

## **9. People's voices: What the community tells us**

Darlington Primary Care Trust and Darlington Borough Council both have procedures for listening to and responding to what people in Darlington tell us.

### **9.1 Darlington Primary Care Trust**

Darlington PCT recognises the importance of listening to local people and the wider community. The PCT has worked closely with partners in the voluntary sector and local authority to gain a better understanding of local peoples' views of NHS services. In doing so the PCT has sought the views, opinions and concerns from a cross section of community groups, organisations and from members of the public. The process has involved consulting local forums, networks, local voluntary organizations and participating in scheduled events, for example the locality based Talking Together events.

The PCT treats all complaints seriously and makes every effort to resolve each one quickly and efficiently, whilst at the same time looking to learn and improve services as a result. All complaints are channeled through the PCT Complaints Manager. Complaints are reviewed on a quarterly basis, in anonymised format, by the Complaints Review Panel, which is chaired by the Trust Chair.

The NHS Complaints Regulations 2004 and Amendment Regulations 2006 require the PCT to acknowledge all complaints within two working days of receipt and to provide a full response from the Chief Executive within 25 working days.

The PCT seeks to learn from all complaints and to make improvements to services. Complaints are valued as an important source of information and feedback on our services. As a result of complaint investigations during the past year, a number of improvements and changes to services have been made.

The following are just a few examples of actions resulting from complaints:

- Changes introduced to the Retinal Screening Service to improve telephone access for patients and location of cameras. Two new dedicated patient telephone lines and staff to man these introduced from December 2007
- Following a complaint regarding lack of communication with a patient's family, a communication sheet has been developed by the PCT to ensure that any changes in medication are communicated to a patient's family
- District nurses to ensure that they provide adequate explanations before delivering care to patients' and to ensure patients' privacy and dignity at all times

### **9.2 Darlington Borough Council**

The Leading Edge Strategy challenges the council to, 'act as a champion' for the interest of the citizen, responding to changing needs and expectations to provide more personalised services. Community Engagement is at the heart of this way of working and *Communities in Control: real people, real power* was launched in July 2008. The White Paper is about passing power to communities to drive real improvements.

Darlington Adult Social Services welcomes and responds positively to all comments, compliments, suggestions and complaints from whatever source as a means of demonstrating their commitment to working in partnership with service users, carers and the wider communities of Darlington.

### **Adult Social Care: complaints, comments and compliment highlights**

- A total of 115 representations were recorded during the year 2007/2008
- 62% of all feedback were compliments about the staff or services (71 out of 115)
- There were also eight enquiries where the issue was not pursued through the complaints process at the request of the individual (Complaint Related Enquiries - CREs)

### **9.3 Darlington Children's Trust**

The Tell Us 3 survey is an annual survey of children and young people conducted by Ofsted. The survey is a key tool for children and young people to say what they think and what they feel about a whole range of issues including services. The survey is used as part of the Children and Young People's Needs Analysis and therefore helped shape the priorities within the 2008-2009 annual Review. The majority of the responses for Darlington's young people were in line with the national averages with the exception of the following areas:-

- **Be Healthy**

**Alcohol:** Significantly more Darlington children have consumed alcohol and been drunk three or more times in the last four weeks (Darlington 9%, National 6%)

**Smoking:** Fewer young people in Darlington have smoked than the National response (Darlington 10%, National 11%)

**Drugs:** Significantly fewer Darlington children have ever taken drugs (Darlington 6%, National 9%)

**Information, Advice and Guidance:** A lower proportion of Darlington young people consider the IAG they receive as good enough in respect of smoking (Darlington 64%, National 70%) and drugs (Darlington 62%, National 67%)

**Worrying:** 5% more Darlington young people worry about exams and school work than the National average. (Exams- Darlington 62%, National 57%; School Work – Darlington 36%, National 31%)

- **Stay Safe**

**Bullying:** Pupils bullied '*at school*' shows a substantially higher number of Darlington's pupils have experienced bullying once a week in school (Darlington 5%, National 3%). Bullying '*somewhere else*' including traveling to and from school shows 30% of pupils having experienced some level of bullying in the past year

- **Enjoy and Achieve**

**School:** The responses to pupils' enjoyment of school show a substantial difference to the National responses with only 4% of respondents enjoying school all the time (National 8%) and only 41% of respondents learning a lot at school most of the time (National 46%)

**Activities:** 7% more young people in Darlington (53%) swim than the national average (46%); substantially fewer young people visit the cinema, theatre or libraries/museum (Darlington 42%/26%, National 56%/34%)

- **Making a positive contribution**

**Giving your views:** A significantly higher number of young people in Darlington have engaged with Youth Parliament activities (Darlington 11%, National 7%), while views given to School Councils were substantially lower (Darlington 15%, National 19%)

- **Achieving economic well-being**

**Making your local area a better place to live:** Responses from young people in Darlington indicates that overall their perceptions of the local area are in line with the national averages. Responses in respect of shops and public transport were better than the national; however, young people were concerned about the numbers of young people hanging around (Darlington 31%, National 27%)

The summary of Darlington's responses, national comparisons and the RAG ratings applied by Ofsted can be found at:

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Children-s-and-local-services-by-local-authority/Darlington/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Children-s-and-local-services-by-local-authority/Darlington/(language)/eng-GB)

## **9.4 Community Surveys**

*Talking Together* is an annual programme of twenty-four meetings which provides an opportunity for Darlington residents to, 'have their say' about issues that affect them. The events also provide an opportunity for the Council, the Police and PCT to find out what people think about changes to and improvements to service delivery. The Police, the Fire Brigade and staff from the PCT also attend.

*Sustainable Community Strategy*- six enquiry groups established to address key quality of life issues. They considered outcomes from forty-two consultation events. The events ranged from detailed focus groups to public meetings to market stall activities and road show events in different localities. Over one thousand people gave suggestions and views on how to make Darlington better. All of these views together with the findings from the Enquiry groups have informed the new sustainable Community Strategy for Darlington.

*Community Strategy* – One thousand and sixteen face to face interviews were conducted during August 2007 with residents aged eighteen years and over.

*Tier 3* – is a group of young people which brings together representatives from existing groups of young people within the statutory and voluntary sector and the Member and Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament in Darlington.