
News update - September 2026

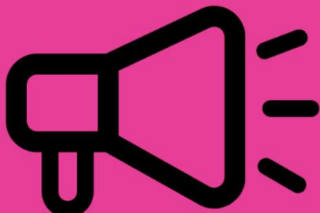


In this edition, we're sharing a couple of research opportunities as we want to hear from anyone who has had a delayed or difficult experience when being discharged from hospital plus we're also hoping to hear your views on Adult Social Care in County Durham.

Also this month, we're getting more information on the D/deaf Wellbeing Hybrid Meeting we're co-hosting from our engagement officer Lynsey and highlighting the success of our regional Healthwatch network as we work towards 'Raising Voices Together'.

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

News & Information



**Talk to us,
Brandon!**

healthwatch
County Durham

Our engagement officer Lynsey holds a regular drop-in session with the SPA Group. We will:

- **Listen** to your experiences.
- **Advocate** for better services.
- **Signpost** you to support.
- **Challenge** providers and decision-makers.

Your local Health and Social Care Champion

Join us Every third Tuesday of each month

St Andrews Methodist Church
Brandon, DH7 8QG

Could Hospital Discharge Be Better?

Were you admitted to hospital in the last year?

When it came time to leave, was the right support in place?

Could you leave when you were meant to?

Or did you have to stay in the hospital for longer than was necessary?

If so, we want to hear from you.



Leaving the hospital is an important milestone in a person's healthcare journey. But leaving the hospital isn't always a smooth experience.

Delays, inadequate support packages and confusing information are affecting people's discharge experiences – and hampering their recovery.

We want to drill down into this issue – identifying where and how the hospital discharge process can be made better for patients and their carers.

So, Healthwatch County Durham are working with a small group of other Healthwatch teams across England to collect people's experiences of hospital discharge in the past year.

Tell Us Your Experiences

What Have You Been Telling Us?



Each quarter, we review the feedback gathered from individuals across County Durham to identify any key trends in health and social care.

These shared experiences not only help shape our future engagement priorities but also enable us to pinpoint concerns that may require direct escalation to service providers.

In this report published a few weeks back, we've looked at what 'You Told Us' in April, May and June 2026.

In this quarter, we look at which services we've received the most feedback on plus we have case studies on breast cancer care and our Word on the Street series hears about concerns at a GP practice following a CQC inspection.

Take a Look Now

New



GAMBLING SUPPORT TREATMENT SERVICES

We've expanded our
Gambling Treatment Service!

- Now including **Young People's** treatment from **age 16**
- A significant development to reach and support young people at a critical time in their lives.

free, flexible, confidential

neca.co.uk

 **FREE, FLEXIBLE CONFIDENTIAL** support for anyone impacted by gambling related harms.

Referrals can be made by contacting one of our regional hubs;
North East; Tel: 0191 5623309
Yorkshire & Humber; Tel: 01423 740723
or visit www.neca.co.uk

scan here 

Have Your Say: Adult Social Care



Healthwatch County Durham is seeking the views of local people about Adult Social Care and how information about services and support is communicated.

We want to better understand whether people can easily find the information they need, whether it is clear and accessible, and how communication could be improved in the future.

Adult Social Care supports adults who may need additional help to maintain their independence, wellbeing and quality of life.

Services can range from practical support at home and residential care to information, advice and community-based support.

Accessing the right information at the right time can make a significant difference, particularly when people are facing changes in their health;

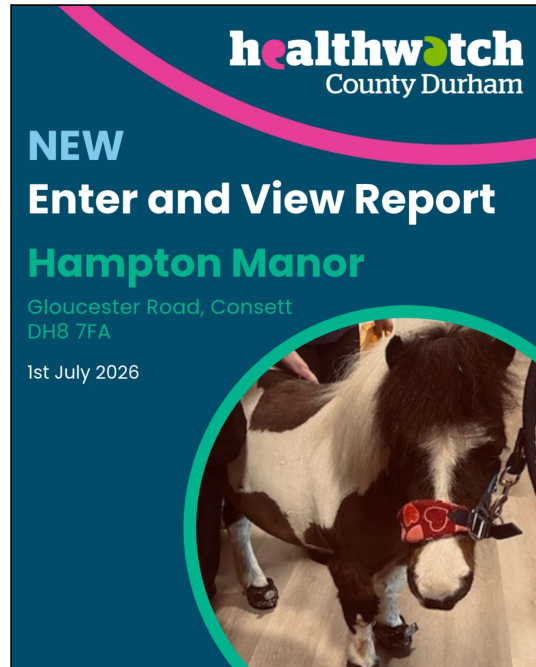
Your feedback could help shape how Adult Social Care information is communicated across County Durham in the future.

