



News update - April 2026



In this edition, we're sharing opportunities to get involved, upcoming events and ways you can help shape local health and care services. From joining research groups to learning life-saving skills, there are plenty of ways to take part and make a difference in your community.

We're also excited to invite you to our Annual Event, where you can hear about the work we've been doing over the past year and share your views with us.

As always, thank you for your continued support — your feedback helps us make a real impact. ❤️

Join us for...

Healthwatch County Durham's Annual Event!

Thursday, 9th July 2026 | 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

You're invited!

Come along to..

- Hear about our work over the past year 📄
- Share your experiences to help improve local health and care services ❤️
- Connect with our team and the community 👥
- Free lunch included! 🍎

Where?

Bishop Auckland Football Club, Heritage Park,
Stadium Way, Bishop Auckland DL14 9AE

 **Reserve your place now:**

[Healthwatch County Durham Annual Event – Book on Eventbrite](#)

We can't wait to see you there! ❤️

A huge thank you to Sophie!



The team at Healthwatch County Durham would like to say a huge THANK YOU to Sophie, who has been supporting us over the last 6 months with our comms & marketing, including producing this monthly newsletter.

Sophie works at [Healthwatch Westmorland & Furness](#) but has been helping us out while we got ready to recruit for the 2026/27 year.

This will be Sophie's last newsletter and we're really grateful for her help with this, the website and all our design requests.



Carers Support Group

Are you an unpaid carer looking for support, connection and a friendly space to talk?

We're launching a new local carers support group, offering a relaxed and welcoming environment where you can share experiences, meet other carers, take time for yourself and access local support and information

Every other month 10.30–12.30pm
Starting Wednesday 6th May

Other dates include:

- 1st July
- 2nd September
- 4th November
- 6th January

Where?
Hamsteels Community Centre
Western Avenue, Esh Winning
Co. Durham, DH7 9LS

Tea & coffee provided

Contact for more info:
Julia Catherall
Email: julia@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk
Tel: 0191 916 9847
Mobile: 07761 205705

www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk



News & useful information

Learn life-saving skills Free Family Course


[Durham County Council](#) is offering a **FREE 1-day Basic Life Support course for families** — a great opportunity to build confidence and learn how to respond in an emergency.

This friendly, hands-on session is ideal for parents, grandparents and carers, and no previous experience is needed.

You'll learn how to:

- Assess an emergency safely
- Perform CPR on adults, children, and infants
- Use a defibrillator (AED)
- Help someone who is choking
- Spot the signs of anaphylaxis
- Use an adrenaline auto-injector (EpiPen)

 **Location:** Green Lane, Spennymoor

 **Dates:** 16 April, 21 April, 1 May & 12 May

 **Time:** 9:00 am – 2:30 pm

 **Book your place:** Call 03000 266 644 or email des@durham.gov.uk

 Find out more: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/skillshelp>

North East Ambulance service patient and public research group

North East Ambulance Service is inviting expressions of interest to join a new Patient and Public Research Group supporting research across the region.

This group will play an important role in shaping research projects, ensuring that patient and public voices are included from the very beginning.

You don't need to have been a patient — we're looking for people with an interest in or awareness of how ambulance services operate.



Join Our Patient & Public Research Group

Help Shape the Future of Ambulance Service Research

- ✓ Around 3 hours per year
- ✓ £25 per hour
- ✓ Stay engaged with events & updates

Interested?

Email: karl.charlton@neas.nhs.uk

Please Share!  

What to expect:

- A small group of around five contributors
- A commitment of approximately **3 hours per year**

- Payment of **£25 per hour**
- Opportunities to stay involved through events, updates, and informal catch-ups

We're especially keen to hear from people with **diverse backgrounds and experiences**, including different ages, ethnicities, genders, and working backgrounds.

Interested?

To register your interest or find out more email: karl.charlton@neas.nhs.uk

Have your say about Personal Independence Payments

The Timms Review has launched a Call for Evidence - they want to hear about the experiences of PIP claimants, families or carers.

