

News and updates

February 2026

Could you help shape end-of-life care?

We're supporting the NHS in our region to hear how people feel about discussing death, dying and the care they would want for themselves or their loved ones.



Talking about death is something many people find difficult, but your views can make a genuine difference to how support is given at one of the most important moments in life. Your feedback will help shape plans for future services and support in the region.

Palliative care supports people who are living with an illness that unfortunately cannot be cured. This illness may be cancer but is more likely to be a long-term condition such as serious heart or lung disease where cure is not possible. It focuses on helping someone feel as comfortable as possible in body, mind and spirit, while also supporting their family and carers.

End-of-life care is a form of palliative care given when a person is approaching the final stages of life.

We'd like your thoughts on where you would like to receive palliative care, the most important aspects of end-of-life care to you, whether you have any written plans for your care and how you would like to be supported to find out about care.

You can do this online at: bit.ly/NHSEndOfLifeCare, by scanning the QR code, or call us to have a chat about these questions. All feedback is anonymous.



Thanks for your feedback!



Thank you for continuing to share your experience of care with us.

Last month a patient gave positive feedback about the gastroenterology department at Wansbeck General Hospital.

They told us: "I felt listened to and that the impact of my condition on my life was understood. I was given enough time to ask questions about likely diagnosis, possible treatment and interim medication to control symptoms while waiting for tests. I could not have asked for a better experience."

We also heard of a 92 year old unable to access a hearing test at home. Audiology services confirmed she could have a visit, but this needed to be recommended by their GP. The patient is nearly blind and the GP has not been supportive with this request.

Visit our website to find out more about what we hear on a monthly basis, or ask for a postal copy of our at-a-glance summaries.

Cold weather can be tough on your lungs, especially if you have COPD, but there are some simple ways to help you breathe easier this winter with this checklist.

- Have you had your winter vaccines?
- Do you have enough inhalers and medicines at home?
- Do you know what to do if your symptoms get worse?
- Have you stopped smoking or asked for help to quit?
- Do you have a plan if you start to feel unwell?
- Have you had an annual COPD review?



Talk to your COPD nurse or GP about more ways to stay healthy this winter or visit the NHS website.

Ways to boost your mental health this winter



Many people find the winter months tough. Experts recommend spending some time outside every day to make the most of the natural light, looking after yourself physically by eating well and getting plenty sleep, and planning some activities you enjoy to look forward to.

Useful websites

CALM: bit.ly/CALMWinterBlues
Mind: bit.ly/MindSADInWinter
Our mental health support page: bit.ly/MentalHealthHWN

If you aren't online, please get in touch and we can signpost you to organisations offering mental health support and information.

Women's cancer awareness – free online session

Friday 13 February 1pm–2pm



Join us to hear from Betsy Holmes, Community Cancer Awareness Worker from Healthworks, who will talk to us about the most common cancers in women.

This will include knowing the signs, symptoms and risk factors associated with common cancers. We'll also hear about the importance of self-checking and screening, and what to do if you find something that's not normal for you.

There will be a chance to ask questions.

To register for your free place women's cancer awareness, visit our website or call us.

Your experiences of the Pharmacy First service



In the autumn we asked for your views of the Pharmacy First service in Northumberland.

Pharmacy First enables community pharmacies to provide treatment for seven conditions without the need to see a GP. These are earache, impetigo, infected insect bites, shingles, sinusitis, sore throat and urinary tract infections (UTIs) for women 16–64.

Pharmacists can also provide an urgent repeat medicine supply.

Visit our website to read what you told us about your awareness of Pharmacy First, or ask for a postal copy.

Where to find us – Here to Hear at a drop-in near you!

Here's where you can find us in February. Call in to leave feedback, ask a question in confidence or pick up some information on local care and support.

Adapt Community Warm Space Burn Lane, Hexham: Every Tuesday, 10am–1pm

Manor Walks Cancer Roadshow Cramlington: Wednesday 4 February, 10am–3pm

Weavers' Court Alnwick: Thursday 12 February, 10.30am–12pm

Hexham Mart: Friday 13 February, 9am–1pm

Hexham General Hospital: Thursday 19 February, 10.30am–12.30pm

Morpeth Leisure Centre: Wednesday 25 February, 10.30am–12.30pm



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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