

PRESS RELEASE

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ADVICE AND GUIDANCE SCHEME GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

The Advice and Guidance scheme we have implemented across Morecambe Bay has successfully continued to expand and develop over the past year, resulting in more people and patients being cared for closer to home.

The Advice and Guidance service – funded by Better Care Together - offers the opportunity for GPs to have a secure electronic ‘conversation’ with a hospital specialist to obtain real time advice about a patient’s condition.

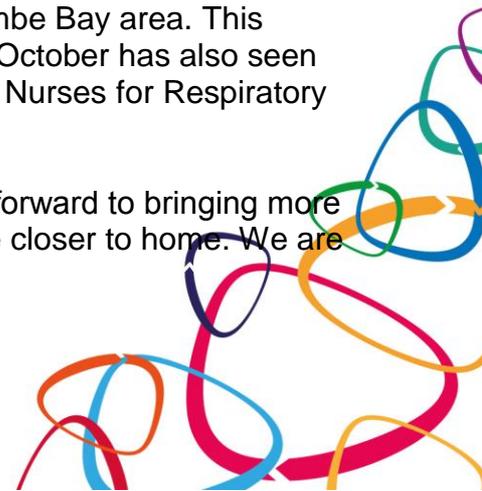
The latest figures covering the period April to October 2017 show that of the 2,441 ‘conversations’ begun by GPs with hospital specialists, 1,675 (72%) of patients were managed under the care of their local GP. Previously these patients would have been referred to hospital for an outpatient appointment.

Dr George Dingle, a GP in the Morecambe Bay area said: “The Advice and Guidance scheme has been incredibly successful so far in terms of reducing the number of unnecessary hospital referrals and allowing patients to be cared for closer to home. Additionally the scheme is educational for GP’s as it enables us to receive real time advice from specialists.”

Progress has also been made with regards to how quickly conversations with specialists take place, with most responding within 24hrs, offering bespoke advice. On occasions where a hospital specialist decides they should see a patient in clinic they may advise on certain tests that could be completed in advance – saving time for both the patient and the clinician. This means that when a patient arrives in hospital a decision can be made much more quickly and can save subsequent trips to hospital.

The Advice and Guidance service was introduced as a pilot in North Lancashire in 2014 and has now expanded to cover 26 health specialties across the Morecambe Bay area. This surpasses the original target to expand up to 19 specialties in 2017. October has also seen the first extension of the the service to Practice Nurses and Specialty Nurses for Respiratory services. It is anticipated that more will shortly follow.

“Advice & Guidance is making great progress year on year. We look forward to bringing more services on board helping patients in Morecambe Bay to receive care closer to home. We are



also working hard to make the system available to other neighbouring health organisations in the region” added Dr Dingle.

For more information Better Care Together has launched a short film to help explain the Advice and Guidance service and the benefits it brings to patients. This film can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPkS5pkQ1Wk>

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Notes to editors:

1. For further information, please contact the communications team on 01524 518638 or by email as indicated above.
2. Better Care Together is a partnership of eleven organisations, including Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the North West Ambulance Service, Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Lancashire North Clinical Commissioning Group and the two Local Authorities: Cumbria County Council and Lancashire County Council and two GP Provider Federations: North Lancashire Medical Group and South Cumbria Primary Care Collaborative working together in partnership.
3. Clinical leaders from across all organisations have designed a new clinical model of care for Morecambe Bay, through a series of design workshops and clinical. The new care models have been strongly influenced by the wide ranging engagement with stakeholders which has taken place over the past two years.

