



News update - March 2026



There are plenty of opportunities coming up over the next few months for voluntary and community groups to learn, connect, and grow.

In this edition, we're sharing a range of **free workshops and training sessions** designed to help organisations strengthen their governance, explore funding opportunities and better engage with their communities.

Save the date

This year Healthwatch County Durham's Annual Event will be held at:

Bishop Auckland Football Club Thursday 9th July from 10.00am

More information and booking details to follow.

Meet our newest Volunteers Hannah Wright and Amelia Dupuy



We are so fortunate to have two new volunteers with HWCD!

Amelia is pursuing a career in Psychology (with an interest in Health Psychology) and sees her volunteering as a chance to gain experience to develop practical skills and gain insight from other related professionals.

*“The feeling of fulfilment from making a difference is the most important motivator”
- Amelia*

Hannah is an aspiring physiotherapist and is keen to have a better understanding of patient experience and involvement.

*“I want to contribute positively to the local community and ensure that local peoples voices are heard”
- Hannah*

We very much look forward to working with both Amelia and Hannah and our great team of volunteers to do that.

Note on our Carers Support Group:

After listening to feedback we have decided to change the times of our carers support groups to 10.30-12.30pm



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:	Where?
1st July	Hamsteels Community Centre
2nd September	Western Avenue, Esh Winning
4th November	Co. Durham, DH7 9LS
6th January	

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






Come see us at...

Social Prescribing Roadshow

The Social Prescribing Roadshow is a free public event bringing together a wide range of organisations offering help with health, wellbeing, employment, carers support and more.

The event is being hosted by the Durham East Primary Care Network Social Prescribing Team and Thrive Durham, with over 20 local services attending to share information and answer questions.

 **Freeman's Quay Leisure Centre**
 **Monday 16 March 2026**
 **10am – 12 noon**

Social Prescribing Roadshow

Organised in Partnership by the Social Prescribing team,
Durham East Primary Care Network and thrive Durham



Over 20 information stalls providing advice and guidance on things such as finances, housing, employment, caring responsibilities, social isolation and physical/mental wellbeing.
The roadshow will also include presentations and other activities!

Opportunity to access the Social Prescribing service as well as being able to look around the Leisure Centre and to sign up for a thrive card and access a 3 day free pass - [thrive leisure tru-us-for-free-three-day-pass/](https://thrive.leisure-tru-us-for-free-three-day-pass/)

Come and have a chat over a cuppa!

Freemans Quay Leisure Centre, Durham

16 March 2026

10am - 12noon




On the day you can:

- Meet local support organisations
- Listen to short service presentations
- Take part in activities
- Learn how to access social prescribing support
- Enjoy a cuppa and a biscuit
- Take a tour of the leisure centre and get a **free 3-day pass**

Lynsey will be attending on the day, so please do come and say hello if you're there.

Find out more

News & useful information

Let's Talk About Suicide

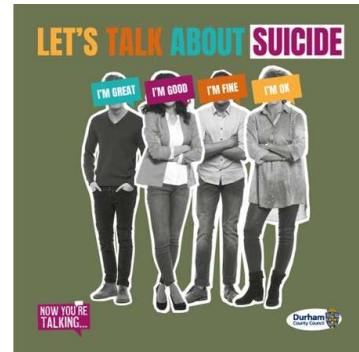
Let's Talk About Suicide is a County Durham campaign encouraging open conversations about suicide, reducing stigma, and raising awareness of the support available locally.

Many people experience feelings of hopelessness or suicidal thoughts, and reaching out can be difficult but talking to someone can be lifesaving.

Whether you're struggling, supporting someone else, or have been bereaved by suicide, help is available.

Find support at:

www.durham.gov.uk/suicideprevention.



Companionship Café

Hosted by Home Instead Durham

Looking for a friendly place to meet others and enjoy a chat? The Companionship Café offers a welcoming space for older people in the local community to socialise, reminisce, and take part in light activities.

There's **no cost to attend**, and light refreshments are provided. If you live at home or are supported by a family carer, you're welcome to come along with a friend, family member or carer.

Where and when:

- **All Saints Church, Newton Hall** – First Friday of the month, 1.30–3pm
- **Framwellgate Moor & Pity Me Working Men's Club** – Last Wednesday of the month, 1.30–3pm
- **Chester-le-Street Golf Club** – Third Tuesday of the month, 1.30–3pm

Find out more:

Call 0191 374 4041



Déjà Brew *Companionship café*

:Hosted by Home Instead Durham



We currently host 3 companionship café's in Durham for older people living at home or with family.

Come along with a family member, carer or friend, (no need to book.) You'll receive a warm welcome, a chance to socialise and reminisce. Meet new people and even take part in some fun activities, talks from guest speakers with relevant topics and a game of bingo.

For more information please contact us on:
0191 374 4041

Each café is held between 1:30 - 3PM

- All saints Church, Newton Hall, DH15LT - every 1st Friday of each month
- Framwellgate Moor Working Men's club - every Last Wednesday of each month
- Belmont Community Centre, Sunderland Road, Durham - Every 3rd Friday of each month



Training opportunities

Free Community Workshops (March 2026)

Durham Community Action is running a series of free training workshops to help voluntary and community groups manage and grow their organisations. Most sessions take place online, with one in-person community engagement workshop.

