



IMPACT REPORT

2024 - 2025



As we mark the 30th anniversary of Healthworks, it's a moment to reflect not only on how far we've come, but also an opportunity to showcase our impact.

I'm very grateful that some respected leaders have taken time to share their congratulations and recognise our achievements in tackling health inequalities.



Welcome from Paul Court, Chief Executive

Healthworks began in 1995 as a bold new idea, a Healthy Living Centre grounded in the belief that health is shaped by far more than medical care alone.

In those early days, I had the privilege of helping to develop our approach: community-led, preventative, and focused on tackling the social and economic factors that affect people's health. We built something new, something that put people first and recognised that meaningful change starts where people live, work, and belong.

Over three decades, Healthworks has grown in scale. We've expanded our reach, deepened our impact, and continued to champion the principles that have guided us from the very beginning. While parts of the health system have faced significant cuts, it has been heartening to see our services not only endure but also evolve. We've embraced opportunities to do more, strengthening partnerships and embedding ourselves more deeply in the fabric of the communities we serve. Through it all, we've remained focused on what matters most: making a measurable difference to people's lives.

As the NHS 10-Year Plan focuses on tackling inequalities, improving population health, and strengthening out-of-hospital care, I want to share Healthworks' ongoing contribution to these priorities. This report captures the depth and breadth of that impact. It evidences the work we do every day, often quietly, but always meaningfully, to reduce health inequalities, support wellbeing, and create opportunities for people to thrive.

As we look ahead to the future, I want to thank everyone - staff, volunteers, partners, and community members - who have been part of this journey. Together, we've shown that with the right approach, it's possible not only to deliver but to lead and innovate.

Here's to the next 30 years!

Paul Court, Chief Executive

A message from Professor Sir Michael Marmot

As Patron of Healthworks, I am delighted to send my warmest congratulations as you mark your 30th anniversary. This significant milestone reflects three decades of dedication to improving health, reducing inequalities, and empowering communities across the North East.

Throughout these years, Healthworks has consistently demonstrated the power of community-led, preventative approaches in addressing the social determinants of health. By working at the heart of local communities, you have reached those most in need and helped create the conditions in which people can thrive, not just survive.

However, the challenges remain stark. In my 10-year review of health equity, we found that living in a deprived area of the North East is worse for your health than living in a similarly deprived area in London, with a life expectancy gap of nearly five years.

Poor population health leads to increased pressure on the NHS and social care, contributing to a system that too often focuses on treating illness rather than preventing it. It also undermines productivity and economic growth, reinforcing the very income inequalities that contribute to poor health outcomes.

That's why the work of organisations like Healthworks is so essential. Your approach aligns directly with the core principles of my research, placing people, prevention, and equity at the centre. By supporting early intervention, promoting wellbeing, and delivering place-based solutions, you are helping to reduce the burden on overstretched public services while achieving long-term, sustainable change.

As you look ahead, I want to acknowledge the profound impact you've made over the past 30 years and the even greater potential for the future. Your work is vital, evidence-based, and deeply rooted in social justice. I am proud to stand with you in your mission and look forward to continuing to support your efforts in the years to come.

Professor Sir Michael Marmot
Healthworks Patron



Professor Sir Michael Marmot is Professor of Epidemiology at University College London, Director of the UCL Institute of Health Equity.

Sir Michael has led research on health inequalities for over 40 years.

He is the author of *Fair Society, Healthy Lives* (The Marmot Review 2010), *Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On* (2020), and *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World* (2015).

Health and Wellbeing Challenges in the North East and North Cumbria

34%

of the population in the North East live in areas ranked among the 20% most deprived in England*

59 years

Healthy Life Expectancy in the North East is the lowest in the UK, 5.5 years below the national average*

47%

have at least 1 Long Term Condition (Anxiety, Depression and Hypertension the Top 3)**

20%

of adults in the NENC regions have 3+ Risk Factors for Circulatory Disease**

28%

of people live with 2 or more long term conditions. 29% living in the most deprived areas**

64%

of adults meet recommended physical activity levels (150 mins per week), compared to 66% in England.*

68%

of adults are classified as overweight or obese, the highest in England (64%)*

11,700

emergency hospital admissions in the North East due to falls in adults aged 65 years and over. The highest in England*

11%

of adults in the North East smoke, down from 13.1% in 2022. Slightly lower than the England average of 11.6%.*

7.8%

of pregnant women in the North East smoke during pregnancy, higher than the England average of 6.1%*

31%

of children in the North East region are living in poverty***

56%

of mothers initiate breastfeeding, compared to 71% nationally. The lowest rate in England*

12%

of children in Reception are Obese, Highest rate in England**



These figures highlight the persistent health inequalities in our region, influenced by poverty, poor housing, low employment, and barriers to healthy choices.

We are delivering preventative services and interventions, alongside partners and communities, in order to change this story

Cost Savings to NHS and Social Care in 2024-2025

By applying the SROI framework*, SportFin estimated the potential cost savings to the NHS and Social Care, and gains to the public through the enhancement of human and social capital generated by activities and interventions delivered by Healthworks.

Health value by outcomes

Cardiovascular Disease Risk Reduction	£5.63M
Diabetes Risk Reduction	£679.0K
Breast Cancer Risk Reduction	£14.08M
Colon Cancer Risk Reduction	£4.52M
Injuries & Long-term effects	-£16.49K
Depression Risk Reduction	£200.57K
Dementia Risk Reduction	£9.82M
Life Satisfaction (Subjective)	£3.00M

Educational value by outcomes

Educational Attainment Improvement	£4.1K
Employability	£33.59K

Societal value by outcomes

Social integration	£132.18K
Volunteering intent	£132.18K
Anti-social behaviour reduction	£16.79K
Recidivism	£61.60K

Healthworks Smoking Cessation
Programme for 2024/25 Evaluation

£7.9M



Societal value:
£325.98k*

Health value:
£37.91m*

Educational value:
£37.76k*

Smoking cessation:
£7.9m**

*Estimated cost savings calculated using Social Return on Investment (SROI) in Sport framework and www.sportfin.io impact correlations algorithm based on 12 month continuous participation.

