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July 2025

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## July 2025 News Update

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**Our Annual Report for 2024-25 is now available to  
download and view**

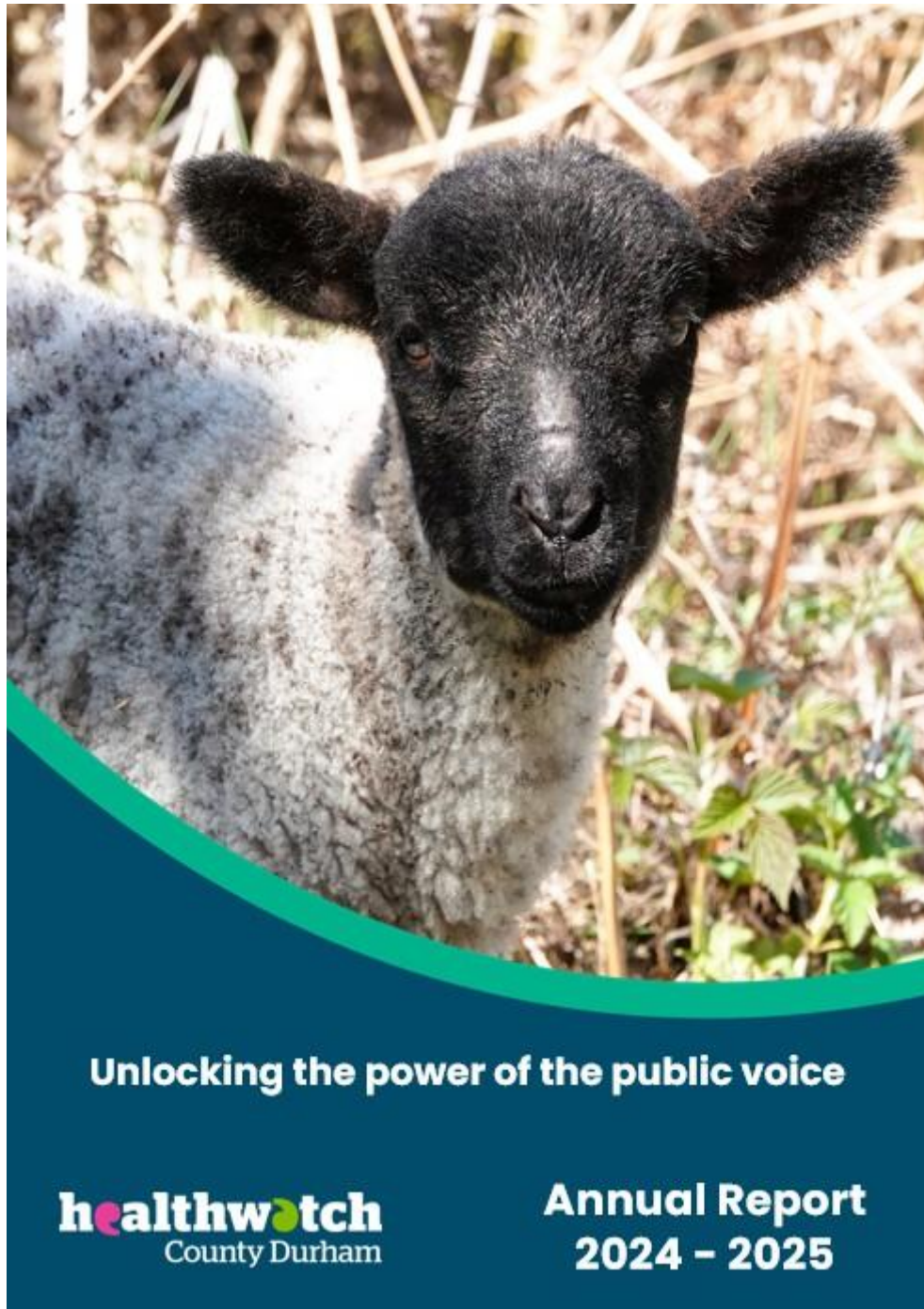
**Read our annual report**



Find out how we engaged with the public to unlock their voice and experiences of local healthcare in 2024-2025 and what our priorities are for 2025-2026.

