

# *NPC Year in Review*

## 2025-26



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## Message from our Managing Director



*David Hedgcock, Managing Director*

“

As we step into another year at NPC, we leave a significant year behind and one that we can all be proud of.

As I reflect on the year gone by, there has been great progress and commitment to improving care for our patients and communities.

To name a few of our achievements, we have taken important steps in improving environments for our patients and colleagues including the start of the process to move our NPC Lintonville practice into a new, modern and fit for purpose space, and made plans for the refurbishment of our NPC Felton practice.

We have taken strides in getting feedback from our colleagues and ensuring that they have their say in how our organisation is shaped to support NPC in the years ahead. We achieved a record response rate of 81.3% in the NHS National Staff Survey, this reflects the engagement, honesty and commitment of colleagues across NPC. We also saw significant improvements across many areas compared to last year's results, and I am proud that we have once again achieved best-in-class status across England for our caring and compassionate organisational culture.

2025 was a particularly special year for Northumbria Primary Care as we celebrated our 10-year anniversary. So much has changed since NPC was first established, from the size and reach of our organisation, to the services we provide, and the communities we serve. What has remained constant is our commitment to high quality patient care and supporting one another as colleagues. Reaching this milestone is a testament to the dedication, professionalism and hard work of everyone who has been part of NPC's journey, past and present.

As we move forward, we have been taking the time to reflect on how our organisation is structured and how we improve staff experience. In recent months we have fostered our GP survive to thrive ethos across NPC which is an ongoing commitment to ensure the thoughts, ideas and ambitions of our 100+ strong GP team are captured and influencing how care is coordinated. This ethos will continue into the future and is closely followed by 2026 being the Year of the Nurse in NPC, Throughout the year we will cast spotlights on our nursing team and ensure the heartbeat of our long term condition management service has an equally strong voice and presence in the organisation. We have also moved towards a revised management structure that places greater autonomy and accountability within practices, built around clear practice-based leadership roles, while retaining central support across the wider organisation. We know that change can bring uncertainty, and we'd like to thank colleagues for their support and flexibility as we moved into this new way of working. 2026 will have a key focus on training, development and support for our new management team and I'm heartened by the positive early steps we are seeing. I remain confident that last year was the right time to undertake this change following our growth two years earlier and believe we now field our strongest team formation for the years ahead.

Despite the pressures we have faced, the changes to national and local policy is what continues to stand out to me and the reason why NPC is such a special organisation is the way that our colleagues have continued to support one another and remain focused on doing the very best for our patients.

To our stakeholders, partners, colleagues and patients, thank you for your trust, support and honest feedback on what is working well and what needs renewed focus. 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*

“

This year marks a significant milestone for Northumbria Primary Care as we celebrate our tenth anniversary. Over the past decade, we have grown into a strong and resilient organisation, delivering high-quality primary care services while continually adapting to meet the changing needs of our patients and communities. This anniversary is not only a moment to reflect on how far we have come, but also an opportunity to look ahead with confidence and ambition.

Our people are at the heart of Northumbria Primary Care. Supporting our teams to be the best they can be is a priority we take seriously. We continue to invest in development, wellbeing and supportive leadership, recognising that empowered, valued and well-supported staff are essential to delivering excellent patient care. I would like to thank all colleagues for their dedication, professionalism and resilience, particularly during times of ongoing pressure within primary care.


As we reflect on the past ten years, we can be proud of what we have achieved together. The strength of our organisation lies in our shared commitment to providing compassionate, high-quality care and in our determination to continue improving for the communities we serve.


While challenges across primary care remain, I am confident that with the passion, expertise and collaboration of our teams, Northumbria Primary Care will continue to thrive and evolve in the years ahead.

