

# healthwatch County Durham

## News update - July 2021

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### Read our Annual Report

Our 2020/21 annual report is here!

Over the last year the COVID-19 pandemic has, and is continuing to bring, new challenges to Healthwatch County Durham including working from home and finding new ways to reach people in our communities in the safest possible way moving forward.

As stated in the report, our Chair, Chris Shore, explains:

*"We have been thinking ahead and planning, in terms of what is important to you. Our public vote has taken place and we will be building our work programme around those key areas. How we engage and meet in future will be really important and we will be looking to introduce new technology to make sure we can continue to provide you with a responsive, yet modern service".*

The report gives an insight into what we have been doing over the past year, and looks at some of the changes that have happened quickly in service delivery over the last 12 months. We are committed to ensuring the voice of the public is heard and that we keep you informed about health and social care across the county. Thank you for your continuing support this year, which helps us, put people at the heart of health and care services in County Durham.

[Click here to read the report](#)



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## We planted a pear tree for Volunteers' Week!

To celebrate our volunteers' hard work and support, we organised the planting of a fruit tree.

The pear tree was planted at Wharton Park on Thursday 3 June, to honour our dedicated volunteers and the time they offer towards letting communities have their say on health and care in County Durham.

The event fell in the middle of Volunteers Week 2021, that took place from 1 to 7 June, which was an opportunity to recognise our volunteers' contribution, and to show our thanks and appreciation.

We would also like to thank the [Congburn Nursery Centre](#) in Edmondsley, for their kind donation of the tree and compost to make this celebration possible.

Take a look at some pictures from the day below!





We also created a video as part of our Volunteers Week celebration. This short piece is introduced by the Chair of our Board, Chris Shore, and our Volunteer Support, Claire Sisterson, and also features the staff team and some of the volunteers themselves. Watch it [here](#).

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## Children and Young Person's Mental Health

Are you under 25? Do you want to help shape future mental health support for young people? Please take a few minutes to complete our [survey](#) on mental health and share your views!

If you are the parent or carer of a younger child, please feel free to complete the [survey](#) with them - every voice matters.

We would also like to hear your experiences of local mental health support services for young people. To tell us your views, please email [emily.hunter@pcp.uk.net](mailto:emily.hunter@pcp.uk.net)

Please feel free to share this survey with any relevant contacts and/or on social media to help us reach as many people as possible- Thank you!



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## Video Diaries Project

We are in the process of shaping a piece of work that will involve the making of ‘video diaries’ over the next 6 months- a short film that someone makes of the things that happen to them that maybe affects their health, over a period of time.

Helen Smith, one of our volunteers who will help carry out the project, is keen to make it happen. Now that we are able to go out more and meet people, Helen felt it would be useful to put down her thoughts and ideas on what she feels people need to be well generally, but especially for people with a learning disability.

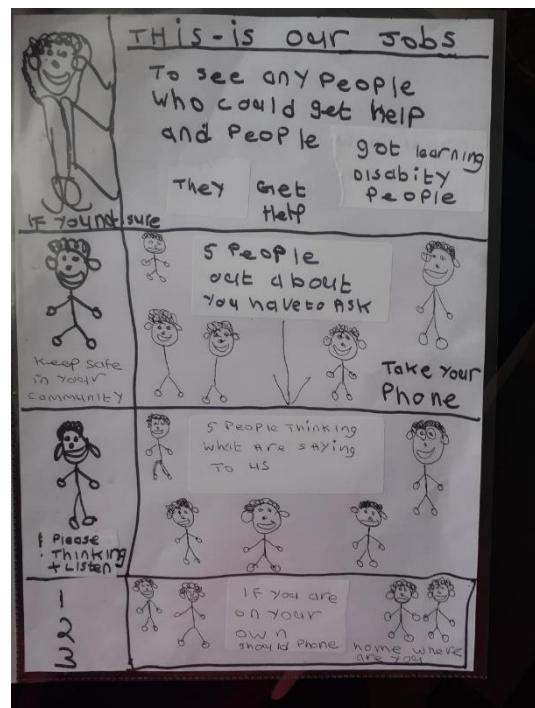
On the area of ‘support’, Helen showed us that friendships and the chance to talk, are really important, as is the chance to help out in the community. Having access to a mobile phone is reassuring and having the chance to share experiences is nice too.

