

healthwatch

County Durham

News update - October 2020

Thank you for Sharing your Views!

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to our work plan priorities survey.

We will continue to work hard to ensure that all residents get the best out of health and social care services in our region. Our priority as a local Healthwatch remains to equip people with relevant information about how and where to get the support they need.

Keep an eye out for the survey results in our next newsletter and across our social media channels.

Thank you again for your ongoing support!



Thank you

healthwatch

Spotlight on Signposting

We have had a number of people contact us with regard to accessing the testing for Covid-19 (Coronavirus):

Family A had a child develop a cough and requested a postal test as the nearest available drive through site was a significant distance away, and would involve needing to stop on the way there and / or back. A local drive through test was unavailable until the following week.

Family B, who live in the same area, also required a test but were offered a local drive through appointment on the same day and received their results in under 48hours.

If you would like to share you experience of the testing process, please contact a member of our team:

📞 Call us on **0800 3047039**

✉ Email us at healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net

📱 Text us on **07756 654218**



The COVID-19 app is Here

You can now download the COVID-19 app onto your smartphone (England and Wales only), using the Google play store or Apple app store. The app allows people to report symptoms, order a coronavirus test, check in to venues by scanning a QR code and it helps the NHS trace individuals that have coronavirus. The app will also help the NHS understand if the virus is spreading in a particular area, and so local authorities can respond quickly to stop it spreading further and save lives.

If you chose to download the app, you are helping in the fight against Coronavirus (COVID-19). The app helps trace app users who have spent time near other app users, who they may not personally know, and who later test positive for coronavirus. The “Check-in” feature supports this functionality by anonymously alerting users who have been at the same venue at the same time. App contact tracing reduces the time it takes to alert those who you have been in close contact with.

The app will not hold any personal information about you or track your location. Experts from the Government, Apple, Google and industry have helped to design, test and improve the app. The National Cyber Security Centre also checks that the app is safe and secure to use.

If you would like to learn more about the app and how it works, please see [here](#).



NHS
Test and Trace

Be Aware of Coronavirus Scams

In County Durham there has been a recent increase of reports of people being scammed. Scammers have been ringing up individuals who have been tested for Covid, or who are about to be tested and posing as if they are from Covid-19 Test and Trace. They

are asking for payments of £50 or asking for patients bank details, so please be aware.

Covid-19 tests are free and the NHS will never ask for card details. Official NHS Test and Trace contact tracers will never ask you for you for financial details, PINs or passwords.

Friends Against Scams are cautioning members of the public to be aware of people offering or selling:

- Virus testing kits
- Vaccines or 'miracle cures'- there is currently no cure or vaccine
- Overpriced or fake goods to protect yourself from Coronavirus such as anti-bacterial products
- Shopping or medication collection services
- Home decontamination services

Don't assume everyone is genuine. It's ok to refuse, reject or ignore requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you. Take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information, and be suspicious of any requests for money upfront. Check with family and friends before accepting offers of help if you are unsure.

If you think you've been scammed, contact your bank first. For advice on scams, call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 11 33. To report a scam, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

Painkillers don't Exist

There are over 55,000 prescriptions for opioids and gabapentinoids every month across County Durham, which can be dangerous if taken for a long period of time.

Pain medication isn't the only option for persistent pain, but going 'cold turkey' can be life threatening. If you regularly take pain relief medication it's vital that you never stop taking suddenly- even if you think you're addicted.

If you are affected by this, or think you know someone who is, please speak to your GP or click [here](#) for more help and advice.

**LONG-TERM PAIN MEDICATIONS
DON'T KILL PAIN, THEY MASK IT.**

Protect your Child from Flu

This year it's never been more important for your child to get their free flu vaccine!

If you have children aged 2 - 3 they will be offered a free flu vaccine by their GP. Contact your GP practice for an appointment if you haven't heard from them yet.

If your child is at primary school or in year 7 you will be asked to give your consent so your child can have their free vaccination at school. Please remember to complete the consent process as soon as possible.



NHS

#DOYOURBIT
Protect your child from flu
Help them be a superhero and protect others

#PROTECTYOURFAMILY

The advertisement features a young girl with curly hair, wearing a white top and a red cape, with her right arm raised in a fist. The background is a solid teal color. The NHS logo is in the top right corner. The main text is in large, bold, white and teal fonts. The hashtag #PROTECTYOURFAMILY is in the bottom right corner.

