

## **PRESS RELEASE – JULY 12, 2018**



### **South Tyneside Hospital's heartfelt thanks to charity**

The Cardiology team at South Tyneside District Hospital have a new, state-of-the-art echocardiograph machine, thanks to a generous £84,000 donation from local charity Heart Call.

The equipment is used to do ultrasound scans which give accurate information about the size of the heart and the structure and function of the heart muscle and heart valves, all of which can help to detect abnormalities and explain the cause of symptoms or provide a diagnosis. Up-to-date software offers advanced 3D views, with a specialised 3D transoesophageal echocardiogram - obtained by swallowing a small ultrasound probe - providing more detailed images, particularly of the structures at the back of the heart.

To mark the acquisition, a special event was held at the hospital to celebrate the work of Heart Call which has helped to save and extend the lives of hundreds of

South Tyneside heart patients, and to say thank you to its supporters for all their fundraising work over more than 30 years.

Jakki Colwill, Cardiology service and development lead, said: "Heart Call is an amazing charity and we are extremely grateful to them for their latest fantastic donation which is enabling us to offer our patients even better care. Words can't express the debt of gratitude which we and the South Tyneside community owe to them."

Consultant Cardiologist Dr Abdul Nasser added: "We want to say a massive thank you to Heart Call for their fundraising work which has saved so many lives. Without their efforts, a lot of local people would not be diagnosed or receive the treatment they need. We are committed to securing the very best care for the people we serve and we are looking forward to working together with Heart Call to continue developing our Cardiac department so we can provide the best possible local hospital services."

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust Vice Chair Allison Thompson said: "On behalf of the Board and Trust colleagues, I would like to extend our huge thanks for the incredible generosity of Heart Call, both now and over many years. This enables the Trust to provide an additional level of cardio care to the people of South Tyneside which would not be possible otherwise."

Heart Call was started in the early 1980s after founding member Syd Nicholson, of South Shields, suffered a heart attack. He required a quadruple heart bypass at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle and became a patient of Consultant Cardiologist Dr Lawrence Bryson, who was based at the Ingham Infirmary, South Shields. Mr Nicholson and Dr Bryson discussed the need for hi-tech equipment and the difficulty in keeping up with advances in technology for the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease. Through his business and social contacts including Probus and the Masons, Mr Nicholson sought donations to buy a heart monitor. South Tyneside Cardio Unit Voluntary Support Group, which became known as Heart Call, was formally set up in 1985 as a registered charity.

Heart Call is dedicated to raising funds for the provision of new and additional equipment to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease in South Tyneside. Money comes from a combination of sources such as public subscriptions, bequests, sponsorship and numerous fundraising events.

Mr Nicholson himself visited working men's clubs, local businesses and professional and social clubs, as well as other voluntary groups, to raise money by giving talks on the role and purpose of Heart Call. He was awarded an MBE in January 2005 for outstanding contribution to improving the quality of care for patients. He died in July 2012 and, by then, Heart Call had purchased over 75 pieces of equipment for the hospital - mainly for Cardiology - and had raised in excess of £600,000.

The charity, chaired by Dr Bryson, is still going strong and it receives regular donations from individuals who have supported the cause for a number of years, as well as social clubs and groups which nominate Heart Call to receive all or a share of their fundraising efforts. Last year, a member of hospital staff ran for the charity in the Great North Run. For the last five years, Chichester Snooker Club, South Shields, has held a one-day darts marathon which has added £4,600 to the pot.

Dr Bryson said: "Sadly, within the last year we have lost the last two of the original group, Keith Jones and treasurer Geoff Murdoch. We are looking at ways of continuing the work of the charity which has made such a valuable contribution to the care of residents of South Tyneside."

**ENDS**

*Photo caption: Dr Lawrence Bryson, front row, second right with Dr Abdul Nasser, Jakki Colwill, Alison Thompson, cardiology staff and members of Heart Call.*

Issued by **Kay Jordan**

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

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