

News update - May 2018

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### Cervical screening - we're sharing your feedback



Earlier this year we asked women across the county to share their experiences of cervical screening (smear tests) with us, to help find ways to encourage more women to get screened. Around 900 women completed our survey - the highest response we've had for any in the last two years - and we've now published [a report](#) with recommendations based on what women told us. In particular, we noticed the system of sending letters requesting women make their own appointment did not always work, as many said it was easy to forget or delay doing so. So, we are recommending commissioners and service providers consider alternative appointment systems, e.g. using an online booking system. We'll let you know when we get a response - and thank you for all your input!

[Read more](#)

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## We asked: what should we do next? You said...



Throughout February and March, we asked you to choose the health and social care services we focus on next by rating six options in order of priority. More than 600 people took part in the vote and the four services that came out on top are:

- Mental health services
- GP appointment systems
- Dementia services
- Transitions from children's to adult services

We'll be focusing on these services in our work over the next 12 months. Keep an eye on our website, social media feeds and this newsletter (see below!) for opportunities to tell us what you think of them. Then we'll share your feedback with commissioners. **You talk. We listen. Together we influence!**

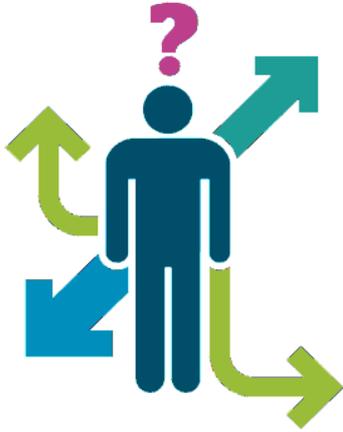
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## Save the date!

On Wednesday 27 June we'll be holding our annual event. It's a great opportunity for you to meet our team and find out about our work. The event will be a breakfast meeting (don't worry it won't be too early) and will be in Spennymoor. More details coming soon!

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## Spotlight on signposting



Did you know that since April 2017...

- we've given 234 people information and advice
- we've spent a total of 7,430 minutes speaking to clients
- we've referred clients to organisations including the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICA), other dental practices, NHS 111 and the Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS)

We continue to signpost patients to alternative dental surgeries for emergency appointments and would like to thank Claypath Dental Practice in Durham for giving patients our contact details when they have needed help with this.

**Our Information and Advice team is available Monday to Friday on 0800 304 7039 (Freephone).**

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## Working to improve patient experience

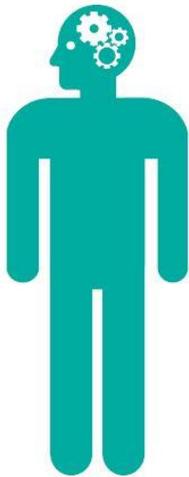


Did you know that as part of our regular work we help County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust monitor whether they're providing a good patient experience? Specifically, we work with the Patient Experience team to look at anonymised complaints - giving our view on whether we think the Trust's responses are appropriate and sufficient. Some of our volunteers are also currently giving feedback on a draft information leaflet for patients and visitors that the Trust is planning to use in its hospitals. Jill Salkeld,

Patient Experience Manager, acknowledged the value of our constructive feedback and said the partnership with us is providing assurance they "apologise appropriately and communicate openly and honestly". **Watch this space for more work we'll be doing with the Trust around gathering patient feedback.**

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## Have your say...



### What do you think of mental health services?

You told us you wanted us to look into mental health services...and that's what we're doing! Over the coming months, we'll be out and about speaking to patients, service providers, support groups and charities about mental health support - and we want to hear your experiences of accessing mental health services too. What worked? What didn't? What single thing would have improved your experience? Share your story with us by emailing

[healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net) or calling Freephone 0800 304 7039. We won't share your details and anything you tell us will be treated in confidence.



## Northern Cancer Voices - add your voice

Northern Cancer Voices is a new project aiming to develop new ways of working that give patients, carers and the wider public opportunities to work with health professionals to improve cancer outcomes in the north. The team is starting off by speaking to people to get their views on how best to create these opportunities to get involved. You can tell them your views by completing their short [survey](#). For more information about the project look at their [e-bulletin](#) or contact Jo Mackintosh on 07730 379671 / 01138 257313 or [joannemackintosh@nhs.net](mailto:joannemackintosh@nhs.net).

**Deadline: 14 May 2018**



## Help set priorities for heart surgery research

Do you have experience of, or interest in, heart surgery? If so, now's your chance to have a say on what gets prioritised in future heart surgery research. The Heart Surgery Priority Setting Partnership is seeking to bring together patients, carers and clinicians to find the top ten priorities for research - to make sure funders know what matters most to those who live with the effects of heart surgery. You do not need to know about research, it's just about what matters to you. Tell them your priorities [here](#).



## A chance to discuss learning disability services

North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group is providing an opportunity for people who have experience of learning disability services to meet staff and commissioners responsible for these services. A meeting is being held from 1pm-3pm on 22 May 2018 at Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggin Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0NT. There will be news on the latest developments in learning disability services and a chance to talk about the implementation of future changes. For more information contact Daniel Blagdon on 0191 389 8617 or [d.blagdon@nhs.net](mailto:d.blagdon@nhs.net).

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## Support, training and advice...

### An evening of cool Britannia

**WHAT?** Charity concert for Veterans at Ease with Darlington Clarinet Ensemble and Durham County Wind Band. Tickets: adults £10, under 14s free.

**WHERE?** Beamish Hall Hotel

**WHEN?** Wednesday 2 May at 7pm.

**CONTACT:** 07557 988403 / [admin@veteransatease.org](mailto:admin@veteransatease.org)

### Support for people with balance problems

**WHAT?** A new social group has started for people with balance problems. Informal chat plus regular guest speakers on related topics such as vestibular migraine.

**WHERE?** St Mary's Church, Vart Road, Bishop Auckland, DL14 6PQ.

**WHEN?** The second Wednesday of each month, 1.30pm-3pm.

**CONTACT:** Call 0191 518 3358 or email [admin@ddsupport.org.uk](mailto:admin@ddsupport.org.uk)

### **Smoking cessation training**

**WHAT?** Smokefreelife County Durham are offering **FREE** Brief Intervention Training to health professionals throughout County Durham. The 2.5-hour course aims to equip participants with the skills to provide clients with simple, opportunistic advice about smoking and how to quit. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

**WHERE/ WHEN?** Training sessions will be held in Bishop Auckland on 11 July and Annfield Plain on 17 October.

**CONTACT:** Book a place at [smokefreelifecountydurham.co.uk](http://smokefreelifecountydurham.co.uk) or contact Shirley Robson on 01207 770031.



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### **Contact us:**

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