

## Neighbourhood Health Programme Updates – North Cumbria

Welcome to the latest Neighbourhood Health Programme briefing note. These briefings are designed as a simple, regular way to stay connected – giving a snapshot of what is happening across the programme, highlighting progress and sharing learning from across the region.

At the heart of the Neighbourhood Health Programme is collaboration: between services, communities, partners, and people. Through these updates alongside our workshops, forums, and other activities we aim to keep the conversation flowing, celebrate what is working well and be open about the challenges we are navigating together.

In this note we share an update on the Neighbourhood Health Framework alongside details of upcoming workshops and engagement opportunities, including the 2026 North Cumbria Health and Care Summit.

### Neighbourhood Health: What's Changing, and What It Means for You

Imagine a patient in Cleator Moor with moderate frailty, type 2 diabetes and early dementia. Today, she sees her GP, a district nurse, a social worker and a memory clinic consultant — all separately, all without a shared plan. She ends up in A&E twice a year because no one spotted the deterioration in time.

That is exactly the patient the Neighbourhood Health Framework is designed for. And North Cumbria is exactly the kind of place it was designed to work.

#### What's changing

On 17 March 2026, the government published the *Neighbourhood Health Framework* setting out a national direction for moving away from hospital-centred care towards joined-up, community-based approaches organised around the places where people live.

The headline pledge: **250 Neighbourhood Health Centres (NHCs) across England by 2035**, with 120 in place by 2030. These will bring GP services, community care, local authority support and voluntary sector organisations under one roof — or at least into one plan.

But the bigger shift is organisational. The framework introduces **Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs)** - multidisciplinary teams that proactively manage the people with the greatest needs: those living with frailty, multiple long-term conditions (heart disease, diabetes, COPD, dementia), or approaching the end of life. These cohorts make up 3–5% of the population but account for more than 25% of non-elective hospital admissions.

Three reform agendas drive the framework:

- **Better routine access** — faster GP appointments, expanded pharmacy, less bureaucracy between primary and secondary care
- **Proactive community care** — INTs keeping complex patients well and out of hospital
- **Alternatives to hospital** — urgent community response, virtual wards, faster discharge and reablement

What it means for you

**If you're a GP or primary care team:** You are the foundation of this model. The framework commits to cutting red tape at the primary/secondary interface, expanding community diagnostic access, and giving GPs the tools to manage population health proactively — not just reactively. From September 2026, all newly qualified pharmacists will be independent prescribers, which should take pressure off demand in primary care.

**If you're a community, council or VCSE leader:** The framework names voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations (VCSEs) as neighbourhood health partners — not add-ons. It also explicitly names libraries, leisure centres and community buildings as potential neighbourhood health infrastructure. If you run community assets in North Cumbria, you belong in this conversation.

**For everyone:** Cumberland's Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) — hosted by Cumberland Council — will lead development of a local neighbourhood health plan from 2027–28. That plan will set local priorities, agree which communities become neighbourhood footprints, and determine how funding flows. The people who shape it now will shape what neighbourhood health looks like here for a decade.

## Events

Neighbourhood Health planning workshop - April

The second in our series of Neighbourhood Health planning workshops will take place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April from 12:30pm to 4pm at Whitehaven Golf Club. This in-person session will explore the Neighbourhood Health Framework in more detail and consider how it might be applied locally in North Cumbria, building on the potential cohorts identified at the first workshop.

Community Engagement Forum - May

The next Community Engagement Forum is Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 1pm on Teams. If you would like to join, or have a colleague who would like to join, please email

[alison.cocker@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:alison.cocker@cumberland.gov.uk)

### Neighbourhood Health planning workshop - June

The third in our series of Neighbourhood Health planning workshops will take place on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June from 1:30pm to 4.30pm at Wigton Market Hall. This in-person session will build on the previous workshops to continue our work to refine and identify our priority focus areas for Neighbourhood Health. If you would be interested in attending please email

[alison.cocker@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:alison.cocker@cumberland.gov.uk)

### North Cumbria Health and Care Summit - July

We are excited to share news of the 2026 North Cumbria Health and Care Summit, taking place on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July at the People First Conference Centre in Carlisle. This free event will bring together partners from health, social care, local government and the voluntary and community sector. The summit will focus on our vision and approach to delivering high quality, integrated services to our population, strengthening partnerships, and aligning local priorities with national direction.

Find out more and register at [North Cumbria Health and Care Summit](#)

We hope you have found this edition of the *Briefing Notes* useful. We plan to share future updates as the programme develops. If you would prefer not to receive these briefings, or if your contact details have changed, please do get in touch with us and we will update our records. Thank you for taking the time to read, and for your continued interest in the Neighbourhood Health Programme.