

PRESS RELEASE – 19th September 2017

South Tyneside and Sunderland set to lead NHS digital transformation

South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group has welcomed news that South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is set to become a ‘fast follower’ in City Hospitals Sunderland’s digital footsteps.

Speaking at NHS Expo last week, the Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt confirmed a further 18 organisations across the NHS who will work with existing Trusts who are already delivering care through world-class use of digital technology and information flows.

The ‘fast follower’ status for South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust has been made possible thanks to the close partnership working as part of the Healthcare Group and ongoing work to transform clinical services across South Tyneside and Sunderland.

South Tyneside will partner with City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, which was chosen by NHS England as one of 16 Global Digital Exemplars (GDEs) in September 2016 in recognition of being one of the most digitally advanced Trusts in the country.

As part of its role as a GDE, City Hospitals Sunderland will be developing a blueprint to transform its digital systems and become paper-free. It has already implemented a fully integrated electronic health record across the Trust, which has greatly enhanced patient safety, outcomes, quality and organisational efficiency. GDE offers the Trust the opportunity to expedite its clinical IT strategy, achieving the ambition of being ‘paper-free at the point of care’ by 2020.

The ‘fast follower’ status for South Tyneside will now allow the Healthcare Group to build on the work already underway in Sunderland and develop a single IT solution across both Trusts.

Ken Bremner, Chief Executive of South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group, said: “This is fantastic news for South Tyneside District Hospital and for our community teams and means we can accelerate learning from Sunderland to develop world class digital systems that will benefit patients in South Tyneside for many years to come.

“For over 25 years we’ve recognised the critical role that technology now plays in delivering world-class healthcare services and in Sunderland we have set the bar in terms of investing in our digital footprint to improve the quality of patient care. Our new Emergency Department is now completely paper-free at the point of care and uses technology that can move around with the patient.

“As a Group, we can now build on this success to further transform our digital capabilities in South Tyneside and the ‘fast follower’ status is testimony of what can be achieved with the two Trusts working together.”

In September 2016, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust formed a strategic alliance called the 'South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group'.

Through the alliance, the opportunity arose to share the expertise at City Hospitals Sunderland, through the GDE programme, to enhance care within South Tyneside with both Trusts working towards the national ambition of patient records becoming paperless by 2020.

Sunderland has already implemented 'electronic health records' and was one of the first Trusts to adopt electronic paper-free working within its new Emergency Department. Further work is expected to bring the following benefits:

- Patients only having to tell their story and staff only having to input information once
- Accurate real time clinical data entry and information provision to all relevant staff on a 24/7 basis
- Embedded decision support and improved communication and care across the health and social care network
- Improved treatment plans that reduce clinical risk, length of stay in hospital and improve outcomes
- Healthcare provision efficiencies
- Online access to electronic records which lets the patient take more control of their health and wellbeing
- Different ways of receiving treatment through technology, reducing the need for patients to come into hospital

NHS England created the Global Digital Exemplar Programme as part of the response to the response to the Wachter Review. Exemplars are internationally recognised NHS care providers delivering exceptional care through the use of world-class digital technology. They will share their learning and experience with other Trusts and help them follow in their footsteps as quickly as possible.

All GDEs have been partnered with other Trusts selected as 'fast followers' and will work together to develop a blueprint that can be used by other hospitals.

ENDS

Media contact: Nichola Taylor

Email: Nichola.Taylor@chsft.nhs.uk | Phone: 0191 565 6256 ext. 42902