
News update - July 2026



In this edition, we're looking at mental health services across Durham and the Tees Valley in a joint report with the local Healthwatch organisations across Teesside, plus it's Alcohol Awareness Week this month.

We're also sharing our Men's Health Week work focusing on wellbeing and activity groups across County Durham and we're also sharing a research opportunity for those using weight loss injections.

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

News & Information



Support is here

**before, during
and after the
final whistle**

For many people, the World Cup is a time of excitement and celebration. But for others, it can bring increased tension, fear and abuse at home. If you are feeling unsafe, you are not alone. Support is available.



Call us
We are here
24/7

03000 20 25 25



Visit us
We are
available

www.myharbour.org.uk



**If you are in danger and need urgent
help please call 999 and ask for police.**

Our Annual Report 2025-2026

Our 2025-2026
Annual Report
from Healthwatch
County Durham is
now published

Here you can
read about:

- The highlights for the past year
- Our reports and summary of findings
- How we have made a difference this year



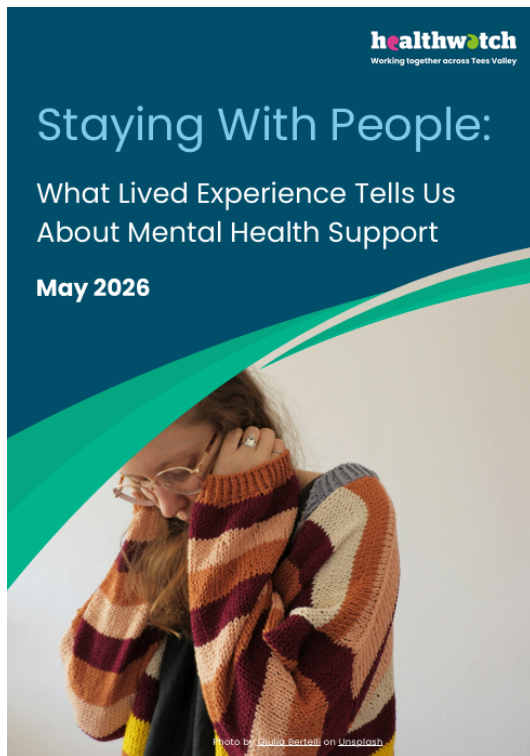
Each year we publish an Annual Report which showcases all the work we did in previous 12 months across 2025-2026. This latest annual report shows how we have made a difference to people using health and care services.

You can read about:

- The highlights for the past year
- Our reports and summary of findings
- How we have made a difference this year
- A message from our chair of the board, Chris Cunnington-Shore
- Our priorities for 2026-2027.

Read our Annual Report for 2025-2026

What Lived Experience Tells Us About Mental Health Support



Working with the five local Healthwatch teams across the Tees Valley we've produced a joint report which was developed in response to Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust's request.

This report brings together in-depth lived-experience accounts from people, families and carers and looks to gain insight for NHS decision makers to support the development of mental health rehabilitation and reablement services.

People across County Durham and Tees Valley have been telling us the same thing for years, and we hope this report can be the catalyst for change.

[Read our 'Staying with People' Report](#)

The Wednesday Peer Group



Pioneering Care Partnership's Peer Support service is offering a welcoming space to meet others, share conversation and enjoy good company. This peer support group is all about building connections and feeling part of a supportive community.

Refreshments will be provided.

If anyone would like a chat or support before coming, you can contact Peer Support Worker, Jayne at jayne.simpson@pcp.uk.net

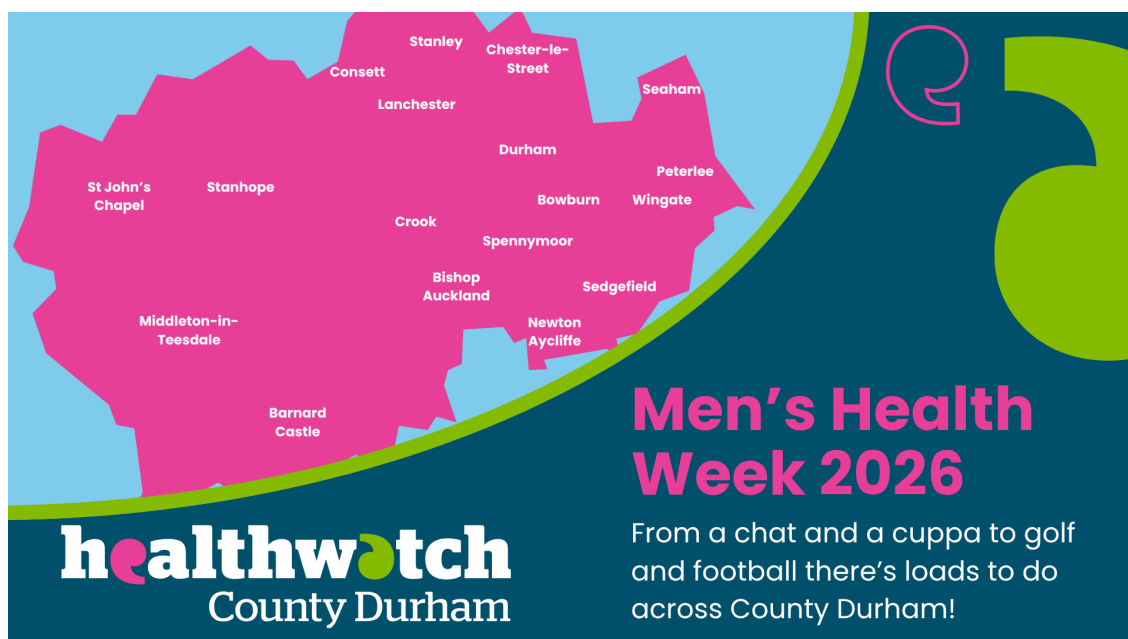
-  Pioneering Care Centre in Newton Aycliffe, DL5 4SF
-  Fortnightly on Wednesdays (starting Wednesday 24 June)
-  10am to midday
-  Free admission no booking required



Men's Health - What's on offer around County Durham

In June, it was Men's Health Week. The annual awareness campaign encourages men and boys to take proactive steps to improve their physical and mental health.