**Estimated cost savings based on Healthworks Community Smoking Cessation, Social Value Report 2025.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

2024 - 2025

Number of Attendances

83,020

Total service
attendances

Number of Individuals

18,022

Unique individuals
attended our activities
An increase of 15%

30% IMD Areas

50%

People using our services
live in the lowest 30%
IMD areas

Gender of Service Users

43.5% Identify as Male
55% Identify as Female
1.5% Identify as other

Ethnicity of Service Users

42.7%

of people engaged were
ethnically diverse.
An increase of 13%

Long Term Conditions

68%

of service users have
one or more long term
conditions

Financial Turnover

£2,449,715

Our turnover
for the financial year

Number of Volunteers

93 Volunteers

supported us this year.
An increase of 86%

Volunteer Hours

4,226

volunteering hours
An increase of 1,007
hours

Economic Value of Volunteering

£59,164

An increase of £20,527

Cost Savings to Public Services

£46.2m

Estimated cost savings
to the NHS and
Social Care

A message from Professor Bola Owolabi CBE

Congratulations to the Healthworks team on 30 years of outstanding service.

Healthworks' unwavering commitment to reducing health inequalities through inclusive, place-based, and preventative approaches exemplifies the very essence of what good, equitable care looks like.

By working closely with communities, especially those facing the greatest disadvantage, you've shown how trusted local relationships, voluntary sector leadership, and early intervention can transform lives and outcomes.

Your work aligns powerfully with our shared ambition for integrated care systems that prioritise prevention, close the equity gap, and give everyone the opportunity to live well for longer.

Here's to your continued success in championing community-led health for the next 30 years and beyond.

Best, Bola

Professor Bola Owolabi

Chief Inspector - Primary Care and Community Services, Care Quality Commission

Professor Owolabi has a particular interest in reducing healthcare inequalities through integrated care models, service transformation, and using data insights for quality improvement.

She has spearheaded NHS England's Core20PLUS5 approach to narrowing healthcare inequalities.

She is also Vice President of the Royal Society of Public Health.

She continues to work as a General Practitioner in the Midlands.



Professor Bola Owolabi the Care Quality Commission's new Chief Inspector of Primary and Community Services.

Previously, she was Director of the National Healthcare Inequalities Improvement Programme at NHS England until July 2025.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Health and wellbeing



18,022 unique people
accessed our services,
and 7,804 were referred
to our targeted
programmes



1,709 telephone and video
support calls were made to
individuals,
equating to 724 hours of
remote lifestyle support



235 individual eligible NHS
and workplace Health Checks
were completed to spot early
signs of stroke, kidney
disease, heart disease, type 2
diabetes and dementia



2,940 active members in
both of our accessible
community gyms



92% of Staying Steady
completers showed
improvement in the TUG
Functional test
(by 40% on average)



71% of Staying Steady
completers showed
improvement in the Sit to
Stand Functional test
(by 41% on average)



1.13 average improvement in
4 point balance test
demonstrates progress in the
ability to maintain stability
and balance



98% of clients reported they
had achieved their Goals,
across a range of Health and
Wellbeing projects



82% of all clients improved
their perceived State of
Health by 22% on average

EQ-VAS



98% of all clients improved
their Quality of Life

EQ-5D



98% of clients asked
would **Highly Recommend**
the programmes to friends
and family



We participated in **196 awareness events** attended by **7,440 people**.

48% of those attending resided in the lowest **30% areas of deprivation**



62 people completed the Cancer Champion Courses

98% found the course informative and useful.



98% of those that attended Cancer Awareness events reported that they are now likely to attend a screening appointment



318 meetings held with North East businesses to promote key cancer awareness messages



3,037 people were referred to our Inpatient and Community Tobacco Dependency services for support in setting a Quit Date.



Of the people accessing our Community Stop Smoking service, **67% of all clients successfully quit smoking at 4 weeks**



69% of those that quit smoking continued to be smoke free at **12 weeks**



56% of people living in the most deprived areas (IMD 1 & 2) set a quit date.

Around 1 in 4 adults in the most deprived areas smoke, compared to 1 in 10 in the least deprived.



91% of clients have increased their physical activity levels

based on GPPAQ



A total of **1006kg weight loss** was reported between **237 clients**



A total of **93cm lost** from waist measurements with an average loss of **4.42cm per client**



131 unique people reduced their BMI to a healthy range with an average **BMI reduction of 2.39**

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Children and families in Newcastle



Our Best Start Team supported **926 new breastfeeding women and families**. **24% increase from 2023/24**



'Breastfeeding Mams' has **3,500 followers on Facebook and 772 on Instagram**



'Breastfeeding Mams Newcastle' dedicated social media support pages and Facebook groups provide **real-time support, information and guidance to families** and enable ongoing interaction with peers



84 families were provided with pregnancy support from practitioners and/or volunteers. **24% increase from 2023/24**



4 Breastfeeding Social sessions per week across Newcastle. Accessed by **479 unique people 2,193 times**



62 children attended our Pre-school **5,215 times** between them, underscoring the value of early childhood education



159 children with visual impairment and their families became part of the Healthworks family this year.



1,215 children and 213 adults learned the power of a healthy smile, thanks to our Health Promotion team.



Engaged with **252 Individuals and 8 partners** in our New Tyne West partnership



With **1,950 unique participants**, our family activities drew a remarkable **10,667 visits**



We continue to develop a range of **digital family resources** which are accessible to families and workers for free - these included family activity eBooks, play and learn videos and family cooking activities

As CEO of The King's Fund, I am delighted to offer my warmest congratulations as you celebrate your 30th anniversary. At The King's Fund, we see time and again how VCSE organisations like Healthworks are essential to improving health outcomes and tackling inequalities.

You support people in ways that are personal, preventative, and empowering - helping to create the conditions for better lives, not just better health.

Thank you for your continued commitment, and congratulations once again on this significant anniversary.

Sarah Woolnough,
Chief Executive, The King's Fund



On behalf of NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB, I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to Healthworks on reaching this remarkable milestone. For three decades, you have been improving the health and wellbeing of communities across our region, delivering services that make a real difference.

Your commitment to tackling health inequalities and supporting people to live healthier, happier lives is deeply aligned with our shared ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan and the developing focus on neighbourhood health. By working at a community level, you have shown the real value of local, community-based approaches in helping us shift the balance of care and improve outcomes.

As we look ahead, I am confident that your dedication, expertise, and community-centred approach will continue to play a vital role in helping us deliver better health outcomes for everyone in the North East and North Cumbria.

Sam Allen. Chief Executive, North Cumbria and North East NHS Integrated Care Board

Spotlight on Waiting Well with NENC Integrated Care Board



Ill health before surgery costs the NHS hundreds of millions each year. Around 10 to 15 % of operations are complicated by smoking, obesity, or uncontrolled conditions like diabetes, leading to cancellations, longer hospital stays, and costly readmissions. In England, an estimated 135,000 last-minute cancellations waste about £400 million annually, while just 3 % of patients with complications account for 45 % of total hospital costs.

Our NHS-funded Waiting Well Service tackles these issues head-on. We help at-risk patients in the North East improve weight, diabetes control, smoking status, fitness, and nutrition before surgery. This preparation reduces complications, shortens stays, and frees up hospital capacity, saving money and improving outcomes.



391
unique people seen



91%
reside in the lowest
30% IMD

Contributed

£2.12 million

in long-term savings to
NHS and Social care
systems



60% of participants
increased their
'State of Health'



62% of participants
reduced their weight
by an avg. 4.8kg

"Before this, I didn't think anything would change. I was just stuck waiting for surgery, feeling worse every week. But having someone check in, help with my diet, and just listen, it made a big difference. I feel healthier, more in control, and ready for what's next"

Stephen, a Waiting Well client

Spotlight on ESCAPE-pain



ESCAPE Pain (Enabling Self-management and Coping with Arthritic Pain using Exercise) is an evidence-based rehabilitation programme for people living with chronic joint pain. Delivered in a supportive group setting, the service combines education and tailored physical activity to reduce pain, improve mobility, and build confidence in self-managing long-term musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions.

The programme supports people who are often waiting for surgery, experiencing isolation, or struggling with day-to-day activities due to joint pain. By reducing reliance on medication and delaying or preventing the need for surgical intervention, ESCAPE-pain helps individuals regain independence while easing pressure on NHS services.



388
unique people seen



59%
reside in the lowest
30% IMD

Contributed

£1.9 million

in long-term savings to
NHS and Social care
systems



79%
of completers improved
their MSK functions



72%
reported reduced
back or joint pain

“I enjoyed the ESCAPE-pain programme, it was fun! Exercising with other people and having the instructors there made a big difference. They kept us motivated and made sure we were doing everything properly. It definitely helped my health and wellbeing, and I’d 100% recommend it to anyone thinking about giving it a go.”

Liz, ESCAPEpain client

Spotlight on our Tobacco Dependency Services



Smoking prevalence in the North East has decreased from 29% in 2005 to 11% in 2023, below the England average of 11.6%. Yet smoking remains a leading cause of health inequalities, hitting hardest in deprived areas, among people with mental health conditions, and residents in social housing.

Healthworks delivers two key pathways to tackle this harm: the Community Tobacco Dependency Service, in partnership with Newcastle City Council's Smoke Free Newcastle strategy, and the Inpatient Tobacco Dependency Service with Newcastle Hospitals.

Both offer personalised quit plans, nicotine replacement therapy, and ongoing one-to-one support, whether in the community or during hospital stays.



3,037
unique people seen
across settings



61%
reside in the lowest
30% IMD

Contributed
£7.9 million

in long-term savings to
NHS and Social care
systems



67%
who set a quit date
were tobacco-free at 4
week follow-up



Average CO levels
dropped by **69%** after
4 weeks

"I never thought I'd get this far. After 50 years, I was sure it was too late for me. But the support was spot on, they didn't judge me. They helped me take it one step at a time. I feel better than I have in years."

Thomas, a Stop Smoking client

Spotlight on our Falls Prevention Service: Staying Steady



Falls among older adults in the UK impose a substantial financial burden on the healthcare system. According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the cost of falls to the NHS is over £2.3 billion annually, which equates to more than £6 million per day.

Staying Steady is an evidence-based community-delivered falls prevention programme in the North-East of England, adapted from the Falls Management Exercise (FaME) intervention. Currently, Staying Steady consists of one-hour group-based sessions delivered once per week over 27 weeks. To help participants meet the 50 hours of exercise recommended to reduce fall risk, group-based sessions are supplemented with home exercises to be completed two to three times per week, for a maximum of 30 to 40 minutes per session.



281
unique people seen



38%
reside in the lowest
30% IMD

Contributed

£3.7 million

in long-term savings to
NHS and Social care
systems



92% of completers
improved TUG
Functional test by **40%**



96% of participants
felt they benefited
from the programme

“Falls prevention exercise programmes like Staying Steady can make a real difference; simply having the ability and confidence to get out of a chair and walk around is so important for physical wellbeing, quality of life and independence.”

Dr Al O'Doherty, Associate Professor in Exercise Physiology, Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, Durham University

Spotlight on Best Start: Children and Families



Children and families in the North East face some of the UK's highest health inequalities, with child poverty at 31% (vs 20% nationally), above-average obesity rates, and lower physical activity levels. Many children start school already disadvantaged in health, social skills, and development.

Healthworks delivers a range of inclusive, community-based activities and support programmes that address these inequalities. From early years development and family nutrition to physical activity and parenting support, our approach is grounded in prevention, early intervention, and building resilience. We create safe, welcoming spaces where children can grow in confidence, families can connect with each other, and parents can access practical advice and specialist referrals.



2,582
unique people seen
across services



59%
reside in the lowest
30% IMD

Contributed

£3.72 million

in long-term savings to
NHS and Social care
systems



926
accessed
breastfeeding support



62 children built strong
foundations for learning
through preschool

"The Best Start team has been such a huge part of my breastfeeding journey, from the early struggles to finishing my volunteer training. I always wanted to breastfeed, but early complications knocked my confidence. The support calls and friendly advice at the groups are 100% why I'm still breastfeeding and feeling ready for the next step as I go back to work and my little boy starts nursery."

Sara, a Best Start mother

Spotlight on our Cancer Awareness Work



Cancer places a significant economic and health burden on the UK, with projected costs reaching £14.4 billion annually by 2050. The North East has the highest cancer incidence rates in the country, with 717 cases per 100,000 men and 603 per 100,000 women in 2019.

Through our cancer awareness work, we are helping communities and workplaces across the North East become more informed about the signs and symptoms of cancer and the importance of screening in reducing risk. Our sessions are available to people, workplaces, or community groups based in Newcastle, Gateshead, and other parts of the North East. With the information learned through Cancer Research UK's training programme, Talk Cancer, these sessions help equip people to have impactful cancer conversations with others.



7,798
unique people seen



63%
reside in the lowest
30% IMD

Contributed

£6.38 million

in long-term savings to
NHS and Social care
systems



55%
average improvement
quality of life



98% found the
Champion Course
useful and informative

“As a trans woman, I’ve often felt invisible in conversations about health. The Cancer Awareness session made me feel seen, it gave me the confidence to talk about cancer risks that affect me too, and to support others in my community to do the same.”

Jo, a Cancer Champion

Supporting People to Live Longer, Healthier, and Happier Lives Since 1995

1995

- Healthworks was developed from the West End Healthy Living Centre in West End of Newcastle

1996

- Benwell Community Gym opened by Tony Blair MP
- By the end of the year, the Gym had 1000 members

2000

- Creation of Healthworks East and West, a network of Healthy Living Centres

2006

- Development of a GP Referral scheme
- Introduction of Community Health Trainers working across Newcastle
- The Lemington Centre was designated as a Sure Start Centre

2021

- GSK/King's Fund Impact Award winner for our work tackling health inequalities in the North East
- Partnered with Northumbria University and Newcastle NHS to launch one of the UK's first community-based Long Covid rehab programmes

2020

- Evolved and reshaped our service delivery by adopting digital tools and resources to continue support during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Celebrated the 25 year anniversary of Healthworks

2022

- Launch of Hospital-Based Tobacco Dependency Treatment Service (TDTS) to support in-patients in quitting smoking
- Winner of NHS Celebrating Excellence Innovation Award for diabetes intervention
- Finalist, NHS England "Busting Cancer Myths in the Community" Patient Experience Network National Awards (PENNA)

2023

- NHS Waiting Well Programme supporting Patients Pre and Post Surgery began
- Tobacco Dependency Treatment Service (TDTS) was nominated for an NHS Celebrating Excellence Award

A 30 Year Journey of Making a Difference and Reducing Health Inequalities

2007

- Rebranded as 'Healthworks Newcastle' to reflect the broader citywide work

2008

- Launched accredited Royal Society of Public Health programmes

2010

- NHS Staying Steady falls prevention programme starts.
- Citywide Breastfeeding Peer Support team established

2011

- Winner of the GSK/King's Fund IMPACT Award
- Awarded commission to develop and co-ordinate Change 4 Life in West Newcastle

2019

- Rebranded as 'Healthworks' to reflect broader regional work
- Ongoing collaboration with Northumbria University begins

2017

- Achieved UNICEF Level 3 Baby Friendly Status
- Piloted the PRE-OP exercise programme to support prostate cancer patients pre-surgery.

2014

- Started delivering NHS Health Checks across Newcastle
- Professor Sir Michael Marmot became the patron of Healthworks

2013

- Selected as one of two regional partners to pilot the Living Well, Taking Control programme, a non-clinical approach to managing type 2 diabetes.

2024

- Officially became an NIHR recognised research site
- Work with the region's Universities continues to expand
- £43.1m savings to NHS/Social Care evidenced, in partnership with SportFin
- Investors in the Environment Silver Award

2025

- Useful Vision, a 20 year-old charity supporting visually impaired children in the North East, joins Healthworks
- Better Health at Work Gold Award
- Healthworks Gym shortlisted for 2025 National Fitness Award
- Healthworks 30 year anniversary!

What Next?

For 30 years, Healthworks has improved health through innovation, collaboration, and community support.

As the new NHS Plan has a renewed focus on tackling inequalities, improving population health, and strengthening out-of-hospital care, Healthworks has a proven platform to deliver measurable impact, built on prevention, wellbeing, and targeted support where it is needed most.

Research and Innovation in Health

At Healthworks, we believe research is integral to better health outcomes and we are a key partner in health inequalities research and innovative interventions with our colleagues across the region's Universities and NHS.

Formally recognised by the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR) as a research site, we collaborate, co-design and deliver on some truly groundbreaking and important research which is making a real difference to people's lives.

Key partnership research projects include:

- **PERFORM** - This study explores personalised exercise-based rehab for people with multiple long-term conditions. Led by Leicester University and supported by Northumbria University, it aims to demonstrate improved quality of life and reduced hospital visits through tailored support.
- **Cervical Screening** - Healthworks is supporting the study at Northumbria University into increasing timely cervical screening participation in areas of high socio-economic deprivation.
- **PURE-EX** - Funded by Breast Cancer Now, Healthworks is working with Newcastle University to co-develop and test the feasibility of a programme to improve diet and physical activity support in standard breast cancer care.
- **KESS** - This study, in partnership with Northumbria University, is focused on developing and testing a digital health intervention designed to support ongoing exercise maintenance for individuals who have completed falls prevention exercise programmes.



