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MEDIA RELEASE

Blackpool health trust celebrates launch of first new adult cystic fibrosis service in UK for 40 years



A Fylde coast health Trust has launched the first new Adult Cystic Fibrosis Service in the UK for 40 years.

The prestigious new service is a huge coup for the Fylde coast and Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

People living with cystic fibrosis (CF) in Lancashire and Cumbria now have access to a highly-skilled, multi-disciplinary team based at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

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At the launch of the service, special guests and senior clinicians, who had worked towards bringing the service to Blackpool for several years, said it was an enormous success for the town and for the North West.

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a genetic disorder that mainly affects the lungs but also the pancreas, liver, kidneys and intestine. Long-term issues include difficulty breathing and coughing up mucus as a result of frequent lung infections.

Emily Bonney, 18, from South Shore in Blackpool, who has CF and recently won a Gold Medal at the World Cheerleading Championships in Orlando in the US with 'Team England Paracheer', cut the cake and said she was delighted that the new service was based in the resort.

She said it meant young people with CF from the Fylde coast and other parts of Lancashire and Cumbria wouldn't have to travel all the way to Manchester to receive treatment.

Emily, who is studying Health and Social Care at Blackpool and the Fylde College, said: "It's great for me that the new service is in Blackpool, especially because I won't have to travel all the way to Manchester.

"I was treated by the Paediatric CF Service at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and now I will be with the adult service. My consultants are Dr Saba and Dr Rowlands. I feel great health wise. I do eight hours of cheerleading practice every week. I love it."

Emily's dad David, mum Lesley, three sisters and two brothers, are all very proud of her.

David said: "The new service is fantastic. We used to have to travel to Manchester for some appointments and it was very time-consuming.

"With Blackpool getting the go-ahead, it's great for local people and people across the North West. It's also a great thing for Blackpool Victoria Hospital. They have been working hard on it for a while now. It's good to be able to come to our local hospital because we know the staff."

The service is for patients from the Fylde coast, Lancashire and Cumbria and patients from other areas can also ask to be referred to it. It is one of only 37 Adult Cystic Fibrosis Services in the country.

Dr Tarek Saba, who leads the new CF service for the Trust, said: "I'm elated. It has been so exciting seeing it all coming together after years of hard work and

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preparation. Our current and previous chief executives have been very supportive.

“It will make such a difference to have it here in Blackpool. People who have CF often have to come for treatment every six weeks – sometimes for two-to three days per visit. This can be difficult for visitors, especially if they have to travel through heavy traffic. Unlike many clinical services, CF services are heavily used.

“The service will also be of benefit of other patients who don’t have CF. That’s what sold it to all of us as a valuable project.

“We have specially trained staff, new equipment and new resources, all of which can be offered to other patients. For example, our equipment can be used by other departments. The service will benefit the rest of our Trust.

“It’s also good that Blackpool has another tertiary service like our Cardiac Centre and Haematology Service that will generate ‘good news’ stories.

“People are living longer with CF and we anticipate that our centre will have many success stories.”

Dr Ned Rowlands, a specialist CF consultant with the new service, said: “I’m delighted that our new service has been launched. It’s something we have dreamed of for years.

“It’s a pleasure and a privilege to have been involved in developing the service. We’ll have everything available here for our patients – even minor things.

“We have gelled very well as a team. It’s a multi-system disorder so we have a multi-system approach involving physiotherapists, nurses, doctors, dietitians, psychologists, consultants and we have our own pharmacist.”

The team has also been doing some charity fundraising through the Trust’s Blue Skies Hospitals Fund to help enhance the facilities offered by the service.

Professor Kevin Webb, from Manchester Adult CF Centre at University Hospitals of South Manchester, who set up the first service in the UK in 1982, said: “I think it’s superb.

“We see a lot of patients at our specialist unit and some of them will be coming to Blackpool. It’s an example of how much better the CF survival rate has become. It’s beyond belief.

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“The care delivered for CF patients is multi-disciplinary so it is delivered by specialist centres.

“I think the Blackpool service is going to be a great success. It will be supported by us and when it has significant numbers of patients, it will become fully independent.

“It’s a prestigious thing for Blackpool. The future for adults with CF is getting better. There is a lot of research taking place. Since the ‘80s, the survival rate has increased by two and a half decades. The median age for survival is now 46 to 47 years and I have worked with patients in their 60s. It’s magical.”

Professor Andy Jones, Centre Director for Manchester Adult CF Centre, said: “It’s great that there is now a more local service for people living in that area.

“The team at Blackpool has put in a tremendous effort to establish the new CF service in Blackpool.

“We have worked closely with the team for many years and will continue to support the development of the service. We think it will be a great success.”

Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Trust, said: “I’m really delighted. It’s one of the best things to have happened since I have been here as Chairman.

“The team came to give a presentation to the board and it was very exciting. We are completely behind it. It will make such a difference in terms of the distance people have to travel.”

Wendy Swift, Chief Executive of the Trust, said: “It’s brilliant that we now have our own Adult Cystic Fibrosis Service.

“I have been right behind it since I heard about it. I have learned a lot about CF. People are living longer and many have families of their own.

“The launch of the new service is fantastic for our Trust and for the entire Fylde coast. It’s another specialist service to add to the excellent tertiary services that we already have here in Blackpool.”

Ends

Photo captions (see below):

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Professor Kevin Webb, from Manchester Adult CF Centre at University Hospitals of South Manchester, cutting the ribbon at the launch event

World Champion Cheerleader, Emily Bonney, 18, from South Shore in Blackpool, who is one of the first young adults to benefit from the new service, cutting the cake watched by Wendy Swift, chief executive of Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Members of the new Adult CF Service on the launch day

Emily Bonney with her CF consultants, Dr Ned Rowlands and Dr Tarek Saba

Jacqueline Bradley and Aoife Healy on an information stand during the launch event

Dr Ned Rowlands

Dr Tarek Saba





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Notes to editors: The launch announcement was postponed due to purdah