



involving people in health & wellbeing

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023



Student GP
Registration
Service

Chair's Letter



Welcome to our annual review 2023. You will find within it, lots of information about the high-quality work we have carried out to inform, improve and redesign health services, involving patients, carers and the public.

During this year, some of the work we have produced included:

- The Urgent Care Review
- A Community Outreach Bus
- Student GP Registration
- English for Health: Postnatal Care.
- Support for those with Autism and Learning Disabilities

This year we have been involved in work in the area of learning disabilities and autism, including finding out what peer research, education programmes and learning resources are available for adults and young people. We also helped inform the development of an autism hub and important physical health checks by GPs.

In conjunction with other partners, we gathered feedback on people's experiences of using Urgent Treatment Centres, to better understand how they can be improved to meet the needs of users. We recruited and facilitated a patient reference group in Newcastle. This group met to discuss priorities to inform the new urgent care services model.

Our English for Health: Postnatal Care project has been based on community intelligence. The focus for this piece of work was to support women who have English as an additional language to better understand and engage with post-natal care services and support in the UK. We developed online learning tools – animations and information that could be accessed as a stand-alone resource or delivered to groups either remotely or face-to-face.

Our Student GP Registration Service aims to support students to easily access primary care, whilst reducing the numbers attending A&E for non-urgent treatments. This project has been running for a number of years and is a collaboration between Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, INE and GP practices

in Newcastle and Gateshead. INE has created and delivered a GP Registration Service for students new to Newcastle for Newcastle and Northumbria Universities. We have produced a bespoke platform online to support this service and we've now registered 50,000 students in the last ten years!

We supported the development of an outreach bus, providing supervision and experience for pharmacy students, and creating additional capacity for General Practices in Newcastle. We carried out and analysed a survey, which explored patient needs and helped decide which areas the bus should visit and we promoted it widely through our social media and networks.

None of what we do would be possible without our fantastic team of staff. As we are an independent, not-for-profit organisation, our robust work is highly valued, in order to inform the development of improved services. Much of our success is down to the expertise and dedication of our staff and we respect and value their work and are hugely grateful for their support. In turn, our team works closely with our partners – linking with professionals and organisations across a range of sectors and disciplines, covering a wide demographic.

Our trustees bring a wealth of experience and skills, to help guide our organisation and we thank them for the time and knowledge they share, to help make our organisation all that it is. As a board we will continue to take time over this next year, to think carefully about what our organisation needs, in order to respond to a changing healthcare environment. And all of us at INE look forward to producing more of our high-quality, independent work, which ensures that the voices of the people of the North East influence the development of robust health services during 2024.

Very best wishes,

Lynda Cox
Chair

Chief Executive's Letter



Given that I'm now in my sixth year with the organisation, it might come as a surprise when I say that the last twelve months have been amongst the most challenging I've faced since starting with the organisation in 2018. There isn't one reason I can single out but the point of mentioning it is to say that challenging times are when we really get to know ourselves and our teammates. I'm not going to sugarcoat it, 2023 was a crucible and I wouldn't want to repeat it but I would like to highlight what we learned from it and where we are now.

When the pressure was on, we had each other's backs. We pulled together and we dug in. Help was asked for when it was needed and slack was given when required. We created some of our best work, hit some really tough targets and managed to raise our game to the next level across the board. If you haven't already done so, please check out the reports and resources on our website, and if you don't have time, read on, there's a summary of that work in the following pages.

It's clear from what we achieved that there's no one like Involve North East; no one with the skill and depth, the community contacts and portfolio of grassroots research within fifty miles of us. If that sounds like pride then let me be clear; it is. I am proud of us and every one of our team and Board for the wonderful work we do.

Of course, pride carries a risk, doesn't it? When you've done so much, the real trick is, can you sustain it? I believe we can and the start of 2024 has already shown that we have some great pieces of work under development. We'll be looking further afield, taking our research beyond Tyne & Wear, and once again engaging with under represented groups as we seek to bring their voices to the table and ensure they are heard, loud and clear.

