases."

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust Medical Director Dr Shaz Wahid said: "Our investment in radiology services at South Tyneside District Hospital this year is around £1.7m. In addition to the new ultrasound machines, we will begin installing a new £1.5m MRI scanner in the autumn, which will be brought into operation this coming winter. This is all part of our commitment to not only improving the quality of our existing services but continuing to provide safe, high quality, sustainable hospital services in South Tyneside in the future."

In the past 12 months, the Trust has opened Haven Court, a £9m centre of excellence for integrated health and social care for older people in South Tyneside, and a £1.4m Surgical Centre, which is improving patient experience and access to surgical services at South Tyneside District Hospital. It also hopes to start work early in 2018 on a new energy centre, which is expected to cost in excess of £5m.

Ends

Photo caption: *Ultrasound lead Jayne Richardson, Lead Consultant for Radiology Dr Richard Cooper and radiology registrar Dr Peter Hewitt pictured with one of the new machines*

Notes to editors

- An ultrasound scan, sometimes called a sonogram, is a procedure that uses high-frequency sound waves to create an image of part of the inside of the body. It can be used to monitor an unborn baby, diagnose a condition, or guide a surgeon during certain procedures.
- In March 2016, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust came together to form an alliance known as South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group serving a population of 430,000 people. A joint executive management team was introduced in September 2016 and extensive work is now taking place with both organisations working in partnership to transform local services and ensure high quality, safe and sustainable hospital and community health services which are for the future. On 4 July 2017, a period of formal public consultation began, led by South Tyneside and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), as part of the 'Path to Excellence' programme and will run until 15 October. The first services being reviewed and formally consulted upon are stroke, emergency paediatrics and maternity and inpatient gynaecology services. To find out more about how to get involved in The Path to Excellence consultation go to www.pathtoexcellence.org.uk, call 0191 2172670, or email pathtoexcellence@stft.nhs.uk pathtoexcellence@chsft.nhs.uk