

## **PRESS RELEASE – 22 November, 2018**

### **South Tyneside and Sunderland patients receiving timely NHS care as hospitals prepare for busy winter period**

Hospital patients in South Tyneside and Sunderland are frequently being seen and treated more quickly than those in the rest of the North East and in many other parts of the country, according to the latest BBC NHS Tracker published this week.

The BBC guide is based on latest performance data\* against a number of key NHS waiting-time standards including how quickly patients are seen with emergency care departments and how quickly they receive treatment for cancer or for planned operations such as knee and hip replacements.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust was the top performing Trust in the region, and ranked 5<sup>th</sup> nationally in emergency care, with 97% of patients being seen, treated and admitted or discharged within four hours of arrival. City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust also scored very highly with 92% of patients seen within four hours. Both Trusts performed excellently compared with the national average for England which was 89% during October.

Over the past two years both Trusts have seen a significant and continued increase in demand on emergency care services in hospital with a 3% increase in activity at South Tyneside District Hospital and a 10% increase at Sunderland Royal Hospital. Despite this, more people than ever before are being successfully treated by local hospital teams.

Both South Tyneside and Sunderland were also in the top 10 Trusts in the country for patients having their planned operations within 18 weeks of referral by their GP, far exceeding the current national England average of 86.7% and the national 92% standard. South Tyneside and Sunderland patients are also receiving cancer treatment in a timely manner with both Trusts again far exceeding the current national England average of 78.2% and the national 85% standard.

Dr Sean Fenwick, Director of Operations for the Trusts, said: “As we head into our busiest time of the year, it is important to remember that despite the continued growing demand for NHS services and relentless pressures we face, our staff in South Tyneside and Sunderland are doing a truly fantastic job in providing safe, high quality patient care every single day, no matter what challenges they face.

“Last winter was particularly difficult for the whole NHS and it took us longer to recover our performance than in previous years. We are now in a really strong position as we prepare for the really testing months ahead and I want to thank all staff for their continued commitment and dedication to our patients.

“We always traditionally see more emergency hospital admissions during the winter months, particularly amongst frail older people who are more vulnerable to illness. We have very robust plans in place to deal with these pressures but would also appeal to the public to play their part in helping us to keep their local NHS running smoothly by using the right service and also taking all steps to protect themselves from illness this winter.”

***5 tips to ‘Help Us Help You’ this winter:***

1. Get your flu jab, it’s the most effective way to protect yourself and loved ones
2. Check the NHS UK page to find out which NHS service is best for your needs
3. If you care for children download the free NHS Child Health app for advice
4. Stock up your medicine cabinet to ensure that you have the essentials
5. Keep warm – try and make sure that your home heated to at least 18°C

**ENDS**

\* To view the BBC NHS Tracker visit <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-41483322> - latest figures are based on October 2018 performance.

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