

Children's Hospital Cancer



Liam Cairns presenting Alder Hey Children's Hospital with Investing in Children membership

Liam Cairns

For the past two years, Investing in Children has been working with Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool on a ground-breaking project that attempts to turn the theory of human rights into a reality making things better for children and young people themselves, in a hospital setting.

As readers will know, the Investing in Children Membership Award has been designed to celebrate good practice. The Award is made where there is clear evidence of adults and children talking to each other about issues that really matter (dialogue), and things getting better as a result (change). When deciding on whether to make the Award or not, we always seek evidence of dialogue and change directly from the young people involved.

Last year, the Oncology* Department (treatment of cancer) gained the Investing in Children Membership Award. It was the first Department in Alder Hey to do so, and the first Oncology Department in the country to be recognized in this way. Earlier this year, on the basis of a further assessment Investing in Children confirmed that Oncology had retained its Award for another year.

The evidence in support came from young people, including Cian (aged 9). This is how he described things:

Changes in Oncology

"Partway through my treatment me and my mum were asked to work with investing in children. We were asked to answer some questions about how we could make changes in oncology. Me and Jack the other person who was doing

it with me were saying that the sick bowls were too small so they made them bigger. I had to go on steroids and they made me very hungry so we asked for a chef. We also made an animation film. This was good because it wasn't as boring waiting around, it made me feel happier. I think the people listened to me; that made me feel like I was making changes."

Saturday Meetings

"We have been meeting on Saturdays with patient experience. They have been letting us say things from our point of view instead of the Adults. We have had lots of people coming in to the meetings and giving the hospital new ideas. We are also going to try and make a children's council more important. We are making a booklet to try and make children more interested. We have also been making groups about different things we have been talking about. We are making a pain group, a food group etc."

Why it is Important for Us to Have Our Opinions

"It is important for us to have our opinions because we are the kids and the ones who are in hospital. The adults might not know what we want. I think that we are playing a big part in the new hospital because we are saying what we want while they are building the hospital. I also think that other children in treatment will be helped by our work."

*ONCOLOGY

Study of cancer including how tumors start, how they can be treated, and how they can be prevented.

For further information on Investing in Children, evidence of dialogue and evidence of change, contact Felicity Shenton, felicity.shenton@durham.gov.uk