I hope you enjoy reading this Year in Review and that it provides a meaningful insight into the progress we have made, the impact we have delivered and the ambition that continues to drive us forward. ”


# A look back on 2025/26

We proudly celebrated   
**10 years of NPC**

NPC Park Parade achieved  
**94%** patient satisfaction  
score in the GP  
Patient Survey 

We launched new digital access system,  
**SystemConnect**, and have received a  
total of  
**104,625**   
requests from patients since the launch

We successfully launched our new  
**NPC website** 

We recorded our highest-ever  
engagement in the NHS National  
Staff Survey, with an  
**80%** response rate 

NPC Rothbury, NPC Amble and Broomhill, and  
NPC Ponteland were recognised among the  
**top 10 GP practices**  
in north and central  
Northumberland by the  
Northumberland Gazette 

Our teams handled over  
**600,000**   
phone calls, ensuring patients could  
access the support they needed

We welcomed **6,355**   
new patients and delivered an incredible  
**793,318** appointments across  
our practices

**Nicola Rice**, our practice  
manager at NPC Ponteland received  
the highly commended award at  
the 2025 General Practice Awards  
for **Practice Manager of the Year**

We secured funding to **support  
refurbishment works**  
across multiple sites to improve the  
environments for our staff, patients  
and visitors 

## An update on our clinical strategy

Over the past year, our clinical strategy has delivered meaningful progress in improving patient care, safety and experience across our practices. Through strong clinical leadership and close collaboration between teams, we have embedded more consistent, evidence-based pathways that reduce unwarranted variation and support better outcomes for our patients.

The programme has strengthened multidisciplinary working, accelerated service transformation and enabled the adoption of innovative models of care. As a result, patients are accessing safer, more timely and more personalised services, while our workforce is supported to deliver high-quality care in a sustainable and resilient way.

These achievements provide a strong foundation for continued improvement and long-term system resilience.

We have made great progress with the key commitment areas of our clinical strategy over the last year. These highlights include:

### Patient Access

Following on from feedback from our patients in our digital access review, we replaced Anima with SystemConnect in May. Our digital access review found that patients found Anima clunky and raised concerns around creating appointments and getting in touch with their practice.

To address these issues, we implemented SystemConnect, which is designed to be simpler and quicker for patients to use, often without needing an account.

Since implementation, we have received positive feedback from patients:

*"I find SystemConnect very comprehensive and easy to use. I've only had positive outcomes using this system."*

NPC Ponteland patient

## Sustainable Services

In January 2026, we welcomed Admiral Nurse Kirsty De Bono-Hume to work across our Northumberland practices. Admiral Nurses are specialist registered nurses in dementia care, supporting people living with dementia and their families — particularly during complex or challenging periods of transition. This role strengthens our ability to provide compassionate, expert support to some of our most vulnerable patients in primary care.

## Prevention

Our winter vaccination campaign resulted in **48%** of eligible patients receiving their flu vaccine across our practices, helping to protect vulnerable groups and reduce seasonal pressures on services.

## Long-Term Condition Management

We have placed a strong focus on ensuring that patients with long-term health conditions are seen in the right place, at the right time. This includes introducing 'one-stop' assessments, enabling patients to discuss multiple concerns with their healthcare professional in a single visit, rather than needing to book and travel to separate appointments.

## Equitable Care

We hosted a series of health and wellbeing drop-in sessions across our practices, offering patients accessible advice and support. These included visits from Age UK, providing guidance on scam and fraud awareness, alongside mental health and wellbeing coaches who offered practical advice and signposting.

## Integrated Care

We launched a pre-operative assessment project focused on optimising patients' fitness for surgery. Through digital, nurse-led and personalised pathways, the project aims to reduce cancellations, improve efficiency and enhance patient outcomes.



## Improving our buildings and facilities for our patients and staff

Last year, we launched our first estates strategy – a long-term plan outlining how we will manage, develop, and invest in our buildings and infrastructure to create better environments for patients, staff, and visitors. This will also have a positive impact on staff and patient experience.

