

Your local health and social care champion

# News and updates

**healthwatch**  
Northumberland

December 2023



## Cost of living support



The cost of living can put a real strain on people's finances and also their health and wellbeing.

We have printed a new booklet which lists details of organisations and services which can offer support with energy costs, prescription and healthcare appointments costs, food, and mental health.

The booklet is free and can be found at community venues across Northumberland, or you can get in touch with us to request a copy or copies in the post.

All the information can also be found on our 'your health' webpage. We'd love to know if you find the booklet useful so please let us know what you think.

## Time to talk about cancer

### online event

**Friday 12 January**  
**1pm - 2pm**

Join us to hear from Maggie Bailey from Coping with Cancer North East, who will talk about some of the myths around cancer.

She will also provide information on the care and support available in Northumberland from Coping with Cancer and through other services. There will be a chance to ask questions after the presentation.

This free session is suitable for anyone who would like to know more about cancer and the support available.

Please get in touch to book your place.

## Where to find us in 2024

Our Here to Hear drop-in sessions will continue next year, at the venues below. We hold these drop-ins in all five areas of the county, and may change them after a time so that we can hear from residents in different places.

Call in to tell us, in confidence, your views and experiences of local NHS and social care services, or to ask a question through our Signposting and Information Service.

### **Weavers' Court, Alnwick**

Thursdays 14 December and 11 January, 10.30am-12.30pm

### **Blyth Community Hub, Keel Row Shopping Centre**

Wednesdays 20 December and 17 January, 10am-12pm

### **Prudhoe Spetchells Centre**

Thursdays 21 December and 18 January, 11am-1pm

### **East Bedlington Community Centre**

Friday 5 January, 10am-12pm

**Morpeth Library** Wednesday 24 January, 11am-1pm



## Stay well this winter

Winter comes with a higher risk of health issues, particularly for older people or those with long-term conditions and compromised immune systems.

### Top tips from the NHS to stay well

**Get your vaccines and boosters** Protect yourself and others by getting your COVID-19 booster and flu vaccination.

**Keep warm during the day.**

Wrap up in lots of layers. Keep doors closed to block draughts.

**Keep moving.** Move around indoors and try to get outside for a walk.

**Wrap up at night.** Wear layers to bed including socks. Keep windows closed at night.

**Eat well.** Eat a balanced diet and try to eat at least one hot meal a day.

**Stay hydrated.** Regular meals and hot drinks can help you keep warm.

**Have your medication on hand.** Make sure you have the right medicines at home in case you get poorly.

**Stop the spread of germs.** Protect yourself and others by washing your hands often and covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze.

**Look after your mental health.** The winter months can take a toll on our mental wellbeing. If you are feeling down, speak to someone – a friend, family member, or a healthcare professional like your doctor.



## Feedback from October 2023



In October the biggest issue you told us about was poor communication from services. This was around prescriptions in particular, and the communication between patient, GP practice and pharmacy.

There have also been communication issues with other services either not communicating with the patient or with each other, which has adversely affected the patient.

To tell us your recent experiences of NHS and social care services, please get in touch in a way that suits you. Your feedback helps services know what is working well and where improvements can be made.

## Would you like to get more involved in local services?

From joining your local Patient Participation Group, to taking part in the council's Adult Services People's Advisory Group, there are lots of opportunities to become more involved in local services, depending on how much time you have to give. Visit our 'useful information' webpage for more details or ask us for an information sheet in the post.

## Christmas and New Year



Our office will close at 5pm on Friday 22 December 2023, reopening on Tuesday 2 January 2024.

Thank you for your support this year. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

## Get in Touch

To unsubscribe from this newsletter or to contact us with feedback or a question, please get in touch.

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**Write to:** FREEPOST Healthwatch Northumberland, Adapt (NE), Burn Lane, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 3HN

### Social Media:

