



Dr Caroline Jeffery with Advanced Paramedic Wesley Scaife and a patient

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## **Outstanding academic is spearheading research to shape the future of GP practices**

An academic at Northumbria University has been praised by a health and social care watchdog for her work in inspiring the next generation of healthcare professionals, as she helps to spearhead new research into the role paramedics are playing in GP practices.

Dr Caroline Jeffery is a Senior Lecturer in Advanced Clinical Practice at Northumbria and is also a managing GP partner with Dr Niamh Telford at

Cheveley Park Medical Centre which provides care and treatment to around 4,350 patients in Durham. The centre is a teaching practice for trainee medics.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC), the independent regulator of health and social care services in England, has carried out an inspection at the practice in Belmont, Durham which rated it outstanding and praised the work of Dr Jeffery with her students.

Dr Jeffery currently has two trainee Advanced Paramedics on placements at the practice, as part of an innovative new research project - believed to be the first of its kind - running in partnership with the University. They are looking at how they can help alleviate the pressure on GPs and offer a more accessible service to patients.

She explains: “The GP workforce is struggling with a national GP shortage whilst at the same time GPs are seeing patients with far more complex cases. Advanced Paramedics at our practice are seeing patients independently and we are facilitating that. They have the skills to go on home visits and can alleviate some of the work for GPs, offering different perspectives.

“Our research is around what impact this is having on the workforce and is running alongside the placement. It is linked to equipping the workforce with roles which are articulated in NHS planning documents the Five Year Forward View and Ten Year Plan.”

The research is being led by Senior Lecturer Daniel Monk, Programme Leader for Urgent and Unplanned Care within the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health. He said interviews would be conducted with GPs and paramedics as part of the research.

“Paramedics are playing an increasing role in the prevention and management of acute hospital admissions in the community, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan. Our research will examine new perspectives on how this will be achieved by Advanced Paramedics in a primary care setting.

“Having Paramedics working so closely in GP surgeries is certainly new in the North East. Paramedics work with GPs in their traditional role however, not as directly and autonomously as the Advanced Paramedics in our programme.

There is a notable gap in this research area both nationally and internationally and our research will begin to develop an understanding of how the GP and Paramedic relationship and roles function in the general practice environment.”

Wesley Scaife, a student on the Advanced Paramedic Master Course at Northumbria, has worked as a paramedic for 14 years and is currently training to be an advanced practitioner.

“As part of my training I am studying at Northumbria University which involves completing a placement within a GP practice. As a paramedic, working within a GP practice has helped me to develop my knowledge and skills within a primary care setting. It gives me a rounded view of the NHS healthcare system and also enables me to be part of research which could change the way healthcare is delivered to patients. The NHS is always changing and evolving and through my studies with Northumbria I am able to be a part in this. I really enjoy the variety of patients that I see.”

Meanwhile the CQC report found that leaders were ‘keen to inspire the next generation of primary care clinicians’ and cited ‘the enthusiasm and commitment of leaders to offer such wide-ranging opportunities to medical students’.

Dr Jeffery, a part time Senior Lecturer at the University who has been working across GP and academia roles for two years, said: “This is testament to the hard work of the practice team who are very supportive and recognise the importance of this inspection.

“Being able to inspire the next generation of GPs, nurses, and everyone that comes through our University doors is a real honour and privilege. I had really exceptional teaching when I was a trainee doctor, which inspired me to enter into the field myself.”

Joanne Atkinson, Associate Head of the Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health, added: “This is a really good opportunity to showcase the collaboration we have working with a GP practice and the commitment we are making to primary care with Caroline as a Senior Lecturer.”

Both women co-authored a chapter entitled End of Life Care in Dementia in a

book called Namaste Care for People Living with Advanced Dementia, which is aimed at students and also received praise in the report.

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