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Award win for child mental health team

An initiative which is helping children in Sunderland to overcome anxiety was a winner at the inaugural Patient Safety and Care Awards.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Sunderland Community Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service won the 'Mental Health' category for 'Fun Friends' – a group programme for children, aged four to seven, with anxiety-related issues.

Trust Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert said: "This is wonderful news and I am delighted that the team has received recognition at a national level for its valuable work with such a vulnerable section of society: it demonstrates that the staff are at the very top of their profession."

The initiative focuses on enabling children experiencing social phobia, separation anxiety and general fears, such as of the dark, of dogs, of lifts and of toilets, to become more self-sufficient in order to improve their emotional wellbeing and reduce their anxieties. It involves the use of cognitive behavioural therapy techniques to change unhelpful thoughts to helpful ones and the development of coping plans to deal with their fears. Preliminary results from a pilot scheme were very positive, indicating reduced anxiety in all six children who took part. Now, it is being rolled out and there are plans for more involvement of parents and school staff.

Donna Carlyle, Early Years Mental Health Specialist with the winning team, said: "Social and emotional development within the early years of life is of great importance. Serious emotional disturbance before the age of six may interfere with emotional, cognitive and physical development, predisposing children to a lifetime of problems in schools and at home."

The Patient Safety and Care Awards 2014 (www.patientsafetyandcareawards.com) were jointly organised by Health Service Journal (HSJ) and Nursing Times, part of EMAP Publishing Limited. More than 1,000 senior healthcare managers, directors and practitioners gathered at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, London to salute individuals and organisations involved in work that is driving the quality, clinical efficiency, effectiveness and safety agendas at the same time.



Jenni Middleton, Editor, Nursing Times, said: "Those organisations shortlisted have listened to the feedback of service users and patients, thought about where they could make improvements that will have dramatic benefits to patient outcomes and transformed the way they deliver care. But what separates them from their peers is that they have done so with the involvement of every single member of the team."

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Pictured above: The first photograph is: The winning Sunderland Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service team

The second photograph is: Michealla (correct) Lincoln and Christine Brace receiving the award on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Sunderland Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service, with Ben Thomas, Professional Adviser for Mental Health, Learning Disability Nursing and Dementia Care, at the Department of Health, centre, Jenni Middleton, Editor, Nursing Times, left, and Alastair McLellan, Editor-in-Chief, Health Service Journal, right.

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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