

## **Press Release**

**Date: 17 March 2014**

### **Trial will bring services closer to home for Stafford and Cannock Chase patients with breathing difficulties**

Patients from Cannock, Rugeley, Stafford and the surrounding villages who suffer from a chronic breathing condition (COPD) could soon be receiving specialist support more quickly and closer to home.

Stafford and Surrounds Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Cannock Chase CCG are launching a trial service that will see a hospital-based consultant move their outpatient clinics into the community alongside specialist respiratory nurses.

The new Community COPD service will involve a consultant specialising in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease – the symptoms of which can include severe breathlessness, persistent coughs and episodes of frequent chest infections. It is estimated that around three million people suffer from COPD across the UK, mostly aged over 50.

Dr Mo Huda, Rugeley GP and Clinical Lead for Cannock Chase CCG said: “When patients are having breathing problems related to their COPD they want to see a specialist nurse or Consultant at a time that is best for them rather than be waiting for a hospital appointment that will not be at the time when patients most need it.”

“We believe that, if practical, there are considerable advantages for community respiratory nurses having access to a Consultant to help with complex patients with COPD. By better management of complex patients we can reduce risk factors associated with patients needing to have emergency care which lead to considerably less stress and inconvenience for patients and their families or carers.

“Bringing NHS services closer to the patient is something we strongly support in principal. However each case needs to be judged on its merits. We will carefully monitor the progress of this 12-month trial and long-term decisions will be based on demonstrably improved services for patients with COPD.”

The consultant will retain a base at Stafford Hospital.

Andrew Donald, Chief Officer for the CCGs said: “This is certainly not about taking services away from the hospital. It is about maximising local skills and having them available to patients at the time they have told us would be most beneficial.”

Dr David Cook, Consultant in Respiratory Medicine said: “This new service will mean patients being able to be seen in clinics nearer to their homes and with less waiting times. A service which some other areas already provide and will now be available to our patients. It will be particularly valuable for patients who become too breathless to attend hospital clinics but who still would value keeping

in touch with their hospital consultant. In some centres text and e-mail communications are also used to communicate with disabled patients. »

**Ends**

**Notes to Editors**

The agreement on the new community COPD service is between the CCGs and Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. It will not be affected by the recent decision to dissolve the Trust.