

## Investing in Children Membership Award™

### Re-evaluation of North House GP Surgery



#### Introduction



North House Surgery is based in Crook, Co. Durham. Patients can register with the surgery if they live in Crook, Howden Le Wear, Witton Le Wear and Stanley Crook. There are 13,500 patients registered with the practice and 3,195 of these patients are aged between 0 – 21 years of age.

The surgery employs 36 staff and 6 GP Partners. However, there are a lot of attached staff including pharmacists, first contact physios, social prescribers, community psychiatric nurses, community wellness team.

The practice is keen to gain the Investing in Children Membership Award™ again as part of their business plan. The surgery previously achieved the award from 2015 – 2019, prior to the Covid Pandemic in 2020.

Ethan 17, Lily 18 and Charlotte 18 attended the surgery on two occasions, 02.05.23 and 27.07.23. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the young people and Cherrie Hirst, Practice Manager, for their assistance and input to enable Investing in Children to complete this membership report.

#### Evidence of Dialogue and Change

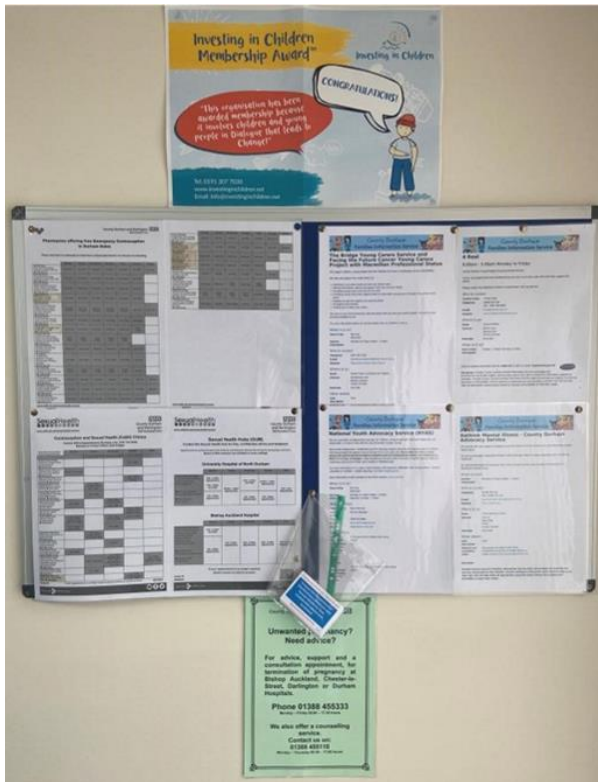
The young people from Investing in Children were impressed with a lot of aspects in the surgery and staff approaches. Particularly that the surgery is keen to get young people engaged in their Patient Participation Group. They also commented how they liked the open plan waiting room with large windows with a garden view, which they felt created a really welcoming and calming atmosphere.



In order to make things even better the young people had some long-term and short-term suggestions. It was agreed that the short-term suggestions would be addressed for the second visit. This dialogue and change would offer further evidence for this report, due to the long timeframe since the last re-evaluation.

## Evidence of Dialogue resulting in Change from Children and Young People

### Recommendations from Previous Report



A suggestion from the previous report in 2019 was to update the young people's notice board. During our first visit the young people acknowledged that the notice board appeared relevant. They were impressed that sexual health was included. One young person said: ***“It’s good to have the small information card [credit card size] available to take away discreetly”***.

The young people would like to see some LGBTQ+ information displayed with inclusive text. Cherrie has acknowledged notice boards need some attention and assured the young people that this will be addressed during a monthly shut down session. Once per month the surgery closes in the afternoon to participate in staff training and complete these tasks.

### TV

During the first visit the young people noticed that the TV in the waiting area was not working. They suggested if it could be set up to promote health messages and local services. When we returned the TV was working and there was some information rolling over the screen. The young people noticed this immediately and were pleased their comment had been acted on.

