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For local media

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust scoops prestigious healthcare innovation award**

An interactive online video programme to help patients with rheumatoid arthritis at increased risk of cardiovascular disease has won a prestigious award.

Love Your Heart is a joint project between The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust's consultant rheumatologist Dr Holly John and the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society. It has picked up an award celebrating the very best of innovation in healthcare around the West Midlands.

Love Your Heart educates patients with rheumatoid arthritis about the risks of CVD, which increase due to both their RA as well as established risk factors such as diabetes, high cholesterol or smoking.

Dr Holly John initially ran an educational programme at Russells Hall Hospital for rheumatoid arthritis patients as part of a research study, with the support of her trust colleagues Ann Marsh in dietetics, Sally Hinsley from smoking cessation, Liz Hale in health psychology, and George Metsios, a research collaborator from Wolverhampton University.

Working with an interactive video producer, Streaming Well, NRAS has made the Love Your Heart programme widely available to everyone with RA or inflammatory arthritis via their website, so that they can find out whether they are at increased risk of CVD and, if necessary, provide tools to help them lower that risk.

The trust was given the gong in the *Supporting Self Care and Prevention of Illness Innovation Award* category of the West Midlands Academic Health Science Network's third annual Meridian Celebration of Innovation Awards.

The awards recognise and celebrate the work of individuals and organisations in developing better healthcare and economic benefit for the region. The judges said Love Your Heart provided a good example of a collaborative and thoughtful approach, meeting a defined and known need.

The four-year study was part of a broader programme of research projects conducted by the rheumatology department in Dudley, working with collaborators from multiple universities, into CVD in RA, which has helped inform national and international guidelines.

One participant said: "Doing this programme was life-changing for me – it gave me the knowledge, the confidence and the stimulation I needed to take action to change my life. I cancelled my Sky subscription, joined a gym and started swimming. It's changed my life in a very positive way."

The award was presented by Dr Sue Ibbotson from Public Health England at the Birmingham Conference and Events Centre.

Dr Holly John said: "I was delighted with the award, which recognises the huge amount of research that takes place within the rheumatology department here in Dudley and celebrates the achievements that can be made by collaborating with the charity sector. I would particularly like to thank all the patients who contributed to the original research study"

Love Your Heart can be accessed via the National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society website.

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