INE was founded out of a passion for ensuring healthcare equity across our region. What does

that mean in 2024? Can we use new and emerging technologies to level up the communities that make up the rich tapestry of the North East? That's one question we'll be seeking to answer. Another is, where should we focus our health literacy programme next? Perhaps you have some thoughts on that. If you do or you'd like to know more about our work why not get in touch or link up with us on social media.

Our work is all about giving voice to people and wherever you live, whatever your background, age, gender, occupation or belief, you deserve to be heard, equally alongside everyone else. We're here to make sure that happens and we can only do it with your help. Health matters, for some it's the most important thing, so if we want to have a healthcare system that serves all of us, and does so well, then let's use our voices to speak up and say so.

Involve North East is beginning 2024 ready to face whatever challenges lie ahead, so maybe it's true; perhaps smooth seas never did make a skilled sailor. As long as we learn from the past, let's not dwell on it but instead look to the future and build that together.

Best wishes,

AJ White
Chief Executive



It's clear from what we achieved that there's no one like Involve North East; no one with the skill and depth, the community contacts and portfolio of grassroots research within fifty miles of us.



Our ethos is, we should never assume we know.

Who We Are

We are passionate about patient and public involvement in healthcare. As the British Medical Journal reported: 'Patients are experts in what it's like to experience NHS care, to live with specific conditions, or to care for loved ones experiencing ill health.' Our ethos is, we should never assume we know. INE is built on the foundation of valuing that patient expertise and putting it at the heart of our research. For healthcare to be truly effective, decision makers must have access to accurate and up-to-date information from the communities they are seeking to benefit.

Trustees

Involve North East is guided by an experienced and highly skilled Board. Their expertise includes communications and business leadership, HR, health and social care research, community development and knowledge management. We are very grateful for the time and effort they put in to guiding us and helping us achieve excellence.

Trustees



Lynda Cox,
Chair



Neina Sheldon
Trustee



Niamh Store
Trustee



Stephen Telford
Trustee



Jen Harrison
Trustee



Dr Andrea Fairley
Trustee



Jen Johnson
Trustee

The Team



AJ White
Chief Executive



Leah Lamb
Research and
Communications
Co-ordinator



Jen Rogers
Involvement &
Engagement
Co-ordinator



Corinna
Macfarlane
Involvement &
Engagement
Officer



Rose Matthews
Involvement &
Engagement
Officer

Team changes

In spring 2023 we were sad to say goodbye to Lauren Chaffey who moved on to take up a role with Northumberland County Council, helping families on her home patch. Replacing Lauren was not easy but I'm delighted to say we aced it with the appointment of two part time project officers, Corinna Macfarlane and Rose Matthews. With skills ranging from academic healthcare research to social work, our team has benefitted from the breadth of experience they have brought.

In November, Rose went back to working freelance but I'm sure we haven't seen the last of her cheery smile and happy disposition. We're delighted Corinna is still working with us, bringing insight and expertise to her role.

Our Projects

Newcastle Urgent Care Review

The North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board (ICB) is responsible for ensuring that high-quality and safe health services are accessible to all our communities. As part of their commitment to putting patients at the heart of their services, a review was commissioned of urgent care services across Newcastle looking at data analysis, workforce, contracts, finance, and patient, carer and public experience.

For the purposes of the review, urgent care was defined as: “When you suddenly become unwell and need to see a health professional the same day, but it is not an emergency or immediately life-threatening.”

In conjunction with The Health and Racial Equalities Forum (HAREF), we were asked to gather feedback on people’s experiences of accessing urgent care, including Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs). The aim was to better understand how they can be improved to meet the needs of users within the resources available.

A listening exercise began at the end of January 2023 which included online and on-street surveys with the public, drop-ins at UTCs, focus groups, public consultation events, a staff survey and sense-checking exercise. We were responsible for analysing the feedback from over 1,200 members of the public and almost sixty staff. The final report we produced was comprehensive and one of the most detailed pieces of work we have ever produced.

Although there isn’t space here to summarise more than a fraction of the findings, we can pick out a few themes. In general, the public and even some staff felt they would benefit from clear, jargon-free information about exactly what urgent care includes and what it does not. This would help people to know which service is right for them, reducing the need to be redirected.

The majority of participants who had used urgent care services had done so for illness rather than injury. Ease of access was an important factor for many in terms of location, parking and proximity to public transport.

