

E&NH0640

New clinic treats rheumatoid arthritis flare-ups quickly, avoiding hospital admissions



Rheumatology specialist nurse, Sharon Pearson (right) in the Lister's new flare clinic

Stevenage, UK – 21 May 2018 – Patients with [rheumatoid arthritis](#) are now accessing a new service – called a flare clinic – to get the care they need more quickly than has been the case previously. If not treated early, patients experiencing a sudden flare-up of their symptoms can end up in A&E and even be admitted – which earlier intervention can help to prevent.

Rheumatology nurse specialist, Sharon Pearson, said:

“Our advice line gets around 250 calls every month, some of which comes from patients experiencing flare-ups in their condition. For those whose symptoms do not settle down following the advice we give, we now can get them in to our new flare clinics to review their medication and see whether they need treatment – such as steroid injections in to their joints, which can be done by our nursing team.

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Sharon continued:

“Not only does the new service aim to help patients experiencing a flare-up to get their rheumatoid arthritis back in to remission, it also avoids trips to A&E and even hospital admissions. The clinic will also allow our consultant colleagues to focus their time on dealing with our more complex rheumatoid arthritis patients.”

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About the Trust's flare clinic service

Since January 2018, when this service was launched, this nurse specialist-led service has allowed patients' medication to be reviewed, x-rays requested and steroid injections (shoulder, knees and intra-muscular) given to help bring their inflammatory arthritis back under control quickly.

[Rheumatoid arthritis](#) is a long-term condition that causes pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints that is thought to affect approximately 1% of adults in the UK, usually affecting the hands, feet and wrists. It is an autoimmune disease, which means that people's immune systems – which fight infection normally – attack the cells that line joints by mistake, making them swollen, stiff and painful. Over time, the condition can damage the joint itself, cartilage and nearby bone. There may be periods where symptoms become worse – known as flare-ups or flares – that can require people to be admitted to hospital.

The flare clinics form part of a wider service from the Trust's rheumatology team, which also includes early arthritis and annual review clinics that result in patients with rheumatoid arthritis having access to one of the best performing services in the country that increasingly is gaining national recognition for the high quality care the team provides.

Further information and advice about rheumatoid arthritis is provided by [Arthritis Research UK](#).

The East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

The Trust provides a wide range of acute and tertiary care services from four hospitals, namely the: Lister in Stevenage; New QEII in Welwyn Garden City; Hertford County in Hertford; and the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre in Northwood, Middlesex

For more information about the Trust, go to the [website](#).

For more information, please call the communications team on: 01438 285362 or 01438 285940; for out-of-hours calls, please call the duty press officer on 07920 412023.

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