### What we have done over the last year:

We have expanded NPC Spring Terrace with additional consulting and training rooms. This increase in space allows for more simultaneous patient appointments, reducing waiting times and improving access. The new training rooms also provide opportunities for staff development, supporting continuous learning and enhancing the quality of care delivered. Patients can now benefit from a more comfortable environment, while staff enjoy improved working conditions that foster collaboration and efficiency.



Reception and back-office areas at NPC Ponteland have been upgraded to improve staff experience and streamline operations. The redesigned reception offers a more welcoming environment for patients, with clearer signage and improved privacy. Behind the scenes, the new back-office layout supports smoother administrative workflows, enabling staff to spend more time focused on patient care. These improvements contribute to a more positive experience for everyone using the practice.



At the Newbiggin practice, upgrades have created additional consultation rooms, increasing clinical capacity and allowing more patients to be seen promptly. The new rooms are equipped with modern facilities to support a wide range of consultations, from routine check-ups to complex care. These changes not only reduce waiting times but also provide a more comfortable and private setting for patients. Staff benefit from enhanced workspace and better access to resources, supporting efficient, high-quality care.



## What is coming up?



In May 2025, we received approval to refurbish our NPC Felton practice. In December, we hosted a drop-in session for residents to learn more about the plans and ask questions ahead of the planning application. As of February 2026, we are working through planning permission requirements, with work expected to begin around the end of April 2026.



To provide improved care and facilities, it has been proposed that NPC Lintonville, some community health services, and the pharmacy relocate to the Ashington Workspace site on Lintonville Parkway. The current building is over 100 years old and no longer meets the needs of patients or staff. The move will allow us to offer better access, enhanced facilities, and an improved experience for all. Our patients and staff support the proposal, and we will keep everyone updated.

## Financial performance review 2025/26

Our financial approach continues to reflect our commitment as a not-for-profit organisation, ensuring that any surplus generated is reinvested directly into improving services, supporting our workforce, and enhancing outcomes for the communities we serve.

Financial sustainability remains central to NPC's vision, underpinned by another year of robust performance and disciplined financial management. Over the past year, we have strengthened our foundations by deepening collaboration across our teaching, research, and clinical workstreams, creating a more integrated platform to support workforce development, innovation, and service transformation. Following last year's expansion, performance in the new financial year reflects a period of consolidation, with revenues forecast to show steady, sustainable growth and remain in line with expectations, reinforcing our long-term stability.

Our efficiencies programme has once again delivered above target, strengthening our resilience as we enter the new financial year. We are now accelerating the next phase of transformation, harnessing new technologies, automation, and data-driven decision making. This includes building on the KPI dashboards already introduced to further strengthen performance oversight, transparency, and accountability. Further scoping and phased implementation work is underway to unlock sustainable productivity gains and enhance outcomes and experience for our staff, learners, and partners.

These advancements continue to support our ambition to integrate primary, secondary, and third sector care more effectively. NPC's role in shaping prevention focused, neighbourhood-based models of care is becoming increasingly central, with integrated neighbourhood teams now transitioning from design into expanded delivery. Their success will be critical to ensuring our operational and financial sustainability, while helping drive the wider system shift towards proactive, community centred care.

## Northumbria Primary Care Network

Over the past year, the Northumbria Primary Care Network (PCN) has continued to strengthen its role in delivering collaborative, population-focused primary care. A key milestone has been securing approval from the ICB to expand the network to include our North Tyneside practices, creating greater alignment across our footprint and enabling more coordinated service planning.

Alongside this expansion, the PCN has prioritised the development of integrated pathways for housebound patients with long-term conditions, working across teams to improve continuity, proactive monitoring and multidisciplinary support. Significant progress has also been made in frailty proactive care, with a stronger focus on early identification and coordinated management to help patients remain well and independent at home. Looking ahead, the network is now beginning work on optimising COPD management in our ex-mining communities, recognising the unique respiratory health challenges within these populations and aiming to deliver more targeted, preventative care.