[Healthwatch County Durham Annual Report 2024 -2025.](#)

Alternatively download a printable PDF version of the Annual Report 2025- 2026 [here](#).



**Healthwatch County Durham 2025 Annual Event**



**Last call to join us for our Annual Event at Crook Community Leisure on Tuesday 8th July 2025 commencing at 12.30 with lunch.**

**\*\*Be quick, booking closes 12 noon on Thursday 03 June 2025\*\***

You will hear about some of the work we have been involved with over the past year, and find out what our priorities will be for the year ahead, as well as hearing about our Enter & View programme.

Booking is essential so please reserve your place by clicking on the link below,

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/healthwatch-county-durhams-annual-event-tickets-1374365116059?aff=oddtcreator>

We look forward to seeing you there.

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Like us, you may have seen the news this weekend regarding the government's decision to close Healthwatch, including Healthwatch England and the network of over 150 local Healthwatch. We are deeply saddened and disappointed by this decision and we are awaiting the publications of the NHS 10 Year Plan and Penny Dash Review into Patient Safety to help us understand this further.

At this very moment the NHS is undergoing yet another major reorganisation, one that will see thousands of roles lost, the government has also chosen to remove one of the few truly independent organisations that champions the voices of patients and the public.

Since 2013, local Healthwatch staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly to help hundreds of thousands of people to speak up. We have ensured their words were heard by those in positions of power to shape and change these services for the better. Since day one, they have done this with professionalism, empathy and determination, often under pressure and with limited resources; we couldn't be prouder of their dedication.

Our work has led to real change. Services have improved, been redesigned and tailored to meet the needs of the people who use them. We've brought lived experience to decision-making tables, shared people's stories with the Care Quality Commission, prompting formal investigations, and published countless reports that have driven action. We are proud of that impact and we're proud that so much of it has come from working in partnership with local people.

However, none of it would have been possible without the tireless commitment of our team and volunteers, whose energy and passion have powered everything we do.

While we await further detail, our priority remains clear.

We are committed to continuing our work, delivering our local Healthwatch across and wider projects to the highest of standards. Making sure the voices of people in County Durham continue to be heard in the places where decisions are made. That includes delivering our Workplan for 2025/26, shaped directly by local people and focused on the issues they've told us matter most.

We will share more about our future once the government's proposals are clearer. Until then, it's business as usual: listening, championing and standing up for people in health and care.



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## What is Healthwatch County Durham currently working on?

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### Work Plan priorities for 2025 - 2026





Healthwatch County Durham wants to hear from you!

Based on your feedback from last year, we've identified the top 6 themes around hospital services—and now we'd love to know what matters most to you.

Please choose the area you think is most important. We'll use the results to plan a project focused on that topic—whether it's sharing what's working well or helping improve what isn't. Your voice will help shape better services for everyone.

Which of the following is most important to you and you would like Healthwatch County Durham to prioritise?

✓	Topic	Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	The NHS app	Your experiences and views of using the app and alternatives to communicate the the NHS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Virtual Wards	Experiences and thoughts about receiving hospital-level care in your own home
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Fracture Clinic	Experiences of using the fracture clinic
<input type="checkbox"/>	The hospital appointment booking system	Your experiences of appointments being booked, amended and cancelled and communication about appointments
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Cancer Clinic	Experiences of using the cancer clinic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dementia Care within the hospital	The experiences of those with dementia during hospital visits

Please feel free to provide further information about why this is important to you

Healthwatch County Durham would like your support to help select our workplan priorities for the coming year 2025 -2026.

Based on your feedback from last year, we've identified the top 6 themes around hospital services—and now we'd love to know what matters most to you.

To complete our Work Plan Priorities 2025 -2026 survey please click on the link: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/workplans2025-26/>

Or download a printable PDF version here:

[Work plans 2025 2026](#)

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## Volunteer Week Healthwatch County Durham celebration at Hardwick Park



This year we celebrated our wonderful Healthwatch County Durham volunteers by taking a lovely walk together in the sunshine at Hardwick Park in Sedgefield, where we took in the fabulous views and wildlife. After a simple picnic in the fresh air we headed inside where one of our talented volunteers ran a craft session where we realised our creativity and did some stone painting work.

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## Download Reports



**Pharmacy First Report available now**



## Pharmacy First

May 2025

**healthwatch**  
County Durham

We looked at if and how people in County Durham had accessed the Pharmacy First Service.

The Pharmacy First service can treat :Earache, impetigo, infected insect bites, shingles, sinusitis, sore throat and urinary tract infections.

Check out the Pharmacy First report on the Healthwatch County Durham website:

[Pharmacy First report | Healthwatch Countydurham](#)

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## In the news and useful information...



### NHS begins rollout of weight-loss jabs to patients in England

From 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 the **phased** roll-out of Mounjaro (weight loss injections) begins.

Over the next 3 years 220,000 patients in England will be eligible however initially only a very small group of patients will meet the criteria. The Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board has not yet communicated whether this roll out will take place via GP practices or a stand-alone service.

The initial group of patients is very small and **we will pro-actively contact eligible patients**. Patients will need to have a BMI of > 40 (adjusted for ethnicity) **AND** 4 out of 5 weight related long term conditions – *type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart and vascular disease, high cholesterol and obstructive sleep apnoea*



You can get more information here – [Tirzepatide \(Mounjaro®\) – Weight loss drug – information for patients – Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care System \(ICS\)](#)

If we do not have a recent weight on your record you can come and use the health pod at West Earlham which will capture your BMI and blood pressure.



## Telecare users and their loved ones across the UK urged to speak to telecoms providers ahead of switch to digital landlines

[What is the 2025 Digital Switchover? Free Care Support](#)

[Telecare users and their loved ones across the UK urged to speak to telecoms providers ahead of switch to digital landlines](#)

## Adult Social Care Strategy public involvement

We are developing a new Adult Social Care Strategy and hope that you will help us. We would really value your views to help shape this work.

This new overarching Strategy is a key action in our Service Improvement Plan, supporting the activity of the service to feel cohesive, ambitious and focused. The Strategy will set out a strategic vision, priorities and the way in which adult social care services are delivered, making a real difference to people's lives in County Durham. We would like to hear your voice, as we reach out to all of our stakeholders including service users and their families and carers, staff, communities, partners and providers. A survey asking some questions about your views and experiences of adult social care is now live on the council's new on-line consultation and engagement platform 'Let's Talk County Durham' until Sunday 6 July 2025.

You can access this survey by registering at [www.letstalkcountydurham.co.uk](http://www.letstalkcountydurham.co.uk).

You can also access the questionnaire by this QR code



We would be very grateful if you would complete this short survey to tell us your views and opinions. It will only take a few minutes of your time.

Your views and comments will then be used to help us develop a draft version of the strategy, following which we will do further work to review with key partners prior to a final document being presented to Cabinet in early 2026.

Thank you for your cooperation and contribution to the development of this strategy.

If you have any questions regarding this engagement process, or require a paper-based version of the survey, please

email [QualityAssuranceDevelopmentandLearningAdults@durham.gov.uk](mailto:QualityAssuranceDevelopmentandLearningAdults@durham.gov.uk).

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## Durham Young Dads project

Durham Young Dads Project provides free one-to-one and/or group support to young dads and dads-to-be (aged 25 and under) in County Durham.

They support young dads to grow, as well as helping them to develop their parenting skills. This could be support to deal with challenges young dads are facing now, as well as helping them to develop the knowledge and skills they need to make positive changes to improve the wellbeing of young dads and their families. This is done through mentorship, educational resources and community engagement, to create an environment where young dads can thrive.

