

# Annual Report

2022/23



## About us

Adapt (NE) is a registered charity, a company limited by guarantee, and a social enterprise which is managed by a trustee board of volunteers with a wide range of areas of expertise. We are a community-based organisation providing services to people in North East England with the aim of promoting an inclusive society.

We aim to improve the quality of life of disabled people who have sensory, physical and learning disabilities or mental health problems; also people who are disadvantaged in being able to access services because they live in a rural location. We work closely with the voluntary and statutory sectors to achieve these aims.

To become more self-reliant, we have developed a range of services, including provision of an enterprise hub and community cafe, whilst still holding on to our primary aims. By using our services, other organisations are assured of quality attention whilst at the same time helping us in our work.

## Review of the Year - Liz Prudhoe, Director

As we look back on April 2022 to March 2023, it is encouraging to reflect on how well we fared this year. We have moved forward and welcomed Northumbria Primary Care Network social prescribing service. We have continued to work with partners across both Northumberland and the North East. Our staff have returned to our offices and as the year went on we have welcomed more groups returning to hold meetings.

We have continued to work with partners across Northumberland on the developing Learning Disability Network which brings together organisations and groups providing services for people with learning disabilities in the county.

Café @ Burn Lane has welcomed customers old and new although has not yet returned to the levels seen prior to the pandemic. There are significant pressures due to the rising cost of food, however, we have worked hard to keep prices as low as possible.

We have installed a defibrillator on the outside wall of the café, providing an emergency resource for the café, Adapt (NE) site and surrounding businesses and residents. The defibrillator was funded by Northumberland Cancer Support Group and the installation covered by our neighbours Red Marine Engineering, and the ongoing maintenance will be covered by Adapt (NE). We are pleased to have this resource on our site however we hope it is something that is never used. Our thanks to both Northumberland Cancer Support Group and Red Marine Engineering.

I wish to record my thanks to all of our board members for their continued support and guidance, and to our staff who are committed to their roles and work hard throughout the year.

We look forward to 2023/2024.

## A word from Lorraine Hershon, Chair

We have continued to provide our services throughout 2022 - 2023 and whilst we appreciate we operate in a difficult financial environment we feel Adapt (NE) is a steady ship in challenging waters.

However, whilst it is difficult financially, we as the board are pleased we continue to grow with the addition of the Social Prescribing Service for Northumbria Primary Care Network. We also welcome working in partnership across Northumberland and the wider region, and the developing Learning Disability Network for groups providing support for people with learning disabilities.

Financially we have had another solid year, albeit with a small financial loss offset by the gains made in our previous year. The coming 12 months will be challenging for us all, due to the difficult economic climate. However, we are excited about our plans to develop services from Café @ Burn Lane. I wish to thank all of our staff for their hard work as we continue to support people across the area in the coming year.

As we move into 2023 – 2024 we start the process of recruiting a new Healthwatch Northumberland Chair, and on behalf of Adapt (NE) I wish to thank David Thompson for six years' of dedicated leadership. David led with steadfast purpose and supported involvement in Healthwatch Northumberland from everyone across the county. We send him our best wishes for the future.

## Northumberland Independent Advocacy Service

Northumberland Independent Advocacy Service is a confidential and free service for adults who for a range of reasons may benefit from additional support. Services are delivered by trained Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHA) and Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCA). An IMHA is a specialist mental health advocate. The changes to the Mental Health Act meant that as of April 2009 there is a legal duty to provide IMHAs for eligible people.

We received 625 referrals over the year, including 87 referrals for the NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy Northumberland service which supports people who wish to complain about their NHS treatment. Please see below the breakdown of referrals.

### Northumberland Independent Advocacy Service referrals 2022/23

11.2 Rep	10
Care Act	40
General Advocacy	12
ICAN	87
IMCA	63
IMHA	263
RPR	121
General Case Advocacy	11
General Advocacy Telephone Support	6
Advocacy for Parents (a new service this year)	12
TOTAL	625

## Healthwatch Northumberland

Healthwatch Northumberland is the independent champion for NHS and social care across the county. Healthwatch was introduced under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and is part of a network of 152 local Healthwatch, supported at national level by Healthwatch England.

As an independent statutory body, Healthwatch has the power to make sure NHS leaders and other decision makers listen to public feedback and improve standards of care. We use a range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible can share their experience of health and social care services and can get reliable information about what help is available.

This year 1953 people helped to improve health and social care services by sharing their experiences of with us. Dentistry, GPs and pharmacies were the services we heard about most. 4883 people came to us for clear advice and information about topics such as mental health and the rising cost of living.

