



Making a difference to patients, families and your local health and social care services in Darlington every day!

What the Health Connectors have been up to during July and August 2018

Community Outreach:

Once again our wonderful volunteer Health Connectors have been out and about in Darlington informing people about the work of Healthwatch Darlington, asking their opinions and offering information and signposting.

Mental Health:

Health Connectors have continued their engagement across Darlington speaking with families and young people about mental health services for children and young people. Visits included The Education Village, YMCA, Humankind (formerly DISC) and Monday market stall. Lots of feedback was given and research surveys completed.

We conducted a focus group with people who have a drug or alcohol addiction and who use mental health services. This has given us an insight into the problems that they may face when accessing services.

Further engagement will be taking place with individuals on a one to one basis and this will give them an opportunity to tell us their real life patient story.

Enter & View:

Our Health Connectors have continued with care home visits; five care homes were visited during May and June and our second Care Home Experience report has been produced. Feedback from residents and families was very good with residents happy with their home and families feeling their relative was looked after.

Volunteer of the Month:

To show our appreciation for our Health Connector's time and commitment to Healthwatch Darlington we regularly select one volunteer who has stood out through their personal development and enthusiasm to receive recognition as 'Volunteer of the Month'. We would like to congratulate Gill Waite who received her award at the end of June 2018.

To read Gill's interview please visit:

<http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk/content/volunteering>



Welcome New Health Connectors

We have welcomed four new Health Connectors to the team who bring a variety of skills and a wealth of experience to Healthwatch Darlington. We look forward to having them on board.

Mental Health Project: As our engagement continues throughout August 2018 looking at children and young people's mental health and substance misuse our Health Connectors will be getting prepared to begin the process of collating research into our reports. We have willing volunteers who are eager to help with this.



Community Engagement: Our volunteers will continue to talk to the public through our community outreach sessions and events engaging in discussions around Health and Social Care services in Darlington.

Don't miss the Health Connectors at the following events in August:

- Darlington Pride, Monday 13th August 2018, 1:00pm-5:30pm, Darlington Market Square
- GOLD Tea Dance, Thursday 16th August 2018, 11:00am-3:00pm, Darlington Market Square.

Enter and View:

Hospital ward enter and views are planned for the future with three wards to be visited at Darlington Memorial Hospital in September which will be carried out with our neighbours Healthwatch County Durham.

Further Training:

Throughout July our new Health Connectors have taken part in our bespoke Healthwatch Darlington training which will give them the skills needed to support and represent Healthwatch and the wider community.

Further training is being organised by our Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator planned for the Autumn months with the view for Health Connectors to undertake Dementia friend and cancer awareness training.

Youthwatch Darlington:

Youthwatch are hoping to expand and are looking for new members.

This would be the perfect opportunity for students or any young people who have just left school/college looking to get involved with something along side their studies in the new academic year or for some work experience. It's fun and gives young people an opportunity to make a difference in their local town.

There is plenty to get involved with from social media assistance, video blogging, creative design for posters /leaflets, project assistance, event planning and creating reports.



To find out about our volunteering opportunities or to find out more about Youthwatch please contact Jemma Austin our Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator via j.austin@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk or on 01325 380145.

You can find more information about our Health Connector volunteering programme on our website via: <http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk/content/volunteering>