Weekly drop-in - for young dads only at Durham Family Hub  
The Woodlands  
Gilesgate  
Durham  
County Durham  
United Kingdom

DH1 2EY

Thursday 6.00pm to 8.00pm

Monthly stay and play - for young dads, their partners and their kids      Durham Family  
Hub

Friday 10.00am to 11.30am

Monthly stay and play - for young dads, their partners and their kids

[North East Young Dads and Lads Project – Dads care too!](#)

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**Upcoming events...**

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# Durham Autism Hubs

For parents / carers of children who are awaiting a referral to the neurodevelopmental diagnostic team, on the diagnostic pathway or post diagnosis of autism.

Children must be living in Durham.

**We have the following dates available:**

**Stanley Family Hub**  
Clifford Road, DH9 0AB

07/08  
04/09  
02/10  
06/11  
04/12

**Willington Family Hub**  
Chapel Street, DL15 0EQ

14/08  
11/09  
09/10  
13/11  
11/12

north east  
**autism** society



## Supporting your autistic child workshop

The workshop will cover:

- worries and action planning
- common misconceptions
- differences in autistic children
- practical strategies to use in everyday life

These sessions will run 10-12 and must be pre-booked.

## One to one appointments

These appointments are for families that have questions or would like to discuss any issues in confidence.

These appointments are available between 9-10am and 1-3pm and must be pre-booked.



**To book please contact Rebecca Weatherstone on  
0191 410 9974 or [rebecca.weatherstone@ne-as.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.weatherstone@ne-as.org.uk)**

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# **Paediatric First Aid**

## **Bishop Auckland Family Hub**

**8 July 2025**  
**09:30-12:30**

**The focus of this session is to support parents/carers/other adults to manage a first aid situation involving a child or infant competently.**

**This course is for beginners or as a refresher for those with previous knowledge and experience.**

**For more info and to book a place please contact Durham Learn on 03000 266 115 or email - [Durhamlearn@durham.org.uk](mailto:Durhamlearn@durham.org.uk)**

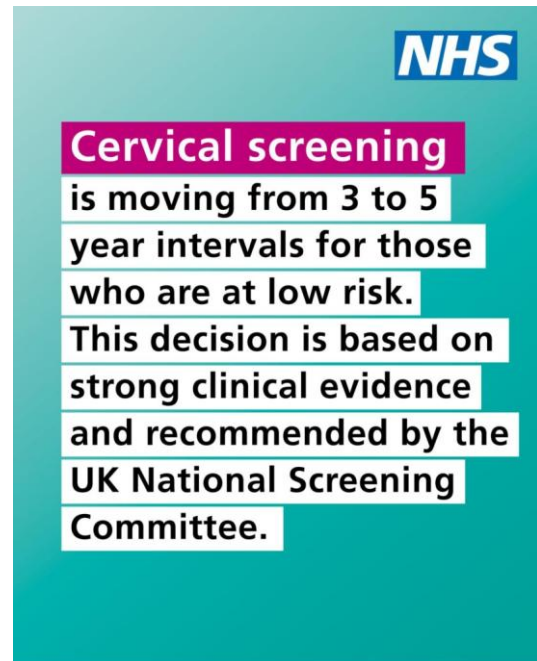


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## **Changes to Cervical Screening**

Cervical screening is moving from 3 to 5 year intervals for those aged 24-49 who are at low risk of developing cervical cancer. Anyone who has had a recent history of an HPV positive test, or any changes to cells, may also be followed up more often - even if they are negative on their next test.

This decision is based on strong clinical evidence and recommended by the UK National Screening Committee, bringing England into line with Scotland, Wales and other countries across Europe.



