

July 2020

healthwatch County Durham

News update - July 2020

Our Annual Report is Here

The Healthwatch County Durham (HWCD) Annual report 2019-2020 is here! Like the majority of us, the current COVID-19 pandemic has, and is continuing to bring new challenges to Healthwatch including working with a reduced team and working from home. So as you will see our report this year is shorter than usual, however it still gives an insight into what has been going on over the last 12 months.

All of us here at Healthwatch are still committed to ensuring the voice of the public is heard and that we keep you informed about health and social care in the county. We will be sharing our revised work-plan for the remainder of this current year with you when we have a clearer picture of what is important to the public as the current lock down eases and we all start to get back to a more normal way of living and working. In the meantime thank you for your continuing support this year, which helps us put people at the heart of health and social care.

Please click [here](#) to read our annual report.

Facts about our Staff Team!

You may remember in our last e-bulletin, as part of Volunteers celebration week and month, we shared some interesting facts about our wonderful HWCD Volunteers. We promised that this month, we would share some interesting things about our staff team at HWCD. Have a sneak peak at some of the things you probably do not know

about the staff team! Maybe their family history, present and past, favourite things, experiences and hidden skills and talents you never knew they had!



Dave Logan- Project Lead



'Ahoy me lad!' -Did you know that Dave is a qualified Yacht Master and is licensed to sail the oceans?



Denise Alexander- Engagement & Signposting Lead



'Royal acquaintances' -Did you know that Denise worked for a national children's charity and was invited to lunch at Kensington Palace with the Princess of Wales. Twenty other guests were invited and treated to a sumptuous lunch as a thank you for the work they'd done for the charity. After lunch, two small boys by the names of William and Harry joined them!



Denise Rudkin- Research & Information Officer



'A world without antibiotics and the NHS' -Denise's great-grandmother died of tuberculosis during the First World War, she was just 41. She was outlived by her own mother, who died 2 years later in the Spanish Influenza epidemic. Her great-uncle contracted tuberculosis and died whilst working as a chemist in the development of streptomycin, the miracle cure for tuberculosis, in the 1940's. Her great-grandmother died of a disease that was difficult to treat until the advent of antibiotics. Her son-in-law, who she never met, died developing that very drug. Her great-great grandmother died in the worldwide influenza epidemic.



Claire Sisterson- Volunteer Support Officer



'Move over Beyoncé'- Claire (along with her ex-husband) has had a band on the road for more than 28 years, she is the lead singer and plays trombone!



Emily Hunter- Engagement & Signposting Lead



Emily absolutely loves giraffes- her favourite animal in the world. It was the first animal she saw on her honeymoon safari in Kenya at Tsavo East National Park!



Julia Catherall- Engagement & Signposting Lead



"I'll have a 99 please!"- Julia's family originally ran their own Ice Cream Company



Georgina Cowey- Administration Officer



'Step, ball change!'- Gina used to compete in ballroom and latin dance competitions regionally, and nationally

Spotlight On Signposting



Last month we received an email from a client who needed a doctor for his wife who is 24 weeks pregnant. This was all the information that we received so an email response to the client to ask if he was registered with a GP practice and if he was to call them first to seek medical advice. He replied to say that he wasn't registered and how did he do this. We asked him to provide us with his address and postcode to enable us to find which area he lived to determine which GP practice would take his family as patients.



His reply was an address in Glasgow. Unfortunately Healthwatch do not go as far as Scotland nor do they have Clinical Commissioning Groups. Google came in very handy to search for GP practices in Scotland. We were able to find a service directory for GP services and add his postcode to search which displayed GP practices close to where he lived. We could then send the link to our client so he could register with a practice where he lives.

If you need any help accessing health or social care services, please contact us at healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net or call 0800 3047039

Healthwatch Volunteer Forum

The Volunteer Forum is made up of staff members from local Healthwatch's who are either 'Volunteer Supporters', or have volunteering as part of their job role. The group tend to meet quarterly to discuss any issues relating to Volunteer support and offer each other support and advice on related topics. Claire Sisterson attends to represent Healthwatch County Durham. The group at the moment are meeting online.



Pharmacy Services Survey



Many thanks to all of you who took the time to complete our survey on pharmacy services in County Durham. Almost 300 of you participated! The purpose of carrying out the survey was to ask you what you thought of these services to ensure that your views were heard and able to influence Durham County Council's plans to deliver services in the future.

In the light of Covid 19 the Council has deferred its

consultation process until 2022, a decision that has been taken nationally. We will be producing a short report in the interim and your views will still be taken into account when the Council undertakes this work in the future.

Blankets of Rainbows for the NHS

Culture Healing Communities (CHC) is a social enterprise in Durham that aims to work in partnership with other organisations to tackle social exclusion, due to mental health issues, poverty, unemployment, diversity or disabilities, by designing, developing and implementing projects related to community engagement, heritage, environment, conservation and culture.

