

Neuro News August 2026

A round-up of local, regional and National news to support people with any neurological condition or disability

National Focus

NHS Boundary Alignment

The Government has now issued its *Rewiring the State announcement*, outlining ambitions for devolution. This includes sharing more powers with Combined Authorities and other local leaders over the coming years.

As part of these changes, Integrated Care Boards, regional police forces, fire and rescue services will align with the boundaries of elected mayors and Combined Authorities by the end of the Parliament.

Consultation on proposed Neighbourhood Health contracting models

To support Neighbourhood Health services' delivery models, the NHS 10-Year Health Plan committed to developing new contracts based on population size. NHS England is currently undertaking a consultation to seek views on two proposed contracting models:

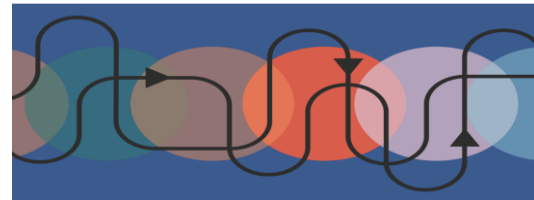
- A Multi-Neighbourhood Provider (MNP) Contract
- A Single Neighbourhood Provider (SNP) Contract

The consultation documents explain the proposals, plus an online survey asks questions about the likely benefits, risks and practical implications, including how the contracts would interact with existing arrangements.

The consultation is aimed at Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), general practice, Primary Care Networks (PCNs), community and other providers, local authorities, patient representatives and other stakeholders. Patients and members of the public may also wish to contribute to the consultation.

<https://www.engage.england.nhs.uk/consultation/mnp-snp-neighbourhood-provider-models/consultation/intro/>

Consultation closes 10th September



Young people into NHS careers

Nearly one million young people across the UK are not in education, employment or training (NEET), with experts warning the country is facing a growing youth employment crisis. In response, the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) and The King's Trust are working together to help young people across the North East overcome barriers to employment and build rewarding careers in the NHS.

NEURO KEY

An Alliance supporting people with neurological conditions

The organisations have welcomed a new group of participants onto the 'Get Started with NEAS' programme, which equips young people with the confidence, skills, and experience needed to secure employment, while opening the door to careers as NHS 111 and 999 health advisors.

<https://www.neas.nhs.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/neas-and-kings-trust-help-young-people-nhs-careers-amid-national-youth-unemployment-crisis>

NAVCA – health starts in communities



Investing in local grassroots organisations cannot be separate from health policy; it is health policy.

<https://www.navca.org.uk/news/health-starts-in-communities-reflections-from-the-health-devolution-commission>

Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

The EHRC put the new *Services Code of Practice* into statutory effect on August 5, 2026. The code clarifies that service providers can lawfully restrict single-sex spaces, such as toilets and changing rooms based on biological sex.

In the latest blog of *Brain Health Matters*, the EHRC discuss the European Neurological Health Strategy, an ambitious initiative that could transform how neurological conditions are prevented, treated, diagnosed and managed in Europe. Available on Spotify or read at;

<https://www.efna.net/podcast-what-will-the-european-neurological-health-strategy-deliver/>

There is a major shift in Europe from seeing neurodivergent traits as medical deficits to embracing neurodiversity as a natural variation in human brain function. Denmark, Sweden and Finland are ranked among the most neurodivergent-friendly countries in the world.

<https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/461072-a-personalised-approach-to-neurodiversity-focused-therapy>

Charity Commission

On 30 September 2026, changes apply to accounting years for small Charities. The current threshold for auditing accounts changes from £25,000 to £40,000.



North-south and deprivation divide

In analysis from the Kings Fund, the north–south divide in life expectancy in England has widened over the past decade.

Life expectancy in England in 2025 reached the highest levels ever recorded, but the gains in longevity have not been shared equally, with a difference of three years between London and the North East. These geographical inequalities reflect socio-economic inequalities and greater levels of deprivation in northern regions.

Markers for inequality include premature mortality from big killers such as cardiovascular disease and cancer, and “deaths of despair”, which include suicide and deaths related to alcohol and drug misuse.

These deaths are fewer in number but often associated with socio-economic and psychological stress resulting from economic disadvantage. Death rates from these causes are among the lowest in London and the South East, and highest in the North East.

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/press-releases/north-south-and-deprivation-divide-widens-despite-increases-in-life-expectancy>

Regional Focus

Senior management within the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) ICB have provided a statement:

‘It has been confirmed that the North East and North Cumbria boundary will be changing to be coterminous with Combined Authority boundaries by 2028. For the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) this means services will continue to align to the North East and Tees Valley Combined Authorities and the North Cumbria area will align to the Lancashire and Cumbria ICB’.



