Healthwatch Darlington is an independent consumer champion for health and social care users, and will help people find and access the health and social care services that are right for them.

Since our last newsletter, we’ve been out talking to you.

We’ve been listening to your stories about local health and social care.

We’ve visited you in the community at our Access Points and recorded all of your comments about local care.

We’ve completed Enter and View visits into a local hospital to find out your thoughts.

You’ve told us about your experiences and opinions on Dementia Services.

You’ve completed our online survey about general health and social care services in Darlington.

You’ve helped us talk to patients in a local Hospital.

You’ve become Healthwatch participants and volunteered your time.

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Join Us, Have Your Say, Get Involved

18 March 14—Help us to write a Mental Health Strategy for Darlington.
2.30-4.30pm (Registration from 2pm) - Central Hall, Dolphin Centre, Darlington.

30 April 14—Exciting opportunity to become a part of the Healthwatch committee. Times and venue to be confirmed. Special information will be distributed.
Issue 1 of the Healthwatch Darlington Signposting and Information Directory is now complete and available for individuals to look for details of many local health and social care services. If you would like a paper copy of the directory, please contact the office on 01325 380145.

The directory can also be viewed online at http://issuu.com/healthwatch/docs/darlington_2014_issue_1

**Partnership working**

Healthwatch Darlington are continuing to work alongside other organisations in Darlington. We have been working collaboratively with Darlington Borough Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Health and Wellbeing Committee. We have supported Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as a critical friend and have gathered public opinion to feed into their work.

Healthwatch Darlington continue to support Darlington Organisations Together (DOT) where many voluntary and community sector organisations get together to share good practice and discuss opportunities for joint working.

**Enter and View Team**

There is now a team of trained Enter and View volunteers completing some excellent work on behalf of Healthwatch Darlington. These people have completed Enter and View training, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, Confidentiality, and Dignity training, and are all fully Disclosure and Barring checked.

The team are continuing to be critical friends and the eyes and ears of Healthwatch Darlington.
Healthwatch in the Community

Healthwatch Darlington will be providing a single point of contact to help people find information about health and social care choices and signpost to NHS Complaints Advocacy.

Contact our Information and Signposting
Freephone 0808 801 0383

Access Points

We will be at the following locations providing information and signposting to health and social care services

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>1st Saturday of the month</td>
<td>10.00-11.30</td>
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<td>Thompson Street East</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maidendale House</td>
<td>2nd Thursday of the month</td>
<td>11.30-13.30</td>
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<td>Burnside Road, Firthmoor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cockerton Library</td>
<td>3rd Thursday of the month</td>
<td>14.00-16.00</td>
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<td>The Green, Cockerton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cafe JJ</td>
<td>4th Tuesday of the month</td>
<td>11.15-14.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Clifton Community Centre, Clifton Road</td>
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Healthwatch in YOUR Community

We want to ensure that the views and experiences of patients, carers and other service users are taken into account when local needs assessments and strategies are prepared.
Healthwatch are happy to come and speak to your community group, service users and staff to discuss the role of Healthwatch and how you can be involved.

We also want to provide as many people as possible with information about health and social care services and signpost to NHS complaints advocacy.

If you feel your service users would benefit from an Access Point at your community cafe, community centre, workplace please contact the office on 01325 380145.
Meet your CCG Lay Members

Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Lay members.

Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has appointed two new lay members to sit on its Governing Body. John Flook is joining as lay member for Audit and Governance and Andie Mackay with a portfolio to challenge ‘current thinking’ so that the CCG can continue to commission high quality services at a time of austerity in public finances.

Both new members will join Michelle Thompson who was appointed last year as the CCG Champion for patient involvement. Like Michelle, both live and work locally and are excited by the chance to work with partners to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

The CCG is only required to have two lay members, but Chief Officer, Martin Phillips, says that the appointment of a third lay member reflects the CCG’s commitment to ensure that local people have a meaningful voice in the discussion and decisions of the CCG.

Andie Mackay

As a fireman, Andie will be able to reflect on how his service has responded in delivering public services in the ongoing cold financial climate. Andie is a serving Fire Fighter with over 27 years’ experience with the County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service. Andie’s career has seen him progress to senior manager level, with a wide range of managerial, operational and strategic level responsibilities. Andie lives in Gainford and is married to Rachel with four children and one granddaughter. He is currently Chair of the Parish Council and Governors at a local Primary School. He is a graduate of the Institution of Fire Engineers and has a Masters Degree in Business and Administration.

