

Darlington Association on Disability

Information Guide

Health Services

The National Health Service is available to everyone and has a duty to make its services accessible to disabled people. This section gives a brief overview of local health services and sources of advice and information.

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General Services

Your **General Practitioner (GP)** is usually your first point of contact with the Health Service. A GP can give direct treatment or refer to other parts of the service, such as hospital specialists, physiotherapy, chiropody and other community teams.

Darlington Primary Care Trust is the NHS body responsible for delivering health services and improving the health of local people. The PCT provides the **Patient Advisory and Liaison Service (PALS)** to give information about local services and to support you to deal with problems that may involve more than one service, including social services.

NHS Walk-in Centres are open seven days a week, with no appointment necessary, allowing you to access healthcare advice, information and treatment for a range of conditions at a convenient time. You don't need to be registered with a GP and you don't have to give your name.

The **Out of Hours Service** provides emergency cover for GPs when local surgeries are closed in the evenings, at night or at the

weekend. This service is contacted by telephone and will connect you with a medical adviser. The adviser may offer you support directly over the phone or refer you to an Urgent Care Centre for a face to face consultation.

Specialist Local Services

Your GP or health practitioner should be able to refer you to a range of appropriate support services. You can also contact the Patient Advisory and Liaison Service (PALS), which can give you advice about accessing these services.

Chiropodists or Podiatrists provide expert footcare at home, in GP surgeries and day centres. Disabled people, children and pensioners are entitled to free treatment.

Community Nurses/District Nurses visit people at home to give nursing care such as changing dressings or assistance with personal needs, including bathing, dressing and eating. They also provide aids and equipment for home nursing, for example continence pads and specialist beds and mattresses. Specialist nurses work with people with mental health issues, people who have learning difficulties and disabled children.

Dental and Optical Treatment is free to certain groups of people. If you are a disabled person and unable to get out you can ask your GP to arrange home dental and optical visits, but you may have to pay for some of the treatment.

You are entitled to travel to a hospital appointment by ambulance if your GP considers you to be medically unfit for travel. The hospital department making your appointment should arrange this for you.

Occupational Therapists work with people to promote independence in personal care, in employment and in leisure activities. In hospitals they are part of the multi-disciplinary rehabilitation team preparing people to return home.

Physiotherapists assist with a wide variety of joint conditions, chest conditions, incontinence, pain or difficulties in moving, balance or control of limbs. They work in the home, health centres or hospitals. They usually offer advice and treatment, such as exercise, electrotherapy, and are able to provide equipment.

Speech and Language Therapists assist children and adults with a wide range of communication difficulties. When spoken language is not possible to achieve they may try signing or the use of

technological aids. They can also assist with swallowing and feeding difficulties.

Disabled people and their families or carers can access a range of community services to resolve practical problems and restrictions on lifestyles. These services can provide particular expertise and advice regarding aids and equipment and housing adaptations.

Integrated **Community Mental Health Teams** in Darlington provide a single point of access to Health and Social Services for the assessment and care of people with mental health issues.

Darlington Learning Disability Service provides a single health and social support service for people with a learning difficulty.

Darlington Primary Care Trust have a **Community Rehabilitation team** for people with neurological impairments, for example multiple sclerosis, head injury and stroke. The service includes physiotherapy, occupational therapy and rehabilitation support. The aim is to set goals in order to promote independence, choice and to reduce the impact of the impairment.

The Expert Patient Programme, run by **Darlington Primary Care Trust**, is a course aimed at supporting people with chronic health conditions. It promotes self-management techniques designed to improve confidence and communications with doctors and other health staff.

NHS costs and exemptions

The Department of Health has published leaflets to explain what support is available with health costs (NHS prescription and dental charges, optical and hospital travel costs). The booklet HC11: **Help with health costs**, sets out information about who does not have to pay charges and about help available for people on a low income. It covers NHS prescriptions; NHS dental treatment; sight tests; glasses and contact lenses; necessary costs of travel to receive NHS treatment under the care of a consultant; NHS wigs and fabric supports. It is generally available from any health service centre.

Complementary Therapies

The **Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health** has published a guide for people choosing complementary therapies as part of their healthcare. It takes readers through the process of

deciding on a suitable therapy and details how to find a well qualified and registered practitioner.

Pioneering Care Partnership (PCP) has a Natural Therapy Suite that provides a variety of complementary therapies such as aromatherapy, reflexology, reiki, osteopathy, massage therapy, acupuncture and many more.

The **International Guild of Professional Practitioners** holds a referral register of qualified practitioners in many complementary therapies. All therapists are fully trained, carry professional indemnity insurance and are bound by a strict Code of Conduct and subject to its Disciplinary Procedures.

The **Institute for Complementary Medicine** provides lists of all types of complementary medicine practitioners who have proved to be qualified and safe to practise on the general public.

Information Services

Darlington Council for Voluntary Service produces a directory listing support/self-help groups in the local area, including the After Stroke Club, Alzheimer's Disease Society, Arthritis Care, Manic Depression Fellowship and many more.

NHS Direct operates a 24-hour nurse advice and health information service, providing confidential information on what to do if you or your family are feeling ill; particular health conditions; local healthcare services and self help and support organisations. NHS Direct can provide confidential interpreters if your first language is not English. NHS Direct has introduced a single, national textphone number for deaf people and those with a speech or hearing impairment. All calls to NHS Direct are charged at BT local rates. The NHS Direct Online website provides information to help you understand health conditions, treatments and access to services.

Patient UK is a website aiming to provide non-medical people in the UK with good quality information about health and disease. It offers information leaflets on a wide range of medical and health topics. It also provides links to around 2000 patient support organisations in the UK. Links are provided to many websites concerned with health, illness and support.

The **Healthcare Commission** is the independent inspection body for both the NHS and private and voluntary healthcare. It is

responsible for reviewing complaints about the NHS or independent healthcare in England that have not been resolved through local complaints procedures.

Other Sources of Information

Other sections of the Darlington Association on Disability Information Guide may contain further information relevant to health issues.

The **Equipment** section gives information on choosing, buying and borrowing equipment

The **Living Independently** section gives information about available support to live independently. The section also covers Direct Payments and the Independent Living movement

There are a number of local and national organisations providing broad information and advice resources. Please refer to this guide's Introduction for contact details.

Contact **Darlington Association on Disability's** Information Service for assistance with searching for information about any subject in this guide or for support in dealing with your information requests.

Contacts

Community Rehabilitation team

Hundens Rehabilitation Unit

Hundens Lane

Darlington

DL1 1DT

Telephone : 01325 286802

Fax : 01325 286819

Minicom : 01325 287155

e-mail :

Website :

Darlington Association on Disability

20-22 Horsemarket

Darlington

DL1 5PT

Telephone 01325 489 999

Fax : 01325 488 188

Minicom : 01325 245 061
Email : mail@darlingtondisability.org
Website : www.darlingtondisability.org

Darlington Community Mental Health Teams

4 Woodlands Road
Darlington
DL3 7PJ
Telephone : 01325 350 501
Emergency duty team : telephone : 01642 631 123
Mental Health Matters Helpline : 0800 085 7027 ,out of hours
telephone support and information service
Fax : 01325 749 238
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website : www.mentalhealthmatters.com

Darlington Council for Voluntary Service

Church Row
Darlington
DL1 5QD
Telephone : 01325 266 888
Fax : 01325 266 899
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website :

Darlington Learning Disability Service

Upperthorpe
90 Woodland Road
Darlington
DL3 7PZ
Telephone : 01325 555940
Out of hours emergency contact number : 07971 983 183
Fax : 01325 555 959
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website : www.darlington.gov.uk

Darlington NHS Walk-in Centre

Doctor Piper House
King Street
Darlington

DL3 6JL
Telephone : 01325 364 271
Fax : 01325 746 112
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website : www.darlingtonpct.nhs.uk

Darlington Primary Care Trust

Dr Piper House
King Street
Darlington
DL3 6JL
Telephone : 01325 364 271
Fax : 01325 746 112
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website : www.darlingtonpct.nhs.uk

Darlington Primary Care Trust

Expert Patient Programme
Dr Piper House
King Street
Darlington
DL3 6JL
Telephone : 01325 746 240
Fax : 01325 746 112
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website : www.darlingtonpct.nhs.uk

Healthcare Commission

Commission for Healthcare Inspection
Finsbury Tower
103-105 Bunhill Row,
London
EC1Y 8TG
Telephone : 020 7448 9200
Fax :
Minicom :
e-mail : feedback@healthcarecommission.org.uk
Website : www.chai.org.uk

Help with health costs

Department of Health
PO Box 777
London
SE1 6XH
Telephone 08701 555 455
Telephone : 01325 364271
Fax :
Minicom :
Email : dh@prolog.uk.com
Website : www.dh.gov.uk

International Guild of Professional Practitioners

4 Heathfield Terrace
Chiswick
London, W4 4JE
Telephone : 020 8994 7856
Fax : 020 8994 7880
Minicom :
E-mail : guild@igpp.co.uk
Website : www.igpp.co.uk

Institute for Complementary Medicine

PO Box 194
London, SE16 7QZ
Telephone : 020 7237 5165
Fax : 020 7237 5175
Minicom :
e-mail : info@i-c-m.org.uk
Website : www.i-c-m.org.uk

NHS Direct

Address : Online service
Telephone : 0845 4647.
Fax :
Minicom : 0845 606 46 47
e-mail :
Website : www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Out of Hours Service

Dr Piper House
King Street
Darlington

DL3 6JL
Telephone 0870 240 6518
Fax :
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website : www.darlingtonpct.nhs.uk

Patient Advisory and Liaison Service

Darlington Primary Care Trust
Dr Piper House
King Street
Darlington
DL3 6JL
Telephone : 0800 7835774
Fax :
Minicom :
Email : sandra.guy@darlingtonpct.nhs.uk
Website : www.darlingtonpct.nhs.uk/pals.asp

Patient UK

Address : Online service
Telephone :
Fax :
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website : www.patient.co.uk

Pioneering Care Partnership

Cobblers Hall
Off Burn Lane
Newton Aycliffe
DL5 4SF
Telephone : 01325 321234
Fax :
Minicom :
e-mail :
Website :

Prince of Wales's Foundation for Integrated Health

12 Chillingworth Road
London
N7 8QJ
Telephone : 020 7619 6140

Fax : 020 7700 8434
Minicom :
e-mail : info@fihealth.org.uk
Website : www.fihealth.org.uk

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