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Prestigious national award for learning disability service

A project which has increased uptake of bowel cancer screening among adults with a learning disability living in South Tyneside and Gateshead has received a national health award.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's Learning Disability service won the Communicating Effectively with Patients and Families category of the Patient Experience Network (PEN) awards. Their specially-developed programme has proved highly successful in increasing uptake by raising awareness of the importance of the screening and educating carers and families and staff on how to support the person with a learning disability to take the test. The same project was a finalist in the Staff Engagement/Improving Staff Experience section of the awards, which recognise best practice in the experience of care in health and social care in the UK.

Trust staff were also runners-up in four other categories and a finalist in another.

Chief Executive Steve Williamson said: "Staff in our community learning disability team are totally dedicated to supporting people with a learning disability to achieve positive outcomes in their lives and I am delighted that their innovative practice has been honoured in this way.

"I am very proud of all the staff who made it to the finals of these prestigious awards. The number and variety of categories for which they were selected, including communicating effectively, bringing patient experience closer to home, innovative use of technology, partnership working and support for caregivers, demonstrates the extremely high calibre and broad range of skills and expertise of our workforce."

The other Trust finalists were:

- South Tyneside Children's Community Nursing Team, which is believed to be one of the few of its kind in the country using Entinor for pain relief for children during invasive nursing procedures in their homes. This is preventing pain, discomfort and distress for children and their families.
- Diabetic Screening's 'one-stop' service for healthcare checks for diabetic patients, which was introduced last year by the Trust and NHS South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group to bring together nine separate annual health checks in a single appointment.



- A project whereby pregnant women at South Tyneside District Hospital receive regular text messages relevant to the stage of their pregnancy, reminding them of planned appointments and providing advice and reassurance.
- Staff in day services at St Benedict's Hospice and Centre for Specialist Palliative Care, Sunderland, for the development of a carers' support service.
- The Special Needs Speech and Language Therapy team in Gateshead, which has a rapid response pathway to raise parents' and carers' awareness of the role of the speech and language therapist and of the care pathways and therapy options available to them. The aim is to develop understanding of their child's difficulties, whilst empowering them with strategies to give support themselves.

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Pictured above: Members of the award-winning Learning Disability service, left to right, head of the service Tracey Peters, safe care lead Peter Nash, community nurse Janis Conway, community support worker Emma Harris and Clinical Business Manager Mandy Bowler

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

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