On further inspection, feedback from the young people was that the text was hard to read due to the colour and size of the text and the background colour. Cherrie informed us that this TV information service was always centrally managed. However, the log in details have recently been passed over to the surgery to enable them to manage the information which is shared and displayed on the screen. The young people acknowledged the issues with the TV content was a wider issue outside of staff's control and they felt reassured that this could now be addressed, and look forward to seeing this updated at the next membership renewal. This also linked to discussions around LGBTQ+ information and Cherrie aims to add this information to this media source too.

As Lily has completed a BTEC Digital IT course, she had some suggestions for making the digital information on the TV aesthetically pleasing. Cherrie was keen to hear her ideas. See the suggestions below from Lily:

- Avoid using gradients or images as a background.
- Don't use highly saturated colours.

- Make sure the text is colour blindness, visual impairment, and dyslexia friendly.
- Don't make the text scroll or move. Keep it static.

## Resources

Another short-term recommendation was to reintroduce safe and clean toys/resources for babies and younger children following the pandemic. The young people also asked if it is possible to provide magazines for older children and adults. Since our initial visit the surgery has recently had an infection control inspection. They [infection control] have suggested some equipment that is suitable for guidelines. The surgery staff have placed an order for recommended items. Unfortunately, magazines were not an appropriate recommended item due to infection control. The young people were happy that staff have ordered the items so quick and we look forward to seeing the equipment at the next membership re-evaluation.

## Seating

The young people observed that the seating in the waiting area, all faced the same direction. In order to make a more comfortable atmosphere and allow people to chat whilst waiting the young people suggested some of the seats could face each other, as some people may find this more relaxed. One comment was: ***“All the chairs facing one direction can sometimes feel regimental or like a classroom”***.

Cherrie explained that although this is not an impossible request, there are some issues the surgery would need to consider. Including:

- Due to confidentiality reasons the surgery would like patients in the waiting area not to directly face the reception desk.
- Also, if the seats were altered 180 degrees the patients would not be able to see the TV screen. This is important to be aware when their name is called out and which room they have to visit. We then explored the possibility of purchasing a new TV so the seats could be turned. The cost of this is high, approx. £6000 to purchase the TV only. The surgery is then restricted by contracts terms and license agreements due to security and confidentiality. This is something the surgery may consider in the future when funding becomes available.

These were not things the young people had considered and were happy that Cherrie was able to clarify some of the obstacles the surgery face.

Another suggestion about seating, was to introduce some seats in porch area near young person's notice board. However, they [the young people] were conscious people may miss their appointment. Cherrie pointed out the self-check in facility, this will help appointments not to be missed if people were to sit there. Once again, this is not an impossible request. The surgery is currently looking at using various spaces within the building. Cherrie talked about unused space behind reception and offering private consultation rooms to be available when needed.

## Social Media

The staff have acknowledged they need to increase and improve social media presence. The young people had various suggestions on how this could be achieved. Ideas to engage young people were:

- Make the site/profile interactive
- Identify target audience for specific posts
- Include an online tour of surgery
- Consider posting videos of staff

The last two suggestions were linked to helping children and young people feel comfortable in a potential adult-focused/clinical/worrying environment.

Since our first visit staff have attended a webinar about social media presence and they will be accessing some related training. The initial platforms the surgery plan to target will be Facebook then Instagram. The young people were happy with this progress and are keen to see how it's developed over the next year.

Following on from our second visit Lily said: ***"It's a shame they've faced a lot of roadblocks with some of the issues, like needing to follow COVID rules with the toys in the waiting room and not being able to control the TV displays, especially since we can tell how committed they are to improving things. They were very open to our ideas both times, so hopefully they can begin implementing them now that they've gotten more permissions"***.

