

Hundreds more North Staffordshire patients helped by fracture service



Jonathan Wilkes is pictured with staff from the fracture liaison service. Dr Zoe Paskins is shown in the centre of the front row.

Hundreds more bone disease patients are being offered vital support to avoid serious fractures after a top-rated service was expanded.

The fracture liaison service is based at Burslem's Haywood Hospital and is now helping up to 2,000 people a year. They are given scans to diagnose conditions like osteoporosis and also receive assessments and advice to reduce the risks of suffering life-changing injuries from falls.

Previously, only people living in Stoke-on-Trent could be directly referred to the team by other staff from Haywood or Royal Stoke University Hospital. At-risk patients from Newcastle and the Moorlands had to be referred by their GPs to access the extra help.

It meant as many as 300 patients were slipping through the net and missing out on the benefits of early intervention.

Now a celebration event has been held to mark the extended provision, with panto star Jonathan Wilkes invited to unveil a plaque at the Haywood. He was joined by staff from the service, which has been ranked as one of the best in the country.

Dr Zoe Paskins, a consultant rheumatologist and clinical lead for osteoporosis services, said: "It's about identifying people who have a fragility fracture. That's something such as falling over while standing and breaking your wrist.

"We then help prevent a second fracture. It includes giving lifestyle advice in terms of smoking, weight and diet. Those who have osteoporosis also have treatment that reduces their chances of another fracture."

It is now helping to reduce the number of people who break a hip or struggle to recover after another injury. The intervention also enables patients to lead more independent lives.

The expansion was made possible after North Staffordshire clinical commissioning group (CCG) committed to funding the service for patients on its patch. Stoke-on-Trent CCG was already commissioning the support for city residents.

The National Osteoporosis Society helped the fracture team draw up a business case.

Fizz Thompson, clinical and operations director at charity, said: "Broken bones can have a devastating impact on people's lives – a problem which can be addressed by early identification of osteoporosis. Fracture liaison services are a proven way of addressing this issue."

Norma O'Grady, from Adderley Green, was referred to the team in March when she took a tumble at Uttoxeter Racecourse.

The 79-year-old great-gran said: "I fell and broke my wrist quite badly. As I was waiting to see the doctor at Royal Stoke, a lady from the Haywood came to talk to me and it went from there.

"I had a scan and was diagnosed with osteoporosis. I've now had one injection and will have more every six months. The service is very good. I do a lot of exercise anyway, which is helping to strengthen my wrist."

The celebration event, which was supported by the Haywood Foundation, took place this week.

Unveiling the plaque, entertainer Jonathan said: "Units like this will do a great deal to help prevent future fractures. I'm proud to support the unit."