

December 2024



December 2024 News Update

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



We would like to say Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone who receives our e-Bulletin. All 1500 of you! We appreciate the feedback we have got from you, your engagement and interest in our work.

There will be no e-Bulletin in January so we will look forward to connecting with you again in the new year.

We will close on Monday 23rd December and will be back Thursday 2nd January.

Take care and have a lovely festive period to all who celebrate. 🇬🇧

Carer's Rights Week



For Carers Rights Day on 21st November, we joined Durham County Carers Support at their week long programme of events, alongside other organisations including Citizen's Advice, the Alzheimer's Society, the Fire & Rescue Service, and Wellbeing For Life . We were at venues in Spennymoor, Consett, Barnard Castle, Crook and Chester le Street to talk to carers and hear their experiences of services. We gave advice about dealing with issues, signposted to other organisations such as the Independent Complaints Advocacy, and took feedback that people wanted to share about the services they use.

Thank you to everyone who came to talk to us – all of your information helps us to tell services what is working well, and where improvements are needed.

Healthwatch England Annual Conference

On 12th November two of the Healthwatch County Durham team, Gail and Chloe, attended the Healthwatch England Annual Conference at the QEII Centre in London.

Local Healthwatch from all over the country were represented, along with various members of the Healthwatch England team.

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They heard from the Healthwatch sponsor minister – Baroness Merron, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Health and Social Care, about the 10 year plan for Health & Care.

Chloe took part in a workshop - “The future of social care – How can we help deliver a national care service?”, while Gail attended “Our role: Young People living with ADHD & autism” where she read out a case study from one of our County Durham residents.

The day finished with a discussion about the future of Healthwatch within the changing health & care landscape, which included Lousie Ansari, our Chief Exec; and David Croisdale Appleby, our Chair.



The Gift that keeps on Giving

One of our long standing Healthwatch County Durham (HWCD) volunteers, Pam Spurrell, received a long-knitted jacket earlier this year, as reported in a previous newsletter.

This had been handmade with coloured squares by a knitting group based at the Pioneering Care Project in Newton Aycliffe.

Pam very kindly decided, because of personal circumstances, to donate the jacket to someone who could get more benefit from it. So, Pam has passed the jacket on to her

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granddaughter's future Mother-in law, who is a farmer in the cold Turkish mountains – here she is modelling her new jacket, and proving that the word of Healthwatch County Durham really can travel a long way - 1750 miles on this occasion!

Our Donation to a Foodbank for Christmas



Our caring Volunteers were concerned about people potentially struggling this Christmas. They raised the idea of organising a Foodbank collection to go out prior to the Christmas break.

Volunteers, Board members and Staff contributed a massive amount through either cash or food, toiletries, sweets and treats for families this year.

Claire Sisterson (HWCD Volunteer Support officer, teamed up with an old colleague (Emily Hunter) in the 'Fire Service' to run a joint collection, this year. Hopefully this will brighten a few families or individuals Christmas', who are struggling.

Thank you to the volunteers for being so selfless this Christmastime and suggesting ways to help others.

Did You Know? GP Tips

NEED HELP WITH MIND TROUBLES?

Did you know...?

| Issue | Did you know that |
|--|--|
| I want to talk to somebody, but I don't know how to start | <p>You can phone the GP Practice and ask for a 30 min Mental Health appointment with a Mental Health Practitioner.</p> <p>You can phone 111 out of hours and they will direct you, or you can phone Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance directly on 0300 304 557. TEWV listening line is also open 24/7 for those that just need someone to talk on 0800 046 1313.</p> |
| Can't I just talk to my GP? | You can, and they may offer you attend six, one-hour sessions within the surgery (starting within 28 days), or they can refer you via the "No Wrong Door" Policy for more specialised help if needed. |
| I think I'm about to have a Crisis (e.g. I'm thinking about taking my own life) – where do I go to get help? | There is a new way to contact the Crisis Team – call 111 and choose Option 2 . This service is available 24/7. |
| If I want to talk to somebody, will they take over what happens next? | Not purely based on your initial discussion. You have to consent to those who will help you accessing your records and you are, always, creating <i>your</i> care pathway WITH your medical/MH professional. |
| Will anyone else from my community find out I am accessing mental health support. | Not unless you tell them. Not even other staff members within the Practice will know why you visit unless they're involved in your treatment. |

MAKING CONTACT ON PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES

Did you know...?

| Issue | Did you know that |
|--|---|
| I can't seem to get through to the surgery | You may need to keep trying – lines can be quite busy. Alternatively, the surgery may have an online system, such as eConsult , where you can request an appointment |
| The surgery says I must phone at a specific time that my work means I can't make | You can make a special arrangement with the surgery |
| I can't take time off to attend the surgery | You can make an appointment at a late or a weekend surgery or make a telephone appointment with a GP |
| It's only a niggle, not worth the time to get sorted | You don't have to see a GP, you could speak to a Nurse Practitioner or Clinician over the phone |
| By the time I get through on the phone the only appointments left are for some time in the future, I need help now | If you don't want to see a specific GP, you can phone 111 to ask for an appointment with another GP at a different surgery – there are often spaces |

During recent work on reaching out to farming families in Teesdale about their health, it has become obvious that some, short, guidance is needed on what to do if you have a physical health issue you're struggling to resolve or mind troubles with which you need help.

The following two pages give some quick reference information that you may find useful. Please let Tony Bentley know (07821 650442 or tony.bentley@pcp.uk.net) if there are things not included that you would find helpful.

