

Patient Forum Newsletter

Eleanor Hayward Chair

There is so much news and information in the winter edition of our newsletter. It is wonderful to see how much work is being undertaken by forum members.

I am really pleased to report that our self-care group is continuing to make a difference in the community, with practical support for a variety of people.

There are changes taking place as our current chair steps down, so we would all like to take this opportunity to thank Liz Brittlebank for her commitment and hard work over the years, which has helped to make the self-care group unique in the region.

I hope everyone has a very healthy and enjoyable Christmas season.

Hear my Voice-coming soon

'Hear my voice North Tyneside' is a new project being launched by NHS North Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group, which enables patients, residents, family members, carers and staff to describe their experience of receiving and delivering health care across North Tyneside.

The aim is to foster a new culture of partnership, involvement and listening that enables the CCG to introduce a more person-centred approach to shaping the way services are delivered and commissioned.

"Hear my voice North Tyneside" is one of the ways in which the CCG can strengthen a culture of partnership and collaborative working by integrating the feedback they receive into shaping and delivering services for the future.

Over the next year the CCG will be launching a range of surveys asking for your experiences across different healthcare settings.

The first survey is asking specifically about experience accessing and receiving care from your GP practice.



Veterans

Accessing NHS mental health services to support veterans and their families can be arranged by GP referral or a military charity.

For North of England services call 0303 123 1145 or email.vwals@nhs.net

Some North Tyneside practices are Armed Forces Veteran Friendly Accredited

Forward Assist is a veterans' charity based in the John Willie Sams Centre in Dudley, which aims to engage veterans in community projects that utilise their valuable transferrable skills. The charity is also involved in life-changing employment, volunteering, education and training opportunities that help to reduce social isolation and promote their physical and mental wellbeing.

More information can be found online [here](#).

The Age UK in Tyne & Wear Joining Forces Veterans Project provides a range of activities and services to meet the needs of veterans born before 1950, their families and carers.

Information and advice caseworkers are available to support veterans with housing issues, health and wellbeing, pensions, benefits, accessing home adaptations and befriending and bereavement services.

More information can be found by contacting Age UK North Tyneside. Telephone 0191 280 8484 or visit www.ageuknorthtyneside.org.uk

Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Programme

NHS North Tyneside CCG has created this £500,000 programme to help local groups improve the health of the borough.

Successful applicants for the large grants are DePaul UK, Linskill and North Tyneside Community Development Trust, Age UK/YMCA and Meadow Well Connected.

Small grants were awarded to North Tyneside Arts Studio, Walking With, Acorns, Wallsend Memorial Hall and People's Centre and Family Gateway.

As these projects develop we will share their information in future newsletters.



Volunteering

There are many opportunities to get involved and support your community over the festive season, as well as throughout the year.

Information on volunteering can be found on the [Voluntary Organisations Development Agency \(VODA\) website](#).

Drink awareness

To keep your risk of alcohol-related harm low, remember:

- Men and women are advised not to drink more than 14 units of alcohol a week on a regular basis
- If you drink as much as 14 units a week, it's best to spread this evenly over 3 or more days
- If you're trying to reduce the amount of alcohol you drink, it's a good idea to have several alcohol-free days a week
- If you're pregnant or trying to become pregnant, the safest approach is to not drink alcohol at all to keep risks to your baby to a minimum.

Regular or frequent drinking means drinking alcohol most days and weeks. The risk to your health is increased by drinking any amount of alcohol on a regular basis.



You can use the [Drink Aware unit calculator](#) online to help manage your drinking:



Primary Care Networks(PCNs)

PCNs are groups of GP Practices commissioned to provide primary care services at scale, covering between 30-50,000 patients.

There are four PCNs covering the North Tyneside area, each with their own PCN director:

- North West
- Whitley Bay
- Wallsend
- North Shields

The PCNs will focus on three particular areas of work over the next year, including extended access to primary care, clinical pharmacy and working with practices.

Pharmacy prescription delivery charges

Some pharmacies now charge for delivery of medication, but there are exceptions such as when a pharmacy is contractually obliged to offer free delivery for appliances and some dressings.

