



## How to access NHS dental care



It's still proving difficult for some people living in Northumberland to find NHS dental care.

North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) has a plan to improve oral health and increase access to NHS dental care across the region.

There are four ways patients can access NHS dental care.

- Contact your regular dentist if you have one or search for a dentist near you.
- Contact dentists that have extra urgent appointments. A list of contact details for those practices can be found on the [NENC ICB website](#).
- Book an appointment at an urgent dental access centre listed on the [ICB's website](#).
- Contact NHS 111 for urgent care.

If you would like some support to search for these services, please get in touch and we will help you find out what is available.

## Northumberland Warm Spaces



Warm Spaces and Warm Hubs can be found across Northumberland, offering a hot drink and a snack and the chance to chat with others.

Many venues offer activities, plus information helping to connect you with the support and services you need.

New locations are being added all the time, including the [Adapt Community Warm Space](#) in Hexham which opened in December.

To find details of all the Warm Spaces and Warm Hubs across the county visit the Northumberland County Council website, or give us a call and we'll help you find a Warm Space near you.

## Have you had an out of hours GP appointment?

We'd like to know your experiences of using GP services outside of usual hours, such as an evening or weekend appointment.

Please get in touch to leave feedback or visit our website.

## Here to Hear drop-ins for you



Here's where you can find us over the next few weeks.

Call in to leave feedback or ask a question in confidence. Please note there will be no December drop-in for Morpeth due to the Christmas break, but we'll be back in January.

### **Newbiggin Community Hub**

Wednesday 10 December  
12pm - 2pm

### **Weavers' Court, Alnwick**

Thursday 11 December,  
10.30am - 12pm

### **The Manors, Prudhoe**

Wednesday 17 December  
10.30am - 12.30pm

### **Hexham General Hospital**

Thursdays 18 December and  
15 January  
10.30am-12.30pm

### **Adapt Community Warm Space, Hexham**

Tuesdays 23 December and  
6,13, 27 January  
10am - 1pm

### **Blyth Community Hub**

Wednesday 21 January  
10am - 12pm

### **Morpeth Leisure Centre**

Wednesday 28 January,  
10.30am-12.30pm

## Spotlight on... Bright Red



Bright Red is a local charity established to improve the lives and treatment of people dealing with blood cancer. Through care, research and education, the charity strives to beat illnesses such as leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma.

Bright Red offers free auricular (ear) acupuncture sessions specifically for cancer patients. These one-hour sessions take place in small groups. The programme is designed to help to alleviate symptoms and improve overall wellbeing in a welcoming and relaxed environment.

For more information speak to your specialist nurse or email [support@brighred.org.uk](mailto:support@brighred.org.uk)

## Update on gluten-free prescriptions



Earlier this year we asked for your views on proposed changes to gluten-free prescriptions. Following the public consultation, gluten-free bread and flour mix will continue to be available on NHS prescription for people aged under 25. Prescribing for adults aged 25 and over will no longer continue after 1 March 2026.

This decision balances the need to use limited NHS resources fairly and effectively while taking steps to protect vulnerable patients.

## Online information events

### Tyneside and Northumberland Mind

Friday 12 December 1 - 2pm

Join us to hear from Mind about mental health and wellbeing support services in Northumberland and how to access them.

### Vision Northumberland

Friday 9 January 1 - 2pm

At our January event we'll hear from Sue Taylor of Vision Northumberland about the range of services available for those with sight loss. We will also get an overview of sight loss including some of the main causes and challenges.

Get in touch to register.

## Have you used Patient Transport Services recently?

Have you, or has someone you care for, used the Patient Transport Service to get to or from a hospital appointment? Please share your experiences and what you think is good about the service, plus where improvements can be made.

## Your feedback

In October we heard mixed feedback about GP services with some saying the appointment booking process had improved. One person told us the staff at their GP practice are "knowledgeable, approachable, thorough and very, very caring".

You told us about long waiting times for audiology appointments and distances to travel to hospital outpatients appointments.

Read more in our monthly summary on our website or ask for a postal copy.

## Pharmacy Christmas opening hours



Over the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays, many pharmacies will be closed. Some pharmacies will be open will be open for reduced hours.

Make sure you have all of your prescription and non-prescription medication ahead of time, and call your pharmacy before making a trip over the Bank Holidays.

**Christmas and New Year 2025:** Our office will close at 12.30pm on Wednesday 24 December 2025, reopening at 9am on Friday 2 January 2026. Our next newsletter will be published in the last week of January. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year, from all the team here at Healthwatch Northumberland.

## Get in touch

To unsubscribe from this newsletter or to contact us with feedback or a question, please get in touch.

Call: 03332 408468

Text: 07413 385275

Email: [info@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchnorthumberland.co.uk)

**Write to:** FREEPOST Healthwatch Northumberland, Adapt (NE), Burn Lane, Hexham, Northumberland NE46 3HN

## Social Media:

