**Patients in Somerset with post-menopausal bleeding will be able to self-refer directly to the Bleeding After Menopause service at Somerset FT from September 2023.**

The new Bleeding After Menopause self referral service will be for women who have gone through the menopause (not had a period for 12 months or longer) who experience unexplained vaginal bleeding or unusual discharge, with the aim of providing an earlier diagnosis of endometrial / womb cancer and improving outcomes for patients.

We also hope that this approach will support GP colleagues with your ever-increasing workload as women will be able to refer directly to the Somerset FT’s gynaecology booking team.  This service will be accessible for patients with a registered GP in Somerset.

Please note that this is not a service to investigate women with unscheduled bleeding on HRT.  Anyone on HRT must have stopped for at least 6 weeks and still be bleeding to meet the service criteria; those women still taking HRT or have not stopped for the full 6 weeks will be directed to their GP.

To access the service there will be a referral form which can be completed online or over the phone for those without online access. Where patients do not meet the criteria, we will be directing them to their GP, and ask that those who are unable to self refer are supported in the traditional way by their GP surgery.

Later this month we will be providing further information on the accepted criteria, the self referral link, website address, and resources which can be displayed in the GP waiting room with a downloadable A4 or A3 poster and an image for a digital screen and ask that you help us promote the service with your patients. This will enable receptionists to signpost post menopausal women with unexplained bleeding or discharge to the service, instead of an appointment at their GP surgery in the first instance.

A radio, bus, print and digital campaign will raise awareness of the symptoms and the service will be launched at the beginning of October and will run throughout October, November & December.

Leading this work is Mr David Milliken, a consultant gynaecological oncologist at Somerset FT. David said “We estimate that we’ll see approximately 45 patients a week at our clinics, which will be run in various locations across the county.  During the one stop clinic appointment patients will receive an ultrasound scan followed by an appointment with a clinician who will conduct an examination, discuss past medical history, review the ultrasound scan and take a pipelle biopsy if required.

“We are seeing a year-on-year increase in referrals to our gynaecology cancer services from women who potentially have cancer – mainly those who’re experiencing post-menopausal bleeding. In fact, over the last year we’ve seen a greater than 30% increase in the number of patients needing our care and treatment so improving access to the service is hoped to encourage women to come forward at the earliest point, which can reduce the treatment needed and lead to the best outcomes for these patients.”

If you would like further information from the team, please email pmbgynae@somersetft.nhs.uk  or phone 01823 213567