



Issued: 10 June 2019  
Embargo: Immediate

## **Community Stroke Prevention event in Whitehaven on 14 June**

Free health checks are being offered by a community group in Copeland which wants to reduce the number of people having a stroke.

The Copeland Community Stroke Prevention Project is made up of, Rotary, the West Cumbrians' Voice for Healthcare, the Stroke Association, NWAS, Healthwatch Cumbria, Public Health, pharmacies and the local NHS. The group will be offering blood pressure and pulse rating testing to look for atrial fibrillation at the Whitehaven Traders Day on June 14th in the ground of St Nicholas Church in Whitehaven.

High blood pressure and atrial fibrillation are known to significantly increase your chance of having a stroke, but can be treated relatively easily.

Rotarian Kevin Walsh has helped organise the event. He said: "Health and Wellbeing is a key area of focus for Rotarians around the world. Being active in our communities is important to us and we are pleased to be hosting the event and sharing our experience from other parts of Cumbria."

There will also be advice on the things people can do to improve their own health, such as healthy eating, taking more exercise and stopping smoking which are key to reducing the chance of having a stroke.

Jon Ward from the West Cumbrians' Voice for Healthcare said: "Knowing that up to 85% of strokes could possibly be avoided, we campaigned for a stroke prevention programme in West Cumbria and Copeland in particular. This brought together a partnership that is providing simple tests for stroke risk factors that can be treated. Three pharmacies in the area are offering free drop-in testing and on Friday we have the first stand hosted at an event happening this summer."

Cumbria Community Pharmacy is offering testing at three pharmacies in Copeland which started in the Spring. They have tested 34 people, 14 people then followed up

with home monitoring using a portable blood pressure testing device. One person was referred urgently for more tests and four others have taken the home monitoring data to be followed up for an informed discussion with their GP.

Lynn McFarlane from Community Pharmacy Cumbria said: “Pharmacies are at the heart of their community and being able to offer this testing to people who may be worried and keen to check their blood pressure close to home is really important.

“We offer anyone who hasn’t been previously diagnosed with high blood pressure, the chance to monitor at home so when they return we have a detailed picture and can recommend any next steps if they are needed.”

The pharmacies taking part are Mirehouse Pharmacy, the Seacliffe Pharmacy in Kells, and Seascale Pharmacy.

NHS North Cumbria CCG is also working with NHS England to support a project to identify people who may be known to have risk factors but aren’t being actively treated.

The programme will use clinical pharmacists to review GP patient records and identify people who have been diagnosed with AF but are not receiving anticoagulation therapy and review their cases in a ‘virtual clinic’ with GPs to develop a treatment plan.

People who may want to have a blood pressure test (a cuff around your arm) or an atrial fibrillation (a check of your pulse) can consider the following options:

- 1) Come along on the 14th June to the Whitehaven Traders Day in St Nicholas Gardens
- 2) Visit one of the pharmacies taking part in our special stroke prevention project listed overleaf
- 3) Make an appointment at your GP Practice – it doesn’t need to be with your GP a healthcare assistant or practice nurse can do the tests and talk about the results
- 4) Ask any pharmacist or health care professional about healthy eating, smoking cessation and taking up physical activity advice if you want support

The event in St Nicholas Gardens in Whitehaven on the 14th is open to all.

<Ends>

### **Notes to Editors**

- Kevin Walsh from Rotary will be available for interview ahead of the event or on the day (by prior arrangement) through Julie Clayton

- The project has been supported by NHS England and The National Lottery Community Fund through the Building Health Partnerships programme
- For more information about risk factors and stroke [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)
- The NHS England and NHS North Cumbria CCG programme will support primary care to increase rates of anticoagulation in people with AF to reduce their risk of stroke. North Cumbria CCG is one of 21 demonstrator site CCGs across England.
- As many as 85 % of strokes could possibly be avoided by treating some risk factors and making positive health choices such as losing weight, taking more exercise
- For more information contact Julie Clayton and Kieron Bradshaw at NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group on 01768 245 490
- Find out more about Building Health Partnership in Cumbria here: <http://www.northcumbriahealthandcare.nhs.uk/building-health-partnerships/>