

NPC YEAR IN REVIEW

2024/25



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Message from our Managing Director



David Hedgcock,
Managing Director

“As we step into a new year at NPC, we stand at a pivotal moment — one that reflects not only the successes of a year passed but also the brilliant opportunities that lie ahead. Last year was a testament to the resilience, flexibility, and dedication of our people, who have consistently risen to meet challenges with a spirit of innovation and purpose.

I feel very proud when I reflect on the last 12 months which has been another big year for NPC, probably its biggest yet. We began 2024 by welcoming 250 new colleagues, from Valens Medical Partnership and Coquet Medical Group, into our organisation. With that came countless new systems, processes, ideas of how we can deliver the best care to our patients and navigating working together as a bigger team.

To name a few of our achievements in 2024, we have opened a new GP practice, welcomed new patients, launched our clinical strategy and delivered an organisation-wide re-brand.

Yet, our story does not end here. Each milestone is a stepping stone to what comes next — a future driven by commitment to excellence and the bold ambition to redefine possibilities. As we navigate the evolving landscape, our focus remains unwavering: investing in our people, delivering the best care possible and working with partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities.

2025 will be a year of real opportunity for NPC, our patients and our communities. A key focus will be connectivity with local services, charities, voluntary organisations and other key stakeholders in our local communities and neighbourhoods.

It will also be the year that we celebrate 10 years of Northumbria Primary Care. This milestone reflects the hard work, dedication and compassion of our brilliant staff, who have made a real difference to the communities that we serve. I am deeply proud of how far we've come, from expanding our services to building strong partnerships, always keeping our patients at the heart of what we do.

To our stakeholders, partners and team members, thank you for your trust and collaboration. This year in review will outline not just our performance, but our purpose, and I hope you enjoy reading it.



Message from our Chair



Katie Stevens
Chair

“

As I reflect on my second year as chair for Northumbria Primary Care, my main takeaway is just how hard our teams have worked over the past year to provide our patients in Northumberland and North Tyneside with the safest and most effective care possible.

2024 has been a year that has once again demonstrated the strength, resilience and dedication of our organisation and our people.

Over the past year, we have navigated a rapidly changing healthcare landscape, responding to both challenges and opportunities with innovation and commitment to excellence in patient care. Primary care remains at the heart of our communities, and we take immense pride in the role we play in improving the health and wellbeing of those we serve.

Our focus has been on enhancing access to care, driving forward integration with our health and social care partners, and embracing new technologies to support both patients and our workforce.

Our achievements would not have been possible without the extraordinary efforts of our teams - clinical and non-clinical alike - who work tirelessly to deliver high-quality, compassionate care. Their dedication, expertise, and collaborative spirit are the bedrock of our success, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of them.

