

Barnsley 'Hospital Eyes' Posters



The thinking behind introducing these posters around the hospital is certainly not to frighten patients or even make anyone feel nervous. It is an evidence based initiative that has proved very cost effective in the past. Newcastle University experimented with similar posters, with decidedly more sinister eyes, to deter thefts that were taking place of pedal cycles. By fixing the poster below near to the cycle racks they found that the thefts reduced by over 60%. There was also comments made that the students felt safer in those areas where the eyes were fixed.



The University then commissioned a study and found that displaying images of 'watching eyes' has been shown to make people behave in more socially desirable ways in a number of settings. The study also found that the signs had a large effect (95%) compared to other place based crime prevention interventions. As a Trust we unfortunately suffer theft of both our equipment and money from patients and staff, along with staff suffering from violence and aggression and sometimes physical assault.

Prior to introducing our posters we consulted with staff, contractors and other service users to seek their views and opinions about their use. At that time we had designed just the first female poster and consulted widely on whether her eyes would be effective, could frighten our younger patients or were too 'starey'. Following the views expressed we introduced another three types of poster that included two males and a further female. Again we asked for comments which were proved very positive.

The introduction of our 'hospital eyes' posters meet three objectives:

- Deter and prevent anti-social and criminal activities – aggression and assault to staff and thefts from the site.
- Reassure everyone at the hospital that we take security and safety very seriously. So you feel safe.
- Reinforce our responsible and legitimate use of CCTV and body worn video, so everyone appreciates that behind each camera is someone trained to observe, who is concerned about your personal security and safety.