For leisure, Helen has listed her love of caravan holidays and dog walking. She has a passion for music, radio and theatre but also enjoys having quiet time. Therefore, we will be drawing on Helen’s interest and skills in the video diaries project, as it evolves.

Helen outlined a '1, 2, 3' keep safe in your community list (see photo below- 'this is our jobs'), which reminds people about being aware that people might have a learning disability and:

1. That it is ok to ask for help
2. The importance of having a phone with you
3. It is important to let someone know where you are

Thank you, Helen, for doing this and well done. Watch out for updates on the video diaries project in future newsletters!



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## Digitally excluded people's experiences of remote GP appointments

Healthwatch England have launched their report 'Locked Out: Digitally excluded people's experience of remote GP appointments'. Working with five local Healthwatch, they spoke to people more likely to experience digital exclusion, to understand how this has affected their access to care during the pandemic. You can read the report in full [here](#).

If you have any experiences about using health or care services that you would like to share with us, or need any help finding services please get in touch:



Call 0800 3047039



Text 07756 654218

✉️ [healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net)



## Easing of restrictions delayed: Please be cautious

Last month, the Government announced its decision to delay the implementation of step 4 of the COVID-19 recovery plan for a further 4 weeks to 19th July 2021. Whilst this may seem disappointing, some restrictions have eased including the limit on wedding guest numbers being removed, but venues will still have to adhere to other rules. Delays in the easing of these restrictions comes amid rising cases of COVID-19, driven by the more transmissible Delta variant.

As we see cases of COVID-19 rise in the North East, and specifically the Delta variant, we are all being urged to continue to “play our part” and remain vigilant to prevent the spread. Please remember:

- You can take LFD (Lateral flow device) tests at home and [report the results online](#)
- Continue to follow the guidance of 'Hand, Space, Face, Air'
- Social distancing of a recommended 2m remains in place
- Check-in at venues using the NHS COVID-19 app
- Vaccinated people could potentially still become infected and spread the virus

**Please note that guidance is subject to change. You can keep up to date with the latest changes to government guidance and restrictions [here](#). Stay safe!**

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## Essential information for eligible people who have yet to receive their COVID-19 Vaccination

As the roll out of COVID-19 vaccinations continues (see short NHS video [Every Vaccine Gives Us Hope](#)), some people may still have questions about getting vaccinated. Accessing credible sources of information is really important in order to make an informed decision on vaccination.

See the webpage [here](#) which aims to provide County Durham residents with links to credible sources of information on the vaccination.



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## Collection of GP data for Planning and Research

NHS Digital are introducing a new '[GP data for planning and research](#)' system to manage patient data, which hopes to benefit the NHS and improve treatment, and is now set to take place from September 2021.

The NHS have reassured people that only the minimum data required for any project is shared, and this data is to go through a process so that nobody can be identified. However it's everyone's right to opt out at any time.

We understand this is a concern for some people, and whilst information on this subject is quickly changing, we are in regular contact with [Healthwatch England](#) to keep informed about any updates and will pass these onto you once we have further clarification.

You can read their previous article, [Ten ways to give patients confidence in how their](#)

*data is shared*', which they are going to be using moving forward, to work with a number of other national patient/data organisations, to develop a set of principles based on previous public engagement.

You can access direct new updates from NHS Digital via their [website](#).