We use a wide range of approaches to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to provide us with insight about their experience of health and care services. During 2022/23 we have been available by phone, text and email, via our website and social media channels, attended virtual and face-to-face meetings of community groups and forums, plus we hold five drop-in sessions per month in community location.

We also hold a monthly online session where we invite a guest speaker from a health charity or support organisation. We prioritise health conditions that don't always have a lot of public exposure and ask that presenters focus on what support and services they can offer people living in Northumberland. The sessions are attended by a mixture of health professionals and members of the public. This year almost 150 people came along to the ten sessions we hosted. Organisations who presented for us this year include the National Autistic Society, Diabetes UK, Parkinsons UK and the Limbless Association. Providing this service not only directly helps individuals, but helps professionals give advice to people and they in turn get the help they need.

We are proactive in ensuring we hear the views of people from diverse backgrounds who are often not heard by health and care decision makers. This year we have done this by holding focus groups with black women, carers of people with drug and alcohol addiction, learning disabled people and people in the fishing industry. We worked with schools to hear from young people aged 13+.

We published 17 reports this year. The most popular one highlighted how some NHS mental health services aren't working for autistic young people and their families.

We're supported by 12 amazing volunteers who are at the heart of Healthwatch Northumberland. Thanks to the 500 hours they gave in the community this year, we are better able to understand what is working and what needs improving in NHS and social care.



### Healthwatch Northumberland case study

We heard from someone who had recently arrived in the country and was having difficulties booking flu vaccinations for their children. Due to the timing of their arrival into the UK they had missed the school flu vaccination programme. They told us they had contacted their local GP who advised them to ask school, and school had in turn asked them to go back to their GP. They were left with no understanding of how to access this service for their children. After looking into this further we managed to contact the childhood immunisations team to book a community clinic appointment.

After having initial difficulty in finding the right department to contact and then being asked to complete online forms to access an appointment which unfortunately did not work, we eventually arranged an appointment by telephone for them for the following day. Whilst the staff were friendly and helpful the process itself appeared to be complex and difficult to navigate and would be even more so for someone whose first language is not English. The person was very pleased with the result.

"Really you did very well with us I am so thankful for what you did."  
South East Northumberland resident

## Northumbria PCN Social Prescribing Service

The Northumbria Primary Care Network Social Prescribing Service was set up in April 2022 and began taking referrals from five GP practices within Northumberland. The demand for the service, and the NHS England emphasis on social prescribing as part of its personalised care agenda, allowed for a team of two Social Prescribers, one Social Prescribing Link Worker and one Team Leader.

GP surgeries covered by the Social Prescribing Service:

- Ponteland Medical Group
- Cramlington Medical Group
- Elsdon Avenue
- The Rothbury Practice
- Haydon Bridge and Allendale Medical Practice

To access the Social Prescribing Service individuals need to be aged 18 years or above, be a registered patient at one of these five Northumberland GP practices, want support with non-clinical issues that are impacting their health or wellbeing, and want to engage with a social prescribing approach to improve their wellbeing.

The service offers support for emotional wellbeing, finance and benefits, employment and skills, social networks, family, parenting and relationships, housing, and healthy lifestyles. This also includes supporting clients around cost of living issues.

Whilst the Social Prescribing Service receives referrals from GP practices, it also accepts self-referrals and partner agency referrals. During the year the Social Prescribing Service received 337 individual referrals with the main issue for referrals being emotional wellbeing.

We are looking to broaden the range of agencies from which we receive referrals, so that more people can access the service.

## West Northumberland Living Well Service

The West Northumberland Living Well Coordination Service was set up in January 2020 and began taking referrals from an initial group of three West Northumberland GP practices in February 2020. The service now accepts referrals from 12 GP practices across West Northumberland (see below).

The demand for the service, and the NHS England emphasis on social prescribing as part of its personalised care agenda, allowed for expansion of the team to six Living Well Coordinators. There has been some change in the team over recent months and there are three Living Well Coordinators in post and two are currently being recruited.

The service offers support for emotional wellbeing, finance and benefits, employment and skills, social networks, family, parenting and relationships, housing and healthy lifestyles. This also includes supporting clients around cost of living issues.

From April 2021 changes have been made to the service to include self-referral and partner agency referral and we accept referrals from anyone aged 16 years and above.

During the 2022/2023 year the Living Well Coordination Service received 705 individual referrals with the main issue for referrals being emotional wellbeing.

The service has focused on raising awareness in the community and with local and regional services. In addition, we have attended the autumn 2023 COVID-19 vaccine clinics to also raise smoking cessation awareness.

