



### Are you participating in Dry January this year?

Cutting back on the booze can be a really effective way to improve your health, boost your energy, lose weight and save money.

If you drink nearly every day, drinking less might lower your risk of having high blood pressure. With the right help, it's easier than you think.

**Short-term benefits:** feeling better in the mornings, being less tired and more energetic, better-looking skin, saving some money.

**Long-term benefits:** lower blood pressure, lower risk of stroke hypertension cancer and liver disease, lower cholesterol levels, better mood memory and quality of sleep, help with weight management.

**Get medical advice before you stop drinking if you have physical withdrawal symptoms** (like shaking, sweating or feeling anxious until you have your first drink of the day). It can be dangerous to stop drinking too quickly without proper help.

### Download the NHS Drink Free Days app

- update and track your drink-free days
- get simple and practical tips to help you control your drinking
- receive reminders when you need it most
- celebrate milestones when you reach targets



Call Drinkline on **0300 123 1110** for free, confidential help for anyone who is concerned about their own or someone else's drinking.

*Dunelm Medical Practice – Across the city of Durham—Bearpark—Gilesgate—Framwellgate*

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**Dunelm Medical Practice**



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## Dunelm Medical Practice Newsletter January 2026



If your GP refers you to a specialist, you usually have the right to choose which hospital you go to.

You can choose a hospital in your area – or one further away if you wish. You may also choose an independent hospital, if it provides services for the NHS. You have the right to choose your hospital, but if you prefer, you can ask your GP to help you decide

## The benefits of choice

Choosing where to go for your care helps you make health and care decisions based on things important to you. These might include:

- Waiting times – you might choose a hospital outside your area if they can see you sooner.
- Convenience – you might choose a hospital near where you live or work, if it makes it easier to attend appointments.
- Near family or friends – you might choose a hospital close to family and friends, so they can support you during your treatment and recovery.
- Recommendations – you might choose a hospital based on quality ratings, reviews, personal experience or recommendations

## How Patient Choice works

**Step 1:** You have a health concern and visit your GP, who advises you see a specialist. Your GP looks up services suitable for you and your condition.

**Step 2:** Your GP practice will help you make a shortlist of suitable providers, based on your condition and what is important to you. You can be referred straight away by your GP practice, if you already know where you want to go.

Choosing  
your  
hospital

Patient  
Choice

If you want more time to decide, your GP practice will give you a letter, or send you an email or text including a link to a website, where you can choose and confirm later

**Step 3:** If you have a link from your GP practice, you can make your choice online, or you can choose using the NHS App, or you can phone the National Referral Helpline on 0345 608 8888.

**Step 4:** If an appointment with your chosen hospital is not available online, your chosen hospital will contact you directly with an appointment date and time when one becomes available. When choosing your hospital, it is important to remember you may need to attend several appointments.

## Where to go for more information

To learn more about Patient Choice, use the QR code or visit: [www.nhs.uk/patientchoice](http://www.nhs.uk/patientchoice).

You can compare hospitals across England by waiting times and Care Quality Commission ratings at [www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk](http://www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk) The website includes information about NHS providers and independent sector health organisations which provide NHS services.

If you do not have access to the internet, you can call the National Referral Helpline for help with choosing and confirming your hospital on 0345 608 8888.



Beamish  
Men's  
Group

Beamish Men's Cree is based in the 1950s area of Beamish Museum. It is a small weekly group session for men aged over 55 to support mental health and wellbeing. These sessions are dementia friendly and tend to be run in the well-equipped workshop, garden and allotment at the back of the cottage, which is a lovely, relaxing space. Some of the men also enjoy cooking or baking in the kitchen too.

They work to combat social isolation and form peer support groups, creating lasting friendships and support networks. The staff and volunteers support the participants in building confidence and independence, and aim for the men to take ownership of their projects, creating a sense of purpose and achievement.

The groups work on many projects, and often use traditional heritage skills, inspired by the museum's collections. Recent examples include creating wooden planters and carving images onto wood, which are then printed on bags to sell in the Beamish shop to help buy materials for the group.

There is also an allotment which the participants enjoy planting in, and joining the Horticultural Show at Beamish, winning rosettes for some very impressive leeks!

If you would like to find out more information about the group please contact the Health and Wellbeing team on 01913704016 or email [healthandwellbeing@beamish.org.uk](mailto:healthandwellbeing@beamish.org.uk)