

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26



0115 962 9310



www.carersfederation.co.uk



21-23 Pelham Road, Sherwood Rise,
Nottingham, NG5 1AP



CONTENTS

Introduction	1 – 3
Caregivers Connected Gateshead	4 – 6
Carers Hub Nottingham	7 – 9
Independent Complaints Advocacy	10 – 11
Training	12 – 13
Quality Standard in Carer Support	14 – 16
The new Carers Federation Website	17
Key Contacts	18

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Carers Federation's Annual Report for 2025/26. This report reflects a year of continued commitment, partnership and progress across our organisation. Throughout the year, we have remained focused on meeting the needs of unpaid carers and the wider communities we support, delivering services with compassion, professionalism and a strong emphasis on quality.

This year has once again highlighted the importance of flexible, person-centred support and the value of strong collaboration with carers, colleagues, commissioners and partner organisations. We remain sincerely grateful to our staff, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders for their continued dedication, and to the people who use our services for the confidence they place in us. Together, we continue to strengthen Carers Federation's role as a trusted provider of carer support, advocacy and training.

Our Vision:

Everyone we support receives care, guidance or training that is tailored to their individual circumstances and needs.

Our Mission:

To be recognised as a centre of excellence in the provision of care, support and training across the UK.

Our Core Values:

Friendliness – We are committed to creating a welcoming environment in which every individual is treated with warmth, respect and personal consideration.

Fairness – We are committed to equality, respect and listening carefully to the needs of others, ensuring that these principles remain central to our work.

Diversity – We value diversity and are committed to ensuring that discrimination has no place in our organisation or in the services we provide.

Integrity – We act with accountability and transparency, sharing our outcomes, learning and experiences openly with the people and partners we support.

Collaboration – We actively develop partnerships and collaborative approaches that help us deliver greater impact and advance our organisational vision.

Continuous Improvement – We are committed to innovation, learning and ongoing development in order to strengthen our services and maintain high standards.

Co-production – We design and deliver services in partnership with carers, ensuring that the voices, experiences and needs of service users remain at the centre of our work.

INTRODUCTION

Summary of the year

Guided by these values, 2025/26 has been another productive and purposeful year for Carers Federation. We have continued to build on progress made in previous years by strengthening existing services, responding to local need and maintaining our commitment to delivering high-quality support across the communities we serve.

Our carer support services have continued to evolve throughout the year, with teams working diligently to extend our reach, increase engagement and ensure that carers of all ages can access timely, appropriate and meaningful support.

We have also continued to promote understanding of carers and the importance of carer-friendly practice through the ongoing delivery of our Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS), supporting organisations to strengthen awareness and improve their offer to carers in both education and workplace settings.

Our training team has remained focused on developing and delivering learning opportunities for both internal and external learners, alongside the continued delivery of our established City and Guilds Independent Advocacy qualification.

Our advocacy services have continued to provide high-quality support across the areas we serve, with teams demonstrating professionalism, expertise and a strong commitment to ensuring that people are heard and supported through often complex processes.

As in any year of change and development, there have also been challenges. We have responded thoughtfully to changes in funding, service delivery and external demand, while remaining focused on sustaining high standards and protecting the long-term future of the organisation.

The future

Looking ahead, we remain firmly focused on our long-term strategic priorities, including sustainability, income generation and service development. We recognise the importance of planning responsibly for the future and we are committed to ensuring that Carers Federation remains resilient, ambitious and well placed to meet the changing needs of carers and communities in the years ahead.

We remain clear in our ambition: to secure a strong and sustainable future for Carers Federation while continuing to champion, support and stand alongside the communities that rely on our services.



Trish Cargill, Chair of the Board of Trustees

INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgments

We extend our sincere thanks to our Board of Trustees for their continued leadership, support and commitment to Carers Federation.

We also wish to recognise the dedication, knowledge, flexibility and professionalism of our staff and volunteers, whose commitment and hard work continue to make a significant contribution to the success of the organisation.

We would also like to thank our Senior Leadership team for their continued support, vision and dedication in driving Carers Federation forward.

As always, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our Chief Executive Officer, Jayne Bell, who continues to lead the Carers Federation team with unwavering commitment and dedication to ensure the best possible quality and outcomes for service users, staff and stakeholders.

Finally, we thank our funders, partners and supporters for enabling us to continue delivering our services.

We hope you find the remainder of this report informative and insightful as it sets out our services and achievements in more detail.



CAREGIVERS CONNECTED GATESHEAD



Caregivers Connected started operating in September 2024. Our contract objective is to deliver support to Caregivers to get the right help, in the right place, at the right time, through the jointly commissioned service between Gateshead Council and the North East Integrated Care Board (ICB). We support unpaid adult caregivers, young adult carers and young carers in Gateshead.

We aim to:

- Raise awareness of the role of Caregivers and improve identification
- Keep Caregivers informed
- Ensure Caregivers feel valued in Gateshead
- Support Caregivers to look after their health and wellbeing

Since the service was launched, we have developed, and continue to further develop, a vibrant and accessible service with the support of our caregivers and in line with Gateshead's Carers Strategy.

Engagement and Involvement of Carers*

812

Referrals made to Caregivers Connected Gateshead

404

Adult Caregivers Statutory Assessments completed

141

Young Carers Needs Assessments completed

106

Carer groups have taken place

175

Caregivers have attended groups

927

Carers and professionals receive our newsletter

£758,219+

Benefits achieved

2453

1-2-1 support (instances)

*during the reporting period

CAREGIVERS CONNECTED GATESHEAD



This year we have completed almost triple the number of Young Carers Needs Assessments than the previous year; **141** this year, compared to **58** in 2024-5. We have also delivered double the number of Carers groups; **106**, compared to **57** in 2024-5. The number of carers and professionals receiving our newsletter has more than doubled; **927**, compared to **451** in 2024-5. We have also delivered over triple the amount of 1-to-1 support we have had with caregivers; **2453 instances**, compared to **754** in 2024-5.

Partnership Working

During the reporting period we have worked with the following

- Age UK, Gateshead
- Adult Social Care
- Children's Social Care
- Safeguarding Boards
- North East Counselling Service
- Citizens Advice Gateshead
- Learning Disabilities team
- Locality teams
- Jewish Community Council
- Skills to Work
- Edbert's House Social Prescribing
- Connected Voice
- Meldrum Group
- Metrocentre Hub
- Pathways to Blossom
- The Little Company of Calm



CAREGIVERS CONNECTED GATESHEAD



Carers Wellbeing Fund

As part of our offer of support, we supply the Carer Wellbeing Fund – a grant for caregivers to enhance and support their lives outside of their caring role, relieving stress and improving wellbeing.

This year we have assessed **70** Young Carer applications and granted **66**. We have also assessed **142** Adult Caregiver applications and granted **131**. The total value awarded to caregivers was **£39,815.06**

Caregivers have used the Fund to purchase a variety of items including, spa days, mobile phones, theatre trips, musical instruments, and items to create a calming space at home.

Volunteering Service

Since December 2024, we have started to recruit volunteers to support us with our own activities, administration and digital support as well as recruiting volunteers for the new befriending service. This year we had **64 adults** interested in volunteering with us.

Quotes from Carers

“You have all been lovely, I was at my wit's end, and everyone has been so kind and helpful and got me out of a dark spot in my life. 5-star service, 10 stars if you have them!”
- Adult Caregiver (Face-to-face Support, Groups and Activities)

“I have found the service helpful and less daunting than I thought. I have also discussed the service with other carers I know and let them know how good the service has been.”
- Adult Caregiver (Telephone Support, General Information)

“I have been able to do loads of things that I would not have had the opportunity to try.”
- Young Carer (Groups and Activities)

CARERS HUB SERVICE



We are delighted to be able to update you on the work the Carers Hub Service has been doing to support adult unpaid carers in Nottingham City and County throughout April 2025- March 2026. We are now in the third year of our contract, which is funded by Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and the Integrated Care Board.

We are proud that the Carers Hub is growing from strength to strength and delivering quality support services to unpaid carers.

We provide a variety of activities to raise awareness and to offer information, advice and guidance to support carers in their caring role and we host many events throughout the year for carers to take a break and to look after their own health and wellbeing.

“

I have loved attending the online evening carer support group, every month I get to have 2 hours that's for me. I can chat about anything and the others in the group always listen and offer support and advice"



CARERS HUB SERVICE



Service Delivery

In 2025/26, the Carers Hub Service received **1,875** referrals for new carers to access our support. We completed **1,600** assessments and connected **300** carers to partner services to assist them in their caring roles.

