



**healthwatch**  
Walsall

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# Winter Newsletter

December 2023



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## Message from Healthwatch Manager – Aileen Farrer



Welcome to our Winter 2023 Newsletter which I hope finds you well during these continued difficult times. I also hope you find the information useful and enjoy reading about how we have been working for you in Walsall.

As always, we remain keen to hear from you about issues you may be facing with health and social care services. We are currently undertaking our "Listening Survey" to learn about what you see as the priorities we should focus on during 2024/2025.

We are currently undertaking a piece of work around the Walsall Manor Hospital Urgent & Emergency Treatment Centre and if you have a patient experience you would like to share with us then please get in touch. You can also read all about other current work projects in this edition and we would encourage you to take part in our surveys so that we can gather as much intelligence as possible and present the views of the public to health and social care providers and commissioners.

We are continued to be supported by our volunteers and if volunteering is something you have been thinking about, please contact Tom Collins via email [tom.collins@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk](mailto:tom.collins@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk) or by telephone 0800 470 1660.

During the holiday period Healthwatch Walsall will be closed on 25th -27th December and 1 January 2024, but we look forward to hearing from you outside these dates. Our contact details are on the back page if you need to contact us.

Finally, it just remains for me to wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year and hope you enjoy the festive break.

## Update on our Work Programme for 2023/2024

We have launched several of our work programme projects. If you have had experiences around any of the services or conditions that we are looking at, then please take part in the survey(s).



The surveys can be found on our website on the main banner:

<https://tinyurl.com/m2maw8k8>

We have now started our work project at Walsall Manor Hospital around the 'NEW'

Emergency and Urgent Treatment Centre, To gather service user views..

A promotional poster for Healthwatch Walsall surveys. The background features a silhouette of a person in a coat and hat standing in front of a modern hospital building. The text is as follows:  
**Attending A&E/Urgent Treatment Centre?**  
**Please take part in a short survey and tell us your experience**  
**healthwatch Walsall**  
**Part 1 survey**  
This survey is about your arrival, first impressions, being listened to, being involved, etc. Please complete both parts so we get the big picture.  
link: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8dceb4>  
QR code with text: Scan the QR code  
**Part 2 survey**  
This survey is about your waiting times and communication with you. Please complete both parts so we get the big picture.  
link: <https://tinyurl.com/5n6jc7kx>  
QR code with text: Scan the QR code  
Your comments will be anonymous & will be used in a report that will be published & shared. It may recognise good practise and highlight opportunities to improve patient experience  
Engaging Communities Solutions  
Tel: 0800 470 1660  
[info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk)

Link to take part in these short surveys:

Part 1 <https://tinyurl.com/yc8dceb4>

Part 2 <https://tinyurl.com/4yhr26xp>

**Have you or are you suffering from Long COVID?**

Take part in our short survey and let us know if you have the support you need?

Use the link: <https://tinyurl.com/mprscsvk>  
 Or if you wish to take part over the phone  
 Telephone: 0800 470 1660

**healthwatch** Walsall

Or use the QR code

Link to take part in a short survey:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mprscsvk>

**Are Walsall health & social care services communicating with you in ways that you can understand?**

**WHAT?**

Take part in our short survey and let us know?

Use the link: <https://tinyurl.com/4dsam5hy>  
 Or if you wish to take part over the phone  
 Telephone: 0800 470 1660

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Or use the QR code

Link to take part in a short survey:  
<https://tinyurl.com/4dsam5hy>

**NHS 111**

**How does it work for you?**

Take part in our short survey and let us know?

Use the link: <https://tinyurl.com/2s3fs3c9>  
 Or if you wish to take part over the phone  
 Telephone: 0800 470 1660

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Or use the QR code

**your voice counts**

Link to take part in a short survey:  
<https://tinyurl.com/2s3fs3c9>

**ITS OUR LISTENING SURVEY 2024/25**

**healthwatch** Walsall

Tell us which health, mental health and social care service you would suggest we look at and your reasons why?

Take part in a short survey that will help guide us to the work projects we carry out in 2024/2025

Link to take part:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mryej35m>

Or scan the QR code

**Engaging Communities Solutions**

**Tel: 0800 470 1660**  
**info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk**

Link to take part in a short survey:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mryej35m>

We have published our NHS Dental Care report. This can be viewed and downloaded from our website [Click Here](#)

We will be publishing our report on the maternity experiences of Black and Asian Women in the very near future so please look out for this in the coming days via our website.

Link to reports on our website: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9yfbcj>

## Out and about in Walsall



We continue our weekly attendance at Walsall Manor Hospital every Monday from 9.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. Come and see us and share your experiences.

We are now visiting the NEW Emergency Care and urgent Treatment Centre on various days across the week.

We are also at the Migrant and Refugee Centre every Thursday morning and then we move to the New Hub at Walsall Bus Station to talk to people.