GP surgeries covered by the West Northumberland PCN Living Well Coordination Service:

- Branch End Surgery (Stocksfield)
- Burn Brae Medical Group
- Corbridge Medical Group
- Haltwhistle Medical Group
- Humshaugh and Wark
- Prudhoe Medical Group
- Scots Gap Medical Group (Scots Gap and Stamfordham) Medical Group
- The Sele Medical Practice (Hexham)
- The Bellingham Practice
- White Medical Group (Ponteland)
- Adderlane Surgery (Prudhoe, non-member practice)
- Riversdale Surgery (Prudhoe, non-member practice)

## Cafe @ Burn Lane

Cafe @ Burn Lane has welcomed customers new and old this year. We have faced the challenges of rising food prices however, we have held prices as low as possible. We have built up a lot of regular customers and we hope to welcome more as the year progresses.

We have had a defibrillator installed on the outside wall of the café, which is a resource for the café, surrounding businesses and the wider community. We hope this resource is not used however it is reassuring to have such it on site. Thanks to Northumberland Cancer Support Group for funding to purchase the defibrillator and Red Marine for the installation. Adapt (NE) will support the ongoing maintenance costs.

We are looking to expand our offer in the café through 2023 – 2024.

## Core Services

### Transport

In the last 12 months numbers have continued to rise across all of our Dial-a-Rides and service routes. We have added two new service routes, two new lunch clubs and a five days a week service to Ministeracres Retreat Centre.

Our two new service routes are Whittonstall on a Friday running into Hexham, and Byrness into Hexham on a Monday. These two routes are run on behalf of Northumberland County Council and have become very popular, with the bus regularly running at near full capacity. Some of the passengers that use these services also use some of the other routes we provide.

There have been two lunch clubs added into the service; Catton, every first Thursday of the month and Allendale each week on a Wednesday. In June 2022 we started providing transport for Tyndale Horticultural Service which offers work experience for people of all ages with disabilities within the grounds of Ministeracres Retreat Centre, growing plants and maintaining gardens and woodland. The Ray Wind Farm has also recommissioned us to provide the Byrness through Otterburn to Morpeth service for another year.

Passengers on all routes have fed back to us that our services are a lifeline and have commented how the drivers are so helpful.

### Getabout Scheme

This year we received 42 requests for help through the Getabout Scheme. As always Getabout received many and varied requests for transport throughout Northumberland. In May we were asked to help a 67 year-old gentleman in a wheelchair get to his friend's house to watch the King's Coronation. We helped an 82 year-old lady with GP appointments, eventually helping her to be seen at home rather than have to travel to the surgery. An 83 year-old gentleman living near Berwick contacted Getabout looking for help to get to a dental appointment. We were able to source several different forms of transport. The gentleman decided on using taxis and thanked us for help finding a service he could use regularly.

Quite often Getabout is asked to help with transport to functions and regular outings. A 67-year-old lady from Alwick got in touch who wanted to attend a club but was unable to find local transport. We were able to put her onto a local organisation which was able to help. A lady who moved to a rural area close to Hexham was looking for transport to go shopping regularly. We were able to point her in the direction of a Dial-a-Ride service running in the area; she now enjoys the service regularly and has made many new friends.

### Wheelchair Loan Scheme

The wheelchair loan service has continued to be very popular. Recently we were able to help a six year-old girl. We had a child's wheelchair which needed new wheels which we were able to recommission. The girl's mum was absolutely delighted with it as she had been unable to source a child's chair elsewhere.

We were donated an almost new electric wheelchair which has been loaned out several times. Elmbank Care Home has also kindly donated five wheelchairs for us to loan out in the community.

## Hexham Enterprise Hub

It feels quite incredible that Adapt (NE) has lived on Burn Lane for ten years. We purchased the old highways site from Northumberland County Council and moved into the main office space in May 2013. The remainder of the site, now the independent units, were more or less derelict and not able to be used. We had a vision of refurbishing the units and providing affordable spaces for other charities and small businesses. We were able to develop and refurbish the site in 2014 with support from the national Rural Enterprise Fund and welcomed our first tenant in October 2014. This was West Northumberland Food Bank, which has remained on the site developing and growing its services.

It is reassuring that we have not had any period of time with any of the units empty, as we envisage in the future when our mortgage on the site is paid off, the rental income will be used to provide services within the community.

## Accounts 2022-2023

The income for Adapt (NE) for 2022 - 2023 was £1076,346 and expenditure was £1083,644, returning a slight loss of £7,298. However, we have a gain on investments of £25,000 which returns a surplus of £17,702.

The £7,298 loss is due to the café and the rising costs of supplies, however, this should be considered against the £52,582 surplus in 2021 – 2022.

Full copies of Adapt (NE) accounts are available on request.



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