Our Carers Hub newsletter was distributed to over **3,500** carers and professionals each month, promoting events, signposting to vital services, and providing key information. During the reporting period, we also created **346** carer ID cards and **71** contingency plans to help carers prepare for emergency situations—providing peace of mind that, should something happen to them, the person they care for will continue to receive support.

We worked in partnership with local hospitals to improve carer identification and develop resources to raise overall carer awareness. Additionally, we supplied carers with formal letters for their GP practices, enabling them to register officially as carers and access dedicated medical support.

Recognising the importance of taking time out, Carers Hub supported carers to take essential breaks from their roles, referring almost **800** carers to respite services in 2025/26.

To provide regular opportunities for carers to connect and access advice, Carers Hub holds monthly support groups both face-to-face and online. Over the course of 2025/26, we held **160** group sessions with a total of **1,076** attendances.



CARERS HUB SERVICE



Events throughout the year

In June 2025 we held Carers Week events with over 80 carers attending and enjoying various workshops, meals out and other activities.

"Could you pass on my thanks to everyone who was involved in the activity day. It was a wonderful day. Thanks again to everyone"

In October 2025 we held a Parent Carer event with 62 carers attending, providing information stands from a number of partner organisations and a chance for parent carers to connect.

In 2025 Carers Hub Service launched a new programme providing information and advice sessions on a range of health conditions and wellbeing topics to support carers in their caring role and to help carers manage their own health and wellbeing. We also provided 138 carers with a gym membership through the year

"Thank you so much for passing on the free gym membership for carers. I have really enjoyed and benefitted from attending various classes - meeting new people and giving a boost to my well-being."

Through the winter months we provided 6 Warm Hub events with 160 carers receiving warm hub packs

"I just wanted to say a big thank you to whoever put the warm packs together. It had been a difficult week and to receive a nice cosy pink blanket and lots of warm goodies was heartwarming"

Carers Hub service has hosted a range of listening events for carers to feedback their experiences on a range of topics including hospital services and home care services. We also developed a satisfaction survey for carers to share their views and shape future services in the Carers Hub

"I found the meeting very interesting. So important to hear other people's experiences too. One of the difficulties of caring full-time, is that we can end up isolated in a cocoon of day-to-day coping"

NORTH EAST NHS INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS ADVOCACY SERVICE



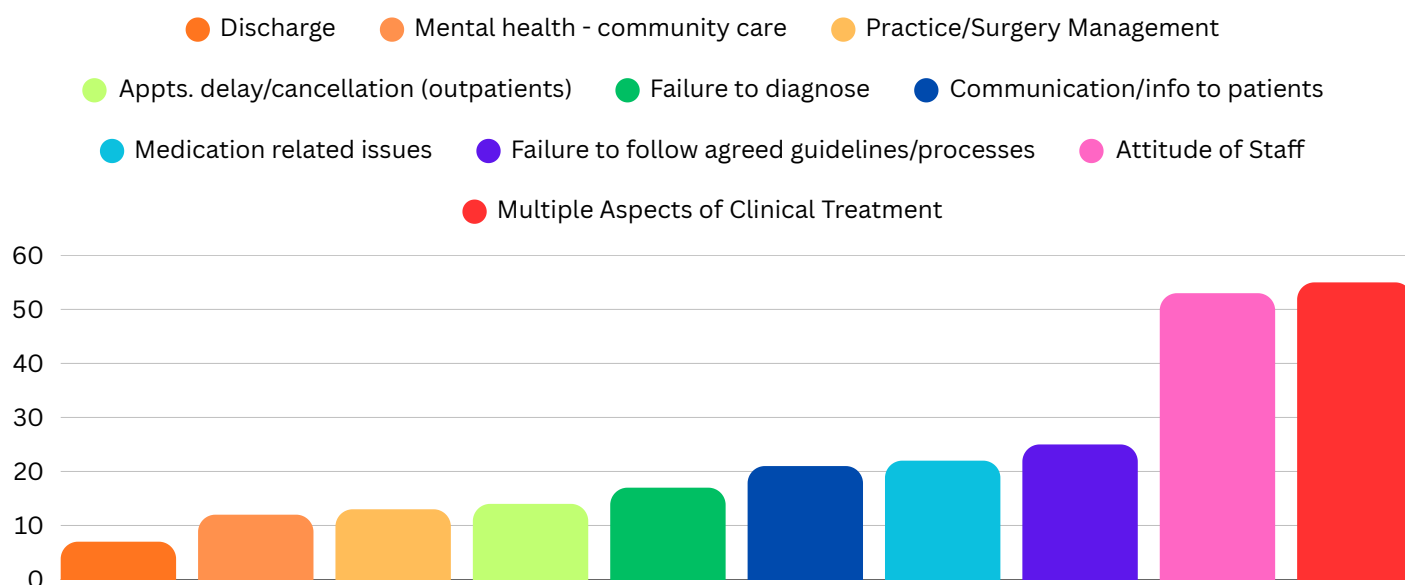
Between April 2025 and March 2026, the NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) service has continued to provide a high-quality, accessible, and person-centred service across Durham, Darlington, North Tyneside, and Stockton.

