

PRESS RELEASE – 12th JUNE 2018

**NHS staff in South Tyneside supported to treat their dependency as
Trust relaunches stop smoking service**



Healthcare leaders at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust are this week relaunching the Trust's stop smoking service in a bid to encourage more NHS staff to kick the habit once and for all and to lead by example for patients and the public to follow.

As part of the Trust's commitment to work towards becoming a completely smokefree organisation in the future, the revitalised stop smoking service will be available to support staff at South Tyneside District Hospital and those working out in the community in South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead. To mark the relaunch, staff were able to seek advice at a special roadshow today (*Tuesday, June 12th*) at South Tyneside District Hospital.

The stop smoking service is provided by the Trust's wellbeing team and offers a support programme not only for NHS staff, but for their friends and family, recognising the vital role loved ones can play in treating tobacco dependency.

NHS staff and their loved ones will be able to receive evidence-based treatment including behaviour change and access to a full range of free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products, including patches and gum, and medications such as Champix and Zyban, although some medications are only available following medical approval. Whilst the Trust's stop smoking service is unable to provide e-cigarettes and other vaping products, it does offer support for smokers using these methods to quit.

Smoking can have devastating consequences for individuals and their families and stopping smoking is the single greatest thing that anyone can do to improve their health and wellbeing. Despite declines in smoking prevalence over recent decades in the North East, tobacco use remains the single largest cause of health inequalities and premature death and for every death caused by smoking, approximately 20 smokers are suffering from a smoking-related disease.

The estimated annual cost of smoking to the NHS in South Tyneside* is about £7.1m - £2.2m due to approximately 2,220 hospital admissions and £4.9m due to treating smoking-related illnesses which require GP and practice nurse consultations, prescriptions and outpatient care.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust Medical Director Dr Shaz Wahid said: "Treating tobacco addiction is a vital element of building a healthier society for the future and NHS staff have a key role to play in creating the UK's first smokefree generation. Many of our patients are in hospital because of smoking-related illness and, if they continue to smoke, it's likely they will take longer to recover, with serious implications for their long-term health.

"Alongside our colleagues in Sunderland, we are fully committed to becoming a smokefree organisation in the interests of the health of our patients, staff and the local community. We are working closely with our local partners to get us to the point of becoming fully smokefree and, as part of this, we want to give our staff and patients all the tools and support we can to help them to stop smoking. Providing a

stop smoking service for not only our staff, but their family and friends, is one way of helping to achieve our smokefree goal.”

Councillor Tracey Dixon, South Tyneside Council’s Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, said: “We are delighted to support South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust in its commitment to becoming a smokefree organisation.

“Although smoking rates have decreased in the last five years, almost 400 people die in South Tyneside every year as a result of smoking. Quitting smoking is the single biggest thing people can do to improve their health so we would advise them to take advantage of the significant help and support on offer to help them treat their tobacco addiction.”

Both South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts, which together employ over 8,500 staff, are aiming to become completely smokefree in future and share a regional ambition 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.

The Trusts are encouraging patients waiting for operations, and pregnant women in particular, to quit. The pre-operation message is to ask for help and treatment 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 because of the heightened risks. 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.

One in two people who access NHS Stop Smoking services are not smoking four weeks later and research has shown that if you stop smoking for 28 days you are five times more likely to stop for good. Research has also shown that people who smoke are four times more likely to give up if they access NHS Stop Smoking services together with NRT, Zyban or Champix, rather than relying on willpower alone.

Under existing policy, NHS staff at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust are not permitted to smoke at work. Patients and visitors to Trust sites are currently permitted to smoke and vape 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 NRT and other treatments.

For free and friendly stop smoking support and advice, South Tyneside residents should contact their local NHS Stop Smoking service by ringing 0191 4247300 or going to www.change4lifesouthtyneside.co.uk.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- *Latest figures from ASH, action on smoking and health, show that South Tyneside has an estimated smoking prevalence of 18.5% in those aged 18+, meaning its population of adult smokers is 22,183.
- There were estimated to be around 79,000 deaths attributable to smoking in the UK in 2015. This represents 16% of all deaths
- The government's Tobacco Control Plan sets out a series of objectives to be achieved by the end of 2022:
 - reduce the number of 15-year-olds who regularly smoke from 8% to 3% or less
 - reduce smoking among adults in England from 15.5% to 12% or less
 - reduce the inequality gap in smoking prevalence between those in routine and manual occupations and the general population
 - reduce the prevalence of smoking in pregnancy from 10.5% to 6% or less

Photo caption: South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Cancer Lead Dr Liz Fuller, left, Wellbeing Practitioner and Stop Smoking Advisor Simon Ayre and Councillor Tracey Dixon, South Tyneside Council's Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, at the relaunch of the Trust's stop smoking service for staff and their family and friends

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