March workshops include:

- [Community Engagement \(in person\)](#) – 10 March
- [Exploring Durham Insight: Understanding Poverty & Deprivation Data](#) – 11 March
- [Managing Risk Using a Risk Register](#) – 12 March
- [Understanding GDPR for Community Organisations](#) – 17 March
- [Boost Your Income through Trading](#) – 18 March
- [Becoming Capital Funding Ready](#) – 24 March
- [Health and Safety for Trustees](#) – 26 March
- [Protecting Your Charity's Finances](#) – 31 March

These sessions are **fully funded and free to attend** but **booking is required** to secure a place.

👉 Find full details and book your place via the workshop links on the [Durham Community Action](#) website

Travel disruption near University Hospital of North Durham

If you have an appointment at University Hospital of North Durham, please be aware of upcoming roadworks that may affect your journey.

From Monday 16 February 2026, there will be 12 weeks of road and footpath works near Aykley Heads, with traffic restrictions in place:

- One-way southbound traffic only
- No northbound access past the County Hall mini roundabout
- Pedestrian diversions in place

If you're travelling to the hospital during this time, please allow extra time for your journey. You can find the route map and more information on our website.

Disruption near University Hospital of North Durham, Aykley Heads
From Monday 16 February

NHS
County Durham and Darlington
NHS Foundation Trust

Road & footpath works for around 12 weeks	One-way (southbound) vehicle access between Aykley Heads Business Park and County Hall	No northbound access past the County Hall mini roundabout
Pedestrian access maintained , with diversions if needed	Possible weekend closures for surfacing	Allow extra time to travel to appointments and follow alternative routes on the map found on www.cddft.nhs.uk

Map of alternative routes available on www.cddft.nhs.uk

[www.cddft.nhs.uk](#)



County Durham Mental Health Outreach Services



Whether you're looking for quick advice, a chat at one of our drop-ins, or ongoing tailored support, we're here to help you move forward.



Here to Help You Stay Independent

Our free, friendly service supports anyone aged 18+ living in Chester-Le-Street and the surrounding areas.



We're here to help you build confidence, improve well-being, and stay connected.

How We Can Help:



- Help accessing mental health, wellbeing, and community services.
- Building confidence, independence, and resilience.
- Advice, advocacy and emotional support when you need it most.

No appointment needed, just drop in for friendly support.
Every Wednesday from 1pm to 3pm -
Starting 04th February 2026

Chester-le-Street Community Association,
5 Newcastle Road,
Chester-le-Street,
DH3 3TS.

Get in Touch

Dean: 07796 329517

Dean.Whelan@homegroup.org.uk

Spring Wellbeing Day

County Durham Drug & Alcohol Recovery Services are hosting a Spring Wellbeing Day, bringing together a range of support services to help people access advice, information and practical support.

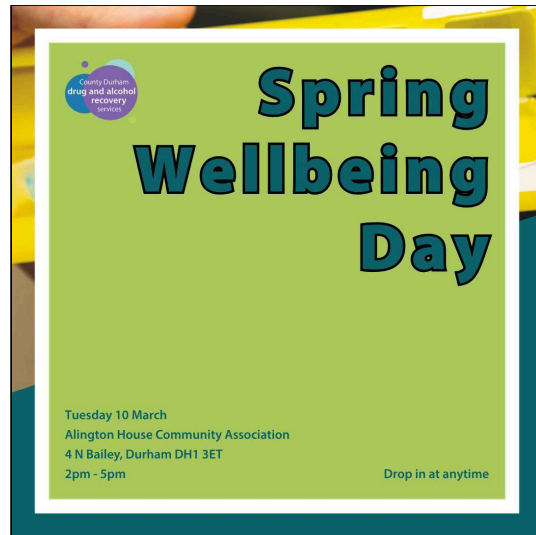
Address:

Alington House Community
Association
4 N Bailey, Durham DH1 3ET

 **Tuesday 10 March 2026**

 **2pm – 5pm**

You can drop in at any time to speak
with teams offering:



- **Naloxone training** with the Harm Reduction team – learn how to use a kit that could save a life
- **Housing support information** for people across County Durham
- **Employability advice** from the IPS team
- **General health advice and a wellbeing MOT** from The Health Squad

Everyone is welcome to attend and find out what support is available.

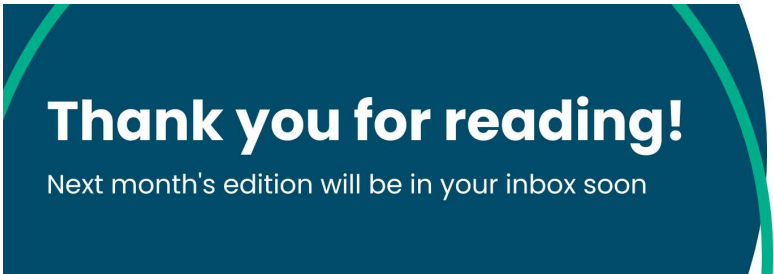


Share your experience with us

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:

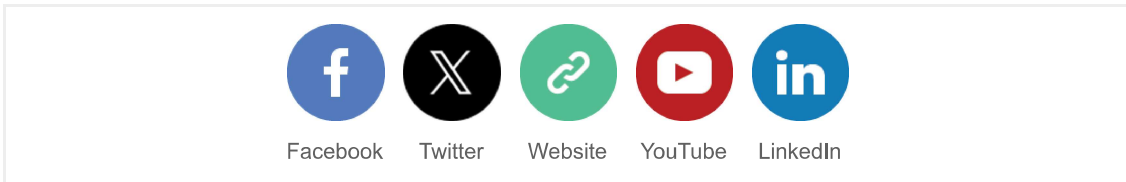


Healthwatch County Durham
Unit 3
Crook Business Centre
New Road
Crook
County Durham
DL15 8QX

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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