

PRESS RELEASE – 5 February 2019

Passport to more support for carers of South Tyneside and Sunderland hospital patients



South Tyneside and Sunderland hospitals are aiming to give carers even more support to enable them to get involved in all aspects of their loved ones' treatment and care, with the introduction of a Carer Passport.

The scheme is being piloted by South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts on two care of the elderly wards - one at South Tyneside District Hospital and one at Sunderland Royal Hospital - and on the Acute Stroke Unit at the Royal, which cares for patients from both areas.

The credit card-sized passport, worn on a lanyard, identifies carers to staff and enables them to:

- visit outside normal hours, including overnight, with the agreement of the ward manager
- help the patient with eating and drinking
- be actively involved in the patient's care and planning for discharge

To accompany their passport 'badge', carers are given a special folder in which to keep useful leaflets with information relevant to the patient's care and a guide to the various support and advice organisations available in South Tyneside and Sunderland, as well as nationally. Also included is a 'This is me' document containing details such as the patient's likes and dislikes and the name by which they like to be called. This can be shown to staff to help them to respond to patients' individual needs and provide more personalised care.

Julie McDonald, Deputy Director of Nursing, said: "Our staff recognise the great value and importance of carers and we are strongly committed to supporting and working in partnership with them in order to ensure that we can provide the highest quality and most effective care possible.

"A stay in hospital can be a confusing, even frightening, experience. Our staff are experts in healthcare but it is the carers who are experts in the individual, personal needs of their loved ones. Making it easier for them to have as much access as possible to support the patient's personal wellbeing throughout a hospital stay can make medical treatment more effective, leading to improved outcomes."

Using feedback from carers and staff involved in the pilot areas, it is hoped that the Carer Passport can eventually be rolled out in all in-patient areas at South Tyneside District Hospital, Sunderland Royal Hospital and Sunderland Eye Infirmary.

The initiative follows on from South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts' pledges of support for the national John's Campaign, a movement to help NHS staff recognise the importance of working with carers as equal partners in the care and support of people with a dementia who are in hospital.

ENDS

Photo caption: Faye Wright, Ward Manager at South Tyneside District Hospital, right, and Jennifer Musgrave, Patient Experience Facilitator with South Tyneside and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trusts', holding the Carer Passport badge and folder

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