Most patients attended urgent care after being referred by a healthcare professional, but a minority had turned up as a first resort. The certainty of being seen by someone that day was an incentive for some. Others lacked confidence in getting timely help through other means or were concerned their condition might deteriorate and were unwilling to wait.

Overall, there was strong evidence of positive experiences of urgent care services in Newcastle from both respondents and staff although around half of participants did identify areas where improvements could be made. Top of their list was waiting times, but many did qualify that by saying they understood that healthcare systems across the NHS have been under pressure for some time.

Following on from the Newcastle Urgent Care Review, we have been working with a Patient Reference Group in Newcastle. This group has been meeting to discuss priorities for the new urgent care services model.



A community health bus for Newcastle

Moving healthcare services closer to home has been a focus of the NHS for over a decade now. It is well known that patients benefit from services that are more accessible to them – they're easier and cheaper to get to and in familiar locations.



With this in mind, Newcastle GP Services (NGPS) and Newcastle University's School of Pharmacy came together to develop a community health bus offering drop-in access in a range of community locations across the city. People can have a health check including blood pressure and cholesterol monitoring, and get healthcare advice on stopping smoking, reducing alcohol consumption and diabetes management.

To help inform the scope of the service ahead of its November 2023 launch, we gathered the views of local residents - what did people want from the service, where should it be located and were there any barriers to accessing it?

What did we find?

In support of a community health bus

There was good support for the community bus concept. Most people told us they would use it and appreciated the flexibility of a drop-in service and something very local to them.

Healthcare on the bus will be delivered by Newcastle University pharmacy students, under the supervision of a nurse; most people supported this way of working as it gave students an opportunity for 'hands-on' patient experience, complementing their theoretical learning. They felt confident in the service knowing that students were being supervised.

"I suffer with agoraphobia and can't always get to GP so this would be helpful if it was close to me."

"Problems obtaining appointments at local doctors so this may be an alternative."

What should the service look like?

Most people said that they would use the service for general health assessments and over half would like to access health promotion information and signposting to other health services.

Other potential future services were considered with interest in adult vaccinations, NHS health checks and ECGs in particular. Respondents suggested that the bus could also offer mental health support.

There was support for a range of locations but particularly Outer West Library in West Denton, Old Eldon Square and Morrisons in Byker. The majority of respondents would be happy to use the service across weekdays and at the weekend during the day.

Barriers and concerns

Why might people not use the service? Some thought that it was a duplication of services available at their GP practice or that it was being used to plug gaps in GP services, offering a watered-down service.

Some thought that the bus might not offer the same professional standards as other NHS services and worried that there may be a lack of dignity in accessing a bus.

To make it easier to use, respondents suggested that it should be available across a wide range of areas, be well publicised, and be accessible to disabled people and those who have English as an additional language.

"Bring it as close as possible to where people live/where they go to already."

"Be accessible as much as possible for people with disabilities and people whose first language is not English."

What happened next?

Having listened to the community and taken our recommendations on board, we're delighted to say the bus is up and running, providing an invaluable service to people in their local area.

One more thing

Bringing services closer to home is also the theme of our current work with Newcastle University where we're exploring with food bank users what additional services they would like to be able to access on site, to ensure that those who need them most have easy access to healthcare services such as dental care and low-level mental health support.



Student GP Registration

50,000 and counting!

Every year Newcastle and Gateshead receive an influx of new students from the UK, Europe and a host of countries further afield. Thousands of people of all ages have the chance to not only experience a first-class education but all the delights of our fantastic little part of the world.



For those new to the UK, there's a lot to learn, not least how our public healthcare system, the NHS, works. It may seem second nature to us that our local GP is the gateway and guardian to a host of other healthcare services but it's not like that everywhere.

In the past, baffled students have turned up at Accident and Emergency for relatively minor ailments because they didn't know where else to go. Not only was this lack of knowledge putting their health at risk, it also put pressure on frontline emergency services.

What was needed was a service whereby students new to the area could be given all of the information they need on how the UK healthcare system works and then helped to register with a local GP of their choice.

Thus was born the Student GP Registration Service which we proudly set up and operate.