We recently attended the Self Care Management event at Bloxwich Active Living and supported the Peoples Panel at St. Johns Church Bloxwich.

These outreach sessions allow us to talk to you and hear your stories. Please join us, we would like to see you and speak with you.

There are other events being arranged so please keep visiting our Events Calendar on our website the link for which is <https://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/events>

## Enter and View update

We continue to undertake our visits to services across Walsall which now includes visiting primary care services and care/nursing homes. We can also visit NHS services in the community and in hospital settings.

We recently visited Palfrey Health centre and Swan House. These reports will be published shortly so keep an eye on our Reports section of our website.

To download or read any of our Enter and View reports [CLICK HERE](#)

## Volunteer with us

We have 12 roles that you can choose from so there is something for everyone. So, to find out more then please telephone us on 0800 470 1660 or email us:

[info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk)



The graphic features a large green arch at the top. On the left, a red heart contains three white hands reaching up. The text 'As part of our ongoing recruitment drive' is in a teal font above the 'healthwatch Walsall' logo, where 'health' is pink, 'watch' is green, and 'Walsall' is teal. Below this, 'Volunteers Needed!' is written in large, bold, teal letters. To the left of the main text, a paragraph describes the search for volunteers. To the right, a circular inset shows two women looking at a document. Below that, a pink circle contains the text 'Get in touch now'. At the bottom left, a teal arrow points upwards with the text 'WE NEED HELP & CAN OFFER UP TO 12 INTERESTING VOLUNTEERING ROLES!'. At the bottom right, contact information is provided, and the 'your voice counts' logo is shown, featuring a stylized 'e' in pink and green.

As part of our ongoing recruitment drive

**healthwatch**  
Walsall

# Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for people who want to make a difference in their community and identify opportunities for health and care services changes or improvements.

**Get in touch now**

To contact us call 0800 470 1660 for a brief chat about what we have to offer.

**WE NEED HELP & CAN OFFER UP TO 12 INTERESTING VOLUNTEERING ROLES!**

visit: <https://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/volunteer>

your **voice counts**

Link to take to register an interest to volunteer:  
<https://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/volunteer>

## Messages from our partners



### ICB health messaging for Healthwatch Walsall – December 2023

#### Measles cases in the Midlands are rising.

Measles is an infection that spreads very easily and can cause serious problems in some people. Having the MMR vaccine is the best way to prevent it and protect our communities.

Measles symptoms include high fever, sore, red, watery eyes: coughing; aching and feeling generally unwell; and a blotchy red-brown rash, which usually appears after initial symptoms.

If you have symptoms of measles, stay at home and phone your GP or NHS 111 for advice. Stay away from GP surgeries and A&E departments

Stay off nursery, school, or work for at least 4 days from when the rash first appears.

It's never too late to be vaccinated. You need two doses of the MMR vaccine to be fully protected against measles, mumps and rubella.

Dr Fiona Rose, GP from Halesowen and Clinical Director for Quality and Safety at the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board has done a series of videos where she talks about measles, mumps and rubella, the risks and complications about each and how to get your child vaccinated against them. [Watch the measles, mumps and rubella 3 part series with Dr Fiona Rose.](#)

For more information visit:

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine>

#### Coughs and colds in children – where to seek advice?

Coughs and colds are extremely common in young children. But did you know that coughing is the body's natural way of clearing an infection?

Having green snot or a noisy chest does not mean that your child has an infection requiring antibiotics. Most of these infections are likely to be caused by a virus, which means that antibiotics are of no benefit and may result in side effects such as rash and diarrhoea.

It can sometimes be harder to identify the cause of a cough. In general, if it is associated with a runny nose, red eyes, ear pain or a wheeze, it is far more likely to be viral infection. Noisy/Rattley chests are also common in young children with viral infections.

For health advice about your child, go to the Black Country 0-18 years website at <https://www.blackcountry0-18.nhs.uk/parents/carers/worried-your-child-unwell/cough-and-cold>

Seek urgent medical help if they have difficult breathing, drowsiness, cold hands and feet and possible blue lips.

Your local pharmacy can provide free advice about coughs and colds. If the pharmacist agrees that medicines are needed, they will be provided free of charge for those who get free prescriptions. Find out which pharmacies are participating in the Pharmacy First scheme and what common conditions are included.



Your child has  
**a cough** and  
you don't know  
what to do?

**Get health advice for your child  
at [blackcountry0-18.nhs.uk](https://www.blackcountry0-18.nhs.uk)**





## Think which service

Do you know which service you should use to get the right support and quickest medical help?

As temperatures drop and nights draw in, it is important to remember that winter conditions can seriously affect your health. The NHS is here for you and our local health and care professionals are ready and waiting to help you this winter.

Think which service is right for you:

- For less urgent health needs, contact your GP or local pharmacy or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) for advice
- If you need urgent medical help but it's not an emergency, contact NHS 111 online ([111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk)) or by dialling 111 for clinical advice, assessment and signposting to the right service
- Call 999 for life-threatening emergencies.

