

# healthwatch County Durham

## February 2025 News Update

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### LGBT and Health Services



Are you a member of the LGBTQ+ community? How do you feel about using health services?

Have you faced any difficulties or barriers when using a health service - doctor, hospital, pharmacy, physio etc. For example - do

they acknowledge your preferred gender? Are you addressed as you wish to be? Have you ever felt discriminated against by health professionals?

Healthwatch County Durham have been talking to various support groups in the area, and we are hosting an event to talk about people's experiences. We are inviting members of local support groups, and people who identify as LGBTQ+ or as part of the queer community, to come along and tell us what issues you may have faced within healthcare.

Our group workshop will be held in Newton Aycliffe on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February between 13.00-15.00. You can drop in at any time or stay for the full event, and you can arrange to speak to someone privately if you don't want to share your experiences with the whole group.

If you would like to attend, please send your contact details to Tony Bentley at [tony.bentley@pcp.uk.net](mailto:tony.bentley@pcp.uk.net) or 07821 650442, and let me know whether you attend any of the local support groups, and I will respond with the full details of the event.

## Meet our New Volunteer



We are so fortunate to have a new volunteer with HWCD.

Meet Paulette Burgess!

Paulette is also a patient advocate for breast cancer, supporting others through a breast cancer diagnosis. A member of the Macmillan cancer innovation community, offering an insight from a patient perspective. Paulette is interested and passionate about giving those with visible differences, a crucial voice, so also is involved with 'Changing Faces'.

Paulette has joined Healthwatch County Durham as an 'Engagement Volunteer' but will soon be undertaking training to become an authorised 'Enter & View' representative.

"I wanted to volunteer with Healthwatch to make a difference in the lives of anyone who is in need of support or advice and am looking forward to using my skills and experience in a positive way, to do this" - Paulette

We very much look forward to working with Paulette and our great team of volunteers to do that.

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## What's in a Name? Autism and Support Services Survey



What's in a name? Does it matter what name support services use when dealing with people with autism?

Some people think a description of Autism / Learning Difficulties doesn't describe their condition and would prefer this to be changed.

We have obtained opinions from academics, people with autism or their carers, and some support

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services but primarily, we would love your opinion. Please, if you have an opinion how people categorise you, fill out our survey :<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/WhatsInAName/> (you can also scan the QR Code)

All information you provide will remain confidential and anonymous.

If you have any questions or would like any more information, please contact Tony Bentley 07821 650442 or email [tony.bentley@pcp.uk.net](mailto:tony.bentley@pcp.uk.net)

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## Durham Locate New Look Website Feedback



Durham County Council and People Places Lives are designing a new directory of services across County Durham for adults, children and SEND. This will replace the current 'Locate' website.

DCC and PPL would like some feedback on the work they have done so far on the website to help gather insight on how to make it even better.

Scan the QR Code to look at the website and fill out the survey.

## Free Suicide Awareness Workshops

# 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](mailto:becky@ifucareshare.co.uk)

**if u  
care  
share**



● 0191 387 5661  
● [share@ifucareshare.co.uk](mailto:share@ifucareshare.co.uk)  
Registered Charity  
No. 1142001

**Wednesday 12th March**  
**Consett Rugby Club, Medomsley Rd,**  
**Consett, DH8 6LU**  
**9:30am - 4:30pm**

If you would like to attend please contact [becky@ifucareshare.co.uk](mailto:becky@ifucareshare.co.uk)

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Registered Charity  
No. 1142001



In loving  
memory of  
Daniel O'Hare

**Wednesday 16th April**  
**Glenroyd House, Medomsley Rd,**  
**Consett, DH8 5HL**  
**1pm - 4:30pm**

If you would like to attend please contact [becky@ifucareshare.co.uk](mailto:becky@ifucareshare.co.uk)

**if u  
care  
share**



● 0191 387 5661  
● [share@ifucareshare.co.uk](mailto:share@ifucareshare.co.uk)  
Registered Charity  
No. 1142001



In loving  
memory of  
Daniel O'Hare

If U Care Share is offering free Suicide Awareness Workshops across County Durham.

These will take place on  
Monday 24th March 10am -1:30pm  
Consett Heart, John St, Consett  
Wednesday 12th March 9:30am -  
4:30pm Consett Rugby Club,  
Medomsley Rd

Wednesday 16th April 1pm - 4:30pm  
Glenroyd House, Medomsley Rd

If you are interested in taking part in the training, please contact Becky at [becky@ifucareshare.co.uk](mailto:becky@ifucareshare.co.uk).