For many years this worked as an on site service during Freshers' Week at Newcastle and Northumbria Universities. When the world went into lockdown in 2020 that clearly wasn't an option. We had to come up with an alternative, and fast. With the help of a web design consultancy, we developed the online Student GP Registration platform, and guess what, our numbers actually went up.

In the post-Covid era the Student GP Reg website is still going strong and has been further developed. We also run a number of on site events at both universities to promote the service and so far in the 2023-24 academic year, we've registered 6,500 students with a GP of their choice. That sounds like a fantastic contribution to healthcare in the North East but we can beat it - over that last ten years we've registered over 50,000 students!

To back up this amazing service we have developed our health literacy animations: English for Health, which take people through every step of how the NHS works and how to get the best out of your GP Practice and other healthcare services. All of the animations and accompanying workbooks are available on our website and the videos are on YouTube. On which subject, the next project we'd like to showcase is...



English for Health Postnatal Care

As a dispersal area for refugees and migrants, the west end of Newcastle enjoys a rich diversity of cultures. In the streets surrounding our office in the Carnegie Building there are over a dozen languages spoken by people who call this city their home.

We all know life can be complicated but those who have English as an additional language face significant barriers and challenges when it comes to areas such as healthcare. It's one thing to get by in English but quite another to understand it well enough to speak about your health or understand the advice given by a medical professional.

Our National Health Service is unique and special but it can also be confusing for those new to the UK. Our research showed that for expectant mothers, pre-natal care is well understood and even if they struggle, specialist language support is available from the NHS. But many countries don't have postnatal services and in the UK there is no language support from the NHS to help women in the community to understand and access it effectively. We were alarmed at hearing cases where new mums wouldn't open the door to a health visitor because they thought it was the social services turning up to take their baby away.

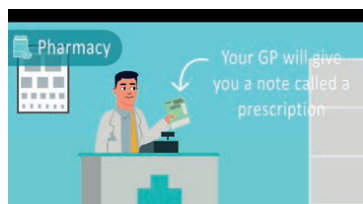
In response to this issue, we set about designing an extension to our successful health literacy series, English for Health. We were delighted when local funder, the LGA Foundation, provided a grant to support the project. Thanks to their help, we set about designing an accessible programme to support mums-to-be and new mums who have English as an additional language to understand the postnatal help that's available to them and their baby. These resources took the form of two animated

teaching videos with accompanying information packs. Specialist support from an ESOL (English as a second or other language) professional ensured the language used was pitched at the right level. As it's the largest local minority we even produced a version with Romanian subtitles and workbooks.

Our aim was that the resources could be used in several ways. Firstly we contacted local organisations who support women to arrange workshops where we could meet and talk to people face-to-face with the videos as a teaching aid. Secondly, for groups that meet via the internet, we could join in through Zoom and teach the sessions that way. Lastly, these resources are available online on our website and will be shared by our charity and healthcare sector partners as a lasting, stand-alone resource that people can access any time.

Our previous English for Health project was full of general information on what the NHS is, how to get the best out of your local GP Practice and the full range of services available. They can be found on our website here:
www.involvene.org.uk/english-for-health

These videos have received over 1400 views and continue to attract an audience. English for Health: Postnatal Care has already attracted hundreds of views and continues to fill a much-needed information gap for women in our region and further afield.



Partnerships

A cornerstone of our success lies in our partnerships. Without the collaboration and support of our partners, our work would be considerably more challenging, if not impossible. We particularly rely on our VCSE partner organisations, who trust us to work with integrity, gathering valuable insights from those they support to influence the design of services they receive.

A special mention must be given to the outstanding work of infrastructure organisations such as VODA, Connected Voice and VONNE here in the North East. Their work is often behind the scenes in bringing networks together and connecting local voluntary organisations. We consider them the unsung heroes of the sector, and they are certainly invaluable to the success of our partnership work. This year we were particularly thrilled to work with VONNE, one example being the Research Engagement Network Programme (REND) which encourages young people, their families, and communities to participate in mental health research.

In the charitable sector, it's not always a breeze, especially when there's competition for funding. However, what we've noticed is that the organisations that thrive the most are those that are open, collaborative, and deeply involved in their communities. At INE, we embrace this philosophy in various ways.

We highly value teamwork and lending a hand to others. Our staff members are encouraged to volunteer, fostering a culture of giving back. Situated in the vibrant Carnegie Building in Benwell, Newcastle, we're right at the heart of community activities. This location allows us to regularly engage with our neighbours and participate in this hub of voluntary and community sector activity.

Our extensive network of partners in both the public and voluntary sectors helps us gather valuable insights directly from the people we serve. But for us, it's not just about transactions; it's about building genuine relationships. Feedback from the community about healthcare services is incredibly valuable. It drives tangible improvements, and our partners acknowledge our role in making that happen. We're immensely thankful for their support, and we want to make it clear—both in person and here—that we truly appreciate their partnership.

By connecting with you, we have the privilege of collaborating with an exceptional and inspiring group of individuals. Thank you for helping bring the views of seldom-heard groups to the table and making sure their needs and circumstances are recognised and valued.

Our Partners



GP practices



"Involve North East has supported us to reach people across Newcastle and Gateshead, ensuring that our work is representative of local people and that seldom heard communities are able to have a voice."

**Jake Graham, Involvement and Engagement Lead,
North East & North Cumbria
Integrated Care Board**



"We had an open discussion in a comfortable and pleasant environment. Hopefully the outcome will be helpful for others."

Member of public

Plans for the future

In our rapidly changing world, it's important to make sure plans are robust, yet flexible. The aim of Involve North East remains the same: to promote the health of the people of the North East, but how we do that has to evolve with the times.

Over the last few years, we've developed an impressive portfolio of digital tools, not least our Student GP registration website and English for Health resources. The NHS is moving in this direction as well, making use of emerging technologies to give patients greater choice and autonomy.

Love it or not, online and digital are here to stay and none of us can afford to get left behind as new advances open up fresh possibilities. We'll be exploring how we can capitalise on that to meet the needs of local people and to make sure their voices don't get lost amongst the move to shift more and more services online.

Speaking of digital, you'll have seen we've embraced our new branding and upped our game in digital content. As the digital landscape constantly evolves, so do we. We're committed to learning and adapting, experimenting with new trends and following best practices. By trying new things and refining our digital approach, we aim to amplify our reach and engagement.

By tapping into diverse networks, we can ensure that our message resonates with a broader audience, providing opportunities for meaningful dialogue, education, and collaboration.

In addition to our continuous work with North East communities, we have close ties with a number of organisations in the healthcare and VCSE sectors. Networking with our partners and others in the sector helps us keep abreast of current trends and projects that might be on the planning table.

Above all, we want to stay responsive to the public's needs. I think the last few years have taught all of us that we don't know what's around the corner. One thing we do know is that we won't be taking our eye off the ball for a second as we continue to develop our plans for 2024 and beyond.

“As the digital landscape constantly evolves, so do we.”

“Above all, we want to stay responsive to the public's needs.”

“Love it or not, online and digital are here to stay...”

Loading ideas...



“In any other industry, not understanding your users would lead to bankruptcy.”

Dr Al Mulley, International Visiting Fellow, King's Fund



Financial Summary

Summary of our income and expenditure for year ending 31st March 2023.

Income and Expenditure

| | 2023 £ | 2022 £ |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Income | | |
| Charitable Activities | | |
| Grants and contracts | 193,701 | 180,066 |
| Investments | 665 | 46 |
| Total Income | 194,336 | 180,112 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Charitable activities | | |
| Operation of the charity | 176,703 | 145,624 |
| Defined benefit pension liability | - | - |
| Total Expenditure | 176,703 | 145,624 |
| Net income/(expenditure) and net movement of funds | 17,663 | 34,488 |

Balance Sheet

| | 2023 £ | 2022 £ |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fixed Assets | | |
| Tangible assets | 69 | 940 |
| Current Assets | | |
| Debtors | 3,745 | 2,055 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | 231,862 | 178,811 |
| Total current assets | 235,607 | 180,866 |
| Creditors: | | |
| Amounts falling due within one year | (44,721) | (8,513) |
| Total net assets | 190,955 | 173,292 |
| Total funds | 190,955 | 173,292 |





involving people in health & wellbeing

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