



News update - May 2026



In this edition, we're sharing findings from our Modern GP Access Report which was a collaboration with the other 13 Healthwatch teams in the area. We're also inviting you to share your views on Urgent and Emergency Care services in County Durham, and highlighting the vital work of Veterans for Veterans in Care, who recently delivered a presentation to the Healthwatch team.

We're marking both Mental Health Awareness Week and National Walking Month with support from We Move County Durham's wellbeing walks, and we're pleased to bring you two newly published Enter and View reports.

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

healthwatch County Durham

Annual Event 2026



Lunch Included!

We are an independent champion for people who use health and social care services in County Durham.
Join us for our free annual event where you will hear about some of the important work we have been involved with over the past year.



Free Parking!



 Registration from 10am

 Thursday 9th July 2026

 Bishop Auckland
Football Club, DL14 9AE

Book Now!

For more information email:
info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

You're invited! 

Reserve Your Place Now!

News & Information

Enter and View



We've published two new Enter and View reports from recent visits that our staff and volunteers have carried out. Enter and View is a legal power that local Healthwatch teams have in England. It allows us to:

- Visit health and social care services
- Observe how services are being delivered
- Talk to patients, residents and staff
- Report on what we see to help improve services

[View all of our latest reports](#)

GP Access Report

Modern General Practice Access (MGPA) is the new national approach to improving GP services, replacing the former PCARP programme.

We've been working with the North East and North Cumbria NHS Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) and the other 13 local Healthwatch organisations to bring together a new report into people's real life experiences of accessing GP services.



Our latest insights highlight:

- What's working well.
- Where people are facing challenges.
- What could make access to GP services clearer, fairer, and easier.

This is about shaping services around real experiences — and your voice still matters.

[Read the Report Here](#)





The Grief Cafe

Grief recovery support group

A warm and welcoming informal group facilitated by the Co-Op Funeral services. Join us for a safe, relaxed space to talk, listen and the opportunity to access support alongside others who have experienced loss.

Thursday 14th May
1:00- 2:00 pm

Foundations 51-55
Church street,
Shildon, DL4 1DT

◆ For more information please contact Co-op funeral care: 01388774853 eddy.miller@coop.co.uk ◆



Veterans in Care

Healthwatch County Durham volunteers and staff members were pleased to welcome a representative from 'Veterans for Veterans in Care' for a valuable and insightful presentation on 20th April 2026.

The session, delivered by John Hambling from the charity, offered an overview of the important work being undertaken to better understand and improve the care provided to veterans living in residential homes. Volunteers heard about ongoing developments, key challenges faced by veterans in care settings, and the efforts being made to ensure their unique needs and experiences are recognised and supported.



This collaboration forms part of a piece of work Healthwatch County Durham are carrying out aimed at gathering perspectives and highlighting opportunities to enhance care services for veteran's living in care homes.

We look forward to continuing to support and learn from this important initiative.

[About - Veterans for Veterans in Care](#)

Urgent and Emergency Care Survey

The NHS in County Durham has launched a survey about local urgent and emergency care services. The findings will help the NHS in our area to better understand any barriers, needs and preferences local people may have when needing these services.



They are asking for your help to inform any future decisions, by sharing experiences you have had. This could be at:

- Urgent Treatment Centres or Minor Injuries Units
- Same Day Emergency Care or Same Day Urgent Care
- Local Pharmacies

"We recognise it can be complicated to know which service to use in an urgent/ emergency health care situation. There are some differences in access to these services across the county...this needs to be addressed."

You can give your feedback here

You can also contact NENCICB.involve@nhs.net if you would prefer a paper copy.

Events & What's Happening

What's Coming Up in May



Our wonderful engagement team are regularly out and about across County Durham at events, community centres, GP practices and more. Here's where you can come and see us this month:

- SPA St Andrews, Brandon, DH7 8QG, Wed 06 May, 9.30am – 11.30am.
- Carers Group, Hamsteels, Esh Winning, Wed 06 May, 10.30am – 12.30pm.
- Bullion Hall, Chester le Street, DH2 2DW, Mon 11 May, 11.30am – 2.30pm.
- Baby Event, Shildon Civic Hall, DL4 1AH, Wed 20 May, 11.00am – 1.00pm.
- Stanley, The Venue, DH9 6AH, Thu 28 May, 1.30pm – 3.30pm.

We Move Together - County Durham



We Move Together is a county-wide campaign running from May to July, bringing together a programme of themed awareness weeks, community events, and activity opportunities designed to encourage more people across County Durham to move more, feel better, and connect with others.

The campaign builds on a wide year-round offer of physical activity across the county, using this period to raise awareness, introduce new opportunities, and encourage people to try something new in a welcoming and supportive environment.

National Walking Month - May.

May celebrates [National Walking Month](#), highlighting opportunities to be active through walking across County Durham.

Weekly wellbeing walks run throughout the year, and during May they are increasing awareness of these sessions alongside introducing additional walks across the county.

[There's walks each weekday across the County - click here to see your local walk.](#)

These walks are free, friendly, and suitable for all abilities, offering a simple way to improve physical and mental wellbeing and meet others in the community.



"Adding Some Sparkle to our Local Communities"

BLOKES BREAKFAST & BANTER CLUB

Feeling a bit blue and wishing for some man-to-man banter?

Where: Romaldu Kirk Reading Room

When: 20th & 27th April, 11th & 18th May, 1st and 8th June

Time: Monday's 09:30 - 10:45am

Come along & banish the blues - enjoy a breakfast bap, a hot drink, and some informal chat with our friendly club chef Owen



Pop in and join us for FREE!

Donations welcome but not obligatory. Pre-booking advised so we can cater for you and your needs.



01833 695822



activities@teesdaledayclubs.org.uk



www.teesdaledayclubs.org.uk

Reg Charity in England & Wales no 1198857

University Research Opportunities

The University of Sunderland are wanting members of the public to take part in some Health Literacy Research.

To take part, you must:

- Be aged 18 or over
- Have experience accessing healthcare services in the UK (e.g., GP visits, hospital care, NHS services, private healthcare, or community health services)

What does it involve?

- Taking part in a focus group discussion
- Online via Microsoft Teams
- To talk about draft health literacy standards

Interested in taking part?

Scan below:



Questions? Contact:
Health.literacy
@sunderland.ac.uk

Scan the QR code or email health.literacy@sunderland.ac.uk for more details.

Meanwhile, researchers at Durham University are running a study about stress and trauma in autistic adults.

They want to learn more about the experiences of autistic adults aged 18+ so they can develop a questionnaire which can create helpful guidance for services. Taking part involves completing an online survey that takes about 15 minutes.

If you prefer different ways of getting information, we have two links to the same survey: one with written information and one with a video explanation. You are welcome to choose whichever format works best for you.

Give Feedback - Written Information

Give Feedback - Video Information

Chester-le-Street Wellbeing Group

A new wellbeing and recovery service will open at Bullion Hall Community Resource Centre to support people with Mental Health and wellbeing. This space will offer a

place to relax and focus on your mental health and overall wellbeing. Take part in enjoyable activities designed to help reduce stress, lift your mood, build confidence, and bring people together.



The groups help people connect, build confidence, and enjoy positive activities in their community, including social groups and Out and About sessions. For more info, get in touch with Dean on 07796 329 517 or email dean.whelan@homegroup.org.uk

**Join in every Wednesday 1pm - 3pm.
South Approach, Chester le Street, DH2 2DW**

Social Saturdays at Waddington Street Centre.

Weekends can be a tough time for people struggling with their mental health.

Join us for friendly support in a social setting
Meet new people
Get involved with our art group
Access our I.T facilities

From April 11th and then Every Saturday 11am -3pm
3 Waddington Street, DH1 4BG

Referrals can be made by individuals or professionals to

www.durhammentalwellbeingalliance.org/referral/

WADDINGTON STREET CENTRE
durham mental wellbeing alliance
WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACROSS COUNTY DURHAM

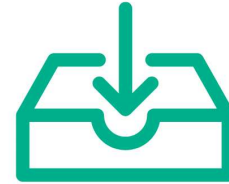
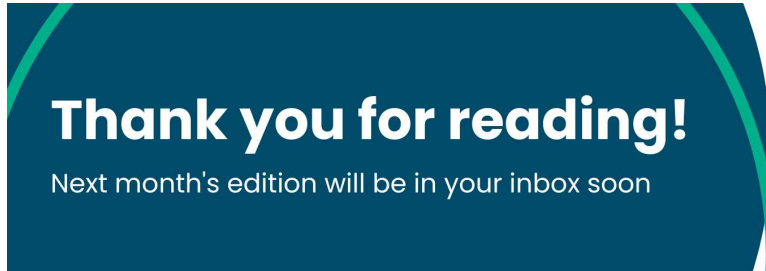
Share your experience with us

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:

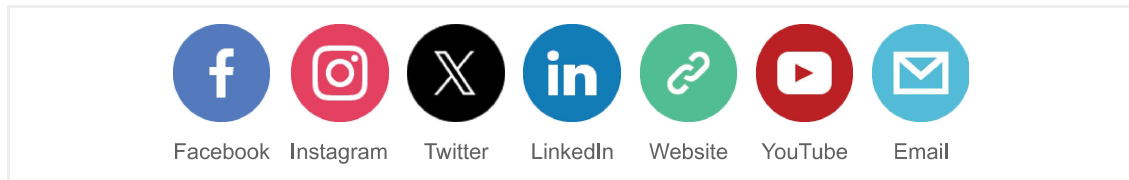


Healthwatch County Durham
Unit 3
Crook Business Centre
New Road
Crook
County Durham
DL15 8QX

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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