Healthworks has been an exceptional partner to Northumbria University, playing a vital role in shaping educational and workforce opportunities, advancing collaborative research, and driving real-world health impact. Their unwavering commitment to tackling health inequalities and improving community wellbeing aligns closely with the University's values and academic mission.

Through our partnership, we've seen how evidence-based practice and community-led delivery can come together to create meaningful, lasting change. This collaboration has become a model for community-integrated research, one that mirrors the NHS's vision of decentralising health services to improve accessibility and outcomes. Congratulations to the entire Healthworks team on your 30th anniversary—a remarkable milestone for an organisation that continues to lead, innovate, and inspire.

Professor Ioannis Vogiatzis, Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation, Northumbria University
Head, Assembly 1: Respiratory, Clinical Care & Physiology, ERS, NICE Expert Panel Member – Long-Term Effects of COVID-19, WHO World Rehabilitation Alliance – ERS Representative



On behalf of Northumbria University, I offer my warmest congratulations to everyone at Healthworks on your 30th anniversary. We deeply value our close partnership in education and research.

Your involvement in guest lectures, joint research, student placements, and knowledge exchange has enriched both our teaching and research. The opportunities you provide - through placements, projects, and employment - have been instrumental in helping our students develop real-world skills, empathy, and professional confidence.



This partnership exemplifies the power of true collaboration: advancing education, research, workforce development, and community health. As you celebrate this milestone, please know how much we appreciate your impact, and look forward to continued success together. Congratulations once again on this remarkable achievement.

Professor Andy Long, Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, Northumbria University



My Journey to a Healthier Future with Healthworks



My name is Paula, and for most of my life I was active, strong, and on my feet. I worked full-time as a care worker until I was 66. Care work isn't easy, but I prided myself on being fit enough to handle it.

When I retired, I expected to enjoy my days and look forward to a healthy, active future. But reality turned out differently.

With less daily activity, I began to notice changes - I was slower, weaker, and off balance. Simple things became difficult: carrying bags, opening jars, even walking short distances.

Then I had a fall. In just a few weeks, I went from feeling fit to hardly being able to walk.

I struggled with stairs, needed a stick to move from room to room, and couldn't stand at the oven for more than a minute without pain.

My joints ached constantly, and the lack of movement caused me to gain weight. I started to fear the worst - that I might end up in a wheelchair.

That's when my GP referred me to TIMS (Tyneside Integrated Musculoskeletal Service). They told me the fall had caused trauma to my joints and triggered arthritis. It was painful, frightening, and overwhelming.

They also gave me a lifeline: a recommendation to try a course at Healthworks...



***“Something had to be done. I didn't want my life to be this way!
Without Healthworks, I know I wouldn't be where I am now.”***

Contacting Healthworks: The Turning Point to My New Life

At Healthworks, I started with the Weight Management programme. It wasn't about dieting, it was about understanding food. I kept a diary, spotted the foods that weren't helping, and learned small changes I could stick to. Losing even a little weight eased the pressure on my joints and made moving less painful.

Then came Escape Pain. This programme helped me rebuild the muscle I had lost, improve my mobility, and manage my pain. I learned the dos and don'ts of exercise for my condition, and most importantly, found encouragement. The staff made it fun and created an atmosphere where no one felt judged.

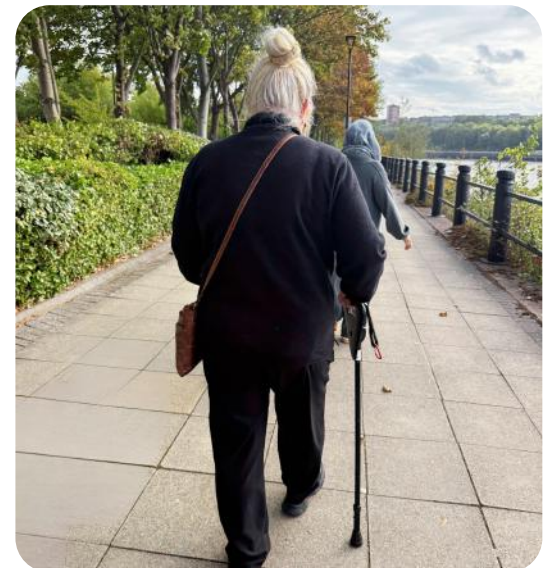
When Escape Pain ended, I moved on to Next Steps classes, which I still attend. There's no pressure, just support to keep improving at my own pace. I also joined Healthworks free weekly Health Walks. At first, I was slow, and embarrassed that I might hold everyone up. But the leaders stayed beside me, offering encouragement.

Week by week, I got faster and stronger. The walks weren't just exercise they were a chance to chat, laugh, and enjoy being outside. That companionship reduced my stress and lifted my mood.

As a result of the support Healthworks has given me, I can now:

- Walk around the house without a stick and climb stairs with ease
- Take on tasks I couldn't do before
- Go out for walks with confidence

I'm also more adventurous, more optimistic, and more like me again!



***“The time I spend here is important because it’s my time to improve my health
- and I’m doing it with people who understand.”***

From Smoker to Smoke-Free After 50 Years



Billy's Story

Billy, 67, lives in one of the most deprived areas in the country. A White British man who worked manual jobs all his life, he'd been smoking roll-ups since his teens, over 50 years. He was on more than 30 a day.

With asthma and long-term mental health issues, quitting felt like a mountain he couldn't climb. He'd tried before but never stuck with it.

By early 2024, his breathing was getting worse, and he knew something had to change. His GP referred him to the Community Tobacco programme. With support from a stop-smoking advisor, he set a quit date, 22 May, and started using nicotine patches and an inhalator to manage the cravings.

At his first appointment, his carbon monoxide (CO) reading was 14. Four weeks later, he'd quit completely, and his CO reading was down to 4. That early win gave him a boost, and he kept going.

At 12 weeks, Billy was still smoke-free. He said he felt clearer in the head, less anxious, and was coughing way less. By six months, he started to believe he'd really cracked it.

In 2025, Billy hit one full year without a cigarette. His breathing's better, his mood's steadier, and he finally feels proud of himself.

"I never thought I'd get this far. After 50 years, I was sure it was too late for me. But the support was spot on, they didn't judge me. They helped me take it one step at a time. I feel better than I have in years."

Post-Stroke Support: Regaining Mobility and Independence



Jackie's Story

At 79, this White British woman lived in one of Newcastle's most deprived areas (IMD 1) and had always been active. She loved her local exercise classes, moving, socialising, and keeping a routine.

But after a Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA), everything changed. Her confidence dropped overnight, and the idea of getting back to exercise felt overwhelming. It also took a toll on her mental wellbeing.

She was referred to Healthworks' 12-week Community Stroke Rehabilitation programme. At first, she wasn't sure what to expect; she just wanted to feel like herself again, get fitter, and rebuild confidence.

The programme combined stroke-specific exercise and education, focusing on fitness, balance, coordination, and everyday movement. With support from trained instructors in a safe, friendly setting, she began to feel stronger and more capable week by week.

She attended every session and made fantastic progress, improving strength, mobility, and stamina. Her WEMWBS wellbeing score rose from 55 to 64, and daily tasks like walking and shopping became easier.

By the end, she was enjoying group exercise again. She now attends weekly gym sessions and has joined a Next Steps class, something she'd set as a personal goal.

She says she loves the structure, the movement, and most of all - the company.

"The programme was a great way to get more active, which has helped me with daily activities like walking, shopping and housework. It really supported my recovery after stroke, and I've enjoyed the group and meeting new people. The staff have been so helpful, supportive and well organised, I'd definitely recommend the service."

Living Well with Multiple Long-Term Conditions



Jimmy's Story

When we met him, this 56-year-old man lived alone in a 4th-floor flat (no lift) in the most deprived part of Newcastle. He had multiple health conditions: Type 2 diabetes, COPD, high blood pressure, depression, and a BMI of 34. Isolated and struggling with day-to-day life, he'd stopped cooking, wasn't taking his diabetes meds, and had no support in place. He wanted help, and contacted us.

Over 12 weeks, we focused on building trust, setting small goals, and improving safety, health, and confidence. Arranging to meet him close to his home to reduce barriers to involvement.

Together, we worked on food changes, batch cooking, resistance exercises, hydration, and understanding diabetes. He was referred to the right services and started using a Libre sensor (glucose monitoring tool).

By the 3-month review,

- he'd lost 17kg, dropping from 113kg to 96kg.
- His physical activity improved from sedentary to moderately inactive, and his wellbeing score (VAS) jumped from 30% to 80%.
- His alcohol use dropped, from a score of 11 to 7 on AUDIT-C. Most importantly, he felt more in control.

As a result of our support, he's eating better, drinking less, understanding his health, and moving forward on his terms.

He showed up when things were hard. We met him there, and he's made real progress towards a healthier future.

"Before working with Healthworks, I wasn't coping. I was stuck in the flat, not eating properly, and scared to cook after burning myself. They helped me cut down on snacks, batch cook meals, and understand my diabetes better. I've lost weight, I'm drinking less, and I feel more in control now. It's made a real difference."



Congratulations to everyone involved in the outstanding work delivered through the close, productive partnership between Newcastle University and Healthworks, who this year celebrate their 30th anniversary. Our collaborative research - particularly in cancer, but also across a broad range of critical health issues - is both inspiring and impactful.

Healthworks' commitment to tackling health inequalities, combined with strong community ties and practical expertise, has significantly enhanced our research. Their insight helps ensure our findings lead to meaningful change, while also offering valuable opportunities for students through placements, experiential learning, and community engagement. This success reflects the strength of our collaboration and our shared commitment to discovery, education, and public good.

Professor Chris Day, Vice Chancellor and President Newcastle University



This milestone is a powerful testament to your commitment to tackling health inequalities and improving lives where it matters most.

For three decades, Healthworks has been at the forefront of community health, championing innovative, person-centred approaches that make a real difference. Your work in some of our most disadvantaged areas; supporting families, promoting wellbeing, and addressing the wider determinants of health, resonates deeply with our mission.



We are proud to work alongside organisations like Healthworks, who understand that health equity is not just a goal, but a responsibility. Here's to the remarkable impact you've had over the last 30 years - and to a future filled with continued progress, partnership, and meaningful change.

Hannah Davies, Executive Director - Health Equity North



Helping New Parents Through Breastfeeding Peer Support



Fatima's Story

In the inner west of Newcastle, a 31-year-old mum is making a real difference for other women going through pregnancy and breastfeeding. Of Bangladeshi heritage and living in one of the City's most deprived areas, she knows first hand the challenges that come with language and cultural barriers.

Having breastfed all three of her children for two years each, she was passionate about helping others navigate their own breastfeeding journeys.

In 2024, she joined Healthworks' Best Start Volunteer Training Programme. With support every step of the way, she completed 42 hours of training and passed her DBS check. Soon after, she started volunteering with local pregnant families.