Michelle Thompson

Michelle has pledged to ensure that patients, carers and the public have a strong meaningful voice. This is driven by the trauma of losing her teenage sister to a rare form of bone cancer in 1995 and then facing the battle of her life when she developed thyroid cancer in 2003. She has used her cancer experiences as a motivator and has run, hiked and cycled all over the world raising money and awareness for Macmillan Cancer Support. Gaining a wealth of experience over the last 10 years leading voluntary and community groups, Michelle was appointed as Chair of Healthwatch Darlington last year as well as being awarded the British Empire Medal for volunteer services to charity and the community in Darlington and County Durham. Michelle is married to oil and gas health and safety advisor Mick and has two children, Emily and Billy.
Compliments at Darlington Memorial Hospital

The Patient Experience Team at County Durham and Darlington Hospitals collect compliments from patients and relatives. We have taken a selection of compliments from Darlington Memorial Hospital between October to December 2013 to share with you.

Ward 14 - ‘The team worked together to make the visit as pleasant as possible so our thanks and applause to the cheery tea lady, the nurses, doctors and the consultant we feel privileged to have met’.

Ward 42 - ‘I would like to put on record our appreciation of all the staff on Ward 42 who have been most helpful to me - in my view they are a credit to themselves, their professions and to the hospital. I am sure the Board should be proud of its nursing teams’.

Ward 44 - ‘I find it hard to express my gratitude to all the team but everyone was very special and all work so very hard and always had a smile’.

Ward 52 - ‘I was very impressed by the day staff and night staff. I have made some lifelong friends. Kindly thank them all each and every one who works on Ward 52’.

ED - DMH - ‘The doctor was extremely efficient and reassuring - the waiting time was minimal and the care excellent’.

Rheumatology - ‘I am happy to say I couldn’t have been in safer hands, The Dr was a true professional at all times and has such a kind and caring manner’.

John Flook

As lay member for Governance and Audit, John will draw on his wealth of NHS and financial expertise. John has significant experience in the NHS, having worked as a Director of Finance in the North East for 20 years. He is currently a Senior Non-Executive Director and Chair of the Audit Committee for NHS Professionals Ltd and an independent member of the Audit Committee of Sport England. John, who has a degree in Economics from Newcastle University lives in Darlington and is married with two adult children.

In welcoming the new appointments GP Chair Andrea Jones say that the role of lay members is critical to “bring a non-clinical viewpoint and challenge, particularly important where there may be an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the CCG clinical member’s dual role as commissioners and providers.”

Information and Signposting
RNIB recently launched the “Don’t lose Sight” campaign to help ensure local authorities and public health professionals ‘do not lose sight’ of the needs of blind and partially sighted people and those at risk of losing their sight.

Every day 100 people in the UK start to lose their sight and shockingly, 50 per cent of sight loss in the UK is avoidable. Some eye conditions, if identified early can in many cases be treated to ensure that further sight is not lost.

Losing sight can have a huge impact upon a person’s life, affecting their mobility, independence and confidence. Older people with sight loss are also three times more likely than those without sight loss to experience depression.

RNIB are concerned that nearly half of council local needs assessments in England do not include any information on people with, or at risk of sight loss. These local needs assessments are known as Joint Strategic Needs Assessments or JSNAs for short.

The JSNA informs decisions as to where to allocate money for services.

Therefore, not including information on sight loss or eye health in the JSNA potentially makes it more difficult to commission services for people living with sight loss in the area, and as a result could increase health inequalities.

RNIB are also calling on public health teams to consider sight loss when they are looking at the other areas of work they do, for example when they look at falls prevention, or education programmes around smoking.

At a time when resources are finite, it is more important than ever to make sure that sight loss is not forgotten when decisions of where to allocate money and resources are made.

For general information about the campaign or to get involved, please visit our website: [http://www.rnib.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/SOS/Pages/jsna.aspx](http://www.rnib.org.uk/getinvolved/campaign/SOS/Pages/jsna.aspx)

Or email Lucy Dixon, RNIB Regional Campaigns Officer for the North East at lucy.dixon@rnib.org.uk
If you’re feeling under the weather, get help as soon as possible. See your local pharmacist or get advice from [www.nhs.uk/asap](http://www.nhs.uk/asap). The earlier, the better.