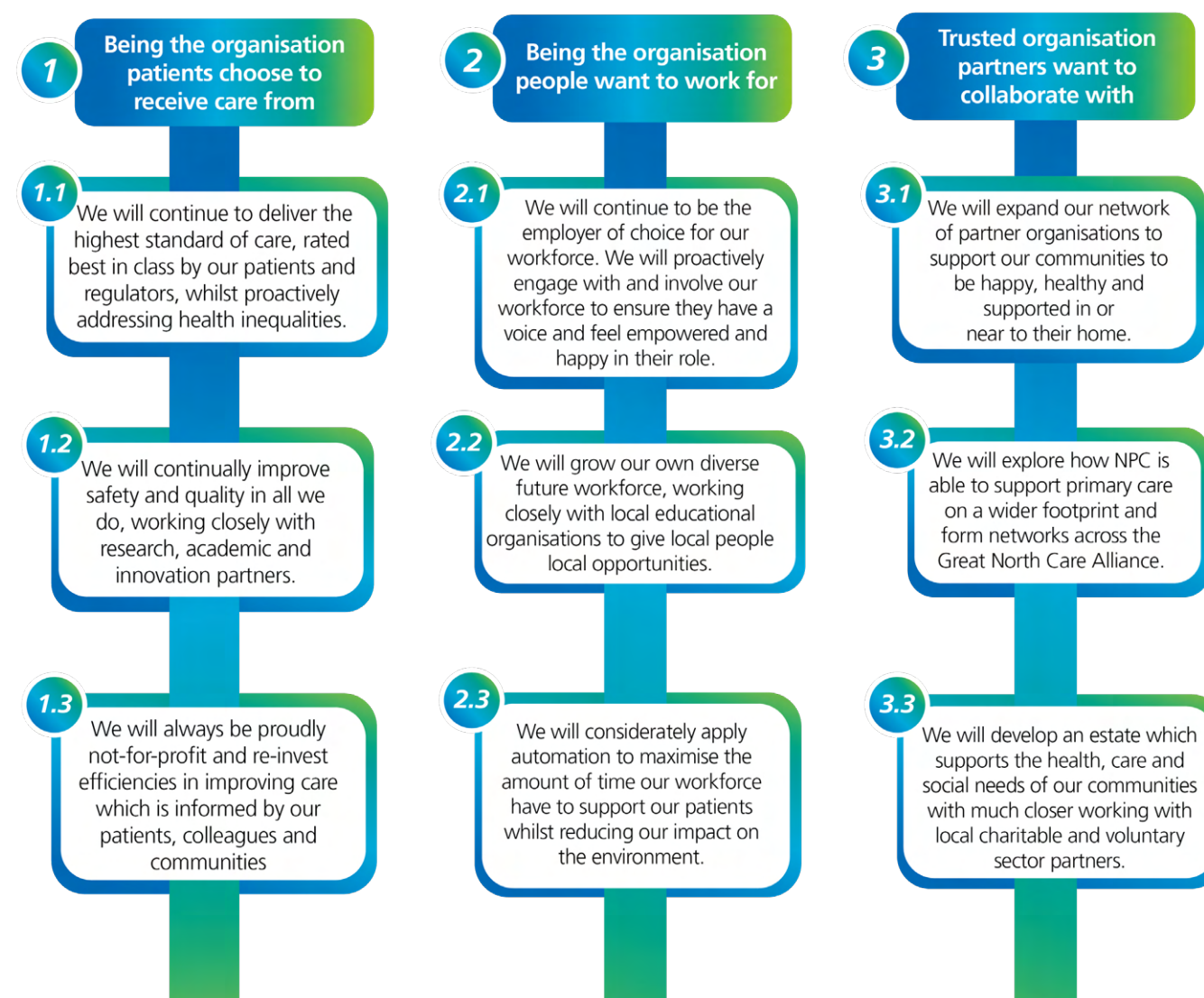
As you read through this report, I hope you will share in our pride in what has been accomplished this year and our optimism for the future. On behalf of the board, I extend my sincere gratitude to our staff, partners, and patients for their continued trust and support in Northumbria Primary Care. Together, we are making a real difference.”

”

The NPC roadmap

In order to grow as an at-scale provider of primary care, we have developed our roadmap to being a care provider, employer and partner of choice. This roadmap will be delivered via our key strategies.

