

**Strictly Embargoed 10.30 pm Friday 8 June 2018**

## **North East hospital leader receives MBE honour**



One of the region's leading NHS figures has been recognised in the Queen's birthday honours for 2018 and is set to receive an MBE.

Ken Bremner, Chief Executive of City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust and South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust has been honoured for his services to NHS leadership and is one of the region's longest serving NHS Chief Executives.

Ken has devoted his entire 36-year career to the NHS and joined as a graduate finance trainee in 1982. He began working in the NHS in Sunderland in 1988, initially working with Sunderland Health Authority before joining City Hospitals Sunderland where he was Director of Finance and Deputy Chief Executive before being appointed to the post of Chief Executive in 2004.

Since 2016 he has also been Chief Executive at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust as part of the strategic alliance formed between the two Trusts known as the South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group.

Leading over 8,500 NHS staff working across South Tyneside and Sunderland, Ken's leadership has been pivotal to the success of building a strong partnership approach and relationships across the two organisations which are now working towards a formal merger to come together as one Trust in the future.

Some of his key achievements in Sunderland in recent years have included the opening of a new state-of-the-art emergency care department in 2017 which is one of the first in the country to be completely paper-free at the point of care. Under Ken's leadership the Trust will also open a new specialist treatment centre on the outskirts of Durham City in July 2018 which will see thousands of patients have access to specialist services much closer to home in a modern, purpose built environment.

During his time in South Tyneside over the past two years, his strong leadership has already helped deliver many quality improvements in patient care at South Tyneside District Hospital with the latest Care Quality Commission (CQC) report acknowledging good progress in medical care, urgent and emergency care services and visible Trust leadership which encourages pride and positivity. His vision has also helped secure over £5million investment into South Tyneside to embrace digital technology and improve patient information systems.

Ken is also a passionate advocate for supporting the armed forces community and under his leadership, City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust received the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Employer recognition in 2017 presented by His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex. In March 2018, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust was also recognised as a forces-friendly employer, with a shared commitment, alongside Sunderland, to support the armed forces community.

His leadership within the NHS expands outside of his own organisations in South Tyneside and Sunderland. Ken was instrumental in the founding of a School of

Nursing at the University of Sunderland in 2016 which is now helping the local NHS to nurture more home grown nursing talent right here in the North East. He has also devoted much time and attention to developing medical education and training in the region and most recently played a key role in securing a successful bid for the University of Sunderland to become one of five new medical schools across England which will help widen access to ensure the profession reflects the communities it serves.

Ken was recently (2017) awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the University of Sunderland. He is a Non-Executive Director of the Academic Health Science Network (AHSN) for the North East and North Cumbria, and also has a community-wide role as chair of the Sunderland Partnership Board, which works to foster improved opportunities for skills training, jobs, economic growth and culture.

Commenting on his MBE Ken said: "I am extremely humbled and delighted to receive such an honour. I am very proud to work in the NHS and would like to thank all those colleagues who have guided and supported me with their wise counsel and expertise throughout the years.

"I am very grateful for the unwavering support of my family which has been a constant source of reassurance throughout my career and helped to make my achievements possible.

"It really is a privilege to work alongside such dedicated and caring teams in South Tyneside and Sunderland and I would like to thank all of our frontline teams for their tremendous work and for the care and support they provide for patients every single day."

John Anderson QAEP CBE, chairman of City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust said: "I have had the pleasure of working with Ken throughout my time in the NHS in Sunderland and I am delighted he has been recognised in the Queen's Honours list. Ken works tirelessly for the benefit of others, always putting patients and the public at the heart of all conversations and I know he is very widely respected across the NHS. He thoroughly deserves this recognition."

Neil Mundy, chairman of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust said: “This is a very well-deserved honour and I am delighted for Ken. His commitment to the NHS has had a hugely positive impact and helped deliver many improvements in patient care over the years. He is an exceptional leader who has the respect and admiration of colleagues and it is very fitting that his achievements have been recognised with this highest honour.”

**ENDS**

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