The NHS is also offering a free flu vaccine for those who are at an increased risk from side effects of flu including:

- Those aged 65 and over (including those who'll be 65 by 31 March 2021)
- Individuals with underlying health conditions (aged 6 months to 64 years)
- Patients on the shielded list and their household
- Pregnant women
- Individuals in long-stay residential care
- Frontline health and social care workers

Changes have been made to make sure it's safe for you to have the flu vaccine at GP surgeries and pharmacies. These changes include social distancing, hand washing and wearing protective equipment.

For more information please see the [NHS website](#) or speak to your pharmacist.

Personal Health Budget Champion Service

Would you like to gain control over your physical and mental health?

A personal health budget is an amount of money to support your health and wellbeing needs. The budget allows you to manage your health care and support in a way that meets your requirements. It's not new money, it's just a way of doing things differently so you are placed at the centre of your care, giving you choice and control over what works best for you. The amount of money you receive is agreed with you or your representative and your local NHS team.

You may be eligible for a personal health budget if you meet any of the below criteria:

- Being in receipt of NHS continuing healthcare
- Have a child receiving continuing healthcare
- Been discharged from hospital on a section 117 aftercare
- In receipt of an NHS wheelchair

Personal health budget may be used for a variety of ideas that can meet your agreed health and wellbeing outcomes. For example, this can include:

- Therapies
- Personal care
- Equipment



For more information, please contact Julie Cane on 07725958329

- julie.cane@homegroup.org.uk or Louise Miller on 07503866936

- louise.miller@homegroup.org.uk

Get Well for Winter

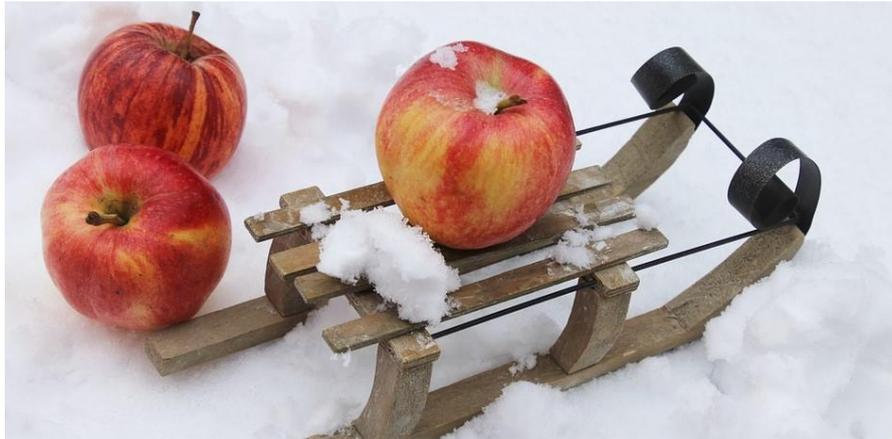
Get Well for Winter is a programme running up until Christmas aimed at people with learning disability across the North East and Cumbria, their families and carers to get as well as possible this winter whilst we are living with Covid-19.

Skills For People are providing a weekly timetable during the run up to Christmas, around supporting you to Get Well for Winter. This will be around:

- Eating Healthily
- Healthy Exercise
- Keeping Safe
- Staying Connected
- Healthy Mood

They will be sharing lots of information, advice, activities and resources to help you Get Well for Winter.

To find out more information about the programme you can watch this [short film](#) or visit their [Facebook page](#). If you are interested please contact Stephen.thompson@skillsforpeople.org or call 0191 281 8737



Adult Learning & Skills Service

The Changes programme has gone virtual. Changes is delivered by Durham County Council's Adult Learning and Skills Service in partnership with County Durham County Carers Support to provide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to the parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Changes aims to ensure that parents and carers who are supporting a young person moving from children to adults' services are well informed about opportunities and gain valuable links to support networks and useful resources across County Durham.

Changes programme information:

- The Changes Programme starts on Wednesday 11th November 2020 and runs through to 16th December 2020 (Every Wednesday from 10am-2pm).
- Changes will be delivered virtually by Durham County Council Adult Learning and Skills Service in partnership with Durham County Carers Support. In many respects, creating a successful virtual training strategy is an art, and various elements will be present in order to implement an informative and engaging experience for all.
- Parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities/difficulties are welcome.

If you are interested please call 03000 266 115 or email alss@durham.gov.uk Places are limited and are allocated on a first served first come basis. Early applications are strongly advised.