During the COVID-19 pandemic they have undergone a 'knitting blankets of rainbows for the NHS' project. With the help of a grant of £1,700 from [Durham Area Action Partnership](#), CHC have provided materials to one hundred self-isolating people and asked them to get stitching. Participants have created woolen rainbow squares for inclusion in blankets, which are now being auctioned to raise money for the NHS.

The blankets are unique, they are a symbol of the unity of Durham communities and they represent all the gratitude our hearts hold towards the NHS. CHC are hoping to raise more than £2,000 to say 'thank you', to say that we are so grateful for the lives of those that were lost to protect ours. The auction is open from the 29th and closes on the 12th of July, so please make a bid, make a pledge, and help CHC raise the bar for Durham, for our communities and for the NHS.

Please click [here](#) to access the auction. For more information about the work of CHC, visit their [Facebook page](#) or email them at culturehealingcommunities@outlook.com.



Wear Blue to Say Thank You!

2020 is Florence Nightingale's 200th birthday and the World Health Organisation have branded this the first ever International Year of the Nurse and Midwife!

"Nurses and midwives make up the largest numbers of the NHS workforce. They are highly skilled, multi-faceted professionals from a host of backgrounds that represent our diverse communities. 2020 is our time to reflect on these skills, the commitment and expert clinical care they bring, and the impact they make on the lives of so many. This year is also an opportunity to say thank you to the professions; to showcase their diverse talents and expertise; and to promote nursing and midwifery as careers with a great deal to offer." (NHS England) Join us and thousands of people across England wearing blue to say thank you throughout July.

Why not share a photo with us and we'll put a selection on our August e-bulletin; send them to us at healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net or tag us on social media!



Updated advice on Shielding

The Government have announced that the advice for people who are shielding because of COVID-19 will be relaxed in two phases.

- **From 6 July** those shielding will be able to spend time outdoors in a group of up to 6 people including those outside of their household, while maintaining social distancing. Those who are shielding and live alone or are single parents with children will also be able to create a 'support bubble' with one other household of any size, following the same rules that are already in place for the wider population.

- **From 1 August**, the shielding advice will relax further, allowing those shielding to do even more, such as visit shops and places of worship, and return to work provided they take particular care to maintain social distancing and minimise contact with others outside their household.
- The food and medicine boxes facilitated by the National Shielding Service will stop as of 1 August, with everyone now being advised that they can visit shops and pharmacies. Other forms of support, such as priority supermarket delivery slots and the NHS Volunteers Scheme - will continue.

For further information and the latest advice, please visit the [government's website](#)



NHS Complaints Process due to resume from 1st July

On 26 March 2020, NHS England advised NHS organisations that due to need to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic, they could choose to pause the complaints process. NHS organisations have now been told that, as long as circumstances do not change significantly, the pause to the NHS complaints process will not be extended into July 2020.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) will also start accepting new health complaints and progressing existing ones from 1 July 2020.

NHS England is discussing with the PHSO and the Department of Health and Social Care the threshold should the NHS need to consider another pause in the event of a second wave either locally or nationally of COVID-19.



Mandatory Face Coverings

Following the ruling of mandatory face coverings on public transport, the government have issued the further guidance on their [website](#). Remember children under the age of 11 are exempt from wearing a face covering.

Arriva have also provided [guidance](#) and have produced free downloadable exemption cards for not wearing face-masks on public transport, which covers medical needs and special needs like autism.

The NHS in the North East and North Cumbria is also reminding the public to have face coverings available to wear when they attend health care settings. Face coverings should cover the mouth and nose while allowing the wearer to breathe comfortably and can be as simple as a scarf or bandana that ties behind the head to give a snug fit.

Alongside wearing a face covering, people attending hospital settings are asked to:

- > Wash their hands often and on entering and leaving the premises
- > Use hand sanitizer if soap and water is not available
- > Follow social distancing measures
- > Adhere to guidance issued by the healthcare provider regarding attendance and/or visiting
- > Come in alone, wherever possible



Here to help you...



Wellchild, the National UK Children's Charity for children with health needs are offering advice for parents and carers, help accessing PPE and supplies, and stay-at-home activities. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are offering a Direct Response Service to get the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and support with supplies that you need. Click [here](#) for further information.



If you are under 25 and looking for mental health support, One Space are available to direct a you to what you need. Click [here](#) for further information.



Voluntary and community organisations can apply for grants between £1,000 and £5,000. All projects must be completed within 12 months of receiving the funding. Click [here](#) to apply before the deadline (20th July 2020), and to see the guidelines.

If you have any questions you can email Lucy Wilkins: PublicHealth@durham.gov.uk



Contact us:

Healthwatch County Durham
Whitfield House
St Johns Road
Meadowfield Industrial Estate
Durham
DH7 8XL

Freephone: 0800 3047039

Text: 07756 654218

Email:

healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net



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