

**PRESS RELEASE - TUESDAY JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup> 2018**

**Falls prevention success in Sunderland and South Tyneside in world spotlight**



The success of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's community falls service in preventing falls among older people in Sunderland and South Tyneside will be in the spotlight at the Nursing World Conference in Rome later this year.

The conference will give researchers, practitioners and educators the opportunity to exchange research evidence, practical experiences and innovative ideas on issues related to nursing and healthcare. A submission by falls specialist physiotherapist Dean Metz and service manager Pam Vickers detailing the Trust's innovative approach to improving the patient's journey by offering a joint nursing and physiotherapy assessment in a one-stop clinic was chosen by the organisers for presentation. The work has already been highlighted nationally as an example of best practice at a Chartered Society of Physiotherapists national conference and at a North Region Falls Summit.

Originally, nurses assessed patients who were then referred, where necessary, for therapy or other interventions. Following research, it was decided to establish joint nursing and physiotherapy assessments in order to shorten the time from assessment to intervention, ensure a more holistic approach to falls prevention, and reduce 'over-assessment' of patients.

Mr Metz, who will give the presentation in September, said: "Both nursing and physiotherapy staff have specific tasks to perform in the assessment but, by doing it together, they are able to benefit from hearing and observing each other's findings. Patients benefit because they only have to a single assessment and, therefore, only have to tell their story once and, within an hour, they can be given an integrated care plan."

When patients were asked about their views on the new way of working, their feedback was overwhelmingly positive. An audit of 142 patients who completed the new-style assessment and who had collectively suffered 629 falls in the six months prior, showed that, collectively, they had only 117 falls in the six months post-assessment. In addition, results of the recognised Timed Up and Go (TUG) test – the time taken from standing from a chair, walking three metres, turning round and returning to sit in the chair – all improved.

Falls are a major problem for older people, robbing many of them of their health and independence, and they cost the country £2.3 billion a year. One in three over the age of 65 will have a fall this year and half of all those over 80 fall at least once a year, often suffering serious injuries and long-term complications, and loss of confidence as a result.

## **ENDS**

*Photo caption: Falls specialist physiotherapist Dean Metz*

Issued by **Kay Jordan**

For press enquiries about this release, contact **0191 404 1128** or email

[kay.jordan@stft.nhs.uk](mailto:kay.jordan@stft.nhs.uk)