Cumberland Neighbourhood Health and Care Update

October 2026

Welcome to the latest briefing note from the Neighbourhood Health and Care Programme.

These briefing notes are designed to keep partners connected with the ongoing development of Neighbourhood Health across Cumberland. They provide a snapshot of current activity, highlights from across the programme and beyond, and opportunities to get involved as we continue to shape our shared approach

In this edition you will find:

- A local update: Health and Wellbeing Strategy and first working group meetings
- National news: recent government announcements
- Wider perspectives on Neighbourhood Health: Neurological Alliance report - 'A vision for neuro neighbourhood health
- News from our partners: third sector consultation event to support the development of the Health and Wellbeing strategy

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The Neighbourhood Health and Care Programme: Local update

Following the development of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership and the aligning of joint priorities, we have supported the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to ensure alignment with neighbourhood health priorities and delivery. The draft is currently being shared with strategic leaders across partner organisations to gather feedback, secure shared ownership and agree a collective commitment to implementation. See 'news from our partners' for an event for third sector organisations.

We have also held the first working groups for the four subgroups:

- **Integrated Neighbourhood Teams:** Partners agreed that Cumberland should build on existing services and community assets, joining them up more effectively through clearer referral routes, streamlined multidisciplinary working, improved information sharing and a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention.
- **Improving Access to General Practice:** The group supported a consistent set of outcomes and minimum access standards across the region, while retaining local flexibility. Priorities included better navigation to the right support, accessible non-digital options, more coordinated multidisciplinary working and proactive care for priority groups.
- **Complex Needs:** Discussion highlighted the need for an inclusive, strengths-based approach that considers the whole person rather than individual diagnoses or service thresholds. Earlier identification, shared assessment and care planning, better

coordination, and collective ownership across health, care, housing, criminal justice and voluntary sector partners were identified as key.
- **Evidence, Insight and Measurement:** The group began developing a shared approach to identifying priority cohorts, drawing together existing data and community insight, and establishing baselines and meaningful measures. The initial focus will be on a manageable number of priority areas, with evidence reviewed before the first cohorts and pathways are agreed.

We are now arranging the next round of working group sessions to **build on these discussions, develop the emerging priorities and agree the next steps**

National news

On 29 September 2026, Prime Minister Andy Burnham set out plans for a phased **National Care Service** in the next Parliament, providing free personal care for older people. **The Casey Commission** is due to **recommend how it would operate** in **summer 2027**. The announcement does not yet settle the detailed delivery model or change current charging arrangements.

The **connection to neighbourhood health is clearer in the Government's 29 July** announcement. Its principles include prevention, helping people remain independent, easier movement between hospital, home care and community services, and closer working between social care, primary care and community health. A parliamentary response also explicitly describes neighbourhood health and the National Care Service as complementary reforms intended to reduce time spent in hospital or long-term residential care.

Interpretation is that this supports four practical directions:

- **Social care involvement in Integrated Neighbourhood Teams**: joint assessment and planning around people's daily lives, care needs and independence.
- **A stronger community recovery offer**: your integrated Discharge to Assess work, rehabilitation and reablement can connect hospital discharge with ongoing neighbourhood support.
- **Joined-up funding and accountability**: the 2026–27 BCF framework already asks areas to align relevant BCF activity with neighbourhood health development.
- **Choice and control**: neighbourhood provision should include personalised support and people's involvement in decisions. These are existing adult social care reform objectives alongside quality and integration.

Our current work fits the stated direction of reform. **The immediate task is to strengthen joint local delivery; the future National Care Service's funding, eligibility and organisational arrangements remain subject to further recommendations and decisions**.

Wider perspectives on Neighbourhood Health

The Neurological Alliance recently published a report titled 'A vision for neuro neighbourhood health'. This talks about the importance of explicitly including neurological conditions in the neighbourhood health implementation plans, what could reasonably be delivered at neighbourhood level and the steps needed to make this model work. You can read the report via the following link: https://www.neural.org.uk/publication/a-vision-for-neuro-neighbourhood-health/.

Our thanks to Yvonne Trace, Senior Stakeholder Engagement Officer at the MS Society and Group Rep for the NENC Neuro Network for sharing this with us.

News from our partners

Cumbria CVS are hosting **an online meeting on 21 October from 10am to 11.30am** for **third sector organisations** which will help you and your organisation to understand what the Cumberland Health & Wellbeing Strategy is, why it is important and illustrate how the third-sector's work aligns to it.

This is one meeting of many being held in different organisations and sectors of the health and care system in Cumberland. The aim of each is to support and develop a consensus across all parts of our health and care system including the third sector, the NHS, Public Health, Children's Services, Adult Social Care and primary care. This consensus will enable us all to work together effectively towards common goals and to improve the health of individuals and our communities in Cumberland.

In the meeting **Rach Stanton**, Programme Manager – Neighbourhood Health and Care Cumberland Council, will **present** the draft strategy followed by a **consultation workshop** for comments, and discussion around how the sector can align with the strategy.
You can find more information about the event and register via the following link: All about the Cumberland Health & Wellbeing Strategy | Cumbria CVS

We hope you have found this update useful. If there is a project, initiative or piece of learning you would like to share in a future edition, we would be delighted to hear from you.

If you would prefer not to receive these briefings, or if your contact details have changed, please let us know and we will update our records.

Thank you for taking the time to read, and for your continued interest in the Neighbourhood Health and Care Programme.