

healthwatch

County Durham

News update - September 2018

Spreading the Healthwatch word



Every new recipient of a care package in County Durham who has a learning disability or difficulty will now receive a specially designed Healthwatch postcard with their care documentation. This will ensure they know we are here to help should they need any advice about their health and social care services. The postcard was created with the invaluable help of Paul James from the Partnership and Engagement Team at Durham County Council and staff and service users at the Options Project in Newton Aycliffe (above), which provides support to local disabled adults.

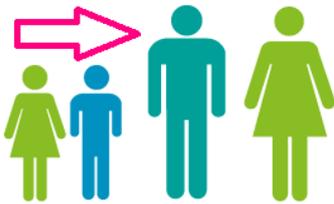
Your chance to feedback on dementia services



Are you a relative or carer of someone living with dementia? Getting the right support at the right time is crucial to helping people live well with dementia. Currently there is no standard procedure for how GPs in the area refer into dementia services, so we'd like your help to identify good practice so it can be shared. What works? What doesn't? And are there any gaps in services you think need addressing? You can share your views with us via our online survey or you can speak to us in confidence by giving us a call on 0800 304 7039.

[Dementia services survey](#)

Transitioning to adult services: your views



Our research team is also busy looking at services lower down the age spectrum, specifically: what is it like for young people transitioning into adult services? It's an area you told us you were concerned about when we asked for your priorities and now we'd like to know more so we can share ideas for improvements with commissioners. So, if you're a young person aged 13 or over with extra care needs, or a family member or carer who supports them, please tell us your experiences. Whether you're just starting to think about moving or have already been transferred into adult services we'd like to hear your thoughts.

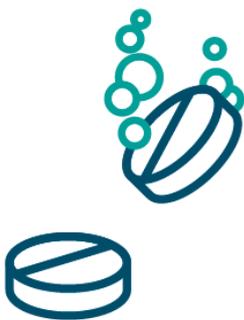
[Transitions survey](#)

Improving cancer screening for all



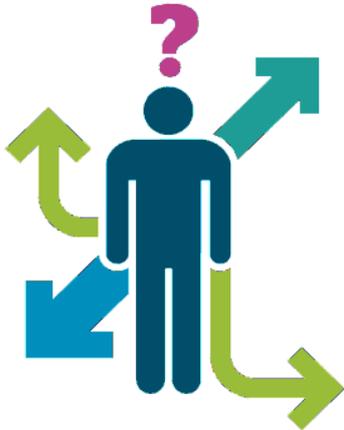
Representatives from a number of key organisations involved in cancer care, including NHS England and local NHS Trusts, came together with cancer survivors last month to consider our research into the barriers that stop people accessing cancer screening. Much time was spent discussing our recommendations for improvements - all based on the feedback you gave us about your experiences of screening programmes. It was great so many people were able to attend and several commitments were made by attendees to take forward our ideas for making screening more accessible. Look out for more detail about these next month.

Making pharmacies more accessible



The research we conducted last year into local pharmacy services is still having an impact. One of our recommendations based on your experiences was to make pharmacies more accessible. The Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC), which represents all NHS pharmacy contractors in the area, took this on board. As part of its response, Greg Burke, the chief officer, visited Durham's Blind Life group in August to talk to members about the support available at pharmacies for people with visual impairments. These include a "talking label" that can tell people what is in their medication. Mr Burke will also be visiting all the pharmacies in County Durham where accessibility has been identified as an issue to see what improvements can be made.

Spotlight on signposting



Our Information and Signposting team is available Monday to Friday on 0800 304 7039 to help with your health and social care queries.

We provide information and advice on all kinds of issues. Between April and June we took 63 calls from people who needed our help. While many of the calls focused on GPs and dentists, other themes included hospitals, care homes and mental health. In total we spent over 30 hours helping people get the right support and the right information. So, if you have an issue you'd like some help with, give us a call on our freephone number 0800 304 7039. You can also text us at 07756 654218 or email:

healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net

New online support for people with diabetes



NHS England has launched a [new website](#) for people with Type 1 diabetes. It's particularly aimed at those with a new diagnosis wanting to learn more about their condition. The idea is to help them access information they know they can trust. The [website](#) includes links to practical help on injecting insulin and checking blood glucose levels as well as useful advice around living with the condition, e.g. how the disease may affect driving, exercise and pregnancy. There are also links to psychological help and support.

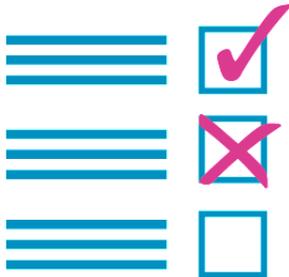
Have your say



Rheumatology services

A project is underway to improve rheumatology services across County Durham, Darlington and Teesside. The aim is to offer a more consistent service across the entire area and to ensure patients are seen by the right clinician, in the right place, first time. If you have used this service you can contribute your views through an [online survey](#) - sharing your experiences of what it is like to live with musculoskeletal conditions like arthritis and any gaps you might have seen where improvements could be made.

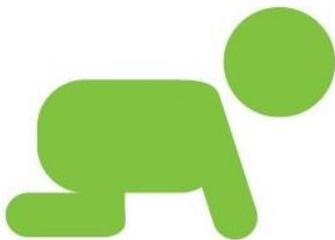
Deadline: Friday 7 September 2018



Children and young people's mental health local transformation plan

The draft plan for County Durham for 2018-2020 is being consulted on with user groups to ensure it will meet the needs of children and young people. Contact publichealth@durham.gov.uk if you would like to be involved.

Deadline: Friday 7 September 2018



How to keep children a healthy weight

Durham County Council is looking for input from the public to help it develop its future strategy for helping children maintain a healthy weight. They would like your views on what factors you think are important in helping a child stay healthy; what support should be available for those who are overweight, and at what point in a child's life this help should be offered. Contributions can be submitted online [here](#).

Deadline: Friday 14 September 2018



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