## Emotional Resilience Training

The graphic features the title 'Emotional Resilience' in purple, followed by 'Delivered by' in blue and the 'Mind' logo in blue. To the right is a green star with a hand inside. Below are five stars with labels: a purple star for 'Improving confidence and self-esteem', a green star for 'Managing negative thoughts', a light blue star for 'Managing stress', a pink star for 'Developing coping strategies', and a dark purple star for 'Basic Mindfulness'. At the bottom left is a green house-shaped outline containing the address: 'Belmont Community Centre, 10 Herefordshire Drive, Durham DH1 2LL'. At the bottom right is a calendar icon showing 'Thurs 27th Feb 10am - 12.30pm'.

Durham County Carers are offering an Emotional Resilience Training session delivered by Mind Darlington, designed for individuals experiencing mental or emotional discomfort. Whether you're dealing with anxiety, depression, low mood, negative thoughts, stress, or emotional challenges, this session aims to provide you with the tools and strategies to build resilience and cope

more effectively.

Strengthen your emotional well-being and gain valuable insights into managing life's challenges.

What will be covered:-

- Improving confidence and self-esteem
- Managing negative thoughts
- Managing stress
- Developing coping strategies
- Basic Mindfulness

Scan the QR Code to book on to the training.



# Arch Recovery College Drop-In



## Who are we?

1 in 4 of us will experience mental health difficulties at some point in our lives. Located in the centre of Durham City, ARCH Recovery College equips people with the skills and knowledge needed to manage their recovery, have more hope, gain more control over their lives, and explore opportunities – despite diagnosis.



## What we offer

- A range of free-to-attend courses, workshops and outdoor activities which include understanding common mental health diagnoses, mindfulness, walking, preparing for change, and photography.
- Our courses are based on recovery principles (CHIME) and are co-produced by people with lived experience of mental health-related issues.
- Classroom activities are primarily based around group discussion and on sharing what has worked for us on our recovery journeys.



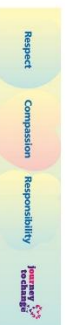
## How you can get involved

Our courses are open to anyone who is struggling with their mental health, their families, carers, or anyone who might be interested. To enrol with us or if you just want to find out more, get in touch with us on 0191 451 0890 or email [TEWV.recoverycollege@nhs.net](mailto:TEWV.recoverycollege@nhs.net)



/DurhamRecoveryCollege

[www.tewv.nhs.uk/get-involved/training/arch-recovery-college](http://www.tewv.nhs.uk/get-involved/training/arch-recovery-college)



**Monthly Drop-in enrolment morning**  
 Thursday 6th of February  
 10am - 12:30pm  
 (First Thursday of the month thereafter)



If you would like to register as a student at ARCH, or simply come in for a chat and find out what we can offer over a cuppa, you are very welcome to pop in to one of our monthly enrolment sessions. Booking is not required, just turn up! :)

**P** Free parking is available in the car park at the side of the Health Centre - please collect a parking permit on arrival  
 T: 0191 451 0890 E: [TEWV.recoverycollege@nhs.net](mailto:TEWV.recoverycollege@nhs.net)

Arch Recovery College equips people with the skills and knowledge they need to manage their mental health recovery, explore new opportunities and have more control over their lives. They offer courses and workshops to enhance people's skills. Arch Recovery are holding a monthly drop-in morning on Thursday 6th February 10am-12:30 and the first Thursday of the month from then on.

You can find out how they can help you and what opportunities are available.

You can find them at St Margaret's Health Centre,  
5 St Margaret's Garth,  
St Margarets Garth,  
Durham  
DH1 4DS.

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## NHS 111 select mental health option



If you, or someone you know, is experiencing a mental health crisis, access urgent support 24/7 by calling NHS 111 and selecting the mental health option.

Local crisis teams are not changing and the service is still provided by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust in our region. It is just a new telephone number to call –

making it simpler for people to find the right support in a mental health crisis.

To help you get the support you need, you will speak to a mental health advisor who will ask you some questions and listen to you. They can offer self-care advice over the phone, transfer you to the crisis service if needed or refer you to other local services. You can call for yourself, or someone else. NHS 111 is for all ages, including children and young people and those with neurodevelopmental needs.

If you are deaf or have hearing loss please use NHS 111 [SignVideo](#) or the 18001 111 Relay UK app.

A mental health crisis can mean different things to different people, but often means that you no longer feel able to cope or be in control of your situation. It can cause a

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significant disruption to your life and your ability to function.