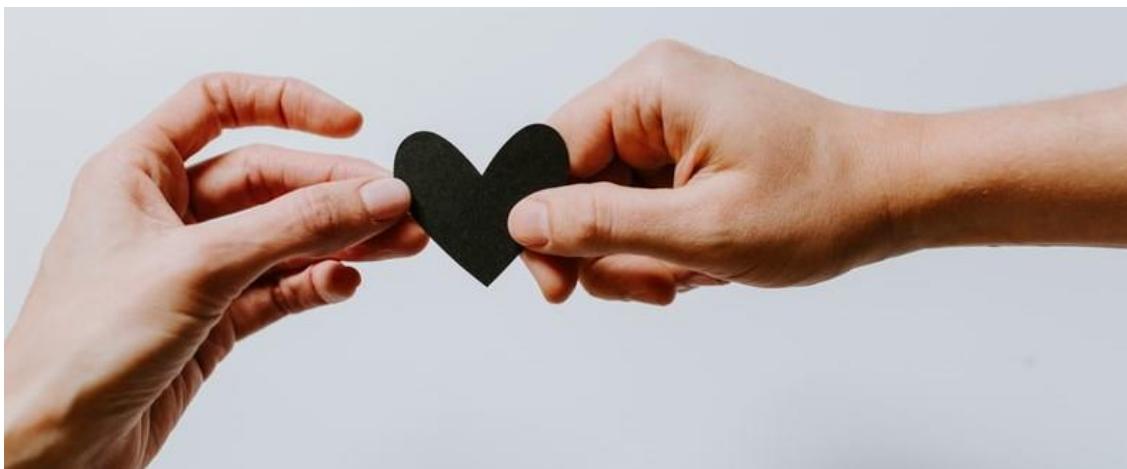
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## Covid-19 Resilience Team County Durham

The COVID-19 Resilience Team is a county wide specialist community-based service. They provide a multi-agency framework of support in local communities. This includes wellbeing support, psychosocial and psychological first aid interventions to bring direct benefit to people's lives.

Support is client-specific, up to 12 appointments available. However, length of support may differ as COVID-19 recovery is anticipated to change over time.

To refer a client for specialist COVID-19 health and wellbeing support, please contact [covidresilience@pcp.uk.net](mailto:covidresilience@pcp.uk.net) or connect with the team on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to find out more.



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## Patient Transport Service

The [North East Ambulance Service](#) (NEAS) provides pre-planned non-emergency transport for patients who have a medical condition that would prevent them from travelling to a treatment centre by any other means, or who require the skills of an ambulance care

assistant during the journey. NEAS understand that going to hospital can be a worrying time, and want your experience of the service to be comfortable and to run as smoothly as possible. Therefore, it is important that you know what you can expect when using their services, which is outlined in their [Patient Charter](#).

You can expect:

- A service within a timely manner in line with the quality standards. Unfortunately, they are unable to give exact collection times but on average, it will be an hour beforehand, depending on how close you are to the treatment centre.
- Their staff to carry identification and to introduce themselves to you politely and professionally on arrival.
- Skilled staff with the knowledge and experience to provide you with a caring, efficient and safe service.
- To be treated with compassion, dignity and respect at all times.
- To be escorted and booked in to the specific clinic you are attending.
- Collection from the clinic back to your home, where they will escort you to your door.

What they expect from you:

- The correct information for your specific requirements to ensure the correct mode of transport is provided for you.
- To be ready when they arrive.
- To treat their staff with consideration and respect.
- That you will let them know as soon as possible if you need to cancel or change your appointment. A dedicated Freephone cancellation line is available for you to cancel your ambulance transport, should you no longer require it, which is **0300 1110247**

If you are eligible for patient transport, your booking will be made either by you, your GP, hospital staff or a dedicated call centre. The number you need to call to book patient transport depends on where you live:

- Patients in the Durham Dales and East Durham need to telephone Travel Response Centre on **03000 269 9999**
- Patients in North Durham should either contact their GP or the Travel Response Centre, this is dependent on the GP surgery

For more information about booking the Patient Transport Service, please see [here](#).