At the heart of our work is a commitment to helping people feel heard, supported, and more confident as they navigate the NHS complaints process. We also want to make sure their experiences help drive learning and improvements in services.

Partnership working continues to be central to our ICA service. By developing strong relationships with local authorities, NHS trusts, regional Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS), and other third-sector organisations, we have been able to help close important gaps in the patient feedback journey (gathering, understanding, and responding to patients' views and experiences). These partnerships create clearer referral pathways, making it easier for people with difficult healthcare concerns to reach our qualified advocates when they need support.

We also work closely with healthcare providers during local resolution meetings (face to face meetings where the complainant talks directly with the people or organisation involved) and, where needed, raise more complex systemic issues with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. This joined-up approach helps make sure people's voices are not only heard but responded to in a meaningful way.

Top complaint types



NORTH EAST NHS COMPLAINTS ADVOCACY SERVICE



Key Statistics 2025/26

170

Self-Help Packs
Downloaded

324

Total Cases

314

Cases Closed
(153 opened in 25/26)

Cases by Care Type

29% Primary (95)

71% Secondary (229)

Resolution Level

88% Local Level

12%
Ombudsman

60

Local Resolution Meetings

3,876

Hours of Advocacy Support

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thanks to our incredible advocates, Carole, Gabby and Libby whose knowledge, passion and dedication have helped the service continue to go from strength to strength.

We would also like to give special thanks to Philip Kerr, NE Operations Manager, who retired at the end of the year after 20 years in advocacy. Thank you, Philip, for your dedication and leadership, and for your contribution to improving outcomes for patients.

Client feedback

“
You have been a life saver. It is an incredible service and anyone who contacts you is lucky to have you in their corner. I would not have pursued as I did without your help and support.

“
Thank you so much for your advice. I would not hesitate to pass on your details to whoever needs help with a complaint, you gave invaluable advice.

“
Just to pass on my gratitude for the effort you put in. It's been a difficult process so working with you has been a pleasure, it's good to have someone that knows more about the complaints process. Really appreciate your help.

TRAINING



April 2025 - March 2026 has been another active and exciting year for Carers Federation training team, continuing to deliver City & Guilds qualifications in Independent Advocacy, courses in safeguarding, mentoring and NHS complaints and launching our very own Step into Advocacy course in July 2025.

Step into Advocacy

Last year saw Carers Federation develop the Step into Advocacy course as a great alternative to the City & Guilds Level 2 Independent Advocacy course which ended in 2024. As a proud holder of the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (QPM), the only Quality Mark for organisations offering Independent Advocacy, Carers Federation is very well placed to offer this course, and we've been delighted with the response to it, and with the feedback we receive from those taking the course.

***“As an autistic woman who cares for my husband who has MS and has two children and having spent Christmas on the cancer pathway (all clear given now) I appreciated the flexibility and offers of support from the assessor – the flexibility that was needed enabled me to manage what was happening for me and achieve this very important study enabling me to take the ethos of advocacy forward to other marginalised groups and communities. I am very grateful.*”**

- Step into Advocacy candidate



The Step into Advocacy course is ideal for individuals who are just starting out as an advocate or have an interest in advocacy. It is also perfect for those who use advocacy as part of their wider role such as support workers, social workers, and health & social care professionals.

