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New Arrangements In Place Across Copeland To Provide Better Care For Adult Patients

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New Arrangements In Place Across Copeland To Provide Better Care For Adult Patients

Posted on Thursday 18th June 2015

Health and care organisations have introduced new arrangements across Copeland to provide better care for people when they become ill.

When GPs visit an adult patient who needs some additional care, rather than send them to hospital they now have a single number to ring to access a range of community services.

There are dedicated staff to take the calls. The support available includes a rapid response team of community nursing and other health and care professionals who are available from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, with out of hours service overnight and at weekends. The team, which includes advanced practitioners, home care practitioners and a tissue viability nurse to ensure continuity of care for patients. It links into all existing services, including those in the community and voluntary sector to make sure that the patient receives the most appropriate care.

In addition there is a named district nurse and social worker for each GP practice so that there is continuity of care for patients.

As well as supporting patients living in their own homes, the new arrangements will mean better support for nursing and residential care homes.

Dr Juliet Rhodes, who is the lead GP for NHS Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group's Copeland locality, said: "We have been working with our partners across health and social care for several months to develop this single point of access and to make sure that between us we can provide the right support for all adult patients, particularly older and vulnerable people, when they become unwell.

"We know that many patients would rather stay at home unless they really need to be in hospital but that they and their families and carers need the right support at the right time to make this happen. These new arrangements which involve much more joined up working across organisations mean that we can do that.

"We launched the new single point of access at the end of April working initially with patients from three GP practices. By the end of May we were able to extend it across all eight GP practices in Copeland."

Jo Cloudsdale, community care manager for Copeland at Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, said: "We have worked with partner organisations including Age UK, the CCG and Adult Social Care to develop a model that meets the needs of the community and ensures that patients are seen by the right professional in a timely manner. We have built on the services we already had and have a model where access to services is the primary goal, with an integrated entry point to community services.

"We have been able to realign posts and use funding to introduce new roles into the community team including a tissue viability nurse, home care practitioners and advanced practitioners, as well as the call handlers who take the clinical information and ensure that it is passed to the right clinician to triage. This new way of working has increased available clinical time which will be spent with patients and means that staff are in a position to act quickly to prevent hospital admission and support safe and timely discharge of patients."

Dr Jeremy Rushmer, medical director at North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "The new single point of access service is a fantastic development for patients in Copeland.

“It is important that patients are treated in the most appropriate setting to meet their care needs and that is not always in a hospital bed. Reducing avoidable hospital admissions means our clinical teams in both of our hospitals are focusing on the most acutely ill patients and patients in the community can receive better continuity of care and support.”

These new arrangements are an important part of the primary care community being developed in Copeland. Primary care communities are currently being developed in localities across Cumbria and involve all health and care organisations coming together to provide more joined up care at home or as close to home for people and ultimately reduce avoidable hospital admissions. Their development was included in the five year plan for Cumbria that was published by NHS Cumbria CCG last summer.

Earlier initiatives in Copeland which are also part of the primary care community include the care coordinators and minor ailments schemes.

The care coordinators scheme was launched last Spring and from April to December 2014, more than 700 frail older people were supported to stay well and independent in their own homes. The scheme has gone from strength to strength and continues to support patients over 75.

The care coordinators who are attached to GP practices visit patients at home and can arrange various types of support, ranging from garden tidying, community nurse visits to benefits advice.

Minor ailments scheme operates through local pharmacies across Copeland and has been in place since February this year. It provides quick access to free basic medicines without a GP appointment for patients eligible for free prescriptions.

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