
News update - August 2026



In this edition, we're sharing our report into hospital appointment booking systems and looking ahead to an event we're co-hosting next month for d/Deaf communities.

We're also sharing details of a call for breast cancer survivors to take part in some research for Northumbria University and we're also getting the lowdown on our carers group held every other month in Esh Winning.

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

News & Information

healthwatch

County Durham

**Your health and
social care champion**

Monthly Drop-in

**Willington
Open Door
Methodist
Church,
DL15 0AG**

- Listen to your feedback
- Conduct surveys and research
- Help with signposting



**every third Wednesday
from 10am to 12pm**

Our Annual Event 2026

Last month, we held our Annual Event 2026 at Bishop Auckland Football Club.

Our annual event is an opportunity to reflect on the work we've carried out over the past 12 months, explore current research, developments and ideas across health and social care, and look ahead to our priorities for the year to come.

It's also a chance to celebrate the achievements of our staff, volunteers and Board members.



On what was a very hot and humid day, the air-conditioned suite was very welcome!

Thank you to all our speakers:

- Chris Cunnington-Shore, Chair of the Board, Healthwatch County Durham
- Michael Laing, Corporate Director: Adult and Health Services, Durham County Council
- Gail McGee, Manager, Healthwatch County Durham
- Susan Watson, Chief Executive, South Durham Health Federation
- Claire Sisterson, Volunteer Coordinator, Healthwatch County Durham
- Susan Ann Smith, Registered Manager, Hawthorn House
- Linda Elsbury, Home Support Worker, Hawthorn House
- Andrea Lambell, Volunteer: Enter and View Representative, Healthwatch County Durham

Also extending a thank you to our staff including; Julia (the chief clicker), Ethan and Chloe (the quizmasters) and Lynsey (sign in desk).

Hospital Appointment Booking System



Healthwatch County Durham have heard from a number of patients who had been experiencing issues with the hospital booking system across the county.

With this in mind, we wanted to find out more about people's experiences and how the system worked from an internal process point of view.

Our latest report aims to provide a clearer understanding of how our systems operate and to help patients better understand the processes involved.

[Read the Report](#)

Family & Friends Support

Support for anyone affected by a loved one's drug or alcohol use.

County Durham
**drug and alcohol
recovery
services**

Face to Face Support - Drop in Sessions

Durham Family Hub (DH1 2EY):

1st Thursday of the month, 1:00–3:30pm

Bishop Auckland Family Hub (DL14 6QL):

2nd Thursday of the month, 1:00 – 3:30pm

Peterlee Family Hub (SR8 5NJ):

3rd Tuesday of the month, 1:00 – 3:30pm

Stanley Family Hub (DH9 0AB):

4th Thursday of the month, 1:00–3:30pm

Deaf Wellbeing Hybrid Meeting

healthwatch
County Durham

Co-hosting with
Emmanuel Chan,
Clinical Nurse Specialist, NE
Mental Health and Deafness
Service.

Wednesday 30th September
2.00pm – 3.30pm

Deaf Wellbeing Hybrid Meeting



Contact Lynsey Kim
for more details – email:
lynsey@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk
or text **07761 205 639**

**Bishop Auckland
Football Club**
Heritage Park, St Helen
Auckland, DL14 9AE

Join the meeting
online or in
person

Free unlimited
teas, coffees and
biscuits!

Healthwatch County Durham will be co-hosting a wellbeing meeting for D/deaf and hard of hearing communities across the county.

Joining our senior engagement officer, Lynsey, will be Emmanuel Chan who is a Clinical Nurse Specialist for North East Mental Health and Deafness Service.

The meeting will be held in person at Bishop Auckland Football Club - Heritage Park but with the option of joining online via Teams.

This meeting is an open invite and there's free parking, good bus links and free unlimited teas, coffees and biscuits.

If you'd like to join it's on Wednesday 30th September from 2pm to 3:30pm.

Please also share with anyone who you think may benefit.

For more information; email: lynsey@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk or text: 07761 205 639.

New Enter and View Report Published



Our final Enter and View report from our 2025/2026 work plan has now been published.

Enter and View is a statutory power where we can visit health and care providers; it helps us understand people's experiences of services firsthand.

This visit was to Brandon near Durham City to visit a residential care home for older adults with and without dementia known as Brandon Lodge.

We publicised our visit two weeks prior and we left surveys and a 'post box' allowing feedback to be completed and left for our return.

Read the Enter and View Report

Our Enter and View programme has also begun for 2026/2027 year and we are continuing to visit care homes across the county with the first visit already carried out.

Events & What's Happening

Coming Up in August

See where our team are this month across the county!



