

April 2018

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healthwatch

County Durham

News update - April 2018



We are five!



All local Healthwatch organisations turn five this month and we'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work since we began. It is your views about health and social care services that are important - and because you've shared your feedback with us we've been able to promote changes in local services so they better meet your needs. Talking of which...

You talk. We speak up. Together we influence.



You might wonder how giving us your feedback, or filling out one of our surveys, makes a difference to local health and care services... well, these are some of the things members of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Primary Care Commissioning Committee said about how our work has influenced them when we met with them last month....

- Funding has been secured by Public Health for two cancer awareness posts, following our findings about the myths and misconceptions that exist about [cancer screening programmes](#). Our recommendations will be used in their work.
Reported by Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health
- One of the three key actions included in the action plan for pharmacy services in County Durham will be to raise awareness of the range of pharmacy services that are available, as a result of [our feedback](#) into the recent Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment consultation.
Reported by Claire Jones, Public Health Pharmacist
- Our [Enter and View](#) visits were praised as a great way to get patient feedback by Jonathan Smith, GP for Silverdale Family Practice and Clinical Chair for Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). He said he has encouraged all GP practices in his area to request a Healthwatch visit.



And it doesn't stop there. Members also contributed ideas about how we could continue to help them gather your views in future...

- Ian Davidson, GP for Lanchester Surgery and Medical Director for North Durham CCG, shared other ideas where Healthwatch could help the CCGs collect important patient views, such as about medicines waste.
- Nicola Bailey, Chief Operating Officer for both CCGs, recommended we meet with key CCG staff to look at their 2018/19 priorities and consider options for better engagement with patients and public around these. This was agreed and the session will be organised soon.

So watch this space for more opportunities to give your views about local services. It really does make a difference!

The votes are in...



Our public vote to decide which services we look into next has now closed.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their views and to our volunteers who have been busy meeting people and collecting surveys. We've been able to gather contributions from all across the county, including from young parents and young carers; residents supported by the Alzheimer's Society and cancer patients. You might have seen the vote advertised in the Spring edition of Durham County News, meaning every household in the county got a chance to vote. The results will be announced next month - so watch this space!

A big thank you...



...to the Medical Group at Meadowfield, Esh Winning, Tow Law, Langley Park and Ushaw Moor, and their Patient Reference Groups, for supporting us with our recent work on cervical screening. They spoke to patients and with their support we've received nearly 900 responses! We are currently compiling all the information received - look out for details of our findings in next month's e-bulletin.

Spotlight on signposting



Our signposting team is available Monday to Friday to help you find the information you need about local health and social care services. In March, the ways we helped included:

- finding information about local support groups, including Mind and Macmillan Cancer Support
- sourcing an emergency dentist
- finding out why one client could not get an answer from a local GP surgery when calling them
- signposting clients to the Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) and Adult Social Care

If you are struggling to find the information you need, call us Freephone: 0800 304 7039.

Beating bowel cancer



April is [bowel cancer awareness month](#). Bowel cancer is the UK's second biggest cancer killer, however, nearly everyone diagnosed at the earliest stage will survive, so it's important to look out for warning signs. Being aware of the [key symptoms](#) - including bleeding from your bottom, unexplained weight loss, and a pain or lump in your tummy - can help increase chances of an early diagnosis. Other health problems can cause similar symptoms though, so the advice is: if things don't feel right, go and see your GP.

If you are aged 60 to 74, it's also important to complete and return your [home screening test kit](#) when you are sent one - even if you are being treated for another form of cancer and even if you don't have any symptoms. They are two of the reasons people gave us for having not completed their home tests when researched uptake of bowel cancer screening in County Durham. Read our findings and recommendations [here](#).

Have your say...



Special care dentistry services

The North East and North Cumbria Local Dental Network is reviewing local "special care dentistry services" to help identify areas where they can be improved. Adult special care dentistry serves people with an impairment or disability - be that physical,

sensory, intellectual, mental, medical, emotional or social. It provides services to people over 16, the elderly at home, and those in care or nursing homes. **You can contribute to the service review via [this online survey](#).**



Alternatively, organisations working with individuals who would find it difficult to complete the survey themselves can work with groups to gather information and submit summaries of their feedback to stuart.youngman@nhs.net. Summaries of historical reports can also be submitted.

Deadline for responses: 27 April 2018.

Local support for veterans



Every third Wednesday of the month, SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, runs the Durham Veterans Contact point at Shakespeare Hall on North Road, Durham, from 12.30-5.00pm. All veterans are invited to go along for a chat; to socialise with other veterans, and to get advice and information if needed. For more information contact Durham SSAFA on 0191 383 9452 or durham@ssafa.org.uk.

The next contact point is Wednesday 18 April 2018.

Training opportunities...

LifeBooks Project

WHAT? A 10-week course learning how to use iPads to make a digital book full of photos, music and memories to share with others.

WHO IS IT FOR? People with dementia and their families.

WHEN? From Tuesday 17 April 2018, 1.30-3.30pm, for 10 weeks.

WHERE? The Venue, Wear Road, Stanley, DH9 6LU.

MORE INFO: Call Julie on 07905 737393.

Through a child's eyes

WHAT? A one-day course looking at the impact living with a family member with cancer or a life-limiting condition can have on children and young people.

WHO IS IT FOR? Anyone working with children and young people. NB: There is a charge for this course.

WHEN? 12 April 2018, 9.30am to 4.30pm.

WHERE? Durham Leadership Centre, Enterprise Way, Spennymoor, DL16 6YP.

MORE INFO: 0300 026 3306/07



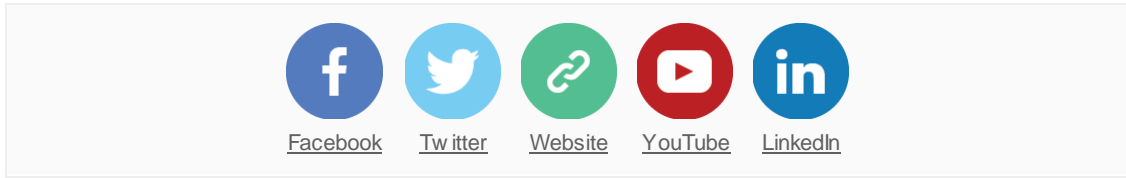
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