

NHS North Durham Patient Congress

May 2018



On 22 May 2018 NHS North Durham held another of its Patient Congress events. This event took place in Lanchester Community Centre, as we continue to try to take our events and conversations to all parts of our local area.

This event had a specific focus on Learning Disability services and issues affecting individuals with a Learning Disability and their families. The event saw over 60 people join staff from the CCG to hear about some of the latest developments regarding these services and contribute their views and experiences.

The event was opened by Dr David Smart, the Clinical Chair of NHS North Durham CCG. Dr Smart provided some key updates which included;

- The new Community Services contract for County Durham and Darlington,
- The recent Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies engagement and
- The pending implementation of [Care Navigation](#) in GP practice across the County



We then welcomed, Dr Chandra Anand to talk to attendees about a range of aspects to care for people who have a Learning disability. This included getting a diagnosis, receiving equitable treatment and access to healthcare as well as a specific focus on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This can be where some children and young people with a learning disability need more support than their setting can provide with the

resources they have. Nationally there have been reforms introduced in 2014 which services have responded to in the ways they work with and support young people and their families.

The CCG had received an inspection in relation to its SEND services in November 2017 which highlighted some areas for improvement. As a result, the CCG has been working very hard (along with partners in Durham County Council and service providers) to look at what can be done to make the necessary improvements for patients, their families and carers.



This has included a completely new governance structure to manage what is happening, more work to understand and respond to local health needs of people with a Learning Disability, plans for further training across multiple services and improved consultation in relation to therapy services.

- Julie Tucker then spoke to the group about various cancer and screening programmes that are in place to help ensure people with a Learning Disability are supported in the same way as anyone else to look after their health.



- Michaela Hopps (From Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust) spoke about annual health checks, what they are and why it is important for someone with a Learning disability to have one done.
- Chris Nash (from SEND Information, Advice and Support service) spoke to attendees about the advocacy service in County Durham. What this service was able to offer and how it was here to help individuals and their families.



Following this there was dedicated time for table discussion where attendees could share their experience and suggestions for the future in relation to;

- Annual Health Checks
- Cancer Screening
- Children's Therapies



Through these discussions, the attendees were able to share their views directly with staff from the CCG as well as the clinicians in the room about what they felt worked for them and what could be improved.

The staff commented after the event at how insightful and beneficial it had been to have the opportunity to sit down and talk about the issues directly.



The staff were able to come away from the event with new understandings and ideas for how they can look at continuing to improve the care and support that is available for individuals with a Learning Disability and their families.

As usual we also had a range of information stalls present on the day to provide attendees with further information about a range of services that are available in County Durham.