Our roadmap to being a care provider, employer and partner of choice



The above will be delivered via our key strategies

Clinical strategy

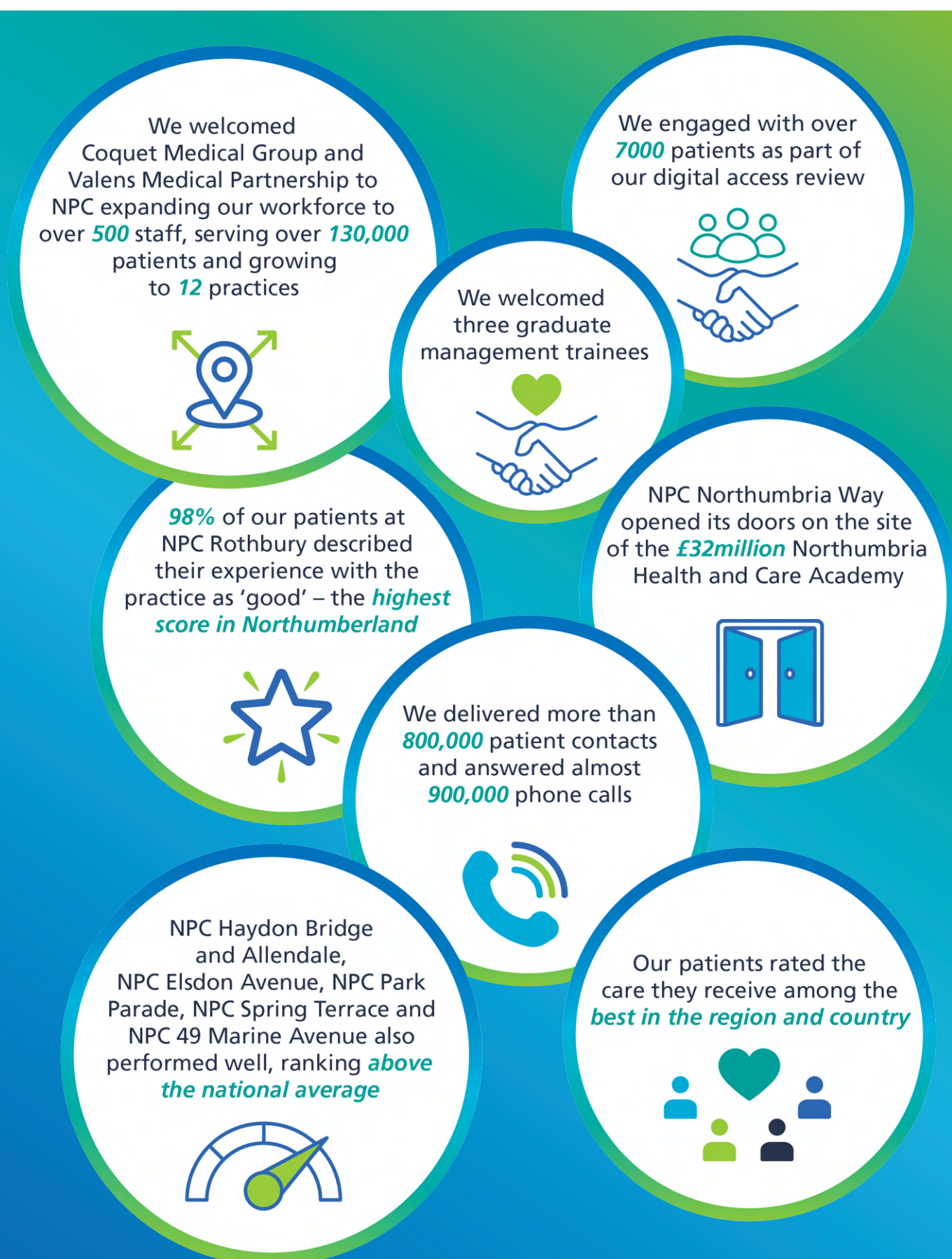
Workforce strategy

Digital strategy

Estate strategy

Communications, engagement and partnerships strategy

Looking back at 2024



Launch of our clinical and estates strategy

Driven by a desire to continuously improve clinical outcomes for our patients, we created the NPC clinical strategy which outlines our clinical priorities and future decision-making as we continue to grow as an organisation. As a healthcare provider, we serve a very diverse population 0 to 19-year-olds, the young and well, those living with multiple and long-term conditions, elderly and frail patients, those with complex mental health issues, those who don't always access the care they need, possibly due to inequalities, and those at end of life.

Throughout our clinical strategy document, which has been developed with our colleagues and partners, we have ensured that patient-centred, and equitable/accessible care is at the heart of our approach.



By focusing on these key commitments, we believe we can contribute to a more effective, equitable and sustainable healthcare system.

You can read our clinical strategy [here](#).

Estates strategy

Our first estates strategy focuses on putting patients and staff at the centre while driving innovation, improving healthcare outcomes, and supporting staff wellbeing. The strategy outlines a creative and financially sustainable approach to maximise the use of inherited and new facilities, aligning with NPC's clinical objectives of delivering sustainable, equitable, and integrated care. We acknowledge the significant impact that the environment that we provide care in has on both patient and staff experience.

The strategy highlights the importance of modern, multi-functional general practices, mobile solutions, minor surgeries, pharmacy services, and digital access. It considers national, regional, and local factors, alongside the needs of patients and staff, noting that 75% of the estate requires upgrades or investment. Significant funding is deemed essential to ensure facilities are fit-for-purpose, accessible, and environmentally sustainable.

Financial performance review 2024/25

Financial stability remains central to NPC's vision, reflected in another year of strong financial performance. Key advancements have been made in fostering relationships within our teaching and research workstreams, providing a solid foundation to expand opportunities that will drive workforce development and innovation in the years ahead. These, accompanied by continued expansion of our core business, have seen revenues for the year now forecast to exceed £30m.

Following a significant period of growth and the acquisition of substantial assets, we looked to prioritise estate management over 2024. This culminated in the publication of our first estates strategy, developed in partnership with NHFM Ltd. The strategy positions us to ensure our facilities remain fit for purpose while maximising the utilisation of our extensive footprint.

Our efficiencies programme has once again exceeded targets this year, reinforcing our capacity to build momentum into 2025. Looking ahead, we are prioritising the adoption of new technologies and automation, with preparatory work already underway to capitalise on this evolving landscape.

These efforts, combined with our focus on integrating primary, secondary, and third-sector care, align NPC with the national drive to shift from treatment to prevention. Our vision for integrated neighbourhood teams is now firmly in place, and their successful implementation will be critical to sustaining our financial and operational success in the future.

Staff awards 2025

In January, we hosted our staff awards celebration and quality event. This was made even more special by coinciding with NPC's 10-year anniversary. The evening was dedicated to celebrating the remarkable achievements of our colleagues and recognising their invaluable contributions.

It was also a heartfelt opportunity to honour our founding members, whose vision, dedication, and loyalty have built the strong foundation on which NPC thrives today.

The event served as a powerful reminder of how far we've come and inspired us to look ahead to the next decade of growth and success.

Adrian Fonseka, who won the Outstanding Leadership Award, shared his thoughts:

"I've really enjoyed getting together today and meeting new faces from different practices. Although I am new to my role, winning this award is incredibly special as it's a reminder that the work I do every day is recognised and appreciated by the whole organisation."



Developing our colleagues

Our NPC Team series

As NPC continues to grow and welcome new colleagues, we want to help staff, patients, and the wider public get to know the people behind our organisation. The NPC Team series shines a spotlight on our team members, sharing insights into their education and career journeys, their roles at NPC, and a glimpse into what they enjoy outside of work.

Wonderful Wednesdays

To show our gratitude and give staff something to look forward to, we introduced Wonderful Wednesdays throughout October, making every week a little brighter. Each Wednesday, we delivered special treats—like cupcakes and fruit baskets—across our practices. Teams were also encouraged to create their own celebrations, from heartfelt staff ‘thank-yous’ to Star of the Week recognitions, making the month truly wonderful for everyone.

Developing our colleagues

Nikki Smith began her journey with NPC as an Admin Lead at Elsdon Avenue Surgery, where she quickly demonstrated her dedication and leadership skills. Her commitment to professional growth led her to progress to the role of Senior Admin Lead, where she took on greater responsibilities in managing operations and supporting her team.

Recognizing the opportunities for development within NPC, Nikki successfully completed both her Level 2 and Level 3 Business Administration apprenticeships, equipping her with valuable knowledge and expertise. Most recently, she further advanced her skills by completing a Leadership and Management apprenticeship, which provided her with the tools and strategic insight to step into the role of Practice Lead for NPC Elsdon and NPC Cramlington.

