

PRESS RELEASE – 12th October, 2017



South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS backs ‘Stoptober’ campaign

South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts are supporting Stoptober by reinforcing their commitment to becoming ‘smokefree’ organisations in the interests of the health of patients, staff and their local communities.

Smoking can have devastating consequences for individuals and their families yet, despite declines in smoking prevalence over recent decades, tobacco use remains the single largest cause of health inequalities and premature death with 18.7% of adults in the North East still smoking. For every death caused by smoking, approximately 20 smokers are suffering from a smoking-related disease.

Across the region, there is shared ambition amongst health leaders, supported by Fresh North East and Public Health England, to reduce smoking prevalence even further to just 5% of the population by 2025. This will bring substantial health benefits to local communities and help save millions of pounds for the NHS in South Tyneside and Sunderland alone.

Both South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts, which together employ over 10,000 NHS staff, are reminding employees that smoking is not permitted at work, as both organisations work towards becoming completely smokefree in future.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust Medical Director Dr Shaz Wahid said: “Reducing smoking rates is a vital element of building a healthier society. As NHS organisations, we should lead by example and we’re proud to be aiming for smokefree status. Many people are in hospital because of smoking-related illness and, if they continue to smoke, it’s likely they will take longer to recover and there will be serious implications for their long-term health and wellbeing. By helping to reduce avoidable illness, we are also helping to secure the sustainability of the NHS.

“We will be working with our local partners and with all our staff to get us to the point of becoming fully smokefree and, as part of our smokefree commitment, we will give patients and staff all the tools and support we can to help them stop smoking.”

Under existing policy, staff are expected to refrain from smoking - which applies to all electronic cigarette or vaping devices and tobacco - at work. Patients and visitors to Trust sites are only allowed to smoke in designated, clearly signposted smoking areas. Any patient who is motivated to quit smoking can be signposted or referred into local public health stop smoking services and in-patients can be offered Nicotine Replacement Therapy.

Public Health England’s Stoptober quit smoking challenge has inspired over one-and-a-half million quit attempts since 2012. The campaign is based on research that if you stop smoking for 28 days you are five times more likely to stop for good. A new University College London report suggests that smokers are having more success at beating the habit than ever before, with record numbers successfully quitting in the first six months of 2017.

South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts are encouraging patients waiting for operations and pregnant women, in particular, to quit. The pre-operation message is to ask for help and support to ‘stop before your

op' as smoking greatly increases your risk of complications during and after surgery: some operations are not even an option for smokers. Every cigarette smoked contains over 4,000 chemicals so smoking when pregnant harms the unborn baby. Cigarettes can restrict the essential oxygen supply to the baby and, as a result, their heart has to beat harder every time the mother-to-be smokes.

For free and friendly support and advice, contact your local NHS Stop Smoking Service. For South Tyneside, ring 0191 4247300 or go to www.change4lifesouthtyneside.co.uk. For Sunderland, call 0800 107 0741 or 0191 5653482 or go to www.livelifewell.org.uk. Alternatively, ask your GP or pharmacist for support. If you live outside these areas, contact the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0300 123 1044 for contact details of the nearest stop smoking service to you. Useful sources of information include www.smokefree.nhs.uk www.freshne.com www.quit.org.uk www.ash.org.uk

ends

Photo caption: Supporting Stoptober - South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust Medical Director Dr Shaz Wahid, left, and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust Acting Medical Director Dr Paul McAndrew

Notes to editors

- New data published in a University College of London (UCL) report shows quitting success rates at their highest for at least a decade, up to 19.8% for the first six months of this year, significantly higher than the average for the last 10 years (15.7%)
- The total cost from smoking to society in England is approximately £14.7 billion a year. This includes the cost to the NHS of treating diseases caused by smoking, which is approximately £2.5 billion a year
- There were estimated to be around 79,000 deaths attributable to smoking in 2015. This represents 16% of all deaths
- The government's new Tobacco Control Plan sets a series of challenging ambitions:
 - reduce adult smoking rates from 15.5% to 12% or less

- reduce the prevalence of 15-year-olds who regularly smoke from 8% to 3% or less
- reduce the prevalence of smoking in pregnancy from 10.7% to 6% or less

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