Our engagement team are always out and about listening to your experiences of health and social care services attending community hubs, events and more. Here's where you might see us this month:

- Bullion Hall, Chester-le-Street, [DH2 2DW](#), Monday 10th August, 11.30am-2.30pm
- Leanne Kennedy Centre, Seaham, [SR7 7NH](#), Wednesday 12th August, 12.30pm-2.30pm
- St Andrew's Methodist Church, Brandon, [DH7 8QG](#), Tuesday 18th August, 9:30am-11:30am
- Shildon Alive, [DL4 1DT](#), Tuesday 18th August, 12:30pm-2:30pm
- Willington Open Church, [DL15 0AG](#), Wednesday 19th August, 10am-12pm
- East Durham Partnership, [SR8 4TQ](#), Tuesday 25th August, 10:30am-1:30pm

- The Venue, Stanley, [DH9 6AH](#), Thursday 27th August, 1.30pm -3.30pm
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Survey: Breast Cancer Survivors



Are you a breast cancer survivor?

Have you been discharged following breast cancer treatment?

A team of researchers from Northumbria University are studying how people experience shoulder movement, pain, and day-to-day functioning after breast cancer treatment. They are especially interested in people's experiences after they've been discharged from their primary breast cancer treatment, when everyday life resumes and support may feel less consistent.

They are not conducting this research on behalf of the NHS, and taking part will not affect your healthcare in any way. Follow the link below to find out more about this study and to fill in their survey, which will take about 20 minutes to complete.

They are also holding workshops to explore this topic further. At the end of the survey, you can tell them if you're interested in finding more about this.

Complete the Survey

You would like to take part in a workshop but don't want to complete the survey? Or just want some more information? Get in touch on the email addresses below:

- Dr Suzi Wolfram – suzi.wolfram@northumbria.ac.uk
 - Dr Andrea Lambell – a.lambell@northumbria.ac.uk
-



Derwentside Free Wellbeing & Recovery Groups August 2026



Monday 3rd

- 10am to 11am- Knit &natter session
- 11am to 12pm- Table Top games (Five Crowns & Phase 10)

Monday 10th

- 10am to 11am – Knit & natter session
- 11am to 12pm – Dominoes & Shut the box game

Monday 17th

- 10am to 12pm – Employability session with Home group LD team

Monday 24th

- 10am to 11am- Knit & natter session
- 11am to 12pm- Table Top games (5 Crowns & Phase 10)

Monday 31st

- 10am to 11am- HAP session
- 11am to 12pm- Cards & Dominoes session

Wednesday 5th

- 10am to 11am- Connect 4 & dominoes
- 11am to 12pm- HAP session

Wednesday 12th

- 10am to 11am- Breakfast club in Cafe Glenroyd
- 11am to 12pm- Table Top games (Phase 10 & 5 Crowns)

Wednesday 19th

- 10am to 11am – Knit & natter session
- 11am to 12pm- Table Top games (Phase 10 & Five Crowns)

Wednesday 26th

- 10am to 11am- Connect 4 & Shut the Box game
- 11am to 12pm – Brunch club in Cafe Glenroyd

Mondays & Wednesdays

9.30am to 12.30pm

Glenroyd House

Medomsley Road

Consett

DH8 5HL



Interested in our wellbeing groups?
Get in touch: Stephen 07739303106
Stephen.Ingram@homegroup.org.uk
Scan the QR code for our Facebook page.

Esh Winning Carers Support Group

Did you know we have a bi-monthly carers support group in Esh Winning? Healthwatch County Durham launched the group with help from Durham County Carers Support.

We sat down with our engagement officer Julia - who coordinates the group - to tell us more:



"It all started after we got a message from one of our e-bulletin readers who mentioned there was little support for carers in the Esh Winning area and surrounding villages."

"The group is for anyone who has a caring responsibility, could be a partner, a parent, a child, anyone really. I'd love to see more people joining and sharing their experiences as it could help someone else who may have similar stories"

"Anyone coming along can expect a friendly welcome, a cuppa and a supportive, informal space with access to information and advice"

- Julia Catherall, Senior Engagement Officer
for Healthwatch County Durham

The group meets on the first Wednesday of every other month at Hamsteels Community Centre (DH7 9LS) in Esh Winning from 10:30am to 12:30pm.

Our next group will be on Wednesday 2nd September where we will have Groundwork North East and Cumbria's Energy Advisor talking about energy efficiency with tips and advice.

Veterans in Care - An Update

healthwatch
County Durham

+



VETERANS
FOR VETERANS IN CARE

Healthwatch County Durham has now completed its final conversations gathering feedback across County Durham about the care of veterans living in care homes.

A huge thank you to all the care homes and staff who took time to share their experiences and insights.

This work has been carried out alongside 'East Durham Veterans Trust' and 'Veterans for Veterans in Care' to better understand how veteran status is recognised and how support can be strengthened.

We are now collating everything we have heard and will be sharing our overall findings and recommendations very soon, so please look out for the full report.

MENB VACCINE

**Available for a limited time
from late July 2026**

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?



All current year 13 students
(or of equivalent age)



**Anyone aged under 25 starting university
or moving into further education halls
of residence** for the first time this autumn



**TWO DOSES
ARE ESSENTIAL
FOR PROTECTION** ✓✓

**HERE
TO
HELP**

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.

Thank you for reading!

Next month's edition will be in your inbox soon



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

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our [complaints process](#)



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