

**PRESS RELEASE – SEPTEMBER 25, 2018**

**South Tyneside and Sunderland nurses and midwives celebrate excellence in patient care and look to the future**



About 350 nurses and midwives from South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts gathered at their second annual conference today (*Tuesday September 25<sup>th</sup>*) to celebrate and share good practice and excellence in patient care and to look forward to the many potential benefits for patients and staff of becoming one stronger, bigger organisation in the future.

The theme for this year's joint Nursing & Midwifery Conference, held at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland and organised in partnership with the University of Sunderland and NHS South Tyneside and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Groups, was 'Changing Times'. This reflected the Trusts' ambition to formally merge for long-term operational and financial sustainability, and the ongoing 'Path to Excellence' programme of transformation of hospital services in South Tyneside and Sunderland to meet the future needs of patients and offer the best possible care for local people.

Chief Executive of South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts Ken Bremner, who opened the conference, said: "The ever-growing pressures

on the NHS mean our frontline teams face constant challenges. Despite this, our nursing and midwifery staff do a fantastic job 24/7 and it is very humbling to see the changes that they make to patients' lives on a daily basis.

“As our two Trusts work ever more closely together, they will have a crucial role to play in delivering the high quality, sustainable services for the future that our population deserve in exciting, innovative ways. I have no doubt that they will rise to the challenge, as they always do, with compassion, dedication and utter professionalism.

“Recruitment is, of course, key and there will be many more opportunities for newly qualified and registered nurses and midwives to develop a career with us. We already work with local universities to ensure a seamless transition for student nurses and midwives joining the team and earlier this year we had a successful trip to the Philippines to recruit more nurses to work across our Trusts. We recruited up to 50 and we expect to welcome them between November and May.”

Melanie Johnson, Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals for both Trusts, added: “This is our second joint Nursing & Midwifery Conference and it has highlighted the wealth of knowledge and skills that we have to share and the willingness to innovate and work differently to improve patient care. This will stand our Trusts in exceptionally good stead as we move forward with the Path to Excellence transformation of services and our proposed merger. We know that we need to think differently about how we care for patients and keep them healthy and well in the future, always with a focus on patient-centred care and a culture of safety and quality.”

Copies of the Trusts' Quality Strategy for 2018-23, setting out the framework and plan of action to improve quality by focusing on patient safety, patient experience and clinical effectiveness, were distributed at the conference and frontline nursing staff in various fields, from both Trusts, gave presentations on a wide range of topics including Maternity, Paediatrics, Integrated Specialist Palliative Care and Infection Prevention and Control. There was also a session on 'Using Technology to Improve Healthcare', in which both Trusts are acknowledged leaders. City Hospitals

Sunderland was chosen by NHS England as one of 16 Global Digital Exemplars (GDEs) in September 2016 in recognition of being one of the most digitally advanced Trusts in the country, delivering care through world-class use of digital technology and information flows. Through the close partnership working of the South Tyneside and Sunderland Healthcare Group, South Tyneside was granted GDE 'fast follower' status in 2017.

A high note of the conference was the showing of videos of the winning entries from South Tyneside and Sunderland in a competition for staff to write a song to a well-known tune to promote Hand Hygiene Day 2018.

Sue Brent, Head of Nursing at the University of Sunderland, said: "We're delighted to collaborate with our partners at City Hospitals Sunderland and South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trusts on this joint Nursing & Midwifery Conference. Through joint working we have already achieved much to be proud of and this conference provides further opportunities for staff to share good practice with each other, which we can embed into our practice and teaching to further improve patient care."

Jeanette Scott, Director of Nursing, Quality and Safety at NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "Nurses and midwives do truly fantastic work, often under immense pressure. The conference is an exciting opportunity to celebrate the hard work carried out across South Tyneside and Sunderland by such dedicated members of staff."

Ann Fox, Director of Nursing, Quality and Safety at NHS Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "In response to the challenges being faced by the NHS, it is more important than ever that we are able to provide high quality, safe and effective care to patients within the finite resources available. Nurses and midwives across the area are providing fantastic care to our patients, and events such as the Nursing & Midwifery Conference are invaluable in helping colleagues to share their innovations and experiences to help improve services even further."

- In November, South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts will hold two nursing recruitment open events – on

Thursday 8th in Alexander's restaurant at South Tyneside District Hospital, 10am-3pm, and on Friday 9th in the Education Centre at Sunderland Royal Hospital, 2pm-5pm.

**ENDS**

*The photo shows: South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts' Chief Executive Ken Bremner and Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals Melanie Johnson, foreground, with staff at the Nursing & Midwifery Conference*

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)