Care UK Invests More Than £3.5m In Secondary Care

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From Rochdale to Portsmouth and Plymouth to Kent, Care UK has invested more than £3.5 million in its NHS secondary care services during the last 12 months.

And two of the boosted services have been rated as 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission.

A £2 million investment at Peninsula NHS Treatment Centre, which received a CQC 'outstanding' report, saw a third operating theatre and new endoscopy suite developed. The new facilities are enabling the hospital to carry out an additional 1,000 NHS operations a year and more than 3,500 endoscopy procedures.

Excellent medical imaging leads to better and more timely diagnosis. The past 12 months has also seen Care UK invest almost £1.5 million in state-of-the-art diagnostic imaging equipment. At Barlborough NHS Treatment Centre, in Derbyshire, an investment of £750,000 in a new mobile MRI scanner unit saw capacity at the centre increased as well as providing a mobile MRI service that can be taken out to more rural areas of Lincolnshire.

This is one of the new generation of MRI scanners which produce high quality images, scan more quickly and much quieter. The high-quality images and scanner capabilities also enable consultants to make quicker and more accurate diagnoses and that improves the subsequent planning of treatment, which leads to the most effective possible approach for Care UK patients at Barlborough and in Lincolnshire. The service is used to scan patients for a wide range of joint problems such as hips, knees, shoulders and spines.

At St. Mary's NHS Treatment Centre in Portsmouth and at Havant NHS Diagnostic Centre a £660,000 investment saw state-of-the-art digital x-ray equipment. Hospital Director Penny Daniels said: 'Digital radiography is the latest technology for x-rays, offering advanced image processing and greater contrast, detail and image quality. This will ensure consultants have the most accurate images with which to diagnose a patient's condition.

'This innovative technology also allows radiographers to obtain high quality images using less radiation, which further increases the safety of the procedure. The new equipment produces a digital x-ray image in just two seconds with radiographers being able to tell immediately if repeat images are needed.

'Previously patients would have to wait for up to five minutes, often having to return to the waiting rooms, until the radiographer processed and reviewed the image. The new system will give us capacity to see more patients and make the experience a lot smoother for them.'

In Rochdale, the ophthalmology team that in May became the first ever to receive an 'outstanding' grade from the CQC created a new mobile macular service that will help to save the sight of people across the North West. The £300,000 investment will see the service - that has a 48-hour referral-to-treatment pathway - support patients across Greater Manchester, Preston, South Ribble, Glossop and Tameside.

AMD nurse practitioner Lynn Ford, who will be helping to deliver the Rochdale service, said: 'Patients come to us at a time in their lives when they are feeling particularly vulnerable. They may have started to lose their central vision, and the thought of having injections into their eye may also cause anxiety.'

'Previous patients have told us that at a time when their vision is compromised and their confidence affected, trips to large, imposing hospitals can be frightening. We bring our service into the community, arranging appointments at the closest location to a patient's home in a smaller, friendlier, more welcoming environment.'

Finally, in Gillingham, Kent, an investment of £165,000 has seen a set of improvements designed to increase patient safety and dignity at Care UK's Will Adams NHS Treatment Centre. Improvements include more single-sex treatment areas and additional consultation rooms, as well as a new recovery suite where patients recovering from a general anaesthetic will be supported by a medical team before they return to the ward.

Hospital director Kerry White said: 'Maintaining our patients' dignity throughout their treatment is very important to our team and we believe these improvements will make people feel even more comfortable and secure. The expansion of the consultation rooms also marks our further progress in improving and

increasing our services for the benefit of people across the Medway area.'

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