"We are therefore undertaking this wider Review with the aim of making sure that PIP fairly reflects the reality of the impact of people's conditions in the modern world. PIP is intended to improve people's independence.

Given the insight assessments provide into the challenges people face, we also want to ensure that government is not missing opportunities to connect people to a system of active support that helps them manage and adapt to their long-term condition or disability in ways that expand their functioning and improve their independence.

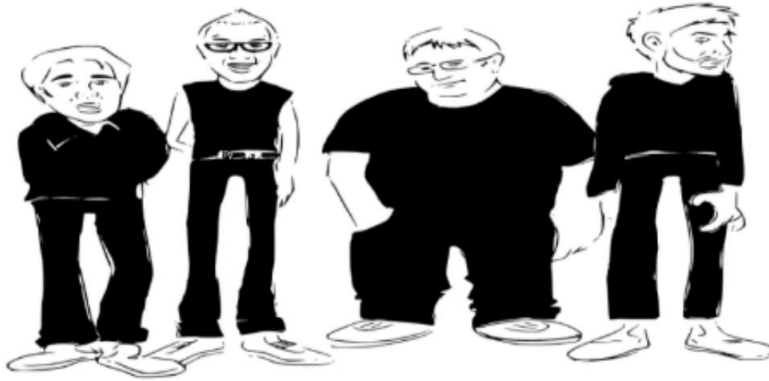
The Review will ultimately report to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for final decisions."

[Visit the page for more information and to add your voice.](#)

The closing date is 28th May 2026

Sedgefield Area Men's Social

S.A.M.S



We are looking to set up a group for men to meet and socialise, put the world to rights and generally chat and make friends.

If you are interested why not come along and join us on **Tuesday 21 April at 6.15pm at Sedgefield Cricket Club** to help us with ideas and your thoughts on what would make a great men's only group
from age 18 +

Please contact Graham at

sams@sedgefielddevelopmenttrust.co.uk

for further information

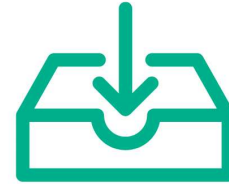
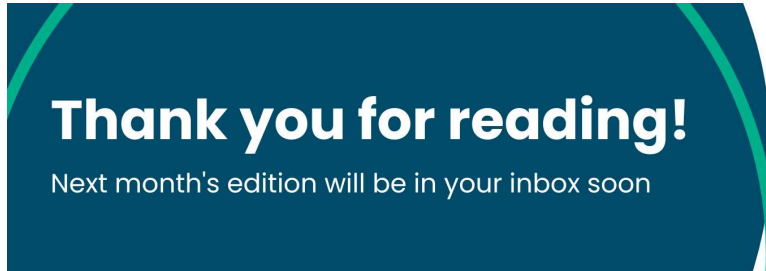
Share your experience with us

Our work starts with your story. You can share your feedback with us at any time — anonymously if you prefer.

- Telephone: 0300 180 0025

- **Email:** info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk
- **Website:** www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

If we're not available straight away, please leave your details and a member of the team will get back to you.



Contact us:

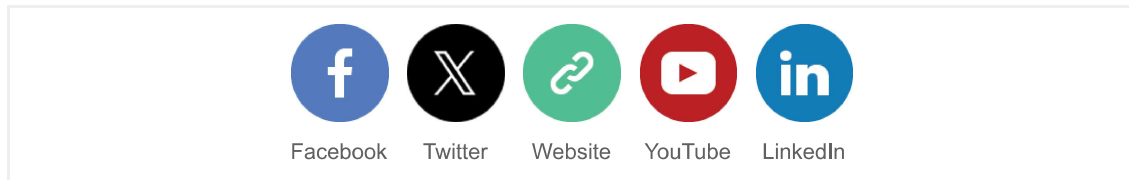


Healthwatch County Durham
Unit 3
Crook Business Centre
New Road
Crook
County Durham
DL15 8QX

Call: 0300 180 0025 between the hours of 09:00 - 17:00 Monday to Friday

Email: info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

Making a complaint: Find out about our [complaints process](#)



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