

MEDIA RELEASE

THURSDAY 25th NOVEMBER - FOR IMMEDIATE USE

NHS HOSPITAL DISCHARGE SUPPORT FUND TO BENEFIT CUMBRIA

Money from the NHS has been made available to support patients leaving hospital through its partnership with local charities.

The NHS Hospital Discharge Support Fund was set up by the NHS in north Cumbria and is held by Cumbria Community Foundation. It will provide financial support of up to £300,000 to the charitable and community sector to help people regain and maintain their independence at home and in the community once they are discharged from hospital.

Age UK West Cumbria, in partnership with Age UK Carlisle & Eden, has been awarded £176,942 to meet the current short-term need of patients leaving hospital with no support from family or friends.

The Well@Home project will provide four weeks of support, including transport, daily welfare calls, home checks, prescription collections, food, and basic supplies.

Jane Mindar, Chief Executive at Age UK West Cumbria, said: "By working together, we will be able to make a real difference to around 700 people between now and the end of March – by getting them home and safely settled into their homes rather than spending more time in hospital which can be quite distressing for people especially in the run up to Christmas. Additionally we can play a larger part in helping the already stretched NHS reduce its burden and free up beds for those who most need them. NHS staff have proven to be complete heroes during the pandemic, and it will be an honour to help them in a small way during winter to carry on saving lives and helping even more people.

Further funding is available and grants of up to £30,000 will be considered (in exceptional circumstances a higher amount might be considered), which must be fully spent by March 31st next year. The funding aims to support voluntary and community sector interventions which promote positive mental health and wellbeing in the widest sense and for all ages.

Funding should achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- increased number of patients supported to return home
- improved discharge experience from NHS and other community based clinical services
- patients supported report a more informed knowledge of the discharge process and support available to them
- people able to regain and remain independent in their home and community
- reduce the number of delayed discharges
- decreased readmission rates as patient and/or carer receive additional non-clinical support
- third sector capacity increased to deliver and sustain low-level community-based support

Peter Rooney, Chief Operating Officer for NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "Making sure patients leave hospital in a well-supported and timely way as soon as their medical treatment is complete is vital for lots of reasons. We don't want patients in

hospital longer than they need to be, we need to ensure those in hospital are those who have the most acute need, and people should be back in their own familiar surroundings as soon as they are well enough.

“This is fantastic opportunity to strengthen those really valuable relationships between our health and care services and our third sector partners. Working together will really help both our people and our services here in north Cumbria.”

Sarah Farragher, Home First and System Flow Coordinator, said: “We are delighted about this opportunity to work closely with partners to support people to return home from hospital, and enable people to live their most independent lives. We really want to encourage our third sector groups to think about new and innovative bids to this fund so we can support more people across north Cumbria.”

Dr Jenny Benson, Director of Programmes & Partnerships Cumbria Community Foundation, said: “As a Community Foundation, we are delighted to be able to support this funding to reach where it is most needed. By supporting valuable NHS and community projects, the fund will ease some of the strain on the NHS.

To find out more about the Fund or to apply, visit www.cumbriafoundation.org/fund/nhs-hospital-discharge-support-fund or call 01900 825760.