Speak to your friends, family or carer if you are feeling under the weather. They can help you to get advice from your local pharmacist or from [www.nhs.uk/asap](http://www.nhs.uk/asap). The earlier, the better.

If you have a bad cough, trouble breathing, a cold or sore throat, tell your friends, family or carer before it gets worse. The earlier, the better.

Getting advice from your local pharmacist or by visiting [www.nhs.uk/asap](http://www.nhs.uk/asap) early may help prevent your bad cough, trouble breathing, cold, or sore throat from getting worse. The earlier, the better.
If you are visiting or caring for an elderly relative or friend who is unwell, get advice from www.nhs.uk/asap or see your local pharmacist to help manage their care. The earlier, the better.

If you know of an elderly relative or friend who has a bad cough, trouble breathing, a cold or sore throat, get advice from www.nhs.uk/asap or see your local pharmacist before it gets worse. The earlier, the better.

If you’re feeling under the weather, get help as soon as possible. Get advice from www.nhs.uk/asap or see your local pharmacist. The earlier, the better.

Local pharmacists provide expert advice to help you manage your long-term condition or can even help you if you have a bad cough, trouble breathing, a cold or sore throat. They have longer opening hours than GP practices, and most have a private consultation area. They’ll also tell you if they think you should see a doctor.
NHS Pharmacy Call to Action
Have your say on your local pharmacy

People in County Durham, Darlington and Tees are being encouraged to have their say to help shape the future of local pharmacy services.

The Community Pharmacy Call to Action aims to strengthen the role pharmacies play in the community, and forms part of the wider NHS England Call to Action campaign, launched in July 2013.

Durham, Darlington and Tees Local Professional Network (Pharmacy) will work with local pharmaceutical committees, hospital pharmacy teams, clinical commissioning groups, local authorities and local HealthWatch organisations to focus on how to develop high quality, efficient services that improve the patient experience.

Members of the public can share their thoughts on what services they would like to see in their local pharmacy by taking part in a short online questionnaire on the NHS England website. A local Pharmacy Call to Action workshop will also take place in March.

Cameron Ward, director for the Durham, Darlington and Tees area team of NHS England, said: “Pharmacies provide an excellent service to our local communities and are already providing a vast range of services to help to keep people healthy, prevent people from being admitted to hospital and to support people in getting the most from their medicines.

“We want to explore how pharmacies can play an even stronger role at the heart of out-of-hospital services and help to overcome some of the challenges we face as a health and social care economy, with increasing demand for GP, urgent care and hospital services.

“We know we have to do things differently to maintain and build on the excellent clinical care and positive patient experience that is provided locally and we are keen to hear from patients and professionals alike as to how community pharmacy can help.”

“Pharmacies will play an important part in providing personalised care, advising on healthy living, improving health and reducing health inequalities, and delivering excellent patient experience to make sure people get the most from their medicines.”

Local views collected as part of the Community Pharmacy Call to Action campaign will be used to inform national and local plans for the provision of community pharmacy services.
Continued from page 9.

Community pharmacist Mike Maguire, chair of the Durham, Darlington and Tees Local Professional Network (Pharmacy), adds: “Over the coming weeks we will be working with a range of organisations to help us plan for the future; ensuring pharmacies have a key role in the local community, and to make sure people know about the range of services their pharmacy can offer.

“Your local pharmacist can offer you free, qualified health advice at any time, no appointment is necessary. They can give you expert help on everyday illnesses and answer questions about prescribed and over the counter medicines. Pharmacists can also advise on healthy eating, weight management, giving up smoking, and most have private consultation rooms where you can talk in confidence.”

The pharmacy campaign follows NHS England’s the earlier, the better campaign, which encourages people to seek medical advice early and not store up health problems. It highlights that there are many places where people can go to get quick medical advice, including local pharmacies, NHS Choices, and NHS 111.

Darlington Local Offer Launch

Darlington’s Local Offer was officially launched at an event on 30 January and was attended by parents, grandparents, young people and representatives from Education, Health, Social Care and the voluntary sector.

