

**Press release – March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**League of Friends – you're all heart!**



A donation of nearly £11,000 will help to save the lives of heart patients in South Tyneside.

The money from The League of Friends of South Tyneside Hospitals was used to buy vital equipment for the Cardiology department at South Tyneside District Hospital in the shape of three temporary pacing boxes and seven blood pressure monitors.

A temporary pacing box is usually inserted because a person's heart rhythm has become unstable, for example, when their heart rate goes dangerously low. A permanent pacemaker is then sometimes needed if the heart rhythm does not return to normal. Blood pressure readings are an important indicator of the risk of having heart disease and/or a stroke and the new 'ambulatory' blood pressure monitors are used to establish an accurate reading over 24 hours and to check that medications to control patients' blood pressure are working. Patients are fitted with a blood pressure cuff wrapped around the arm, which is connected to a small device on a belt or strap to record the readings, and they carry on with their normal activities whilst wearing it.

The Cardiology team at South Tyneside District Hospital provided a service to about 50,000 patients in 2017, ranging from diagnostic investigations to outpatient clinic appointments. During the year, they implanted 105 pacemakers and fitted 1,000 ambulatory blood pressure monitors.

Cardiology service lead Jakki Colwill said: "We are absolutely delighted to have this new, extremely important equipment and we can't thank the League of Friends enough for their kind donation. Our temporary pacing boxes needed replacing and the addition of the new blood pressure monitors has allowed us to reduce delays in treatment by expanding our service into the community. GPs can refer their patients direct to us for blood pressure testing using the new monitors instead of first referring them to a consultant."

The League of Friends shares its anniversary with the NHS, with both celebrating 70 years this year. Since it was founded, its volunteers have raised hundreds of thousands of pounds to provide patients and staff with extra comforts and equipment. In the last decade alone, members have raised more than £300,000, with most of the money coming from the League shop in the main entrance of South Tyneside District Hospital's Ingham Wing.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust Chairman Neil Mundy said: "The League of Friends volunteers never cease to amaze me. Their dedication and generosity know no

bounds and this donation is the latest in a long list which has led, over the years, to improvements in care for generations of South Tyneside patients.”

## **Ends**

*Photo caption: Cardiology Service Lead Jakki Colwill and League of Friends treasurer Sue Goddard, back row, with League chairman Maureen Young and secretary Dorothy Rogers*

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