It highlights important issues such as physical health problems, mental wellbeing, healthy lifestyles, and the importance of regular check-ups.



With figures suggesting that around 50% of men have struggled with mental health difficulties at some point, we've decided this year to highlight some of the groups, activities and services around County Durham where you can improve your mental wellbeing by taking part in hobbies, sport or even just grabbing a cuppa!

We've mapped places across County Durham from the coast to the countryside and the cities, towns and villages in between to showcase just some of what's on offer across our amazing county.





[Read our Full Article Here](#)

Alcohol Awareness Week

From 6–12 July, we mark National Alcohol Awareness Week. With summer in full swing, it's the perfect opportunity to remind ourselves of the importance of drinking responsibly.

We don't want to spoil anyone's fun or summer plans, but it's a stark fact that alcohol can contribute to, or worsen, a range of physical health conditions. It can also have a significant impact on wellbeing and mental health.

Due to the recent heat spell it is even more important to look out for dehydration whilst drinking alcohol.

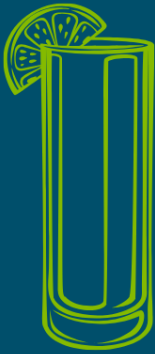
To help, we've gathered some useful information about alcohol, including how to keep track of what you're drinking, tips for staying within low-risk drinking guidelines, and the number of units in some common alcoholic drinks.

UNITS OF ALCOHOL

ALCOHOL AWARENESS WEEK 2026

Monday 6th July - Sunday 12th July

Units in Typical Alcoholic Drinks

Single Vodka and Mixer  25 ml at 40% ABV = 1.0 unit	Medium Glass of White Wine  175 ml at 12% ABV = 2.1 units	Pint of Average Larger  568 ml at 4.6% ABV = 2.5 units	Bottle of Fruit Cider  500 ml at 4% ABV = 2 units
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People are advised not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis.

Spread drinking over at least 3 days if you regularly drink as much as 14 units a week



Try to line your stomach with a meal or something to eat before drinking to slow down how quickly alcohol is absorbed into your bloodstream.



Alternate every alcoholic drink with a full glass/bottle of water. This helps you pace yourself and prevents dehydration.



UNITS OF ALCOHOL

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Alcohol Facts and Tips



Events & What's Happening

Coming Up in July

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](#), Friday 3rd July, 12.30pm-2.30pm
- Foundation for Good, Consett, [DH8 5AP](#), Friday 10th July, 12:30pm-2:30pm
- Willington Open Church, [DL15 0AG](#), Wednesday 15th July, 10am-12pm
- East Durham College, [SR8 2RN](#), Wednesday 15th July, 11am-1pm
- Shildon Alive, [DL4 1DT](#), Tuesday 21st July, 12:30pm-2:30pm

Heat Wave: Tips for Keeping Cool



With the recent news of an amber heat health alert for North East England and more serious red alerts for Southern England, how can you take steps to cope and protect others in periods of very hot and humid weather?

We've put together some tips from the NHS, the Met Office and the UK Health Security Agency to help our communities stay cool across the summer months and more possible period of extra hot weather.

Visit our website by clicking below to find out more.

[Find More Advice Here](#)

People First Board of Trustees Meeting

Our host organisation, People First, are holding a Board of Trustees meeting to discuss the work of the five Healthwatch they are contracted to deliver in Stockton-on-Tees, Cumbria and Lancashire, as well as County Durham.

Monday 21 July, 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm.

The meeting will be held in person at the People First Conference Centre, Carlisle or you can join online, making it easy to take part wherever you are.

If you would like to attend, please email Kate.Hodges@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk

Research: Weight Loss Injections

A research team at the University of Oxford are looking to speak to people who have used, or are currently using, GLP-1 weight loss injections prescribed through the NHS, this would be by a GP or specialist doctor.

The aim is to understand what taking a GLP-1 has been like for patients and how care could be improved in general practice. Examples of weight loss injections (GLP-1s) include:



- Liraglutide (Saxenda)
- Semaglutide (Wegovy)

- Tirzepatide (Mounjaro)

Participants will need to be available to discuss their experience in a one-hour interview by phone or Microsoft Teams. In recognition of your time and contribution you will receive an Amazon voucher for taking part.

Interested in finding out more?

Email: sabrina.keating@phc.ox.ac.uk

Or Call: 01865 289295

Durham Connector Service

The Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance Connector Service provides personalised one-to-one support for adults across County Durham who are experiencing mental health challenges.

The service helps people build confidence, resilience and practical skills, enabling them to overcome anxieties about accessing activities and opportunities within their local community.



The Connector Service is available to people aged 18 and over who live in County Durham, have a mental health need, and present with low levels of need and risk.

As part of the Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance, Connectors offer tailored support to encourage greater independence, reduce social isolation and improve overall wellbeing.

Referrals to the service can be made online



Workplace Health and Wellbeing Roadshow

Come along to our **free** Workplace Health and Wellbeing Roadshow.



Wednesday 15 July



11am to 1pm



East Durham College, Peterlee Campus, Willerby Grove, Peterlee, County Durham, SR8 2RN

Contact us to find out more:



workplacehealth@pcp.uk.net



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:



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DL15 8QX

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

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