Nikki's outstanding contributions and leadership have not gone unnoticed. In recognition of her dedication and impact on the organization, she was honoured with the **Outstanding Leadership Award at the NPC Staff Awards 2025** - a testament to her hard work, commitment, and ability to inspire those around her.



Virginia Mason Study Tour 2024

In May 2024, some of our colleagues visited the Virginia Mason Institute in Seattle, Washington. The Virginia Mason Institute (VMI) is an organisation dedicated to helping healthcare organisations deliver better care while becoming more efficient, resilient and sustainable.

As part of the visit, colleagues were able to learn from the VMI about its world-class methodologies and innovations in healthcare to implement a proven approach that improves processes, reduces time and enhances the overall patient experience.

"I was very grateful to have been given the opportunity to represent NPC on a visit to the Virginia Mason Institute in Seattle. My main reflections and takeaways were on the Leadership behaviours and Shared vision. We are starting to introduce some small changes, such as compacts and idea boards, in the hope that we can empower and develop teams and build on that golden thread."

Abi Callender,
Group Manager



Improving our buildings

As outlined in our estate strategy, there has been a big focus on ensuring our buildings are fit for purpose and as safe as possible for our staff and patients.

NPC Widdrington

NPC Widdrington, located in Widdrington Station, has undergone significant upgrades to enhance patient experience and future-proof the facility. The refurbishments include five new clinical rooms, modernised existing rooms, and a welcoming reception and waiting area with a dedicated family room equipped for mothers and children. There has also been an expansion to the car park from 23 to 48 spaces.



NPC Northumbria Way

In June 2024, NPC Northumbria Way opened its doors on the ground floor of the Northumbria Health and Care Academy, situated within the grounds of the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital. Previously known as Brockwell Surgery, the practice relocated to a bright and welcoming space designed to enhance the experience of both patients and staff. The development features consulting rooms of various sizes and a reimagined reception area, offering greater privacy for patients when speaking with practice staff.

Our research highlights

It has been another busy year for research within NPC, with many patients being recruited for various studies and more in the pipeline.

All NPC sites are now enrolled in a shingles-related trial called ATHENA (Amitriptyline for the prevention of post-Herpetic Neuralgia).



Why is this study needed?

Some people can have nerve pain in the area of the shingles rash, months after the rash has gone. This is called "post-herpetic neuralgia".

- We currently do not have any treatments to prevent this.
- We want to find out if taking a low dose of a tablet called amitriptyline may help prevent it.

The only way to find out if amitriptyline helps is by doing a clinical trial.

There has been great progress on this trial with **67** patients being screened and five patients recruited to the study.



Join Dementia Research is a service supported by Northumbria Primary Care to enable people to take part in vital dementia research. Anyone over the age of 18 can register whether they have a diagnosis of dementia or not.

It is only through research that we can understand what causes the disease, develop effective treatments and improve care.

Digital review

We undertook a review of our digital front door access to enhance patient experience and encourage greater digital uptake.

NPC explored 17 digital products used in primary care, benchmarking them against criteria aligned with both patient and staff needs.

A survey involving over 6,000 patient responses highlighted key themes around the front-end user interface such as the length of questionnaires and the impact of practice responsiveness on patient confidence.

Patients expressed greater satisfaction when practices embraced digital tools to streamline workflows and maintained consistent high response rates and processes.

A working group was established to implement improvements suggested, focusing on simplifying the digital pathway and making access more user-friendly. The group is developing KPIs and best practices based on successful models from other practices, and this will form the basis of a new digital framework for NPC, regardless of which future tools may be adopted. This will ensure NPC has the best possible platform and processes in place, in line with the requirements of the GP contract which requires all practices to offer digital access during core operating hours for routine requests from 1 October 2025.

Supporting our patients

As part of our commitment to delivering exceptional care for patients with long-term conditions, we strive to ensure they receive the best possible treatment and support to enhance their quality of life.

Recently, a patient was referred to our health and wellbeing team following a routine health check. She had been living with arthritis, which limited her mobility and impacted her daily life.

