

## CCG putting measures in place to tackle urgent hospital admissions

West Norfolk CCG Accountable Officer John Webster outlined some of the challenges faced by the local health system during the June Community Engagement Forum meeting.

An ageing population with complex medical needs, financial deficit and workforce shortages are among the issues in West Norfolk, the representatives heard.

During the meeting in Downham Town Hall Mr Webster said: “We have been looking at unplanned admissions to hospital as it is one of the biggest areas of spend within the CCG. We are significantly higher in these areas than neighbouring CCGs.

“There are a range of preventative measures that we are introducing to support people if they have had a fall so it is not necessary to take them straight to hospital. We have created a Frailty Programme with that express purpose of doing just that.”

The Emergency Department at the QEH has seen an increase of 23% in the number of patients over the age of 65 since 2015/16.

Hospital admissions can have an effect on older patients. Days of bed rest can result in 14% reduction in hip and leg muscle strength and a 12% reduction in aerobic capacity.

Fran Rose-Smith, QIPP Manager at the CCG, outlined some of the initiatives being put in place as part of the Frailty Programme.

A Frailty Single Point of Access pilot service was launched last October to prevent a deterioration in a patient’s condition. GPs, paramedics, community matrons and community therapist are able to contact a Consultant Geriatrician at the QEH to get advice and guidance over the phone. The consultant can then book in the patient in for a rapid Frailty Clinic Appointment and cases are reviewed by a range of healthcare professionals.

Ms Rose-Smith said: “During a 30 day period, 70% of patients that were assessed in the service did not need to be admitted. This is a really good service for older and frail patients.”

The CCG is also working with East of England Ambulance Service on a specialist paramedic two car trial in West Norfolk to prevent frail patients from being admitted to hospital.

Under this scheme paramedics have enhanced training to do wound closure, testing for possible urinary tract infections, assessing gait and are hoped to be able to issue basic equipment like walking aids.

Members of the CEF learned about a new service which is helping to support people with bad backs, knees and other muscular issues.

West Norfolk CCG is working with Allied Health Professionals (AHP) Suffolk to launch a Musculoskeletal (MSK) Virtual Triage and Single Point of Access service in April.

AHP Suffolk’s Operational Lead Patient Services Jannine Fage and Kylie Chambers, Clinical Liaison Lead, outlined how the new service.

GPs and patients are now able to refer directly to the experienced physiotherapists who staff the virtual triage service.

Patients are then referred onto the most appropriate service for their condition ranging from manual therapy, physiotherapist, secondary care, pain management and the Rheumatology service.