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Team in line for award – with a little help from their friends

An award-winning health service which is making a difference to the lives of children and families in Sunderland is up for another honour.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Community Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is in the running for the title of 'Team of the Year' in the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA) Awards.

Their 'Fun Friends' group programme for children aged four to seven tackles anxiety-related issues including social phobia, general fears such as of the dark, of dogs, of lifts and of toilets, and obsessive compulsive disorder. Using cognitive behavioural therapy techniques, it enables them to become more self-sufficient by developing their emotional and social skills. Results from a pilot scheme were very positive, indicating reduced anxiety in all those who took part. Last year, the same initiative won the 'Mental Health' category of the Health Service Journal and Nursing Times' Patient Safety and Care Awards.

Trust Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert said: "We are very proud of our CAMHS and it is fantastic for the staff to receive national recognition such as this for the tremendous work which they do."

Donna Carlyle, Early Years Mental Health Specialist, said: "Serious emotional disturbance before the age of six may predispose children to a lifetime of problems in schools and at home so social and emotional development within the early years of life is of great importance." The winners of the CPHVA Awards will be revealed on Friday, March 27th.

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Pictured above: Sunderland Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service team

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

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