TRAINING



City & Guilds

Carers Federation training team continued to deliver high quality City & Guilds qualifications with candidates successfully working towards, and completing, the Level 4 in Independent Advocacy and Level 4 single specialised units in:

- Independent mental capacity advocacy (IMCA)
- Independent mental health advocacy (IMHA)
- Independent advocacy within adult social care
- Independent advocacy with children and young people
- Independent complaints advocacy
- Community Advocacy

Working closely with partner organisations we are delighted to be able to train advocates enabling them to offer independent support to those in need.

At Carers Federation we continuously aim to deliver the best service, support and quality to our stakeholders and candidates. Between April 2025 -March 2026 we successfully passed another two 6-monthly City & Guilds audits continuing to ensure processes and procedures remain robust and candidates are receiving up to date, accurate and quality delivery.

We really value the feedback we receive from the individuals who use our services and continue to develop our service based on their responses.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the support and guidance you have provided as my assessor. Your support has been invaluable and has certainly helped me grow as an advocate.

-Level 4 candidate

Outstanding support, as always. The assessor guides you through, motivates you through challenges, and praises you when you most need it!

-Level 4 candidate

The assessor was very supportive and could always be reached quickly and the feedback I received helped me to improve my practice.

-Level 4 candidate

Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to our fantastic Training team, Jane and Becki, for their hard work, never ending enthusiasm and commitment to ensuring everyone gets the best service possible.

Any profits from the Training go back into Carers Federation's carer support services so we can continue to improve and expand our services.

QUALITY STANDARD IN CARER SUPPORT (QSCS)



Between April 2025 and March 2026 Carers Federation have continued to work with organisations across the country delivering the Quality Standard in Carer Support (QSCS). The QSCS is an accreditation for organisations to raise awareness, remove barriers, develop policies and procedures, and improve access and support for carers in education, employment, and healthcare settings. Once again it has been fantastic to see the positive impact that the QSCS has on carers of all ages and the organisations that we work with.

During this period, we are delighted that the following organisations have achieved the QSCS accreditations:

Colleges



Secondary schools



The accreditation lasts for 3 years, and we love it when organisations come back to us for reaccreditation as it shows an ongoing commitment to support carers of all ages and is a clear sign that QSCS is an effective way of doing this

Reaccreditations



The QSCS takes 12-18 months to complete, and there are organisations all over the country working towards their accreditation with our support.

This year saw us develop a new QSCS for Hospital Trusts and we are thrilled to be working with our first Trust who are due to complete in summer/autumn 2026.

We are thrilled to have been granted funding through the National Lottery Awards for All to work with a number of primary and secondary schools in Gateshead to identify and support young carers and their families, part of which is to deliver the QSCS accreditation.

QUALITY STANDARD IN CARER SUPPORT (QSCS)



Driving Change Project

Carers Federation are well over two years into the three-year Driving Change in Higher Education (HE) project in partnership with the Learning and Work Institute. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund this project enables Carers Federation to deliver the QSCS to Universities across England.

Driving Change aims to break down barriers to HE and ensure that young adult carers have the same opportunities to go to university, and achieve their potential, as other young people.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, we are delighted to say that the following Universities achieved their QSCS accreditations:



With more Universities completing their accreditations each month we look forward to celebrating with each of them.

Here's what London South Bank University had to say about the QSCS:

We're proud to have been awarded the Quality Standard in Carer Support accreditation, recognising our strong, compassionate approach to supporting students with caring responsibilities.

Over the past 18 months, we've strengthened the support we offer by listening more closely to student carers, aligning our inclusive policies with the needs they've told us about, introducing a dedicated financial award and creating earlier, more personal touchpoints to help students feel seen and supported from the moment they join LSBU.

This recognition is an important milestone, but it also reinforces the wider national need for more consistent support across the higher education sector. We remain committed to collaborating with partners across London and nationally to help remove barriers and build a system that enables young adult carers to thrive.