## Our people

Behind every milestone we celebrate, there are the people who make it possible. This section reflects on the contributions, development and wellbeing of our teams, and how we are investing in our people to meet the opportunities that lie ahead.

### Staff induction brochures

We launched our brand-new NPC induction brochures. These brochures provide colleagues, new and present, with a clear, consistent and accessible guide to NPC, our mission and values, policies and procedures. These brochures have helped streamline our onboarding process and give staff a reference they can return to if needed.

### NHS National Staff Survey

As mentioned previously we recorded our highest-ever engagement rate with the NHS National Staff Survey with 80% of colleagues taking part. Not only did we achieve this high engagement rate, we also saw improvements in 74 areas of the survey which reflects the progress being made across our organisation.

Some of the results include:

- *88% said they felt their role makes a difference to patients and service users*
- *87% said they felt trusted to do their job*
- *90% said they enjoy working with colleagues in their team*

### People Promise Exemplar

In early 2024, NPC was selected to take part in the People Promise Exemplar programme in collaboration with the NHS England national retention team. From this NPC's top three priorities were identified as;

***We work flexibly, We are always learning and We are recognised and rewarded.***



### We work flexibly

Flexible working has been a high priority area for NPC over the last year and this has been driven from staff feedback, new starters and engagement surveys. Our goal is to foster a culture where flexible working is accessible, well-understood and consistently implemented across all departments. Over the last year, we have implemented a number of initiatives to support flexible working including:

- *Updated flexible working policy*
- *Created a new online flexible working application form which all staff have access to*
- *Created case studies from a range of staff groups to highlight successful flexible working arrangements*
- *Launched workshops and engagement sessions for staff to find out more information on flexible working and for managers to get support*
- *Created a flexible working reporting dashboard*
- *Ensuring flexible working is embedded as a 'golden thread' throughout organisational strategies and projects*

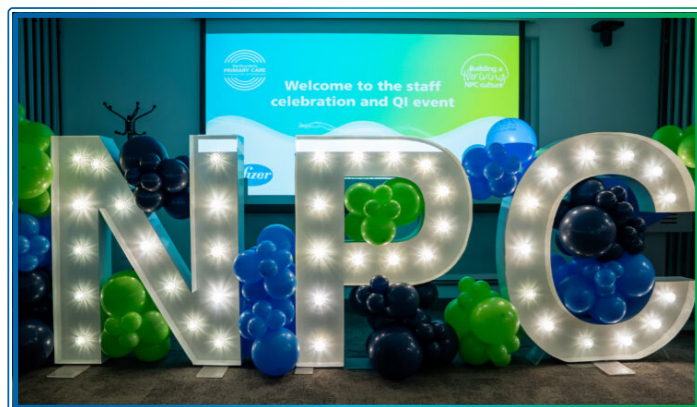
Since implementing these initiatives we have had 23 flexible working requests made from staff with a 100% approval rate.

## *We are recognised and rewarded*

We have focused ensuring our staff feel appreciated for the hard work and dedication they give. We have implemented the below initiatives to support our staff:

- *Thank a colleague – It's important we all take time to recognise and celebrate a colleague or team who have gone the extra mile. Every week we share special 'thank yous' in our newsletter*

## **NPC Staff Awards 2026**



In January our teams came together for a special combined event to celebrate two things that make NPC great: our people and our commitment to quality improvement.

The event was filled with energy, connection, and recognition as teams from across NPC gathered to reflect on the past year, share successes and recognise their invaluable contributions.

The QI portion of the event showcased the incredible work being done across NPC to improve services, processes and outcomes for patients and staff. Staff had the opportunity to learn about innovative projects, share ideas, and see first-hand how continuous improvement is shaping our organisation.