The Local Offer gives information to parents of children with Special Educational Needs and or a Disability between the ages of 0-25, in a single place, which helps them to understand what services they and their families can expect from a range of local agencies, including what they are entitled to by law.

It clarifies what provision is normally available from early years settings, schools (including academies), independent and free schools, colleges and other services including health and social care.

You can find the Local Offer online at: http://darlington.fsd.org.uk

A booklet has also been produced which lists various organisations and support you may be entitled to. The Local Offer is a continuously evolving piece of work, and if you feel there are services/organisations which are not currently included, please contact us:

E-mail: PFIS@darlington.gov.uk
Tel: 0800 9172121

You can also complete our online survey. Details can be found at:
http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/darlington/fsd/organisation.page?id=MFF2pjF-zMI
“Helping people in the Local Community of Darlington before they reach crisis point”

Carewatch is a leading UK home care provider, with 154 branches, covering most of the nation, including Darlington. We’ve been providing home care for twenty years, helping people with a wide range of care and support needs to stay at home, safely and with dignity.

We’ve been working with Darlington Borough Council for many years and are starting to provide a service through the CCG’s.

We are involved in every aspect of our customers’ care and support, ensuring an integrated and holistic approach. We work in association with a number of local organisations including the Alzheimer’s Society, local Hospices, advocacy services, Age UK and Mencap. We also provide specialist services for people with learning and/or physical disabilities, mental health support needs, and dementia. Our person-centred approach means that we put the customer at the heart of everything we do.

We are strong advocates of social inclusion and as such, we encourage and enable our customers to engage where they can with their local activities and events. Our care staff are recruited locally and have good knowledge of their local communities such as what events and activities are happening. We also provide a companionship service to many customers to help them feel less isolated.

As you may be aware, a high percentage of people don’t qualify for state funding as the eligibility criteria has tightened. This means that more people needing care and support in their own home are having to fund their own care.

Many people don’t know where to start when they need support, some think that residential care may be their only option which may stop them from reaching out for the support they need, not realising that they can stay at home. Often, people only reach out for help when they come to a crisis point, by which time it can be too late. We are aiming to work in partnership with groups and associations like Healthwatch to raise awareness of Carewatch and the services we provide, reaching people before they hit crisis point.

Together through raising awareness of the services Carewatch provides we can help people avoid going into hospital unnecessarily, or going into residential care when this is not an option they would have wished for.

If you would like to learn more about Carewatch, the services we provide and the difference we make to people’s lives please either contact Kelly Hodgson on 07785 425725 or visit our website www.carewatch.co.uk
Get Involved

Why Volunteer with us
Healthwatch Darlington will provide opportunities for individuals, groups and organisations across our community to work together to make a difference. In order for the Healthwatch to reach its potential and provide an effective voice for the people of Darlington, it needs the expertise of local people, campaigners who use health and social care services and organisations who are experienced at representing their communities.

What Volunteers do
Healthwatch Darlington will provide new ways for more people to contribute their views and experiences on health and social care services.

Participant
Receive regular newsletters and updates
Complete questionnaires or comment on Facebook and Twitter
Attend Healthwatch Events

Volunteer
Help organise and run Healthwatch Events
Enter and View—(visit and observe local health and social care services)
Assist at promotional and Access Points

Task and Finish Groups
Work on specific issues
Share specialist knowledge, experience and expertise
Shape and influence local services

Have you experienced Health and Social Care services in Darlington in the past twelve months? If so, tell us about your experiences by logging on to:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9SLCZYP
or alternatively scan the QR code to the right of this box with your smart phone

Contacting your Healthwatch Project Office
Telephone: 01325 380 145  Text: 07525237723
Information and Signposting Freephone 0808 801 0383
Address: Freepost RTEH-TUCJ-TGCU, Healthwatch Darlington, CVS Building, Church Row, Darlington, DL1 5QD
Email: info@healthwatchdarlington.co.uk
Local Healthwatch Development Officer: Diane Lax
Community Participation and Engagement Officer: Andrea Goldie
Information and Signposting Officer: Jodie Craggs

Web: www.healthwatchdarlington.co.uk
Facebook: Healthwatch Darlington
Twitter: @healthwatchdton