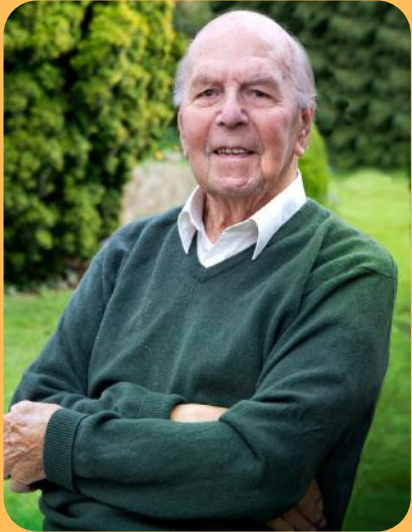
Since then, she has dedicated over 50 hours to supporting mums one-to-one, helping them understand their choices around infant feeding, especially when English isn't their first language. She also contributed to social media content to reach more women and played a big part in normalising breastfeeding within her community.

Along the way, she's built her confidence, developed new skills, and made valuable professional connections.

For Fatima, this isn't just volunteering, it's a stepping stone toward her dream of becoming a Maternity Support Worker and continuing to support mothers in meaningful ways

"Having experienced the journey of pregnancy and breastfeeding myself, I understand the challenges and joys that come with it. Volunteering with Healthworks, Best Start Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Services allows me to give back by offering support, encouragement, and guidance to other parents. It is a truly rewarding experience, and the staff have been so understanding, caring, and supportive throughout my journey."

Preparing for Hip Surgery with Waiting Well Support



Patrick's Story

At 72, Patrick was feeling stuck. Living with arthritis in his hip, most days were spent at home, watching TV, and moving as little as possible. He'd get out now and then to his local archery club, but even that was becoming harder.

His mobility was getting worse, his confidence had dipped, and he couldn't understand why his weight and blood sugar stayed high, he thought he was eating well. Then came a turning point: a referral to the Waiting Well programme ahead of his hip operation.

At first, he wasn't sure what to expect. With weekly support from Healthworks' staff, things started to shift. He got personalised advice on food and movement and began setting three small, realistic goals each week. He started checking his blood sugar daily, and gave the ESCAPE-pain online programme a go to build his strength and fitness safely at home with guidance from a qualified exercise leader.

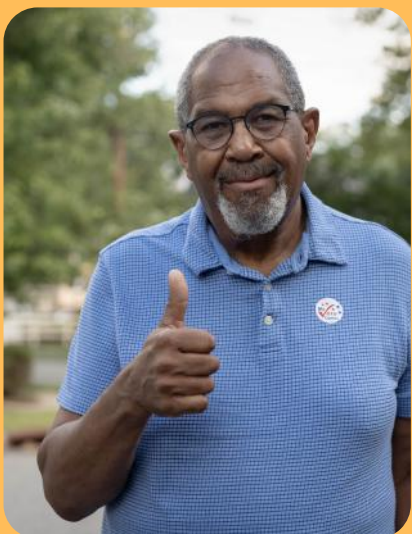
Week by week, Patrick began to feel different, stronger, and more in control. Over 12 weeks:

- He lost 6kg,
- dropped his HbA1c from 73 to 50,
- and more than doubled his steps from 3,000 to over 7,000 a day.
- He was eating better and feeling better.

What once felt overwhelming now felt manageable. With the right support, Patrick found his way forward.

"I didn't know a service like this existed but I'm so glad Waiting Well got in touch with me before my operation. If I hadn't taken part in the programme, I may not have been able to have my hip operation and be pain-free like I am now."

Regaining Independence After Surgery with Staying Steady



Reuben's Story

After cancer surgery in April 2022, a 73-year-old man from north Newcastle, found his life had changed overnight. Once an avid walker, covering 10 to 15 miles at a stretch, he was suddenly battling severe pain, weakness, and a loss of confidence after a fall.

Bursitis in his hip and a hairline pelvic fracture made things worse. Though he stuck with his physiotherapy, he often felt unsafe walking and uncertain about the future.

Referred to the Staying Steady programme by TIMS, he wasn't sure what to expect, but he soon recognised an opportunity to boost his physical health and wellbeing.

Over the weeks, walking grew easier, and his confidence returned. Movements that once felt impossible, like getting down to the floor and back up, became achievable. He reported feeling stronger, safer, and more independent.

The structured sessions gave him routine and motivation. He attended 23 out of 27 sessions, an 85% attendance rate. His progress was clear:

- His Timed Up and Go dropped from 21 to 14 seconds,
- His Sit to Stand reps doubled from 5 to 10.
- His fear of falling faded, no longer holding him back.

Now, with a walking frame, he's confidently covering 4 to 5 miles on flat ground and tackling daily tasks with ease. He plans to keep active by attending Healthworks' Keep Moving sessions and stay active at home.

"Staying Steady helped me notice real improvements in my mobility. I was surprised I could get down to the floor and back up, it made me feel safer. The course gave me confidence, and your support was excellent."

Fit For The Future: Supporting the NHS 10 Year Plan

The NHS “Fit for the Future” strategy sets out a bold 10-year vision to create a more sustainable healthcare system, one that is digitally enabled, rooted in communities, and focused on preventing illness rather than just treating it. Our work already reflects this direction of travel. We are committed to reshaping health and care in ways that are more proactive, accessible, and resilient, especially for those most at risk of poor health outcomes.

Shifting Care from Hospitals to Communities

Healthworks is helping move the centre of care closer to the neighbourhoods where people live, reducing dependence on hospitals. From breastfeeding peer support to local MSK rehabilitation, and virtual wellbeing sessions to in-community weight management, our services make it easier for people to get the help they need, early and locally. As we expand, we'll continue embedding support into everyday spaces, improving outcomes and building healthier, more connected communities.

Embracing Digital Transformation

We're investing in digital tools to increase access, choice, and engagement. Our online training platforms, virtual groups, self-guided resources, and digital communications are empowering individuals to take control of their health, wherever they are. These efforts directly align with the NHS vision of using digital innovation to enhance reach, reduce inequality, and modernise care delivery.

Putting Prevention First

Prevention is core to our model. We run targeted outreach and early intervention programmes that tackle smoking, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and mental health challenges, especially in communities facing the greatest health inequalities. By identifying risk early and acting upstream, we help reduce avoidable illness, ease pressure on NHS services, and support longer, healthier lives.

Healthworks is proud to be part of the movement to deliver care that is local, digital, and preventative. By aligning our plans with the NHS 10-Year Plan, we're not just responding to health needs; we're helping to reshape how and where care happens for the next generation.

Maximising Our Digital Impact

We've transformed the way we connect, support, and deliver services by embracing digital tools and innovation. From virtual classes to interactive resources, online communities to targeted campaigns, our digital approach is helping us reach more people, remove barriers, and improve health and wellbeing across our communities.



Service Delivery

- Free online **multimedia resource library**
- **Online exercise classes and workout videos** for our clients and the wider public
- **Fitbits and other digital technology** enhance the impact and effectiveness of our services
- **460 participants** in our online cancer training course



Social Media

- **14k+ social media followers** and growing year on year
- **217k unique people** reached with non paid content
- **3 million+** views / impressions of our organic content
- **200% reach increase** on Facebook, our main platform
- **330+ active members** in Breastfeeding Mams Newcastle online support community



Digital Reach

- **SMS and online messaging** increasingly used, e.g. **welcome SMS sent to all new mothers in Newcastle**
- **1,670 subscribers** receive The Works e-newsletter
- **55k new website** users this year
- **Information shared in accessible formats** across channels to extend our reach



Inclusion

- **Cross team Social Media Champions** plan and share content to promote key health messages widely online
- **High social media engagement** drives important health and wellbeing conversations
- **Diverse information formats** ensure inclusivity, accessibility, and wider reach



Insights

- **Year-round calendar** of targeted, multi-platform health and wellbeing campaigns
- Dedicated online client resource pages **accessed 4,500+ times**
- **Digital tools used** to re-engage clients, target outreach, gather feedback, and maintain connections



Progress

- **Paperless systems** reduce waste, improve information quality, and boost efficiency
- **All staff and volunteers** have access to e-learning, support, and professional development
- **Digital training, tools and resources** enhance staff and volunteer skills and improve service delivery

Driving Change: Our Commitment to Net Zero

How We Reduce Our Environmental Impact



Make sustainability a core consideration in every procurement decision



Continuously assess and minimise resource use through green practices



Embed green practices organisation-wide to reduce our impact on the environment



Promote greener travel initiatives to minimise travel impact



Drive “digital-first” communications to reduce paper use, waste and unnecessary travel



Plan all events and activities with a focus on sustainability



Save energy with LEDs, sensors, energy efficient appliances and smarter energy use



Empower staff with regular liE updates, training, and guidance to drive impact



Reduce waste by improving recycling facilities, signage, and staff and public awareness



In early 2025, Healthworks achieved the Investors in the Environment (liE) Silver Award, a major milestone in our sustainability journey.

Achieving the liE Silver Award shows our strong commitment to sustainability and the practical changes we’re making across Healthworks.

From better recycling to cutting paper use and encouraging greener travel, we're already seeing results. Now, we're aiming for the liE Gold Award, with our new Green Team of liE-qualified staff helping our team find and adopt practical ways to work more sustainably every day.

Our ongoing efforts have cut the organisation’s greenhouse gas emissions from 83 tCO₂e in 2023 to 69 tCO₂e in 2025.

Healthworks is making steady progress toward lasting environmental change, with practical steps in place to reach Net Zero by 2040

Developing A Diverse and Healthy Workplace

We are committed to building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve, and actively recruit, support and develop team members from all backgrounds.



80 total team members
equating to 63 Full Time
Equivalents



77% Female, 21% Male,
1% Non-Binary
99% identify as the same
gender assigned at birth



7% identified as LGBTQIA+
(including gay, lesbian, bisexual,
pansexual, queer, asexual, or who
self-described)



13% of our team
identified themselves
as ethnically diverse



47% reside in the lowest
30% IMD areas*
*English indices of
deprivation 2019



16% of our team considers
themselves to have a
disability or impairment



Better Health
at Work Award
Gold Award

This year, we achieved the Gold Award as part of the Better Health at Work programme, a recognition that reflects the scale of our efforts, and the depth of our commitment to the health and wellbeing of our staff team

“Throughout the three years that Healthworks has taken part in the Better Health at Work Award, the commitment to genuine staff involvement has stood out. There is a clear culture of openness, with staff confident in approaching senior management with ideas and feedback on wellbeing.

The shift in workplace culture is palpable; wellbeing isn't an add-on; it's part of the way Healthworks operates. Campaigns this year, particularly around financial health and mental health storytelling, have had a transformative impact. Staff aren't just participating; they're leading. This is an organisation that truly listens, evolves, and puts people first.”

Better Health at Work Assessor

Collaborative Working



Healthworks would like to thank these organisations and businesses for their ongoing support this year

Final Thoughts from our Chair



This year marks a very special anniversary for Healthworks because we are celebrating 30 years of tackling health inequalities.

From a pioneering Healthy Living Centre in 1995 to a multi service forward thinking organisation serving communities across the North East, we've never lost sight of our founding belief, that healthier living starts in communities, shaped by the environments people live and work in.

Healthworks continues to go from strength to strength, and central to that success are our people. As in previous years my greatest thanks go to the Board, Directors, staff and volunteers, led by our outstanding CEO Paul Court. This year, we were awarded the Better Health at Work Gold Award, which is further recognition of our commitment to wellbeing.

Over the past three decades, we've expanded, adapted, and deepened our impact. While much of the health system has faced cuts and growing demand, Healthworks has remained resilient, reaching those who need us most and helping people live longer, healthier lives.

Healthworks proves what is possible by being innovative and needs based. Our model shows that prevention works, that community-led care matters, and that partnership is key. As we look ahead, we remain committed to building healthier, fairer futures.

Joel Marks, Healthworks Chair



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