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## Veteran Friendly Framework

homes without the background history of an individual's service, and service life may not understand the social, emotional or physical needs of veterans or the impact their military service has on their experience of life, work, family, and physical and mental health.

eteran Friendly Framework is a framework  
of eight standards that need to be  
ved by Care Homes to become a Veteran  
lly Status Care Home.

lf support, resources and staff training are  
led to care homes in their journey towards  
an Friendly Framework Status.

rogramme lead is Kathryn Glass, with more  
nation to be found on [their website](#), or by e-  
ig [vff@starandgarter.org](mailto:vff@starandgarter.org).

video below Julie Gregory, Home Manager  
Willows talks about the benefits of  
ning a Veteran Friendly home.



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## Health Awareness Campaigns in July





# July is Good Care Month



**Whether you are visiting the GP, living in a care home or having an operation, everyone deserves access to safe, high-quality care.**

Good Care Month, observed annually in July in the UK, is an awareness campaign dedicated to celebrating and recognising the vital contributions of social care professionals. The month highlights the work of both paid and unpaid carers who support vulnerable individuals, aiming to improve the sector's recruitment and retention

Tell us your experiences of good care at:

[Share your views | Healthwatch Countydurham](#)

or email us on: [info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk)



Alcohol Awareness week this year focuses on the relationship between alcohol intake and work.

"Around 10 million of us are regularly drinking alcohol in ways that can harm our health and wellbeing. From headaches, hangovers and sleepless nights to lower productivity and symptoms like anxiety and depression worsening over time, alcohol affects us in so many ways.

But how many of us have stopped to think about the impact of the work we do on our risk from alcohol? With longer hours, more stress, the blurring of lines between work and home, and too many workplace cultures that place booze rather than people at the centre of things, there are so many ways work and alcohol are linked. This Alcohol Awareness Week, it's time for us, and the places we work, to feel healthier, more productive and happier."

**Alcohol Change UK**

[Alcohol Awareness Week | Alcohol Change UK](#)

For local services and support please visit:

[County Durham Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services](#)

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Samaritans Awareness Day is on 24 July (24/7) so we're raising awareness throughout July, to let people know that they can talk to us, day or night, 24/7.

Every year in July, Samaritans branches in the UK and Ireland hold local events to raise awareness that Samaritans are here to listen to anyone who's struggling to cope, at any time of the day or night.





For more information about Carer's events happening across County Durham, please click on the link below:

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**World Hepatitis Day** is observed each year on 28 July to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes severe liver disease and liver cancer.

**The theme for 2025: Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down** calls for urgent action to dismantle the financial, social and systemic barriers - including stigma - that stand in the way of hepatitis elimination and liver cancer prevention.

Chronic hepatitis B and C silently cause liver damage and cancer - despite them being preventable, treatable, and, in the case of hepatitis C, curable. The theme emphasises the need to simplify, scale up, and integrate hepatitis services - vaccination, safe injection practices, harm reduction and especially testing and treatment - into national health systems.

The campaign is a reminder that we must act now to expand access, integrate care, and end hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

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...and last but not least

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Did you know you can get health weather alerts...



# Weather health alerts

The alerting system provides an early warning when adverse temperatures are likely to impact on the health and wellbeing of the population.

The Weather health alerting system is provided by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in partnership with the Met Office. It's intended to provide early warning to the health and social care sector, the responder community, the voluntary and community sector and government departments when adverse temperatures are likely to impact on the health and wellbeing of the population. The Weather health alerting system is made up of the Heat-Health Alerts (HHA) and Cold-Health Alerts (CHA). The Weather health alerting system underpins the Adverse Weather and Health Plan.

[Weather-Health Alerting System - GOV.UK](#)

[Weather health alerts | UKHSA data dashboard](#)

## Share your News

If you have anything you would like to share with us to put in the e-Bulletin, please get in touch and we will be able to include it in the future. This can include upcoming events, important information on health and social care and support around County Durham.

Email [info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk) if you would like your information to be considered for the e-Bulletin.

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## Contact us:

Healthwatch County Durham

Unit 3

Crook Business Centre

New Road

Crook

County Durham

DL15 8QX

[Tel:03001800025](tel:03001800025) \* Charges may apply

Email:

[info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk)



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