

November 2021

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# healthwatch

## County Durham

### News update - November 2021

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## You still have time to join our Virtual Annual Meeting

Stakeholders and members of the public are invited to join us for our Annual Meeting taking place on **Wednesday 17th November from 10.00am to 11.00am.**

The COVID-19 pandemic means that the meeting will take place virtually to keep everyone safe and help minimise the spread of the virus.

**If you would like to attend, please register [here](#). The deadline to register is Monday 15th November.**

There will be an overview of our Annual Report and we will hear from our guest speakers, Michael Laing, Director of Integrated Community Services and Pauline Fletcher, Senior Primary Care Manager (Dental Commissioning Lead - North East and North Cumbria)

If you would like submit any question in advance, please forward your name and contact details including your question to [healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net). There will also be an opportunity to submit questions online during the live event. The deadline for questions in advance is 5pm on Monday 15th November.

**We hope you are able to join us! If you have any queries please contact us at [healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net) or call us on 0800 304 7039**



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## We are recruiting!!

We are recruiting for a Communications and Administrative Officer to join our team!!

the smooth running of all Healthwatch activities. Further details and application form can be found [here](#). Closing date is Monday 8th November.

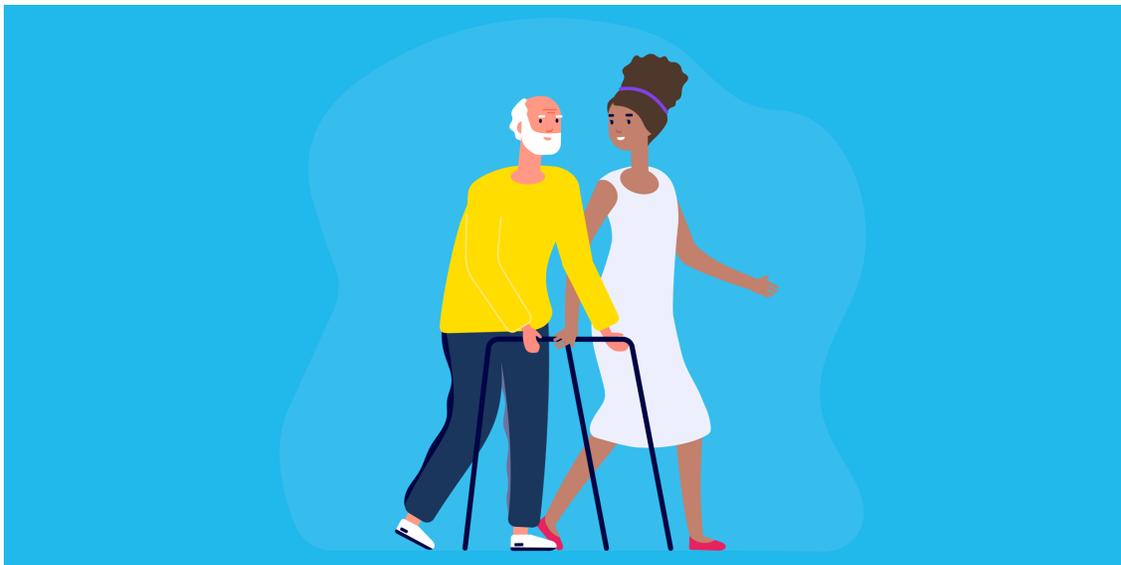


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## Do you or a family member receive care at home?

We would like to hear from you and/or your family about the support you have received since the start of the COVID pandemic. This could include things like what has worked well and also if you think there is anything else that could have been better, as well as finding out how isolated you feel you have been. Any information you share with us will be confidential.

If you would like to be involved or would like more information please call us on our Freephone number 0800 3047039 or mobile 07756 654218 and we will call you back.

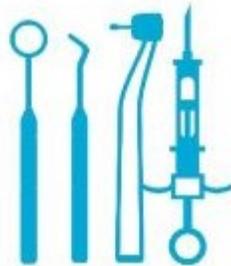


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## Spotlight on Signposting - NHS Dentists

we continue to receive a considerable amount of calls from clients unable to access dental treatment and to make an appointment for a dental check up. Under the government guidance the advise to patient remains the same:

- You do not need to be registered with a dental practice to access NHS treatment
- In a dental emergency, you can call any NHS dentist and ask to be triaged for an emergency appointment
- The NHS Choices website can help you find a dentist based on your postcode. If you are able to travel, then you may wish to broaden your search: [www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist](http://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist)



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## Are your emails causing you stress?

