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This newsletter is produced quarterly for you by members of the Forum's Communications Working Group.

If you think you'd like to get involved, and you have a passion for healthcare and a sense of local community, you're just the person we are looking for. Find out more in the 'Have your Voice Heard' section later in the newsletter or contact Michele Spencer michele@chcfnorthtyneside.org.uk for more information.

Primary Care Networks

Did you know that your GP practice is part of a Primary Care Network (PCN)?

No?

Well... **it's where your GP practice has partnered with others in your local area to offer additional services and, very importantly, offer extra appointment slots** when your GP practice can't fit you in.

If you're unable to get an appointment at your GP practice when you need one, **ask the reception staff to check if there is an enhanced hours appointment available** instead.

North Tyneside offers 4 primary care networks in Whitley Bay, Wallsend, North Shields and North West, so it might mean a little extra travel, but each PCN has additional rooms and staff outside of your current practice and also offer enhanced hours appointments so you can book appointments after work or outside of your GP Practices contracted hours. PCNs also bring a range of additional staff and offer a wider range of appointment types.

All in all, PCNs aim to make GP services more accessible to you and it's a great option available to patients.

Stay Well in Winter

As winter approaches, some people will be more at risk during the cold weather especially older people, babies and children and those with a long-term condition.

If this is useful to you or maybe a friend or relative, you'll find lots of advice and tips here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/>



Warm Spaces in North Tyneside

Locally, North Tyneside has many warm space sites across the borough available to all residents. It's **not means-tested and is a comfortable space to relax**, get involved in activities (if you wish) **and grab a hot drink**.

Up-to-date information on where to find your closest warm space can be found here: https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/sites/default/files/web-page-related-files/Warm%20welcome%20locations_2.pdf

Homelessness

North Tyneside Council's Housing Options Team offers a wide range of support for people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

It is always our priority to work with you, to try to prevent homelessness or relieve your housing situation. **You don't have to be sleeping on the streets or not have a roof over your head to be thought of as homeless**. We work with a range of people in a variety of situations, to provide support and housing advice.

The Council has an excellent track record of preventing homelessness and supporting those at risk.

If you, or anyone you know, requires housing support, you can arrange a face to face interview with the Council's Housing Advice team at one of the borough's customer first centres in North Shields, Wallsend, Whitley Bay or Killingworth by emailing Housing.Advice@northtyneside.gov.uk or phoning 0800 011 6511.

As well as offering direct support, North Tyneside Council also works with a number of partners who can help in different situations. The Housing Options team may be able to signpost you to a partner organisation, depending on your situation.

Age UK North Tyneside's Health & Wellness Groups

Age UK North Tyneside is **supporting older residents to get into fitness and community activities** after launching a new range of weekly classes.

With sessions covering everything from Pilates and balance exercises to reading and social groups, there's something on offer for residents of all abilities.

While the sessions are fun and beneficial, they're helping to address health inequalities for older residents in the borough.



Thanks to funding from the Health Inequalities Fund, Age UK North Tyneside is able to offer **the first session for free, with an additional free session when you bring along a friend** and test a wide range of activities to see which prove popular with older residents.

To find out more about Age UK North Tyneside's Health & Wellness groups, call the Health & Wellness team on **07974 185 070** or email healthandwellness@everydayuk.org.

Live Well with Cancer

Cancer affects more people than you know and impacts on everyone who cares for the individual who has been diagnosed.



Do you know anyone living with cancer who could do with some additional support?

Live Well with Cancer are passionate about helping people improve their quality of life and aims to enable people to live life fully with and beyond a cancer diagnosis. Their focus is to empower people through self-help, mutual support and signposting to local services. They host events, deliver workshops and introduce service users to exercise regimes adaptable to all levels of fitness.

More information can be found on their website: <https://www.livewellwithcancer.co.uk/>

Northern Cancer Voices



Northern Cancer Voices need volunteers to help in roles to promote its work, recruit new members and gather feedback from patients, carers etc. on their experience of cancer service. They are a Collaborative Group of health professionals, volunteers and patients covering the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) – the largest ICS in the country. This means that your support will only serve to strengthen their efforts.

Can you help spread the word?

Get in touch to find out more about how you can help:
info@northerncancervoices.co.uk

Eating Distress North East



It's estimated that over 1.25 million people in the UK live with an eating disorder – meaning you might know someone who is struggling.

Eating Distress North East (EDNE) is **the only specialist charity offering support to people across the region experiencing eating distress, with or without a formal diagnosis**. It exists because every individual affected by eating distress deserves specialist support, hope, and to know that recovery is possible.

EDNE offers a range of services for people experiencing mild to moderate eating distress across North-East England. It is an all-gender service currently working with people aged 16 and above.