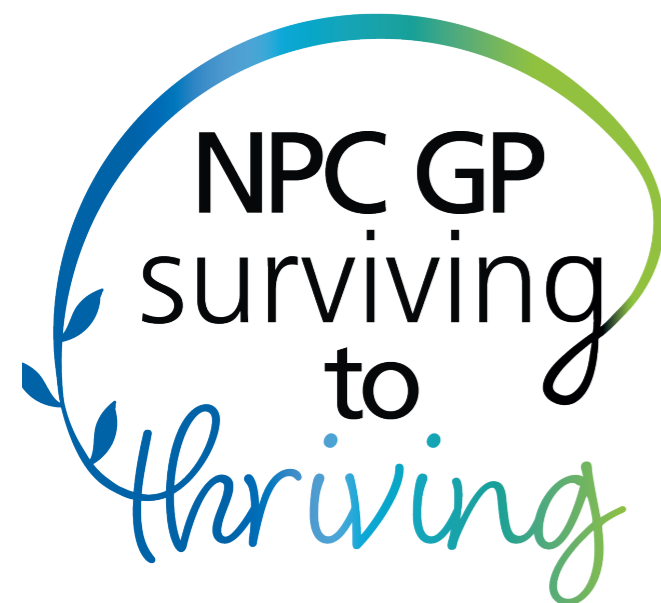
Olivia Murphy, senior admin lead at NPC Nelson won the Non-Clinical Newcomer of the Year award. Olivia reflected on this achievement saying:

*"Winning the Non-Clinical Newcomer of the Year was a huge privilege. From the moment I joined, I've been inspired by the dedication of colleagues across every department. In an admin role, you see how the small details behind the scenes make a big difference to patient experience. I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute and I am excited to keep learning, growing and supporting our team."*



**Olivia Murphy,**  
Senior admin lead,  
NPC Nelson

## GP Surviving to Thriving



In September, we launched our GP Surviving to Thriving programme which is focused on helping to improve day-to-day work for our GP's by implementing initiatives to support managing workload pressures and reduce administrative burdens to free up more time to see patients.

To track progress of the programme and to measure the success of improvements, we created a follow-up survey in early 2026 and found:

- 61% felt like a valued member of the wider NPC team
- 63% felt listened to
- 66% felt the programme had supported them
- 64% felt more confident in raising an issue relating to workload

Feedback about the programme includes:

*"My experience is that, when not covering other GPs work, I now have time to complete my work within a reasonable time. This is a direct result of the changes made by this initiative, for which I am grateful."*

*"I really appreciate the dedicated time with admin sessions, it has made a really big positive impact on my mental wellbeing, and I think patients value it too as you have more time to spend with a patient."*

