

Press release – Tuesday 19 December 2017

Working together to provide better care

A&E is not always the best place to be taken if you call 999, and thanks to an improved way of working more patients are now getting the care they need in their own home.

London Ambulance Service has been working closely with NHS rapid response teams across North West (NW) London, helping more patients to get the treatment they need in their own home. This enhanced way of working has seen up to 100 additional people being cared for at home a month.

How does it work?

Ambulance crews responding to a 999 call now have all the information they need to assess if a rapid response service could provide better, more suitable care for the patient, rather than taking them to A&E. If the patient is clinically suitable to be referred to a rapid response service, the ambulance crew will call one of the eight response teams in NW London, who will visit the patient in their home within two hours of being contacted.

Katherine Murray, Head of Community Independence Service (CIS), Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL), said: *“A&E is not always the right place to provide care, especially for some of our elderly patients; being taken into a busy and unfamiliar environment can be distressing. Where clinically possible it is much better for people to be treated and cared for in their own home.”*

Rapid response teams include nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and health care assistants who have access to medical and social care input.

They can help patients with conditions including:

- Respiratory infection or urinary tract infection
- Falls and dizziness
- Cellulitis
- Exacerbation of a long term condition, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or asthma, which can cause breathlessness
- Catheter problems
- Diarrhoea/constipation/vomiting/dehydration

Depending on patients' clinical needs, rapid response teams will visit multiple times over the course of a week and the patients GP will be involved in their care.

Rapid response teams have been in place across NW London for several years. In recent months ambulance crews have received refresher training and updated information about how rapid response and community support services can help keep some patients well or be treated at home. This training has seen a rise in the numbers of patients being cared for in their home.

Emily Grist, Stakeholder Engagement Manager at the London Ambulance Service, said: “*The on-going work between the London Ambulance Service and rapid response teams across NW London has been extensive and we are seeing some fantastic results.*”

[ENDS]

Notes to editors

1. The North West (NW) London health and care partnership is made up of over 30 NHS and local authority organisations. Between us, we plan, buy and provide health and care services for more than two million local residents across eight boroughs, spending around £4 billion per year. There are 400 GP practices, ten hospitals and four mental health and community health trusts across the eight boroughs.

Find out more: www.healthiernorthwestlondon.nhs.uk/

2. For further information, please contact Sabrina Prescott-Nelson, Communications Officer at The North West London Collaboration of Clinical Commissioning Groups:

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