Developing meaningful metrics for VCSE impact

NENC have created a framework that acts as a "translation layer", rather than trying to find a single reporting system. This recognises qualitative evidence alongside quantitative measures and acknowledges that wider outcomes, such as reduced demand on health and care services, require analysis by commissioners and system partners rather than expecting individual VCSE organisations to demonstrate them alone. More at;

<https://www.sharedpurpose.co.uk/articles/developingmeaningfulmetricsforvcseimpact>

Hidden barriers for people with autism

North East Autism Society's new film shares the voices of autistic people, families and doctors, highlighting sensory challenges, finding it hard to communicate their pain to a doctor, and sensitivity to touch as some of the things that can make a visit to the GP harder.

People with autism report poorer health than the general population. One reason is the challenge of going to GPs from the sensory environment to being misunderstood. The film explains why GP surgeries are so difficult for autistic people and suggests simple ways to make them more accessible.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Up-iOHFNsMs>



A joined-up response to food insecurity and eating distress in the North East

A pilot research programme has found a significant link between food insecurity and eating distress in the North East. There is call for services to work more closely together to support people affected by both.

Led by Northumbria University in partnership with Eating Distress North East (EDNE), Newcastle and Teesside universities, The Bay Foodbank, Middlesbrough Foodbank, and XR Therapeutics, the pilot reported food insecurity can trigger and worsen eating distress symptoms.

The research highlights that stigma, limited public awareness, and a lack of joined-up provision are leaving people without the right support. Frontline staff and volunteers identified clear gaps in knowledge and capacity.

<https://www.edne.org.uk/2026/06/11>

Dame Susan Snowdon appointed President of Point North

Point North, the community foundation for County Durham and Tees Valley, has appointed Dame Susan Snowdon DCVO, CStJ, JP, DL as the new President, recognising her long-standing contribution to public life, community leadership and civic service across County Durham and the wider North East.

In 30-years, Point North has awarded more than £78.6 million in grants to local charities and grassroots organisations.

<https://pointnorth.org.uk/>

Local news

Neuro Key's collaboration with Teesside University through the Expert by Experience programme was recognised in the VONNE *Unlocking Potential* report for embedding people with lived experience into research projects and shifting the role from research subjects to active collaborators.

VONNE has highlighted how the VCSE can contribute to the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) Local Growth Plan (LGP), a 10-year strategy. Notably, the LGP commits to *"working alongside, but not putting undue burden on, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector"*.



The Carers Support Service are asking for support in sharing an important survey with unpaid carers across Stockton-on-Tees.

Feedback from the survey will help shape the new All Age Carers Strategy, ensuring local services, support, and policies are effective and that carers are recognised, valued and better supported within our community.

<https://consult.stockton.gov.uk/adults-health-and-wellbeing/10f84611/>

Neuro Key

In the last few months;

- Sustained extensive support for 2 advocacy cases to improve quality of life for people with complex neurological needs.
- Delivered 2 research projects with Dr S Kiliñç from Teesside University to develop our self-management programme and sustain inclusion of neurological conditions on the long-term condition agenda through arts and crafts.
- Worked collaboratively with research participants to draft two events, Induction week at Teesside University in September and a round-table event in October to promote My Life Tool and the value of including peer researchers.
- Supporting 3 students for participatory research, we were advised a student had their findings on *Stroke Survivors* published in *Neuropsychological Rehabilitation*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09602011.2026.2623946>
- Continued to challenge terminology in reports citing 'neurological diseases' which implies infection and three neurodevelopmental conditions labelled 'psychiatric disorder's' listed

in the House of Commons Library PIP by Constituency. This community deal with extensive abuse and hate crime on social media due to such terminology.

- Attended a Multiple Long-Term Condition (MTLC) conference in Newcastle with Dr S Kiliñç. Invited to present a poster on the evaluation of My Life Tool, we were the only VCSE/University partnership presenting a biopsychosocial model, noting poor understanding of diagnostic overshadowing, that is, contributing new symptoms to existing conditions.
- Lobbied across NE networks about an inclusive neurodivergent agenda to highlight the negative life impact on families and the need for new thinking.

Peer support

- Neuro Key deliver a peer support group for adults with or parents of neurodiverse young people. The group meets at Lingfield Meeting Hall, 78 Lingfield Ash Coulby Newham TS8 0SU - first and third Tuesdays in every month after 5pm to 8pm
<http://aadhd-ne-uk.weebly.com/>
- Community member, the pain friendship group offer peer support at Thornaby library on the last Friday every month, 1-3pm except August.



Demand for our support and expertise of 33 neurological conditions rose 30% in 2025. Neuro Key constantly raise issues on the impact of targeting neurodiverse adults through welfare reform, the lack of understanding about life managing a neurological disability and the impact on caregivers.

Neuro Key have the digital fundraising platforms Give As You Live, Easy Fundraising and Just Giving pages for our advocacy service. As the leading cause of disability, people with neurological conditions are the most marginalised of NHS client groups.

Join us in campaigning for inclusion of the neurological community to improve public service understanding.

Newtown Community Resource Centre
Durham Road
Stockton-on-Tees TS19 0DE

Need details of information?
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