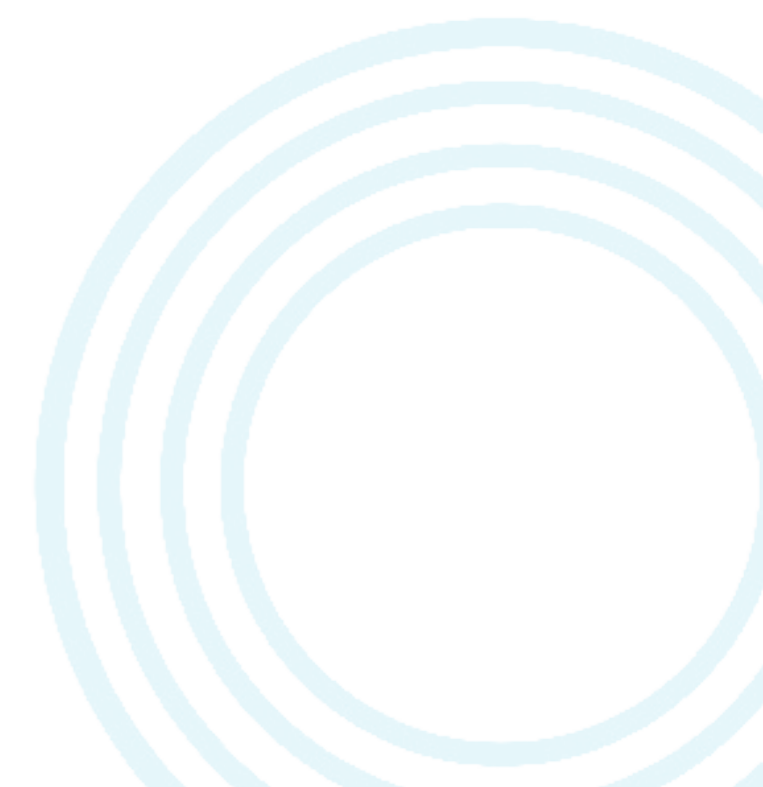
## We are always learning

Investing in our staff means that our people grow with us, becoming stronger members of our team. We are committed to ensuring all our teams have access to resources where they can grow and develop.

## Staff story - Rachel Hall



Rachel's journey at NPC Spring Terrace began ten years ago as a reception apprentice, and her dedication and passion for patient care have seen her grow into a nursing associate. From supporting clinics and gaining clinical skills across NPC sites to completing the Nursing Associate programme at BPP University, Rachel's story is a shining example of career progression and commitment to patient care.



## Education Highlights

It's been another fantastic year of investing in learning and development, empowering our staff to grow alongside the organisation, strengthen our teams and progress towards their individual career ambitions. By continuing to prioritise education, we're building the skills and confidence needed to deliver the very best care for our patients.

### *NPC-Wide Education Event*



In December, we proudly hosted our NPC-wide education event, bringing colleagues together from across the organisation to celebrate our shared achievements, connect with one another and exchange learning.

Administrative, clinical and nursing colleagues attended tailored sessions designed to support their roles, with topics including health literacy and long-term condition management. The event created valuable opportunities to network, share best practice and learn from the diverse expertise across our teams.

*"I really enjoyed attending the NPC-wide education event. It was the first in-person education event we've had in over 18 months, and it was brilliant to see colleagues from across the organisation come together to share learning and best practice. I had the chance to connect with people I wouldn't normally meet and learn from their experiences. Although we work in different areas, it was inspiring to see how we're all contributing towards the same goal of improving the care we provide to our patients."*

**Lisa Hutchinson, lead practice nurse, NPC Spring Terrace**

## NPC Aspiring Leaders Programme



In January, we celebrated our fourth cohort of graduates from the NPC Aspiring Leaders programme. Delivered with the support of the trust's organisational development team, the NPC leadership programme has been designed to meet the needs of our future leaders in primary care. The course focuses on what individuals need to know about leading in a primary care setting, as well as giving participants the opportunity to meet and learn from local leaders in healthcare, to gain valuable insight.

This cohort saw 13 graduates from across the organisation and from a range of departments including nursing, administration and clinical.

**Alison Munir**, neighbourhood nurse lead, was one of this year's programme graduates. Her final presentation focused on delivering equitable care for frail, housebound patients living with multiple long-term conditions. She said:

*"The leadership presentation was a valuable opportunity to share what I had learned throughout the programme and how it positively influenced my quality improvement project. My aim was to demonstrate a deeper understanding of compassionate and collective leadership, and how these approaches can strengthen team development and cohesion. By embedding these principles, we can break down barriers and drive improvements in both care quality and patient outcomes for housebound patients with long-term conditions.*

*Integrating compassionate and collective leadership into quality improvement work can have a meaningful and positive impact for everyone involved."*

## Research at NPC

At NPC, we are dedicated to delivering high-quality, patient-centred care across our network of GP practices. A key part of this commitment is creating opportunities for both our patients and practices to engage in innovative research that drives improvements in primary care and enhances patient experience.

In December, we published our Research Strategy, which sets out our ambition to make research an integral part of routine primary care. The strategy highlights how research benefits our patients, strengthens our practices, and positively impacts the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve.

