



October 24th, 2014

## Chance to find out more about award-winning child health service

An award-winning initiative, which is helping children to overcome anxiety, will be in the spotlight at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Medicine for Members meeting on Monday, November 3rd.

The Trust's Sunderland Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service won the mental health category of this year's national Patient Safety and Care Awards for 'Fun Friends' – a group programme for children aged four to seven with anxiety-related issues.

It aims to enable children experiencing social phobia, separation anxiety, general anxiety and specific 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. The programme 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.

Primary Mental Health Specialist Christine Brace 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 Medicine for Members meeting on Monday, November 3rd, will be at 2.30pm in the Lecture Theatre in the Education Centre at South Tyneside District Hospital, with refreshments available from 2pm. These regular meetings are an opportunity to find out about the work of South Tyneside Foundation Trust. Anyone wishing to attend is asked to contact the membership line on 0191 2024121 during office hours or to leave a message. This is also the number to ring if you are not currently a member but would like to find out more about joining. The Trust provides hospital services in South Tyneside and community health services in South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead. Membership is free and is open to residents in



all three areas who are over the age of 16. Members receive regular updates about the work of the Trust and are invited to events, meetings and presentations on health issues.

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*Pictured above: The award-winning Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service team*

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

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