Silver Friends Information Event



Free Information Event



Tuesday
28
January
10.30am-12.30pm



It's at...
Citizens House
Station Road
Consett
DH8 5RL

Get information and advice around health, finance, support and much more. For people aged 50+

We may be able to provide transport to and from the venue for you.
For more information, please contact Leanne:

 0191 223 8662
 07841 446 237
 silvertalk@karbonhomes.co.uk



The cakes and cuppas are on us!

karbon
homes

Come along to Karbon Homes, Silver Talk free Information Event on 28th January 10:30-12:30pm. There will be free advice and information stalls for things such as finance, health and support.

This will be held at Citizen's House, Consett, DH8 5RL.

See you there.

Suicide Prevention Training

Chester Cares & Shares

Free **Suicide Training on Prevention** for those living, working, or volunteering in the Chester-le-Street AAP area.

Wednesday 15th January
West Pelton Methodist Church
9am – 4:30pm

If you would like to attend please
contact becky@ifucareshare.co.uk



Free Suicide Awareness Workshop

Thanks to funding from Derwent Valley AAP, we are offering free suicide awareness workshops for businesses and organisations in the Consett area.

Monday 24th March
Consett Heart, John St, Consett,
DH8 5LA
10am – 1:30pm

If you would like to attend please
contact becky@ifucareshare.co.uk



☎ 0191 387 5661
✉ share@ifucareshare.co.uk
Registered Charity
No. 1142001

Improve Your Digital Skills



Improve your digital skills Our Digital Champions are here to help!



Would you like to ...

Stay in touch with loved ones

Contact your GP for appointments and prescriptions

Access services quickly and easily

Shop from the comfort of your own home

We can support you to use digital devices and learn new skills in a safe and secure way

Free tablet loan scheme available

Call us to get involved

0191 386 3856

or email us at info@ageukcountydurham.org.uk

Get help with improving your digital skills, such as shopping online, ordering repeat prescriptions and staying in touch with friends and family.

You can also loan a tablet through the free tablet loan scheme.

To get involved phone 01913863856 or email info@ageukcountydurham.org.uk.

Please share with those who you think may benefit from this support.

Wellbeing for Life Christmas Fayre



Christmas Fayre

 Friday 6 December  10:30am -2:30pm

 Healthworks, Paradise Lane, SR8 3EX



“—
| Mocktails, festive
food samples and
mental resilience
support.

Tombola and raffle. |
—”

Join us for our Christmas Fayre at Healthworks and kickstart your festive spirit.

- Enjoy Mocktails and festive food samples
- Shop festive stalls
- Chat about how we can support you with mental resilience
- **Donations** for local foodbanks welcomed

 Healthworks, Paradise Lane, Easington SR8 3EX

For further information on the Wellbeing for Life service
Freephone: 0800 8766887 www.wellbeingforlife.net



Wellbeing for Life will be hosting a Christmas Fayre at Healthworks, Easington, SR8 3EX from 10:30 - 2:30pm on Friday 6th December. There will be mocktails, festive food, festive stalls and a chance to chat about support for your mental resilience.

Singing and Songwriting for People with Dementia



ARE YOU LIVING WITH DEMENTIA?
or caring for someone who has received a diagnosis?

Come and join us at Turtle Song and try something new
FREE SINGING AND SONGWRITING SESSIONS
No previous experience necessary

WHEN
Every Thursday 2pm to 3:45pm
23rd Jan to 20th March 2025

WHERE
No. 42 Market Place
Bishop Auckland
County Durham, DL14 7PB

COMPANIONS AND CARERS WELCOME
Sign up for FREE or find out more
niamh@turtlekeyarts.org.uk
020 8964 5060

“Turtle Song is a friendly, fun and creative experience. Music makes me feel good and for a couple of hours I am transported away from real life. And the tea and coffee were a treat!”

Turtle Song

This joyful project has been running in different areas around the country for 16 years and is a collaboration between Turtle Key Arts, English Touring Opera and Royal College of Music. Young musicians join the project to create a truly intergenerational experience of high quality music and a real Turtle family experience.



We are grateful for the support of
Headley Trust
Scouloudi Foundation



Turtle Song are offering free singing and songwriting sessions for those who have dementia in the New Year. From 23rd January to 20th March from 2pm - 3:45pm at No. 42 In Bishop Auckland Marketplace.

Music can be a great way to soothe the mind and make people feel connected.

Pharmacy First



Think pharmacy first

Sore throat? Your pharmacist can now provide treatment or some prescription medicine, if needed, for seven common conditions, without you seeing a GP.

Subject to age eligibility, including 5 years and over for sore throat prescription medicine. Service available at majority of pharmacies.



Remember that your pharmacy can offer help with many more ailments.

Why use Pharmacy First?

- Going to your local pharmacy offers an easy and convenient way to get clinical advice on minor health

concerns - you don't need an appointment and you can be seen in a private consultation room.

- Your local pharmacist can now offer treatment and provide some prescription medicine for seven conditions, if appropriate, without the need for a GP appointment or prescription.
- These conditions include earache (for those aged between 1 and 17), impetigo (for those 1 year and over), infected insect bites (for those 1 year and over), shingles (for those over 18 years old), sinusitis (for those aged 12 years and over), sore throat (for those aged 5 years and over) and urinary tract infections (UTIs) (for women aged 16-64 years).
- Pharmacists have the right clinical training to make sure you get the help you need and can also signpost you to your general practice team, A&E or other relevant local service, where necessary.

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 victoria.dixon@pcp.uk.net if you would like your information to be considered for the e-Bulletin.

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Contact us:

Healthwatch County Durham
Whitfield House
St Johns Road
Meadowfield Industrial Estate
Durham
DH7 8XL

Freephone: 0800 3047039

Text: 07756 654218

Email: healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net