[Take a look at our Research Strategy](#)

### Research Highlight - CORAL Study



The CORAL study is exploring whether taking CoQ10 for 12 months can improve quality of life for patients with heart failure. Heart failure is a major public health challenge, often leading to hospital readmissions and significantly affecting quality of life.

Over the past year, we've made great progress: invitations have been sent out across eight practices, and 42 patients have joined the study so far.

## Our partnerships

We continue to work closely with the voluntary and community sector to better serve our staff, patients and members of our local community. Our current partnerships include:

**RABI**



Our team at NPC Rothbury are working closely with farmers charity, RABI (Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution), to address the unique challenges faced by our local rural farming community. Our executive GP, Dr Jack Lamb, completed a mental health first aid training course tailored specifically for people connected to farming.

*“By working closely with RABI, we aim to equip our teams with the knowledge and resources they need to deliver even better care and support to our patients in these communities.”*

**Dr Jack Lamb, executive GP**

## Fisherman's Mission



We're working in partnership with Fishermen's Mission in North Tyneside to better understand how we can support patients who work at sea.

We're encouraging fishermen to let their GP practice know about their role, so we can add a note to their record identifying them as working in the fishing industry.

This helps our teams tailor how we communicate. For example, we may use email or text messages instead of phone calls, as calls can often be difficult to connect when someone is out at sea.

## Supporting our patients

Delivering safe, high-quality and accessible care remains at the heart of our mission.

When a patient experienced a mental health crisis, his sister knew how serious the situation was. Having previously lost a family member to suicide, the family were understandably fearful. In the past, they had often felt unheard by the wider healthcare system.

When she contacted the practice, her call was answered by Jane Black with empathy and compassion. Although her brother was initially unable to attend his appointment, Jane listened carefully, recognised the urgency, and rearranged it for later that day — giving the family another chance to encourage him to come in.

Following that appointment, he is now receiving the support he needs.

The patient's sister shared: *“Jane listened to everything that was said and clearly understood our plea for help and support. If it wasn't for Jane that day, I can confidently say my brother wouldn't be here now.”*

For this family, being heard made all the difference.

## North Tyneside merger



In April 2025, our four practices in North Tyneside, NPC Spring Terrace, NPC 49 Marine Avenue, NPC Park Parade and NPC Nelson, came together to form one unified practice, strengthening the way we deliver care for our patients now and in the future.

This merger was designed to increase resilience and provide support across our North Tyneside practice teams. By bringing our teams and resources together, we can work more efficiently, share best practice and build greater resilience across the service. Centralising key functions and reducing duplication means we can lower costs and reinvest those savings into developing and expanding patient services.

Most importantly, this change helps secure the long-term sustainability of our practice, ensuring we continue to provide high-quality, safe and reliable primary care for our community.

## PPG update

Patient participation groups (PPGs) continue to be key in helping our practices link in with patients and local communities. They are a crucial and valued voice for the local patient population to help inform and improve the operation of GP surgeries, the delivery of care and future service development.

Our PPG Chair meetings are held at least once a year and are chaired by the NPC Chair, Katie Stevens. These meetings provide an opportunity to update PPG Chairs on key projects, campaigns and current challenges, while also giving them the chance to share feedback and highlight any support or information they may need. Following these meetings, PPG Chairs can then cascade key updates and discussions back to their local PPG groups.

Over the last year we have held two PPG chair meetings and 36 PPG practice meetings across NPC.

*“We have made significant progress in strengthening our relationships with our PPGs. We have placed a strong emphasis on ensuring members understand our clinical strategy, how we are responding to the challenges we face, and how we continue to adapt within an ever-evolving NHS landscape.*

*Now more than ever, it is vital that we listen to our patients, seek their feedback on our services, and take meaningful action in response — for example, by ensuring we better promote the support available to carers.*

*I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our PPG Chairs and members for their continued time, commitment and support. Their contribution is invaluable and plays a crucial role in helping us become stronger providers of primary care.”*

**Katie Stevens, Chair**



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