QUALITY STANDARD IN CARER SUPPORT (QSCS)



You're Welcome

In addition to our QSCS work, Carers Federation also continue to support hospitals to achieve the You're Welcome accreditation, which has been developed to recognise and further best practice in delivering children and young people friendly health provision. During this period, we are delighted to congratulate the following hospitals on achieving the You're Welcome accreditation:



Spire

Hull and East Riding Hospital



Spire

Bristol Hospital



Acknowledgements

A very big thank you to our fantastic QSCS Development workers -Naomi and Jane - whose dedication, knowledge, and passion make this work possible. And a big thank you to Jack our Marketing coordinator for his commitment, experience and ideas in developing and promoting the work we do. Any profits from the QSCS service go back into Carers Federation's carer support services so we can continue to improve and expand our services.

You're Welcome Q&A with Spire Bristol:

On completion of the 'You're Welcome' Standard do you feel more confident as a service to engage and support children & young people?

Yes definitely. Its also a nice way to celebrate the service for Children and Young People.

Q:What has been the impact on undertaking the 'You're Welcome' accreditation on:

Children and Young People

Very excited to use this accreditation in the hospital. It also brings a feeling that Children and Young people are recognised.

Staff

All staff have enjoyed working through the accreditation. It brought lots of discussions within the team.

Organisation-wide awareness and systems

Spire have embraced Your Welcome into the hospitals that have a CYP Service.

Links with the community

We are currently looking at new avenues to try within the Community, which as a hospital, we wouldn't have previously thought of.

THE NEW CARERS FEDERATION WEBSITE

In November 2025, we launched our redesigned website, modernising how we reach and serve unpaid carers while embedding our core values into every page. Developed in partnership with Stimulating Minds, our design partners, reflecting our commitment to collaboration, the new platform mirrors the growth and continuous improvement driving Carers Federation.

Designed through co-production alongside carers and Carers Federation staff, the site ensures the voices and needs of service users guide the online experience. A fresh, modern aesthetic offers a friendly welcome, while clearer navigation creates an intuitive journey so visitors can easily access vital support.

To ensure fairness and champion diversity, enhanced accessibility features, such as text scaling, high-contrast modes, and screen-reader compatibility, guarantee our resources remain open to everyone without discrimination. You can visit the site at www.carersfederation.co.uk.

The screenshot displays the Carers Federation website homepage. At the top, the Carers Federation Limited logo is on the left, and a navigation menu with links for Home, What we do, Services, Work with us, Training, and Contact is on the right. The main banner features a large image of two women hugging, with the headline "Are you an unpaid carer?" in purple. Below the headline, it states "Carers Federation runs carer services in Nottingham and Gateshead" and provides two buttons: "Nottingham/Nottinghamshire" and "Gateshead". Below the banner are three service tiles: "Quality Standard in Carer Support" with a quote about QSCS accreditation, "Carers Federation Training" with a description of online and TEAMS training, and "North East ICA" with a description of the Independent Advocacy Service. Each tile has a "Discover more" button. At the bottom, a testimonial from a "Carers Hub Servicer User" is overlaid on a photo of a group of people, with the text: "I can't thank you all enough I'm lost for words and feel really emotional that you and the team have done so much for me."

KEY CONTACTS AT CARERS FEDERATION

Thank you for taking the time to read this year's Carers Federation Annual Report. We value the opportunity to showcase the fantastic work over the year by our dedicated team. Below you will find key contacts for all services across the charity.

General Enquiries

Email: info@carersfederation.co.uk

Telephone: 0115 962 9310

Office Address:

Carers Federation Head Office
Christopher Cargill House,
21-23 Pelham Road,
Nottingham, NG5 1AP

Training

Email: training@carersfederation.co.uk

Telephone: 07739237443

Quality Standard in Carer Support

Email: QSCS@carersfederation.co.uk

Jane Walsh: 07525 237 730

Emma Watson: 07852 354 804

Naomi Sykes: 07841 067 098

Carers Hub Service Nottingham

Phone: 0808 802 1777

Text/whatsapp: 07814678460

Email: carershubreferrals@carersfederation.co.uk

Caregivers Connected Gateshead

Email: info@caregiversconnectedgateshead.co.uk

Free Phone: 0808 8010350

WhatsApp or Text: 0774 041 0314

Office Address:

Caregivers Connected Gateshead, Room 405
Aidan House
Sunderland Road, NE8 3HU

North East Independent Advocacy

Email: ica@carersfederation.co.uk

Phone: 0808 802 3000

Office Address:

NHS Complaints Advocacy N.E.
Room 405 Aidan House
401 Sunderland Road
Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 3HU