You should call NHS 111 and select the mental health option if you are worried about:

thoughts about your life not being worth living or about harming yourself

feeling out of control or unable to cope

feeling anxious about leaving the house

hearing voices or seeing things that others can't

If you or someone else have physically harmed themselves, or if their life is at risk, then you should still call 999 or go to A&E.

Find out more about [NHS 111 select mental health option](#)

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## Wellbeing for Life Training Calendar



### Winter Training Calendar January – March Q4 2025



**FREE for anyone living or working in County Durham**



We are a fully subsidised provider of health improvement, health education and public health training. All of the training is FREE to anyone living or working in County Durham.

Our training provides learners with the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills in health improvement and community related subjects. Our training courses provide an exciting and comprehensive learning programme for professionals, volunteers and community members. We offer both accredited and non-accredited training. It is a relaxed and interactive atmosphere at our sessions to ensure

everyone feels welcome.

We deliver the sessions in community venues and we can come to you if you have a group of people who would like some training. (**NOTE:** currently some of our training is delivered virtually by MS Teams)

Wellbeing for Life have updated their training calendar and have a lot of training opportunities, which are free to anyone who is living or working in County Durham.

Training opportunities include an insight into menopause, stress management, assertiveness skills, diabetes awareness, and so much more.

Click here to find the extensive list and book onto the sessions: <https://www.wellbeingforlife.net/#/allsessions>



# Suicide Awareness Training

## Online Suicide Awareness Training

Take Action, Save Lives: Sign Up for Zero Suicide Training Today!



Every life is valuable, and together, we can create a future free from suicide. Zero Suicide Training empowers individuals to recognize the signs, offer support, and provide hope to those who need it most. Whether you're a healthcare professional, community leader, or concerned citizen, this training equips you with the knowledge and skills to make a real difference.

### Why Sign Up?

- **Learn to Save Lives:** Equip yourself with tools to identify warning signs and take action.
- **Support Your Community:** Help create a safe space for those struggling with suicidal thoughts.
- **Make a Lasting Impact:** Be part of a movement to reduce suicide rates and save lives.

Join us in taking a stand for mental health. Sign up for Zero Suicide Training today and be part of a compassionate, informed, and supportive community dedicated to preventing suicide.

The Suicide Awareness Training is a short, free, online course that can be taken by anyone who wants to learn basic suicide awareness and prevention skills. We believe suicide is preventable and we know that sometimes all it takes to save a life is a conversation.

### Who it's for

The training is aimed at anyone aged 16 and over who wants to know what to do if they're ever in a situation where someone they know or see may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

### What you'll learn

The training will take you through:

- suicide risk factors
- suicide warning signs
- coached scenarios sharing approaches for how you can talk to someone you're worried about
- videos from people sharing real experiences
- where to find information about available support

At the end of the course, you'll get a training certificate to download.

### How long it takes to complete

This is a short online course that can be taken at your own pace. You can choose the parts of the course that you interact with. We recommend allowing yourself at least 30 minutes.

ZSA are offering free suicide awareness training online to everyone.

The short 30 minute course is for anyone who wants to learn basic suicide awareness and prevention skills.

You will learn about suicide risk factors, warning signs, where to find the right support and more.

Take the training here: <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/suicide-awareness-training>

## Cut the Cost on Keeping War



# Cutting the cost of keeping warm

We understand how difficult it can be when energy bills start to rise. By making some small, simple changes we can all save money while staying safe and well.

### Save money when cooking

When cooking, put a lid on your pan as this can save you money on your energy bill. Putting a lid on your pan allows water to boil faster and the lid keeps the heat in the pan, rather than letting it escape, speeding up cooking time and helping you use less energy.

Slow cookers save money! Slow cookers are an extremely efficient way to cook, you can batch cook meals. Likewise, microwaves and air fryers are also great alternatives to using ovens.

### Switch off your appliances

Turning off lights and switching appliances off standby when not in use can save **£85<sup>1</sup>** a year on energy bills.



### Do not over fill

Only boil as much as you need, overfilling your kettle wastes energy.



### Turn down your thermostat



By turning down your thermostat from 22°C to 21°C, you could save **£115<sup>2</sup>** on your energy bills.

Wash on eco or 30°C or cooler cycles when you can. Washing at 30°C rather than higher temperatures could save **£15<sup>3</sup>** a year

### LED lights

Switch your lights to energy-friendly LED light bulbs. Replacing all the light bulbs in your home with LEDs can save around **£65<sup>4</sup>** a year, lasting five times longer.



