

21 APRIL 2026

Regional Health Scrutiny Update

Summary

The Committee is requested to consider an update on the work of the regional health scrutiny committees. Some recent health-related developments impacting on the Tees Valley and / or wider North East and North Cumbria footprint are also highlighted.

Detail

Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

1. Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council hosted this Committee during 2025-2026.
2. Two Committee meetings have taken place since the last update. The first was held on 11 December 2025 where agenda items included:
 - Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2025 (see **Appendix 1**)
 - University Hospital Tees (UHT): Strategy Update (see **Appendix 2**)
 - NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) / Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV): Tees Respite Care / Adult Learning Disability Update
 - NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB): Palliative and End-of-Life Care Strategy – Development / Implementation
 - Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV): Health Inequalities
3. The latest Committee meeting was held on 12 March 2026 where agenda items included:
 - Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2025 (see **Appendix 3**)
 - North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS): Quality Account 2025/26
 - Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV): Urgent Care Mental Health Crisis Update (see **Appendix 4**)
 - Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV): Quality Account 2025/26 (see **Appendix 5**)

At the end of the March 2026 meeting, the Committee was made aware of a recently received letter from the Director of Specialised Commissioning, Health and Justice, and Public Health (North East and Yorkshire Region) and the NENC ICB Chief Contracting & Procurement Officer outlining proposed changes to the delivery of neonatal care across the North East and North Cumbria region. It was agreed that an additional Committee meeting should be convened in the near future to enable further detail to be provided and considered.

4. As per previously agreed rotational arrangements, Chair and support responsibilities for this joint committee will move to Middlesbrough Council for 2026-2027. The first meeting date of the new municipal year is still to be confirmed.

Sustainability and Transformation Plan / Integrated Care System Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

5. Following a lengthy hiatus, Durham County Council (who support this Joint Committee) contacted scrutiny teams across the region in November 2022 with the intention of arranging a meeting for late-November / early-December 2022. However, following liaison with senior NENC ICB representatives, it was deemed that in light of the ongoing ICS briefings to the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, a meeting of this Joint Committee (which involved similar Councillors) was likely to be a duplication and would not add value.
6. In wider regional health matters, the NENC ICB '**Here to help you**' webpage continues to provide information on choosing the right NHS service for your needs, keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet, or getting your vaccines. Plus, there is lots of health advice and local support information (see <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/>).
7. Trailblazing **efforts to help people in the North East and North Cumbria tackle health problems and stay in work will be extended** thanks to new Government funding of around £10 million. The North East and North Cumbria was one of three regions selected to test new ways of helping people whose health problems are making it hard to work (through the national Health and Growth Accelerator which got underway late last year). Now an additional £25 million will be shared between the North East and North Cumbria, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, to tackle conditions that most impact people's ability to work (see <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/news/government-funding-boost-to-extend-health-support-for-working-people/>).
8. A crucial **learning disability respite service that faced years of uncertainty has secured its future** with a move to 'wonderful' new premises in Middlesbrough. Around 70 families and carers who look after loved ones with often complex learning disabilities will continue to access respite services following an agreement between the NHS and Middlesbrough Council to move the service to Levick Court in the town. The service was previously delivered at two NHS buildings (Aysgarth in Stockton and Bankfields in Middlesbrough), but could no longer be safely delivered from those buildings due to their age, the cost of repairs, and to ensure compliance with Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulations. (see <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/news/wonderful-new-home-secures-future-of-respite-service/>).

9. 2024 UK Health Security Agency (UKSHA) data revealed that the **North East has some of the highest rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the country**, with under-25s disproportionately affected. A new 'Elephant in the Room' campaign has been launched to help reduce rates of STIs in the North East and North Cumbria by starting a conversation that many people find difficult to talk about – their sexual health (see <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/news/lets-talk-about-the-elephant-in-the-room-safer-sex/>).
10. Following the early-2025 announcement requiring **ICBs to reduce running and programme costs**, the NENC ICB is progressing with the implementation of its strategic commissioning transition programme. From April 2026, place partnerships, led by local partners, will take on increased responsibility for the delivery and governance of integrated care and neighbourhood models. As part of this transition, ICB-led place committees will conclude at the end of March 2026, with locally-led governance arrangements taking their place.
11. More locally, a number of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust developments have been publicised in recent weeks (see <https://www.nth.nhs.uk/news/>), including:
 - Teesside endoscopy service celebrates reaccreditation success (December 2025) <https://www.nth.nhs.uk/news/endoscopy-service-celebrates-reaccreditation-success/>
 - New initiative to help patients who may be deteriorating (January 2026) <https://www.nth.nhs.uk/news/new-initiative-to-help-patients-who-may-be-deteriorating/>
 - New fast and easy system for feedback for new mums and mums-to-be (March 2026) <https://www.nth.nhs.uk/news/new-fast-and-easy-system-for-feedback-for-new-mums-and-mums-to-be/>

North East Regional Health Scrutiny Committee

12. No meetings are currently scheduled.

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