

PRESS RELEASE – SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

Improving support to help South Tyneside and Sunderland cancer patients to enjoy their lives



South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts have appointed a Cancer Improvement Manager to support a programme to ensure every cancer patient receives the care and support they need to live a happy and healthy life beyond diagnosis.

In her role, which is funded by The Northern Cancer Alliance, Kelly Craggs and her team will be working with patients and partners to establish a 'recovery package' in clinical practice in hospitals and primary care in South Tyneside and Sunderland.

The package is part of the NHS's Achieving World-class Cancer Outcomes 2015-20 strategy for England and South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland Trusts are working in conjunction with South Tyneside and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Groups to deliver it.

It is intended that, by 2020, every patient in South Tyneside and Sunderland who receives a cancer diagnosis will be offered a recovery package including:

- An holistic needs assessment and a care plan within 31 days of diagnosis
- A 'treatment summary' at the end of each treatment phase which is copied to their GP
- A Cancer Care Review in primary care within six months of diagnosis
- Access for patients and carers to health and wellbeing events

Mrs Craggs, who was a head and neck cancer clinical nurse specialist with City Hospitals Sunderland for nine years, said: "Cancer survival rates are at their highest ever level and more than half of people receiving a cancer diagnosis will now live for 10 years or more. Everyone who gets cancer is different and the care and support they need to live their lives is different. The aim of the recovery package is to ensure that the individual needs of everyone going through cancer treatment and beyond are met by personalised support and services."

Laura Hope, The Northern Cancer Alliance's Living With and Beyond Cancer programme manager, said: "The development of the Cancer Improvement Manager post demonstrates the partner organisations' commitment to supporting the people of Sunderland and South Tyneside to live well with and beyond cancer."

Dr Matthew Walmsley, Clinical Chair at NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "Any cancer diagnosis is life-changing for patients, their families and loved ones so it is vital that they feel cared for and supported. In developing this new programme, we are taking a step towards our goal of providing world class cancer services that will offer the best possible care to people across the area."

Dr Ian Pattison, Clinical Chair at NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, added: "Patients across Sunderland and South Tyneside already benefit from high quality cancer services. However, we always look to improve on the support that we can offer and this new package will ensure that patients in the area can continue to receive the best possible specialist care."

As part of the work, volunteers from Age UK Sunderland and Age Concern Tyneside South (ACTS) will support patients in identifying and discussing their wider psychological, social and financial needs once their clinical needs have been met by their cancer team, and will signpost them to the most appropriate community services.

Tracy Buck, Director of Age UK Sunderland, said: “This is a great opportunity to ensure those living with and beyond cancer can receive the community support they need to feel themselves again. The work will support people to feel more included in their community and more in control of their lives again.”

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Photo caption: South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts' Cancer Improvement Manager Kelly Craggs, centre, with Living With and Beyond Cancer facilitators Lynsey Clarke and Helen Elliott

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