The Warm Homes Healthy People project is dedicated to keeping the vulnerable residents of Suffolk warmer and healthier in their home at any time of year.

We assist the following vulnerable households on a low income including:

- Those with children aged under 5
- The elderly
- Anyone with a long term health condition and/or disability.

We recognise the importance of early intervention, to avoid the patient reaching a crisis point which costs the health system precious time and money. The project can provide assistance in the form of:

- Emergency fuel payments to keep the heating on
- Free energy surveys of the home to identify essential improvements
- Loan of heaters when heating breaks down or is inadequate
- Funding towards the cost of emergency boiler repairs and replacements

In essence we are providing first aid to your patients’ homes!

Tell us who needs help. Which vulnerable patients could we make a difference to? How many patients health could we improve? With YOUR help referring to our project, we can help to:

- Reduce GP visits
- Reduce emergency hospital admissions
- Reduce re-admissions.
- Reduce the number of delayed discharges
- SAVE money
- SAVE time
- SAVE lives

You can refer your patients via our secure email address: warmhomereerrals@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk or phone our local rate helpline which can be used by patients 08456 037 686.

Some Family Carers are already benefitting from Respite on Prescription, which is being offered by GP’s in West Suffolk.

Family carers will very often sacrifice their own health needs as they seek to care for someone else. They will refuse hospital appointments, elective procedures and even more necessary longer hospital admissions because they do not feel able to leave the person they care for, as they do not know what will happen to them.

The initial ‘respite prescriptions’ have included hospital visits for back surgery, hip replacements, hysterectomy, eye treatments and chemotherapy to mention just a few.

In each of these cases the doctor has simply put basic details on the prescription form and given it to the family carer. The family carer then phones Suffolk Family Carers, and they do the rest.

Prescription pads have been supplied to every doctor in West Suffolk. Suffolk Family Carers are encouraging family carers to use this service, as they seek to prevent elective and diagnostic hospital visits turning into an emergency admission.

One recipient of a respite prescription said: “Thanks to respite on prescription, I went to hospital with no worry about my husband. He was looked after very well at the home. If you help others the way you helped me, well there is no room for improvement, carry on the good work.”

For further information please call Jan Brittain on 07557 633 724 or Emily Meadows on 07557 630 965.
ADMISSION AVOIDANCE FOR ACUTE EXACERBATIONS OF COPD

By Linda Pearce, Respiratory Nurse Consultant, West Suffolk Hospital

A significant number of patients can be safely and effectively treated and maintained at home.

Referral criteria consists of a confirmed diagnosis of COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) with current exacerbation being treated with antibiotics and/or prednisolone, where hospital admission would be considered if our services did not exist.

Through the use of a standard treatment regime and using their clinical judgement, the experienced COPD specialist nursing team will visit the patient at home on the same day. Daily reviews will take place through the acute phase. The team are supported by clinical lead Linda Pearce, respiratory consultant nurse, who works across the community and West Suffolk Hospital.

The GP and referrer are advised if the patient is accepted into the service and when the patient is discharged. Other key components of the service include home oxygen assessment, assisted discharge and pulmonary rehabilitation.

Initial contact with the service is via a fax/telephone referral to the Care Coordination Centre by calling 0300 123 2425 or faxing 01473 276470/1/2/3/4.

AGE UK SUFFOLK DEMENTIA ADVISOR SERVICE

By Sam Curry, Team Leader - North Suffolk and Dementia Specialist, Age UK Suffolk

Age UK Suffolk Dementia Advisor Service is funded and supported by Suffolk Council County. The service works in partnership with Sue Ryder Care, Suffolk Family Carers and Alzheimer's Society. The four organisations are working together to improve the lives of people with dementia and their family carers.

The service has been supporting people in Suffolk since September 2012 with the remit to provide information, advice and guidance to any Suffolk resident who has a diagnosis of dementia and their family carer. Each advisor covers a district and is underpinned by a dementia advisor volunteer assistant/s. Dementia advisors use a person centred approach, tailoring advice and guidance to an individual's needs. They give the person more choice in order to help them understand what services are available and how to get them, and enable people to understand and manage the illness effectively, maintaining quality of life so they can live well and make informed choices for their future.

Advisors also provide information that people need at the time and in the way that they need it. Advisors are available after diagnosis and throughout a person's journey with dementia. The advisors can be available by phone or through personal visits to a person's home. One of the key benefits is that they are there to listen to the concerns and needs of each person and their family carer, endeavouring to answer any questions people might have or provide help to find the right answer. There is the added value of enabling quicker access to benefits and support, therefore improving the person's ability to live independently and most importantly - helping to prevent situations deteriorating and responding to any concerns or problems quickly.

If you or someone you care for has a diagnosis of dementia, please ring Age UK Suffolk Dementia Services on 01473 353 055 or email dementia@ageuk.suffolk.org

If you do not have a diagnosis of dementia but are concerned about memory loss and would like more information and advice, please ring 24 Hour Suffolk Dementia Helpline (managed and operated by Sue Ryder Care) on 01473 353 350.

TELE-DERMATOLOGY

By Hannah Neumann-May, Redesign Project Manager

Many dermatological conditions can be triaged and/or diagnosed by qualified specialists from good photographic images, and can be managed in the community by GPs or community clinics.

Teledermatology allows specialists to examine and triage cases from photographic images and, within an average response time of 48 hours, recommend referrals to secondary care where appropriate but otherwise triage cases back to the community with a suitable management plan.

Teledermatology is the delivery of dermatological services using telecommunication technologies. It is a continually evolving sub-speciality of dermatology and an area of rapid growth. West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group has completed the procurement process to secure provision of a 12 month service, appointing Vantage Diagnostics Ltd™ to provide this service - they are a UK-based company that offer a web-based system that can be integrated with existing NHS clinical IT systems, along with imaging equipment (digital SLR cameras, iPhones or USB dermoscope) and training for clinicians and nurses. Vantage have carried out pilot projects in Hampshire, Bristol and Hillingdon using both geographically remote and local UK dermatologists. Practice set-up costs are around £1,000, with a tariff per referral of approximately £33.

The roll out of the Teledermatology service across West Suffolk is scheduled to commence on Tuesday 2 September 2014. Further details can be obtained by contacting Dr Nick Rayner (nicholas.rayner@nhs.net).