Our team worked closely with her to set small, achievable fitness goals while also providing guidance on healthy eating and stress management. Through this tailored approach, she gradually built her strength and resilience.

Today, she can walk 10,000 steps a day without experiencing arthritis flare-ups or pain - eliminating the need for pain medication. In addition, she has lost six stone, reducing her BMI from 56 to 43, and now has more energy in her 50s than she ever did in her 30s.

Inspired by her transformation, she has offered to become an advocate for our health and wellbeing team, eager to share her journey and encourage others to take proactive steps toward better health.

Our partnerships

As part of our clinical strategy, we are actively seeking to develop partnerships with the voluntary and community sector to better serve our patient population, including some of the most deprived areas facing significant social challenges and health inequalities. Through these collaborations, we aim to address fundamental issues that can prevent individuals and families from accessing medical care or lead to avoidable hospital admissions.

Current partnerships include:

EPILEPSY ACTION

We recognised that across NPC, thousands of patients are diagnosed with epilepsy, many of whom experience life-changing effects for their medication and treatment. To better support this patient population, we have collaborated closely with Epilepsy Action to provide additional training for our clinical teams. Additionally, we have incorporated valuable input from the charity into our clinical strategy and enhanced our clinical templates on SystmOne.



We are developing an Admiral Nursing service in collaboration with Dementia UK, providing specialist support for dementia patients and their families



**St Oswald's
Hospice**

In partnership with St Oswald's Hospice, we have created a bereavement support service for patients. This includes 1:1 support in our practices or over the phone.



Working alongside Age UK, we launched a scheme for patients attending appointments at NPC Northumbria Way by providing free transportation for vulnerable patients who would not be able to reach their GP. This initiative was launched after patient engagement events raised concerns about accessing the new surgery.

Education and training highlights

We continue to invest in training and education, so our staff can grow with us, become stronger team members and achieve their own personal career goals.

Throughout 2024, there were many highlights from our training and education programme including:

NPC Aspiring Care Leaders Programme

This programme is designed for aspiring primary care leaders, offering invaluable support to those embarking on their journey in general practice or seeking to advance their careers. It provides comprehensive training in leadership skills, public speaking, coaching, and the inner workings of general practice. In January 2025, we proudly celebrated the achievements of our third cohort of NPC colleagues as they successfully completed the course.

"The Aspiring Leaders Programme helped me better understand myself and my communication style through Insights and gave me the confidence to step into a leadership role. Meeting and learning from experienced leaders within NPC were invaluable and helped me to understand the bigger picture of how NPC operates as well as the culture of the organisation."

Richmond Arcillas, Senior Clinical Pharmacist

"I was honoured to be asked to take part in this course. It's been a fantastic learning experience, and I have learned many skills that I can take in my everyday role and share with my team to encourage them to go into leadership."

Gillian Chapman, Practice Lead and Programme Graduate



Our graduate trainee programme

In January 2025, we welcomed three new members to NPC through our first graduate trainee programme – one specialising in informatics and two focusing on general management.

Working alongside our finance manager, Lewis Scandle, our informatics trainee, Adam Tait will be focusing on ways we can collect data to improve our services and patient outcomes. Leigh Madden and Jenny Waller, will be joining our general management team, gaining hands-on experience by rotating through the delivery team, operations and governance.

As part of this exciting programme, participants will embark on a six-week induction course and also pursue a master's qualification from Teesside University.

This initiative introduces a fresh wave of talent to the organisation but also focuses on succession planning and nurturing a new generation of management professionals to drive future growth and innovation.



Operation Equinox

Operation Equinox project focused on our central Northumberland practices who joined NPC as part of the acquisition of Valens Medical Partnership. This project supported colleagues to feel part of our organisation, improve staff experience and wellbeing and improve patient care and experience too.