### Full load

Only wash with a full load, cutting back on just one washing cycle a week can save you an additional **£15** a year and further savings on metered water bills.



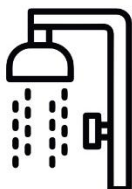
### Use a washing bowl

Using a bowl to wash up rather than a running tap can save you money on your energy and water bills if you have a water meter. You only need to run a typical tap for 95 seconds before you would have filled a washing up bowl.<sup>5</sup>

### Take shorter showers

Spending just one minute less in the shower can save **£20** a year in a typical household and uses far less energy than taking a bath. Sticking to 4-minute showers could save a typical household **£75** on energy bills and around **£65** on metered water bills every year.<sup>6</sup>

Replacing an inefficient shower head with a water-efficient one can reduce your yearly gas bill by **£45**. If you have a water meter as well, you can save another **£25** – that's a total saving of **£70** each year.<sup>7</sup>



### Maximise your income

Every year, millions of households miss out on thousands of pounds worth of benefits, that they are entitled to. Turn2us's benefit calculator easily and quickly identifies any benefits you are entitled to claim to increase your income: [Turn2us Benefits Calculator](#).

**We're committed to helping our customers keep safe and well. We work with a number of services and organisations that can provide help and support on energy fuel efficiency.**

### Help and support with energy bills



#### National Energy Action (NEA)

If you need advice and support on your energy bills, please visit NEA's website via the link for more information: [National Energy Action NEA](#)



#### Citizens Advice

If you need information on grants and benefits to help you pay your energy bills, please visit: [Citizens Advice](#)



#### Groundwork

If you need help with saving money on your energy bills or improving efficiency within your home, please visit: [Groundwork](#)



#### The Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register (PSR) is a free service that helps energy companies to look after customers who have extra communication, access, or safety needs. It helps us tailor our services to support households who need extra help with everyday energy matters like bills, and also in the unlikely event of a power cut or gas supply interruption.

Find out if you are eligible and register at: [Priority Service Register](#)



#### Safer Homes Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Fitting a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm in your home is a great way of keeping you and your family safe from the dangers of (CO). CO is an odourless, tasteless, and invisible gas that is dangerous, and can be created from faulty gas appliances.

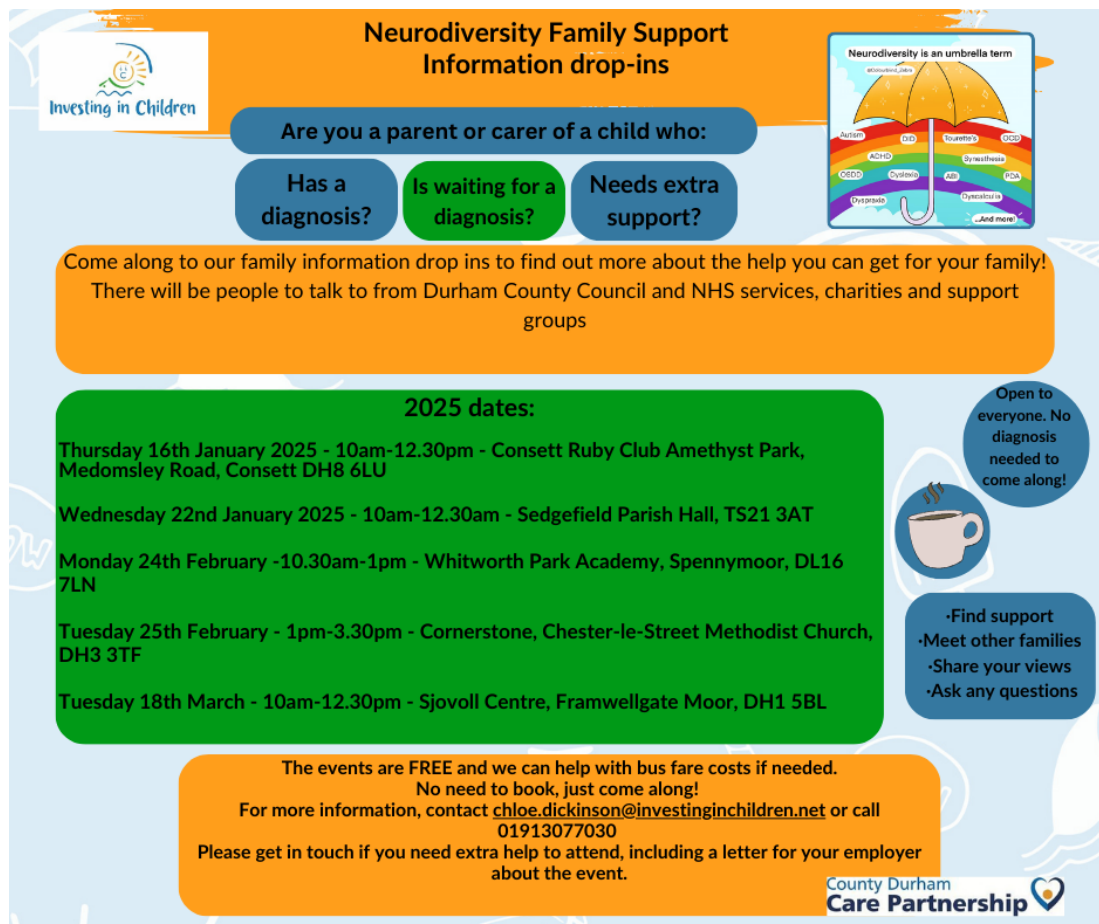
The Safe Homes programmes offers households a free CO alarm (maximum of one per household) - [you can request your free CO alarm here](#).