Have Your Say: Take the Survey

NEW: Enter and View Report - Hampton Manor

Our role at Healthwatch County Durham is to gather people's views and experiences, especially those that are seldom heard.

For the second year, our Enter and View programme will again focus on residential care homes across the county ensuring residents, staff and families have their voices heard.



Enter and View is a statutory power that enables us to visit health and social care services to gather people's views and experiences first-hand

In July, our representatives visited 'Hampton Manor' in Consett which is a care home catering for residential care, dementia care, respite, palliative and end of life care.

The full PDF report from our visit was published on our website in August and can be read and downloaded now.

[Read the Report](#)

Events & What's Happening

Coming Up in September

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:

- Beamish Football Centre, AiCD Roadshow, [DH9 6PZ](#), Tuesday 8th September, 10am-1pm
- Durham Sixth Form Centre, Freshers Fayre, [DH1 1SG](#), Friday 11th September, 10:30am-12:45pm
- St Andrew's Methodist Church, Brandon, [DH7 8QG](#), Tuesday 15th September, 9:30am-11:30am
- Shildon Alive, [DL4 1DT](#), Tuesday 15th September, 12:30pm-2:30pm
- Willington Open Church, [DL15 0AG](#), Wednesday 16th September, 10am-12pm
- The Venue, Stanley, [DH9 6AH](#), Monday 28th September, 10am-12pm
- Bishop Auckland Football Club, Deaf Wellbeing Meeting, [DL14 9AE](#), Wednesday 30th September, 2pm-3:30pm

This Month: Deaf Wellbeing Hybrid Meeting

This month we're co-hosting a meeting for D/deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing communities across County Durham.

Joining Healthwatch County Durham will be Emmanuel Chan, Clinical Nurse Specialist for North East Mental Health and Deafness Service, who will co-host the meeting taking place in Bishop Auckland.

Our Senior Engagement Officer, Lynsey Kim, explains to us a little bit more about the event.



healthwatch
County Durham

Deaf Wellbeing Hybrid Meeting

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

Wednesday 30th
September

Bishop Auckland Football Club

Join the meeting
online or in
person

"The D/deaf Wellbeing Hybrid Meeting was originally funded by the NIHR [National Institute for Health and Care Research], but when that funding came to an end, Healthwatch County Durham stepped in to fund room hire as we understand that many people prefer to meet up in person, while others prefer the online option, so maintaining both was important."

"The meeting is co-hosted by Emmanuel Chan, a Clinical Nurse Specialist who works with D/deaf and hearing loss communities and we'll have other organisations and support services attending too. At Healthwatch County Durham, we already have strong links with the D/deaf community, and the meetings will also provide an opportunity for people to participate in any research projects or surveys we're running."

"The venue has been carefully selected to provide a suitable space. It is fully accessible, has excellent transport links, and attendees can also enjoy free tea, coffee and biscuits. We hope the meeting continues to be a valuable opportunity for people to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and access information, advice and support."

- Lynsey, Healthwatch County Durham

The meeting will be held on Wednesday 30th September at Bishop Auckland Football Club, Heritage Park, DL14 9AE from 2pm-3:30pm.

For more information contact Lynsey directly on
lynsey@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk or text 07761 205 639.



LIVING WELL

Support • Connection • Opportunity
Building healthier, happier lives in our communities

NOW YOU'RE TALKING...



The Cornforth Partnership's Living Well project provides friendly, practical support to help you feel better, get more from life and be part of your community.

We work with you, at your pace, to support your wellbeing and help you overcome the barriers that matter to you.

THE 5 STEPS TO WELLBEING

We offer a range of activities and support based on the NHS 5 Steps to Wellbeing:



CONNECT

Reduce isolation and loneliness through social activities and community support.



GET ACTIVE

Take steps to improve your physical health with community based activities and sessions.



TAKE NOTICE

Enjoy the environment around you and help improve our natural spaces.



LEARN

Build confidence and develop new skills through low level learning opportunities.



GIVE

Give back to your community through volunteering and helping others.

WE CAN HELP YOU WITH:

- ✓ Lifestyle changes
- ✓ Managing your health and conditions
- ✓ Work, volunteering and other activities
- ✓ Managing money



Personalised support using the Wellbeing Outcome Star

Our friendly team offers one-to-one peer mentoring to help you set goals, remove barriers and make sustained changes.



TOGETHER WE WILL:

- ✓ Identify gaps in services and develop activities that reflect community need.
- ✓ Work in partnership with local organisations and community networks.
- ✓ Build stronger, healthier and more connected communities.



Everyone deserves to live well. We're here to help.

GET INVOLVED TODAY

Take the first step towards a healthier, happier you. We're here for you.



01740 652000



enquiries@cornforthpartnership.org



cornforthpartnership.info



Provide the right support, in the right place, at the right time to enable the development of Healthy, Vibrant and Aspirational communities.



CheckMate

MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH GROUP

A safe, welcoming space for men to talk, connect and support each other. You don't have to face it alone.

TALK. CONNECT. SUPPORT.

You matter.



Working for our communities

Raising Voices Together: Across the North East and North Cumbria

In August, Christopher Akers-Belcher presented the Healthwatch North East and North Cumbria Network's Annual Overview Report 2025–26 to the regional Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB).

Christopher, the Regional Coordinator for the North East and North Cumbria Healthwatch Network, showcased how the 14 local Healthwatch organisations in our region - including Healthwatch County Durham - are working together to bring the voices of local people into system decision-making.



The presentation demonstrated how the regional Healthwatch network is helping to shape health and care improvement across the Tees Valley, County Durham, Tyne and Wear, Northumberland and Cumbria, through trusted community relationships, independent insight and lived experience intelligence.

Some of the key projects of the year include:

- **Primary Care Access:** Gathering feedback on GP access and helping improve understanding of primary care changes.
- **Shaping New Services Through Lived Experience:** Using local experiences to help design services that meet people's real needs.
- **Reaching Communities Less Likely to Be Heard:** Ensuring seldom-heard communities can share their views and experiences.
- **Mental Health Rehabilitation:** Influencing improvements to mental health recovery and rehabilitation services.

Free Support to Help Quit Smoking

Did you know that Smoke Free County Durham offers free, expert support to help people quit smoking for good?



The service provides flexible, non-judgemental advice and guidance to anyone aged 12 and over who lives, works, studies, or is registered with a GP in County Durham and currently uses tobacco products.

Smoke Free County Durham offers up to 12 weeks of personalised support from a specialist stop smoking advisor, helping people develop a quit plan that works for them.

To make support as accessible as possible, appointments are available face-to-face at clinics across County Durham or by telephone, allowing individuals to choose the option that best suits their circumstances.

Quitting smoking can be challenging, but having the right support can make all the difference.

Referrals can be made by individuals themselves or by professionals. If you, a colleague, family member or service user would like support to stop smoking, contact Smoke Free County Durham on **0800 772 0565** or visit the link below to get started.

Smoke Free County Durham



Reg Charity No: 1204999

Helping Women Thrive Across County Durham

The Phoenix Project is a community based women's health programme designed to empower women across all life stages to understand, manage and support their hormonal health and mental wellbeing through:

- Physical activity
- Education
- Supportive coaching

We create safe, positive and confidence-building spaces where women can rise stronger – physically, mentally, and emotionally.



Thanks to National Lottery Players, we have been awarded National Lottery funding via Sport England towards The Phoenix Project



info@livewellne.co.uk



www.livewellne.co.uk



The Live Well Centre
Old Cooperative
Workshops
Sacriston
DH7 6HJ



Find classes
and connect
with us on
Facebook



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

Email: info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

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