



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 from January - May 2018

Mental Health: Volunteers have been tirelessly researching across June with the aim to contribute to the mental health engagement taking place during July. Health Connectors have been looking at local, regional and national reports and priorities regarding families and young people using mental health services and substance misuse. We will be giving everyone the opportunity to get involved and to share their views during July.



Enter & View: We are continuing our visits to local care homes, having completed 3 with 2 to go. We have been made very welcome in all the homes we have visited. It has been a pleasure to visit the homes as most residents have a positive view of their life within their care home.

Volunteer Celebration & Recruitment event: Health connectors were invited to a special volunteer celebration and recruitment event on the 5th June 2018. This was to mark Volunteers Week and to celebrate what we have achieved so far in 2018.

The Health Connectors have visited 33 venues throughout January - May 2018 speaking to around 472 individuals about their health and social care services. For a small team of volunteer Health Connectors they have given a massive 449 hours of their time during this period which is excellent.

It was a fantastic day and our volunteers were recognised for their hard work. We want to thank everyone who attended and we hope to welcome some new volunteers to the team very soon.



From left: Gill Waite, Robert Upshall, Patricia Martin, Ross Bowman, Madi Scott, Lorraine Dunn, Jamie Odgers and Bill burrows



Our Future Plans

Mental Health Project: We will be continuing with our Mental Health project and developing two surveys. One for parents/carers and one for young people. These will be promoted via social media and our website across July. Our Health Connectors will also continue plans to carry out engagement across the summer months with the view to gather as many survey responses as possible from families and young people using mental health services.



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.

Research: Some of our Health Connectors will be researching and planning to engage with individuals living in Darlington who may have experiences to share when going through the screening and assessment process for continuing healthcare (CHC).

Outreach sessions in July:

We will be out and about across Darlington in July. We will be speaking to families and young people about mental health services. Don't miss this opportunity to share your views. You can talk to the Health Connectors on the following dates:

- Monday 9th July, Market Stall, Darlington Town Centre
- Monday 16th July, Market Stall, Darlington Town Centre
Monday 30th July all 9.00-3.00pm.
- Market stall, Darlington town centre
- Tuesday 31st July
Dolphin Centre. 11.00-2.00pm.

Volunteer Health Connector Training Programme:

We are looking for new volunteers to join the Health Connector volunteering team

The next 4 module training course is being delivered during July which is currently open with spaces available to join!

The training covers the following -

☆ **Introduction to Healthwatch Darlington**, 19th July, 10am-12pm

☆ **Roles of Volunteers**, 26th July, 10am-12pm

☆ **Listening and Communication Skills**, 2nd August, 10am -12pm

☆ **Representing Healthwatch Darlington**, 26th August, 10am-12pm

This training provides new volunteers with the skills and confidence to support Healthwatch Darlington and the wider community. What's more is its delivered by our very own CEO Michelle Thompson.

You can find more information about our Health Connector volunteering programme via our website where you will find our application packs and role descriptions:

<http://www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk/content/volunteering> or alternatively you can contact Jemma our Volunteer and Outreach coordinator via j.austin@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk

