

Issue 21  
December 2020



North Tyneside  
Clinical Commissioning Group



# Patient Forum Newsletter

Welcome to the Christmas issue of the Patient Forum Newsletter we hope you find it informative.



## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

For NHS information please click [here](#)

For Government guidelines please click [here](#)

## Navigating Life in North Tyneside

Navigating Life  
in North Tyneside  
During COVID-19



As government guidelines on shielding and measures to control the spread of coronavirus continue to change, we are all finding ourselves having to alter the way we live our lives. Some people may find these changes easier to adapt to than others. With so much information available it can be difficult to keep up.

Navigating Life in North Tyneside during COVID-19 is a magazine produced by VODA and North Tyneside Council to help local people to navigate a changing landscape in the borough of North Tyneside.

We're very lucky in North Tyneside to have access to a wealth of services, local charities and community organisations and volunteer networks which have adapted to support people during the pandemic. The magazine features advice and information on the following:

- Help to prevent the spread of coronavirus
- COVID-19 support hub
- Good Neighbours supporting local residents
- What to expect at your GP appointment and what to do if you are ill
- Finding local health and care information and useful services in North Tyneside
- Practical and peer support from NT LIFE and advice on health and wellbeing
- Getting around and socialising safely

[Read the magazine here.](#)



## HowFit – improving fitness



HowFit is designed to help people improve their fitness and wellbeing. A leaflet has been distributed to 317,000 residents in North Tyneside, Newcastle and Gateshead which outlines information on exercise, eating and nutrition.

With the aid of a new website, HowFit encourages users of any ability, from chair based to fairly fit, to undertake a plan of simple exercises that can be carried out at home without the need for any special equipment. It works on three levels of exercise from simple stretches to slightly more strenuous workouts.

Patients can register for HowFit by submitting their name and email address. Some Forum members have been involved in the testing of the website. For further information go to: [www.northtynesideccg.nhs.uk/get-fit-in-your-own-front-room/](http://www.northtynesideccg.nhs.uk/get-fit-in-your-own-front-room/)  
To register and get more information go to [www.howfittoday.co.uk/](http://www.howfittoday.co.uk/)

## Home Safety Check and Falls Prevention

### Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

The home safety check aims to identify all fire and lifestyle associated hazards, in order to reduce the risk of having a fire or accident in the home. Personnel will deliver various methods of safety education and protection advice and will fit appropriate smoke detection for the deaf and hard of hearing if required. They will also carry out home visits to discuss:

- Fire escape plans
- Bedtime routine
- Kitchen and cooking safety
- Electrical safety
- Smoking and candle safety

They will also offer brief advice and onward referral for many aspects of health and wellbeing. Primary falls prevention is also offered to all occupiers aged over 65. The check aims to deliver advice about eye tests, medication reviews, slipper checks, lighting, good housekeeping and removing clutter. They will also inform residents about the importance of strength and balance classes.

Prevention staff also carry-out low level interventions within the home such as securing loose rugs and carpets, loose and untidy cables and trip hazards. They can also provide non-slip bath mats and walking aids.

For more information please visit [www.twfire.gov.uk](http://www.twfire.gov.uk)



## Livi

Livi is a free NHS GP online access service which allows patients to book appointments, get medical advice, prescriptions and referrals which is perfect for those who can't get to their surgery. Access to Livi is via an app.

Since July, over 5000 North Tyneside residents have registered for Livi which is a 12 month pilot and there have been around 1300 GP consultations.



For more information, including frequently asked questions and patient feedback go to: [www.northtynesideccg.nhs.uk/your-health/livi/](http://www.northtynesideccg.nhs.uk/your-health/livi/)

## Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing is when health professionals refer patients with social, practical or emotional needs to support in the community in order to improve their health and wellbeing.

The North Tyneside Social Prescribing Service is provided by First Contact Clinical and consists of two teams of link workers, one based in the community and one in GP practices. Their aim is to support patients to access local services based on what matters to them.



Patients can be referred by their GP or practice nurse or they can refer themselves. A link worker will then work with the patient and take time to find out what is important to them and support them to identify issues they would like to address. This may involve introducing them to services, groups or activities in their local community and then supporting them to improve their health and wellbeing and to make positive life changes in areas such as:

- Housing, benefits, financial and advice
- Employment, training and volunteering
- Education and learning
- Healthy lifestyle and physical activity
- Arts, gardening, creative activities
- Befriending, counselling and groups

To access the service a person must be a resident of North Tyneside or be registered with a North Tyneside GP practice and 18 years of age or over.

Referrals can be made by email to [fcc.ntsps@nhs.net](mailto:fcc.ntsps@nhs.net) or by calling 0191 4324829. More information can be found [here](http://here) or at [www.socialprescribing.org.uk](http://www.socialprescribing.org.uk)



# Patient Forum Working Groups

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the work of the forum members but the use of Microsoft Teams has been successful, enabling members to keep up to date and in touch.



## Future Care Working Group

Despite the challenges over the past few months, members of this group have been able to meet using Microsoft Teams via the internet. Although there has been a lot of work undertaken re COVID-19 not all of this has had negative outcomes. New methods of working, delivering care and use of technology has emerged.

One of the many areas explored has focused upon services for older and vulnerable people. What emerged from this extensive piece of work is that people valued the idea of a one-stop service for health care needs. This resulted in the production of an Integrated Frailty Pathway. Within this are a lot of different parts that contribute to the North Tyneside response to future service delivery.

Key elements within this pathway are use of assessment criteria, identification of existing services and development of new ways of working to ensure person-centred, comprehensive, quality care. Other areas make use of the valuable voluntary services that are available. These are discussed within this group and other sub groups.

Recent work has included the reconstruction of current services and recruitment of staff including nurse practitioners plus mental health personnel. This service will now be referred to as CARE Point (North Tyneside). This service over the next few months will be further developed and shared with patients and care providers.

The Future Care working group has been included in discussions and contributed from a patient perspective. Progress and development will be included in future Newsletters.



## Mental Health Working Group

Members have received a presentation about the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of residents in North Tyneside. This will inevitably have an impact on the demand for services and providers are working together looking at how best to meet this expected rise. Referrals across all age groups are likely to increase.

Short-term, the impacts are anxiety, loneliness, stress, depression and increased substance misuse. In the medium term there is an increased risk of suicide and self-harm, domestic abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder.



The psychological toll on children and young people during the pandemic includes increased anxiety, self-harm and stress, struggles with family relationships, more with suicidal thoughts as well as school or college related issues impacting on mental health.

Four group members have recently attended a workshop, along with representatives from all areas of mental health services in the borough, to define the core model for North Tyneside Community Mental Health provision. This is a three year plan to have an integrated model by 2023/4 to enable patients with serious mental illnesses to live well in the community by improving access and treatment and giving patients greater choice and control.

Members have asked for more information regarding services available for people with learning disabilities and this will be addressed in a future meeting.



## Innovations Working Group

The group recently met on Microsoft Teams and were joined by Ruth Battey from North Tyneside Council and Claire Howard from VODA to give an update on progress of the review of SIGN NT, the signposting and information network to health and wellbeing services in North Tyneside.

Ruth advised that funding had recently been granted by the Big Lottery Fund, North Tyneside Council and the Primary Care Networks to upgrade the system. From feedback received, including from the Patient Forum, the aim will be to make it more user friendly and have a better search facility. It will be restyled 'Living Well in North Tyneside'.

We also received some feedback on Livi and HowFit. Livi is going well and receiving good feedback from patients. One of our members has had a GP consultation and was very positive about the experience. Usage is being monitored and analysed.

The HowFit exercise programme is up and running and good feedback being received. All households in North Tyneside, Newcastle and Gateshead have received a booklet "Small steps to feeling good" which gives full details.

It was acknowledged that the Innovations group is vital in discussing new ways of delivering patient care and services.



## Communications Working Group

Members continue to enthusiastically prepare the newsletter as well as a bulletin for distribution to practice patient groups to keep them informed about the Forum and initiatives in North Tyneside.





## Self Care and Wellbeing Working Group

The group has met for the first time since lockdown and is keen to resume the promotion of self-care. Members discussed possible themes for consideration and the main areas mentioned were: mental health, including loneliness, obesity and weight management, exercise and local services information systems. It was agreed that mental health was a key concern especially during the pandemic and consideration will be given to how we could take this forward.

Members were joined by Claire Howard, the wellbeing facilitator from North Shields Primary Care Network and VODA. Claire has valuable experience in the voluntary services sector and it is hoped that the group will be able to work with her in the future.



## End of Life Working Group

Members recently discussed the palliative care work plan which will produce a one, three- and five-year strategy. The current pandemic has naturally been a challenge for all services and members appreciated the impact on visiting for relatives and carers with loved ones in a hospital setting.

## Eleanor Hayward – Chair of the Patient Forum

Our health and community services continue to be tested to the limits during the pandemic. North Tyneside is rising to the challenge and the most important message for residents is still Hands, Face, Space. We all have a role to play in looking after ourselves and others around us. Please stay safe.

Congratulations to North Tyneside CCG who has received an 'outstanding' rating from NHS England for the second year in a row. This is a great achievement and means that the people of North Tyneside continue to receive some of the best healthcare in the country. For more information see [here](#)

I hope everyone has an enjoyable Christmas season.



## Did you know.....

Healthwatch North Tyneside has put together a guide to help you get the right help in North Tyneside when you feel ill. There are several ways to get help when you don't feel well and it can be confusing to know who to call or where to go.

[Visit the Healthwatch website for more information.](#)

**Seasons Greetings to everyone  
and a Happy Healthy New Year**