Boots

Charges apply to all patients unless a Boots charge exemption applies:

- Patients requiring urgent end of life care
- Emergency deliveries after an urgent request from a GP
- When a pharmacy "has not met agreed levels of customer service"

The cost is £5 per patient per delivery. Alternatively, a payment of £55 per patient can be made for an annual subscription.

Payment can be made in the pharmacy or via the Boots Customer Service Centre. If patients living at the same address have the same delivery schedule, one charge will be made for delivery.

The free delivery service by Royal Mail is if patients sign up to their online pharmacy dispensing service.

Lloyds

Two plans are available - the single person plan is £35 for six months or £60 for 12 months. The household plan is £52.50 for six months or £90 for 12 months, which covers prescription delivery for unlimited persons at the same address.

Well

There are no plans to change their current policy. There is no charge for delivery, but the service is only for those patients identified on an individual basis as requiring the



support under the Equality Act. If patients are not at home to receive the delivery, a card is left advising that medication will have to be collected from the pharmacy, redelivery is not part of the service.

Pharmacies receive no payment for delivering prescriptions except for appliances and some dressings. Recent cuts to NHS funding mean they are no longer able to absorb this cost and have therefore introduced charges.

There are other pharmacies in North Tyneside, so please check your local arrangements.

Medicines

Remember to order your prescribed medication in plenty of time before the festive bank holidays, and be sure to check your medicine cupboard is well stocked with:

- Painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen
- Antihistamines for allergies and insect bites
- Rehydration salts and diarrhoea tablets
- Indigestion tablets
- Plasters and antiseptic wipes

Don't forget your pharmacist can help with many ailments, and can save you a visit to your GP.

Think Pharmacy First



This scheme allows people who receive free prescriptions to go straight to their pharmacist to receive treatment without needing to visit their GP to get a prescription first.

The scheme is available to adults who are entitled to free prescriptions on the grounds of low income and their children along with all people aged 60 or over.

To get free treatment you will need to sign the prescription the pharmacist prescribes and show proof that you do not have to pay.



Proof could be your HC2 certificate, or income support. If you sign the form but cannot show proof, then the pharmacist will still provide the medicine, but checks will be made later.

To receive free medicines for a child on the Think Pharmacy First scheme the parent or guardian must also be eligible for free prescriptions.

For the list of ailments covered in the scheme please [click here](#).

Emergency contraception

This can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or if the contraception you have used has failed - for example, a condom has split or you have missed a pill.

There are two types of emergency contraception:

- The emergency contraceptive pill (morning after pill)
- The intrauterine device (IUD or Coil)

For more information, [visit the NHS website](#).

Domestic abuse

A range of support services are available in North Tyneside and neighbouring boroughs.

More information can be found on the SIGN North Tyneside [website](#).

Working groups feedback

Mental Health

North Tyneside Life Recovery College is a service for people with mental health problems, based in the Linskill Centre in North Shields. It promotes skills and confidence for students and volunteers.

Members receive regular updates on developments.



Self-care

Back pain workshops are held around the borough, led by physiotherapists and aimed at patients newly diagnosed by their GP who have been referred to the service to receive professional information and guidance.

Future Care

Members recently visited both the Urgent Care Centre based at North Tyneside General Hospital and the Emergency Care and Ambulatory Care units at The Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital, Cramlington.

Communications

Members continue to support the CCG with communications as well as producing this quarterly newsletter.

End of Life

A new leaflet, 'care and support living with a life-limiting illness' has been supported by members and contributed to over the last few weeks.

The leaflet describes the services available to palliative care patients and lists their contact details.

Innovations

This is a newly formed group to support IT developments in the CCG. Members with a specific interest share their time and expertise to ensure initiatives are appropriate to patients.

Did you know?

During Christmas dinner, we typically consume over 5,200 calories and a whopping 190g of fat. You'd have to run two marathons or 52 miles to burn this off.

If you ate this way every day, you would be 22 stone (140kg) heavier by this time next year. 73% of us don't think about the calorie intake over the festive period!

Seasons greetings to all of our readers!