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## Everyone working in care homes to be fully vaccinated under new law

Care home residents will be better protected from death and serious illness, following confirmation people working in care homes will need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

The new legislation means from October - subject to Parliamentary approval and a subsequent 16-week grace period - anyone working in a [CQC](#)-registered care home in England for residents requiring nursing or personal care must have 2 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine unless they have a medical exemption.

For more information, please check the government [website](#).



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## Community Pharmacy Services

There are some new community pharmacy services which have launched recently, or are about to launch, in County Durham:

### Discharge Medicine Service (DMS)

The Discharge Medicines Service (DMS) became a new Essential service within the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) on 15th February 2021. It's an essential service meaning all community pharmacies must provide it.

From 15th February 2021, NHS Trusts were able to refer patients who would benefit from extra guidance around new prescribed medicines for provision of the DMS at their community pharmacy. The service has been identified by NHS England and NHS Improvement's (NHSE&I) Medicines Safety Improvement Programme to be a significant contributor to the safety of patients at transitions of care, by reducing readmissions to

hospital.

County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust began referring patients via this service on 7th June 2021. Please see [here](#) for more information.

### **General Practice Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (GPCPCS)**

The NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service launched on 29th October 2019 as an Advanced Service. Since 1st November 2020, general practices have been able to refer patients for a minor illness consultation via CPCS, once a local referral pathway has been agreed. You can read more about the GP referral pathway [here](#).

The service, which replaced the [NUMSAS](#) and [DMIRS](#) pilots, connects patients who have a minor illness or need an urgent supply of a medicine with a community pharmacy.

As well as referrals from general practices, the service takes referrals to community pharmacy from NHS 111 (and NHS 111 online for requests for urgent supply), Integrated Urgent Care Clinical Assessment Services and in some cases patients referred via the 999 service.

The CPCS aims to relieve pressure on the wider NHS by connecting patients with community pharmacy, which should be their first port of call and can deliver a swift, convenient and effective service to meet their needs. Since the CPCS was launched, an average of 10,500 patients per week being referred for a consultation with a pharmacist following a call to NHS 111; these are patients who might otherwise have gone to see a GP.

The CPCS provides the opportunity for community pharmacy to play a bigger role than ever within the urgent care system.

GPCPCS is being rolled out in County Durham and Darlington on 5th July 2021.

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## **Northern Cancer Alliance**

The [Northern Cancer Alliance](#) is pleased to announce that it has been chosen as one of the pilot sites for the NHS Galleri trial later this year. This trial will assess the benefit of a new test that looks for potential signs of cancer in a sample of blood. Participants in the trial will be asked to give a sample of blood once a year, for three years. Samples

will be taken on a covid-safe mobile unit at sites across the North East and North Cumbria. Where a cancer signal is detected people will be referred for investigation at their local hospital.

We are supporting this research as a potential new way to detect cancer. More information about the study will be shared as soon as it becomes available.



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## Develop your Knowledge and Skills!

Triage, in partnership with Durham County Council, are offering a wide range of courses to help you develop knowledge and skills to support you finding the right job.

Courses on offer include:

- Level 1 Certificate in Retail Knowledge
- Level 1 Award in Customer Service
- Level 1 in Personal Development and Employability
- Level 1 Certificate in Mental Health Awareness

During your time at Triage you will receive:

- Travel expenses paid whilst attending training or opportunities with them
- Access to exclusive vacancies from their recruitment team
- A chance to meet their recruitment team who have multiple employer contacts in the Durham area
- Financial support for work (e.g. travel to work, uniform)
- 13 weeks job focused support from their progression consultant to move you into work

You must be 19 years or older and have lived in the UK for over three years to apply. You must also not be in any other form of education or training.

For more information, or if you would like to apply for any of the courses, please call 01642 917015 and ask for a member of the Engagement Team.

## Get Involved:

### Active 30 Durham

The Active 30 hub helps schools, families, and community groups to positively impact on the health and happiness of young people by supporting them to participate in the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity activity every day.