## **Additional evidence of Dialogue resulting in Change provided by the organisation**

### Patient Surveys

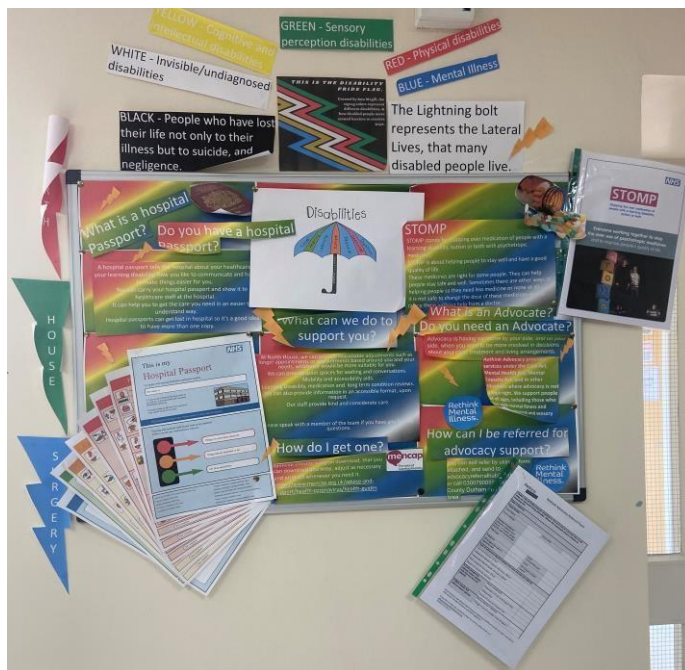
North House surgery have recently completed their own patient survey. There were 878 responses, most of which were received online, others were in paper form via a post box in reception. Online surveys were a recommendation from a previous report. The young people agreed online was a great way to engage a lot of people and asked if ages of the respondents could be identified within the feedback. They [LiC young people] would like to ensure local young people were getting involved and giving their views and opinions. Cherrie informed us this was not asked on this survey, but it is something they could consider for future surveys. The surgery aims to complete these annually. The feedback will be shared with staff internally then on their website, they are developing a 'You Said We Did' section.

In addition to the above annual survey, each patient receives a text message to rate their recent visit. This information is collated and shared with staff on a monthly basis.

### Involving Local Young People

As part of the 'Better Health at Work' award the surgery is expected to engage with the local community and how they support the community. Cherrie is considering inviting local primary school children into visit the surgery to reduce any anxieties they may have and let the young people know what a doctor may do and the equipment the staff may use.

## Disability Display



The young people initially thought this display was linked to LGBTQ+. However, on closer inspection it was information about disabilities. Cherrie shared that this was a suggestion from The Learning Disability Checkers. This is an adult service similar to Investing in Children and they visited in late 2022. The young people did not want to disregard what this group had suggested but Cherrie understood how confusion could happen. Cherrie will check their report and alter the display appropriately. The young people mentioned that they liked the children's activity which was next

to the bird. They feel this could be in a different area so it is more obvious to people who are waiting. It was mentioned that it's quite a busy notice board as there were multiple pieces of paper layered on top of each other. Cherrie already has this on her list of information to review.

## Patient Participation Group

The surgery has addressed the importance of having young people included in their Patient Participation Group and are currently looking to create an online platform specifically for young people to meet monthly and get involved with this. The young people from Investing in Children suggested offering incentives to encourage attendance. The development of this forum is to be discussed at the next Patient Participation Group meeting in August as Cherrie would like the current group to take a lead on its progression. As this was addressed by the surgery I feel this is more evidence of their commitment to involve young people in decision making.

## Recommendations

### **Recommendations from children and young people**

- Update the young person's notice board and media screen to include LGBTQ+ information and inclusive text.
- Increase and improve social media presence.
- Add age to the practice survey so it's clear when young people are sharing their views.



## **liC recommendations**

- We look forward to seeing the website 'You Said We Did' section developed at the next evaluation.

## **Conclusion**

I feel there is some good work highlighted in this report which evidences the importance of having this kind of dialogue. While change is not always possible, it was also a good opportunity to share information and how things work behind the scenes in a surgery, like the finances and legislation about the TV, which not everyone may understand or be aware of.

During the time between our initial visit and second visit staff have taken on board some of the information the young people shared and actioned what was feasible within the timeframe. Staff were accommodating during our visits. I feel it is evident that they listen to children and young people and make suitable and appropriate changes where possible.

For these reasons I'd like to recommend that North House Surgery receive the Investing in Children membership Award™.

## **Endorsement by Young People**

This report was endorsed by Lily and Charlotte.

**Louise Frost**  
**Project Worker**  
**October 2023**

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### **Investing in Children CIC**

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