

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **New screening test that improves early diagnosis of bowel cancer launched in Dudley**

An innovative life-saving screening programme has been launched by The Dudley Group to help prevent bowel cancer.

The 15-minute procedure, called a flexible sigmoidoscopy, helps prevent bowel cancer at its earliest stages by detecting and removing small growths called polyps that could become cancerous in the future.

Men and women in Dudley aged 55 are being invited by post to attend the one-off procedure at Russells Hall Hospital. The programme is being run in conjunction with The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust.

Consultant Gastroenterologist and clinical director Dr Neil Fisher, said, "As with all cancers, the earlier it is detected the easier it is to treat and the higher the chance of survival for patients.

"Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in the UK and around one in every 18 people will get it at some point in their lifetime but, when caught early, it is one of the most treatable types of cancer.

"It really is so important that if people are invited to have the test that they take us up on the offer. Unfortunately, national statistics show us that only around half of those who are invited actually have a sigmoidoscopy," added Dr Fisher.

"Dudley is one of the first trusts in the West Midlands to offer this type of screening, putting us at the forefront of the bowel cancer testing in England, so I would encourage anyone invited to have the test to take advantage of this effective procedure."

People already aged over 55 will not receive an invitation to be screened but they can request to be screened at any time up until their 60th birthday by calling 0800 707 60 60 to ask for an appointment or by visiting their GP. They can do this even if they received an invitation but decided not to take up the offer at the time.

People between the age of 60 and 75 will still be invited to take part in the national screening programme using a home screening kit every two years as usual.

\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\*

Information for editors:

- Flexible sigmoidoscopy, or bowel scope screening, uses a thin flexible tube with a tiny camera on the end to look at the large bowel to find and remove polyps. Polyps do not usually cause symptoms but some might turn into cancer if they are not removed.
- Our Bowel Scope Screening (flexible sigmoidoscopy) programme is being run in partnership with The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

For more information, please call Alice Ford, Communications Assistant for The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, on (01384) 456111 extension 1419 or email [alice.ford@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:alice.ford@dgh.nhs.uk)