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Free NHS Wi-Fi now available across South Tyneside and Sunderland hospitals

As part of a project being rolled out across the entire NHS, a new, free to use NHS Wi-Fi service has been launched in South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust.

The new service, known as NHS Wi-Fi, was setup in response to patient feedback asking for free Wi-Fi services to be introduced in NHS locations. The new service can be accessed by selecting 'NHS Wi-Fi' from a mobile phone or smart tablet device and following the simple onscreen registration instructions.

Users will be welcomed by an NHS 'landing page' containing national healthcare information and easy links to healthcare advice and support, as well as a search facility for local hospitals, clinics and health services.

The free NHS Wi-Fi service is now live at South Tyneside District Hospital, Palmer Community Hospital in Jarrow, Sunderland Royal Hospital, Sunderland Eye Infirmary and the Children's Centre on Durham Road, Sunderland. Patients and visitors accessing services within these NHS locations across the South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group will now be able to use the free NHS Wi-Fi service to access and download health apps, browse the internet and look up health and care information.

Andy Hart, Director of Information Management and Technology for both Trusts, said: "The launch of free Wi-Fi is great news for our patients and visitors, who can now access the internet using their own devices while they're in hospital. We hope that this improves their experience while they are with us and helps people keep in touch with their family, friends and loved ones during what can often be a stressful and anxious time."

The South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group is at the forefront of digital transformation in the NHS thanks to joint working as part of the 'Global Digital Exemplar' (GDE) programme.

City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust was chosen as a GDE site in September 2016 after being recognised by NHS England as one of just a handful of Trusts across the country who are already delivering care through world-class use of technology and digital patient information flows. The GDE status brought with it a £10 million investment.

In September 2017, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust was confirmed as a GDE 'fast follower' thanks to joint working with City Hospitals Sunderland, bringing a further £5 million investment into the local health economy. 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.

Working closely together to join up systems and processes, both Trusts share the national ambition to work towards becoming paper-free at the point of care by 2021 and recognise the importance of investing in technology to improve the quality of patient care and experience.

NHS Wi-Fi will eventually be installed in all NHS hospitals and GP Practices across the country by spring 2019, allowing patients to access the internet free of charge in waiting rooms and ward areas, via their own smart phone or tablet. It is hoped that in future the service will allow patients to use the latest generation of digital health and care services.

ENDS

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