Wellbeing for Life launches new Booking System

Wellbeing for Life have launched a new booking system for all of their training courses - due to social distancing guidelines they are not yet back to training in person. Currently all training is being delivered via Microsoft Teams.

They are currently offering sessions covering:

- Healthy Lives: Food for Thought
- An Insight into the Menopause
- Physical Activity: Basics to Getting Started
- Basic Diabetes Awareness
- Building Personal Resilience to Change
- Basic Mental Health Awareness



All training courses are free for anyone living or working in County Durham. To view the virtual training calendar or to book your place see [here](#) . For enquiries please call 0800 8766887

Positive Behavioural Support Awareness Workshops

County Durham Care Academy are running positive behavioural support awareness workshops for carers supporting adults with learning disabilities or autism.

By the end of the workshops you will be able to:

- Identify things, people and situations that increase the chances of challenging behaviour.
- Identify the possible reasons for challenging behaviour.
- Develop some support strategies.
- Develop an awareness of Positive Behaviour Support.
- Help improve the quality of life for the adult you support.

Workshops are to be delivered over 5 virtual sessions using Zoom:

- Tuesday 3rd November Thursday 5th November
- Tuesday 17th November Thursday 19th November

- Final sessions to be arranged with group

To book a free place on this course please contact Susan Garrett at Susan.garrett@dccarers.org or call 0191 5006030

Durham Deafened Support: Trustees Wanted

Would you like to make a difference to the lives of adults with all types of hearing loss in County Durham?

Durham Deafened Support (DDS) is a community based charity that has supported Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people in County Durham and Darlington for the past 22 years. They are looking for enthusiastic people who can volunteer their energy, time and skills, to become part of their board of Trustees.

As a member of the board of Trustees you will have the opportunity to:

- Meet and work with people from different backgrounds
- Be part of a multi-talented, forward thinking and committed team
- Use your own skills, knowledge and understanding to help promote and develop the work of the organisation
- Learn new skills
- Be part of an organisation that is passionate about supporting vulnerable people in our communities.

In return you can expect to receive training and support, the opportunity to develop existing and learn new skills, receive out-of-pocket expenses and become part of a strong, friendly team. Volunteering can make a real difference to your own life and the lives of others.

If you have spare time on your hands and are looking for the opportunities to help people, please contact David Blackwell (Chair) at david@ddsupport.org.uk. For more information regarding Durham Deafened support and it's work, please visit their [website](#).



World Mental Health Day

The 10th October is World Mental Health Day and this year, is arguably, more important than ever as a result of Covid-19 and the effects it has had on our daily lives.

[The County Durham Time to Change Hub](#) and Stamp It Out are encouraging us to start conversations and share our experiences about our mental wellbeing this World Mental Health Day. You can do this by sharing your positive stories on social media or simply reaching out to a friend and asking them how they are.

For more information on how to get involved in activities and events contact info@investinginchildren.net or call 0191 3077030



Stoptober



Smoking attacks our lungs and makes it harder to breathe. But quit for 28 days and you're 5 times more likely to quit for good.

Many people try to quit smoking with willpower alone, but it's much easier with the right help. There are lots of support options available:

- Download the free NHS Stoptober app to help track your progress
- Read up on stop smoking aids
- Talk to your local Stop Smoking Service

For more information and support, visit the [Stoptober](#) website.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month



October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. This worldwide annual campaign helps to educate and highlight the importance of breast awareness.

This year, [Breast Cancer Now](#) aim to get as many people as possible involved in raising awareness and funds to help support life-saving research and life-changing support. [Sign up](#) for their 'wear it pink' awareness day on the 23rd October to show your support.

Please see [here](#) for more information.

Sober(ish) October



Sober October encourages people to go booze-free in October to raise money for [Macmillan Cancer Support](#), who need your support now more than ever.

As 2020 has already been quite the challenge, this year, there are some new options for taking part. You can choose to have a Sober(ish) October by taking on the challenge for 21 or 14 days, or go old school and challenge yourself to take on the full 31 days.

No matter how long you choose to go sober for, by signing up to the challenge, you'll be doing something amazing for people with cancer. All money raised will help to make sure Macmillan can continue being there for the millions of people living with cancer in the UK.

And you're not just helping others, you're helping yourself too. Having a break from alcohol has great health benefits, such as having more energy, a clearer head and sleeping better, plus no hangovers!

To sign up, please click [here](#)



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