Visit their website to find out more about the services on offer:

<https://www.edne.org.uk/our-services/>

Shared Decision Making

Some great work is taking place across the country to help patients and healthcare professionals communicate more effectively so both sides can make the most of short appointment times.

The Patient Information Forum and the Patients Association have published a report setting out simple steps that will help to remove barriers to shared decision making. This was a co-production project in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB and the findings of this work have resulted in a set of recommendations for national action:

It's OK to Ask – A national campaign should support patients to know 'It's OK to Ask' questions during appointments and prepare questions before appointments.

This will help patients to feel comfortable asking for more information or raising anything that feels bothersome to them.

My Planned Care – Non-judgmental information should be co-produced nationally to help people on waiting lists prepare mentally and physically for surgery. This information should be provided in plain language and accessible formats and added to My Planned Care.

This will help patients to why they might be being asked to make difficult changes to their lifestyle around an operation (i.e. factors relating to weight, smoking, alcohol consumption etc.)

About Me – About Me information should be added to the NHS App and linked to the shared care record.

This will enable healthcare professionals to see at a glance what is important to a patient and supports them to deliver personalised care.

Shared care records – Shared care records need to be implemented without further delay to support shared decision making and patient safety across complex care pathways.

This will stop patients having to explain their situation and conditions each time they visit a new healthcare professional.

Navigating the system – ICBs need to provide a clear description of care pathways in MSK and other conditions and provide consistent information and support to embed shared decision making.

This will reduce some of the stress patients feel when they have to interact with the healthcare system.

Read the full report <https://pifonline.org.uk/resources/publications/pif-pa-removing-barriers-to-shared-decision-making/>

NT LIFE Launches Sept 2023 Prospectus

NT LIFE Recovery College, the free, peer-led mental health educational and support service for adults in North Tyneside, has launched its new prospectus for September 2023. New sessions start from 4th September and again on 23rd October.



Courses include their Get2Gether drop-in, vegetarian cooking, DBT skills, creative writing, dance, art, book club, photography, emotional regulation toolkit, a neurodivergent support group and more. You can view all of their upcoming sessions in the prospectus: <https://voda.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/September-December-2023-NT-Life-prospectus-2.pdf>

Booking is essential. To get involved, you must first complete the expression of interest form by visiting: <https://voda.org.uk/ntlif/>

The team will contact you and arrange an informal chat and then if you are keen to get involved, they will get you enrolled as a student of NT LIFE and choose the activities or courses you would like to get involved with.

NT LIFE: Helping people learn positive new ways to deal with life's stresses, understand themselves better and find purpose.

Can you Identify This?



Have your Voice Heard!

Would you like to help improve local NHS services? If so, joining the North Tyneside Patient Forum is a great way to provide feedback and encourage positive changes.

We want as many people to be a part of the forum as possible to make sure we're hearing a wide range of views. So far, we have members who are new mothers, those who have caring responsibilities for elderly relatives and those who are managing long-term conditions themselves.

What could you bring to the conversation?

Do you have an illness that reduces your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

Have you ever experienced low mood or depression?

Is English a second language for one of your friends or family members and you could advise us on how best to reach them?

Any and all are welcome as long as you live in North Tyneside.

The **forum meets for a couple of hours six times a year** and you can attend as many or as few meetings as you're able.

There are also opportunities to join specific working groups if you can volunteer more of your time.



Communications; support the production of this quarterly newsletter.



End of Life; influence services for palliative care patients and the carers.



Mental Health; find out what services are available to residents.



Innovations; help shape new initiatives to improve patient experiences.

Innovation

Member Spotlight

Vicki Shouksmith



Before I had my daughter a year ago, I rarely visited the doctors or hospitals, but during pregnancy and afterwards I had some disappointing experiences with the NHS.

Rather than just complaining about it, **I wanted to see what I could do to make sure no one else had to have similar experiences in the future.** I joined my GP's Patient Participation Group and that's how I heard about the Patient Forum.

I've always struggled to find volunteering opportunities that work around my schedule, but there is no pressure to attend everything the forum is involved in. Meetings are a mix of Teams and in-person, making it very flexible and easy to participate.

I'm looking forward to joining the next Mental Health working group as NHS Talking Therapies really helped me to manage my anxiety during the pandemic.

Did you Identify This?



Answer: Gateshead's Angel of the North!

Thank you to Sam Stephenson for the image

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

For NHS information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

For Government guidelines

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

For local information

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/category/1429/coronavirus-covid-19>



Thank you for reading our newsletter! We hope that you found the information useful.

If there are any topics you'd like us to explore in future issues, please share your thoughts with Michele Spencer michele@chcfnorthtyneside.org.uk