Those working with and using Active 30 resources will be better prepared to set young people up for lifetime involvement in physical activity, something that is crucial to their long-term health beyond childhood.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the Active 30 Hub has been refreshed to provide schools, families and community groups with information and inspiration on how to promote physical activity in the home and community as well as school to support young people to be physically active throughout the pandemic.

A ‘Get Active in the Holidays’ tab has been created to support groups delivering Holiday Activity with Healthy Food programmes and school holiday projects to embed physical activity into holiday provision. This section of the site provides a list of activities for different ages and abilities to incorporate Active 30 resources into delivery whilst also raising the profile of the Active 30 with families and communities. View it [here](#).

To support young people and families to be active over the summer holiday, the Active 30 steering group have developed an easy to access resource booklet to embed physical activity and emotional wellbeing activities into young people’s lives. The resource will be available by the end of July. Please visit the [Active 30 hub](#) to access a range of physical activity and wellbeing resources.

## Who is the Active 30 booklet for?

- Schools and home educators: to help embed 30 minutes of physical activity in the school day
- Families: to support you to promote physical activity within the home setting
- Community groups: to support community groups to embed physical activity and emotional wellbeing activities in delivery

The activities have been split into the following categories;

*0 -5 years (Early Years)*

*6 -7 years (Key Stage 1)*

*8 -11 years (Key Stage 2)*

*12 -18 years (Secondary)*

*Special Educational Needs and Disabilities*

*Mental Health and Emotional Support*

County Durham  
**Active 30 Campaign**

**Active 30**  
Durham

Healthy-Happy-Active-Get involved!

[www.countydurhamsport.com/young-people/](http://www.countydurhamsport.com/young-people/)

## Head and Neck Cancer Awareness workshops

The PCP Cancer awareness team are holding a number of head and neck cancer awareness workshops in July. Did you know:

- It is the 7th most commonly diagnosed cancer in the UK

- It is easily treated if found at an early stage

Sign up to learn about the symptoms to watch out for and how you can reduce your risk. The workshops are FREE to anyone who lives or works in County Durham and are available on Microsoft Teams.

Contact [andrea.mackrell@pcp.uk.net](mailto:andrea.mackrell@pcp.uk.net) to book your place.

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## Home Oxygen Assessment Service Survey

Tees Valley CCG are keen to understand the views and experience of patients who have used the Oxygen at Home Service, how they access it, any barriers to service, what ‘good’ looks like etc. This is in order that they can build a more detailed picture of the service and feed this into work ongoing across the region via Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) that are looking closely at the way services are configured. Click [here](#) to complete the survey, before the 16th July 2021.



## Samaritans: The Big Listen 2021

Every July, Samaritan branches across the UK and Ireland hold local events to talk about the services they offer in their communities, to raise awareness that they are there for anyone who needs someone to listen, without judgement or pressure.

You can find your local branch [here](#) or get involved using the hashtags #TalkToUs and #TheBigListen

Remember, whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you. They're available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call them for free on 116 123, or find out other ways you can contact them [here](#).



## World Hepatitis Day 2021: Hepatitis Can't Wait

The 28th July is World Hepatitis Day (WHD) 2021, which hopes to bring the world together under a single theme to raise awareness of the global burden of viral hepatitis and to influence real change. In 2021 the theme is 'Hepatitis Can't Wait'. With a person dying every 30 seconds from hepatitis related illness- even in the current COVID-19 crisis- the World Hepatitis Alliance can't wait to act on viral hepatitis:

- People living with viral hepatitis unaware **can't wait** for testing
- People living with hepatitis **can't wait** for life saving treatments
- Expectant mothers **can't wait** for hepatitis screening and treatment
- Newborn babies **can't wait** for birth dose vaccination
- People affected by hepatitis **can't wait** to end stigma and discrimination
- Community organisations **can't wait** for greater investment
- Decision makers **can't wait** and must act now to make hepatitis elimination a reality through political will and funding.

Whether you have one minute or an hour, there are plenty of ways you can get involved in World Hepatitis Day. Find out more [here](#).



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## Contact us:



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