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Trust's learning disability service up for national award

A successful South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust project which has increased the uptake of bowel cancer screening among people with a learning disability is in line for a national award. It has been shortlisted in the Improving Safety and Quality in Primary Care category of the Patient Safety Awards 2015.

Trust Chief Executive Lorraine Lambert said: "I am very proud of our community learning disability service and I am delighted that they have received this much-deserved recognition for their outstanding practice."

The team was concerned at the low number of adults with a learning disability in South Tyneside and Gateshead taking part in the national bowel cancer screening programme for 60 to 74-year-olds. In December 2014, the team launched a 12-week, intensive project to improve this, involving easy-to-read letters about the screening, a training presentation for carers and the community learning disability nurses, and the introduction of a specific appointment to discuss the test with the individual, carers or family. At the end of it, 61% of those who had been involved in a discussion about the screening did the test - compared to the national average for the general population of 60% - 18% of whom required further follow-up.

Safe Care Lead Peter Nash said: "The project proved highly successful in increasing uptake by raising awareness of the importance of the screening and educating carers and families and our staff on how to support the person with a learning disability to take the test. We are now considering adapting the same principles for screening for other cancers."

The Patient Safety Awards, organised by Health Service Journal and the Nursing Times, will be announced at the Patient Safety Congress in Birmingham, July 6th-7th.

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Pictured above: Chief Executive, Lorraine Lambert

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

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