Since Valens Medical Partnership joined NPC in January 2024, we have listened closely to feedback from NPC Northumbria Way, NPC Lintonville and NPC Wellway patients and colleagues and found consistent themes emerging:



- 1** *Localised care* – we have now moved to locally coordinated care that meets the specific needs of patients and communities.
- 2** *Non-clinical management* – new practice leads have been hired and have taken on vital roles in managing daily operations.
- 3** *Practice environment* – efforts are being made to improve practice building within NPC through the development of our estate strategy.
- 4** *Local meetings and team building* – regular practice meetings have been reinstated and ‘time out’ sessions allowed teams to connect and identify areas of support.
- 5** *Patient preference* – patients want more options for contacting practices including a better review of the digital access platform. Some patients prefer face-to-face appointments, so higher numbers of in-person appointments are now available in certain practices.
- 6** *Clinical ledgers & task inboxes* – work is underway to transition clinical ledgers and task inboxes to local management.

The primary goal of this project was to enhance patient care while improving the experience for both patients and staff. By reintroducing local, responsive, and personalised care, we have made it easier for patients to access services, which in turn has positively impacted staff experience.

Based on patient feedback, we have implemented several improvements across our central Northumberland practices. Notably, we now have on-site reception teams, allowing patients to build relationships with familiar staff.

Additionally, we have streamlined our processes to reduce the time spent on each call and interaction, enabling us to assist more patients both over the phone and in person. Recent patient survey results indicate a significant improvement in overall experience, and thanks to the dedication of our teams, patient complaints have decreased.

Our staff survey results show that team members prefer working within a practice rather than a centralised location, as it allows them to build meaningful connections with patients. Furthermore, our staff wellbeing surveys reveal a positive trend, reflecting the benefits of these changes.

Our patient participation groups

Patient participation groups (PPGs) are a key part of the NHS long-term plan. PPGs assist GP practices and primary care networks (PCNs) in gathering information from patients and local communities and are a voice for the local patient population to help inform and improve the operation of GP surgeries, the delivery of care and future service development.

Over the last year, there has been significant work undertaken within the organisation to strengthen the relationship we have with our chairs and PPGs to improve health outcomes for our patients. In September, our chair, Katie Stevens, held our first NPC-wide PPG chairs meeting.

Key themes of discussion in this meeting were around how we are working towards strengthening communication with our patients and the importance for patients to understand the changing primary care landscape.

These meetings will be held twice a year will give us the opportunity to update our PPG chairs on key projects/campaigns happening within the organisation and any challenges or barriers we have faced.

Refreshing our branding

As NPC continues to grow significantly, welcoming new staff and patients, it's important that everyone feels part of one organisation. To achieve this, we recognised the need to standardise our branding across the organisation, and importantly in our practices.

A strong brand identity goes beyond visual elements – it embodies the personality, culture, reputation and vision we strive to convey to both our staff and patients.

To ensure the rebranding process truly reflected the values and needs of those who matter most, we conducted extensive engagement with our staff and patients, gathering their invaluable feedback to shape the future of our brand.

Our new Branding



News highlights

As a large-scale primary care provider, staying connected with our communities and stakeholders is vital. One of the key ways we share important updates and developments is through local news.

This past year, we were delighted to see many positive stories about our work featured in the media. Highlights included the launch of our new patient transport scheme in Cramlington, and a trial of an AI-powered digital coaching app designed to support lifestyle changes for managing hypertension and coexisting conditions like depression or anxiety.

Our top news stories in 2024:



"As a GP partner, being part of NPC is incredibly rewarding. The unwavering support from colleagues during challenging times makes all the difference. There's a genuine sense of belonging within the organisation, which truly shines through and enhances the care we provide to our patients."

Dr Christopher Lee, GP Partner at NPC Park Parade

"Working at NPC is fantastic because the organisation is filled with people who bring a diverse range of expertise. I always feel there's someone I can turn to for advice and support. We have an incredible team at NPC, all united by a shared goal: delivering the best possible care to our patients."

Michelle Hagman, Senior Pharmacy Technician

"What makes NPC a great place to work is the people. There is a sense of belonging that radiates through their culture, and you always feel like you have someone there to help provide support."

Lesley Griffiths, Care Coordinator

Find out more
www.northumbriaprimarycare.co.uk

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