Please use the below details when requesting your free CO alarm:  
**Username = coalarms Password = Saferhomes123**



Take a look at the posters above to find out how to save money on your electric bills through these cold months. This could include turning your heating down by a few degrees, not overfilling the kettle, only washing clothes when you have a full load and shorter showers.

## Neurodiversity Family Support Information Drop-Ins



The poster features the 'Investing in Children' logo on the top left and a rainbow umbrella graphic on the top right. The umbrella is labeled 'Neurodiversity is an umbrella term' and lists various conditions: Autism, ADHD, Tourette's, OCD, ACIDH, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Cystic Fibrosis, ABI, PDA, and Dyscalculia. Below the umbrella, three blue buttons ask: 'Are you a parent or carer of a child who: Has a diagnosis? Is waiting for a diagnosis? Needs extra support?'. A central orange box contains the event description. A green box lists the 2025 dates and locations. A blue box on the right lists event activities. An orange box at the bottom provides contact information and a note about bus fare. The County Durham Care Partnership logo is in the bottom right corner.

**Neurodiversity Family Support Information drop-ins**

Are you a parent or carer of a child who:

- Has a diagnosis?
- Is waiting for a diagnosis?
- Needs extra support?

Come along to our family information drop ins to find out more about the help you can get for your family! There will be people to talk to from Durham County Council and NHS services, charities and support groups

**2025 dates:**

- Thursday 16th January 2025 - 10am-12.30pm - Consett Ruby Club Amethyst Park, Medomsley Road, Consett DH8 6LU
- Wednesday 22nd January 2025 - 10am-12.30am - Sedgfield Parish Hall, TS21 3AT
- Monday 24th February - 10.30am-1pm - Whitworth Park Academy, Spennymoor, DL16 7LN
- Tuesday 25th February - 1pm-3.30pm - Cornerstone, Chester-le-Street Methodist Church, DH3 3TF
- Tuesday 18th March - 10am-12.30pm - Sjøvoll Centre, Framwellgate Moor, DH1 5BL

Open to everyone. No diagnosis needed to come along!

- Find support
- Meet other families
- Share your views
- Ask any questions

The events are FREE and we can help with bus fare costs if needed. No need to book, just come along! For more information, contact [chloe.dickinson@investinginchildren.net](mailto:chloe.dickinson@investinginchildren.net) or call 01913077030 Please get in touch if you need extra help to attend, including a letter for your employer about the event.

County Durham Care Partnership

Investing in Children are holding neurodiverse family support information drop-ins to help you find support for your family. There will be people from Durham County Council, NHS services, charities and support groups there to make sure you get the right help.

See above for the dates and locations.

For more information please email [chloe.dickinson@investinginchildren.net](mailto:chloe.dickinson@investinginchildren.net) or call 0191 3077030



## Find the right service

### The emergency department is busy

You may face a very long wait.

**If you're feeling unwell but it isn't life-threatening:**



Hospital emergency departments are very busy at the moment, and people are asked to only visit if really necessary. If you feel unwell, but the problem isn't life-threatening, there are other ways to get help:

Your local pharmacy can help with a number of conditions.

Or you can get advice from NHS 111, by telephone or online. Ring 111 or visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk)

Help to keep emergency departments for emergencies only.

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## 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](mailto:victoria.dixon@pcp.uk.net) if you would like your information to be considered for the e-Bulletin.



**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](mailto:healthwatchcountydurham@pcp.uk.net)