Email is such a useful communication tool, but is it affecting your mental health? Many of us have smart phones that give us access to our emails 24/7. This can lead to us constantly scrolling and checking for messages. Add this to the fact that many of us are continuing to work from home since the pandemic and it is more likely that we'll be checking and responding to messages out of hours.



Some tips to reduce email stress include:

- Switch off - when you finish work, switch off your devices and put them away. Out of sight, out of mind.
- Out of office - set it for when you're away from work so that your colleagues know when you're not available.
- Do not disturb - use this setting on your mobile phone to pause notifications over a set time. This can be helpful in reducing time on other apps too!
- How much?! - many phones have a setting that can tell you how much time you spend on social media and other apps, such as email. Have a look and see whether you're spending more time than you think...
- Focus - set yourself time during your working day where you close your email down and allow yourself to focus on a specific task
- Email etiquette - ask yourself (and your colleagues!) to consider whether sending that email is essential and whether you really need to 'reply all' and clog up someone's inbox. Lead by example too - don't send emails out of hours either!
- Declutter - when you have dealt with an email, file it, or delete it and keep your inbox clear
- Unsubscribe - unsubscribe to email newsletters and updates that you don't read
- Time for you - set aside some time to put your devices (personal and work) away and do something away from a screen. Take a walk, spend some time with the family or do something non-digital that you enjoy.

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## Carers Rights Day - Thursday 25th November



Durham County Council and Carers UK have come together to offer some great digital resources to Carers living or caring for someone in County Durham. The offer is to be launched on Carers Rights Day, but can be accessed now.

Carers will be given access to a wide range of digital tools and essential resources that may help make people's caring situation easier.

Visit [carersdigital.org](https://carersdigital.org) to create an account using your free access code **DGTL2485**

Durham County Council are funding this until next March but if its found to be successful, they will consider funding it for longer.

Carers can use the code **DGTL2485** to get free access to all the digital products and online resources, including:

- E-Learning designed to help carers access advice and information relevant to their

- The 'Jointly' care co-ordination app for mobile phones/tablets. A central place to store and share important information about the person you are caring for, including appointments, allocate tasks, save files or notes and lots more. This App is invaluable for carers to keep on top of all the tasks involved with caring for someone
- Essential leaflets and booklets for carers including: Upfront guide to caring, Looking after someone - Carers Rights Guide and Being heard: A self-advocacy guide for carers
- Access links to further resources and sources of information and support for people who are looking after a loved one.



## Congratulations to Family Action: Charity of the Year 2021 in the Third Sector Awards

Congratulations to Family Action who have won Charity of the Year 2021 in the Third Sector Awards.

These awards are one of the most important ways the third sector publicly recognises excellence and achievement, and so to win [Charity of the Year](#) is true testament to the hard work, passion and commitment of their staff and supporters.

A word from Chief Executive, David Holmes, CBE.

“We are delighted to be recognised as Charity of the Year in the Third Sector Awards 2021. This award is testament to the incredible energy, commitment and resilience of all our staff and volunteers at Family Action. The pandemic challenged us all in so many ways, yet as an organisation we faced the challenge together, became stronger together and increased our support for children and families across the country.”

We are so thrilled to have won Charity of the Year and look forward to continuing to be there for families as they recover and rebuild towards a positive future.

A huge thank you to our amazing workforce, volunteers and supporters who make our work building stronger families and brighter lives possible.

Find out more about [what we do](#) and how you can [get involved](#) with Family Action.

BSL users can now use Sign Video as a way to contact NHS 111. You can download the app, or use a PC/laptop and webcam to access the service.

Sign Video is the replacement for InterpreterNow. Full details of how to use the new service can be found here <https://signvideo.co.uk/nhs111/>



When it's less urgent  
than 999

## Boost your Immunity this Winter

HM Government

NHS

**BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER**

**WITH THE FLU VACCINE + COVID-19 BOOSTER**

Get vaccinated. Get boosted. Get protected.  
[nhs.uk/wintervaccinations](https://nhs.uk/wintervaccinations)

This Autumn/Winter it's essential you protect yourself and others against both flu and COVID-19. [www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations](https://www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations)

Contact us:

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