[For more information go to the NHS Black Country ICB's website.](#)

**Healthier Futures**  
Black Country Integrated Care System

**NHS**



## Keep warm and well

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems.

Heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom. It's best to keep your bedroom windows closed at night.

Older neighbours, friends and family members may need some extra help – there’s a lot you can do to help people who need support:

- Icy pavements and roads can be very slippery, and cold weather can stop people from going out. Keep in touch with your friends, neighbours and family and ask if they need any practical help, or if they're feeling unwell.
- Make sure they're stocked up with enough food supplies for a few days, in case they cannot go out.
- If you need to go out in the cold, wear shoes with a good grip and a scarf around the mouth to protect them from cold air, and to reduce their risk of chest infections.
- Make sure they get any prescription medicines before the holiday period starts and if bad weather is forecast.

If you or someone you know needs help over the holiday period when the GP surgery or pharmacy is closed or you're not sure what to do, go to [111.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) or call 111.

**Healthier Futures**  
Black Country Integrated Care System



## Useful tips to help you stay well this winter:



Keep your home warm



Get your winter vaccines



Look after yourself and others



Keep your medicine cabinet stocked

**#StayWellThisWinter**

# LET'S TALK ABOUT

# CANCER

## Would you like to become a Community Cancer Champion?

Cultural barriers and a lack of awareness about "what cancer is?", in communities can often lead to late diagnosis and poorer survival rates. We will look to address these issues through a proactive community engagement training programme.

The key main areas that we will look at are;

- Health and Wellbeing
- Cancer Prevention and Early Diagnosis
- Cancer Screening Programmes
- Signs and Symptoms
- Living well and beyond Cancer

This training will aim to improve early diagnosis of cancer, addressing some of the health inequalities. Talking helps breakdown fear and barriers. This training program is designed in conjunction with Cancer Research UK, and will give participants the knowledge and confidence to have conversations in their community about cancer prevention, myth busting and early diagnosis.

This training will take place over three sessions via Microsoft Teams and all sessions must be completed to finish the course.

If you are interested on putting your name down for an upcoming place on the next cohort, then please book on with the following

link <https://re-url.uk/WUUA> or  
contact [Kassandra.styche@nhs.net](mailto:Kassandra.styche@nhs.net) for more information.

## Order repeat prescriptions before Christmas

People in the Black Country are being reminded to order any repeat prescriptions they may need ahead of the festive period.

GP practices and pharmacies will have limited opening hours over the Christmas and New Year period, making it more challenging for people to access medicines at short notice. Every bank holiday, NHS 111 sees an increase in people getting in touch about repeat prescriptions. Waiting and using emergency or urgent services over the festive break puts added pressure on already busy services.

To avoid this and to ensure health is not put at any unnecessary risk, people are being asked to submit any repeat prescriptions that are due for renewal by Monday 18 December at the latest to make sure there is enough time for them to be processed and dispensed.

Dr Ananta Dave, Chief Medical Officer for the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board, said: "Running out of your usual medication can have serious consequences, especially if you use them to control heart and breathing problems or a long-term condition such as diabetes, and is the last thing you want to do while you're celebrating with loved ones over the holidays.

"That's why we're encouraging anyone who may need a repeat prescription to order them well ahead of the bank holiday period and not leave it until the last minute when pharmacies and GP practices are operating with limited opening hours.

"This can be a busy time of the year, especially in the build-up to Christmas, but it's important that we all take time to think about our health and do what we can to stay well. Having a medicine cabinet at home with some simple over-the-counter remedies like paracetamol, ibuprofen, and anti-diarrhoea tablets is also recommended so you can treat any common illnesses or ailments yourself."

Most repeat medication requests can be made online, via local practice websites or through the NHS App. People who do not use the internet can approach their practice to access their prescriptions.

To find your nearest pharmacy, visit the NHS website.

If you or a loved one becomes unwell over the festive period and is in need of urgent health advice or treatment – particularly over the bank holidays when GP practices will be closed – contact NHS 111 by dialling 111 or visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk).

See Walsall pahramcy open times

Pharmacy Name	Address Line 1	Address Line 2	Postcode	Telephone	Monday 25th December 2023 – Christmas day	Tuesday 26th December 2023 – Boxing day	Monday 1st January 2024
Asda Pharmacy	42 George Street	Walsall	WS1 1RS	01922 704130	Closed	10:00-16:00	10:00-16:00
I-Dispense	126 Lichfield Street	Walsall	WS1 1SY	01922 646521	09:00-12:00	Closed	Closed
Limes pharmacy	The Limes Business Centre	5 Birmingham Road	WS1 2LT	01922 634165	12:00-15:00	Closed	Closed

## Local Foodbanks

Walsall North Food Bank – Pelsall Methodist Church, Chapel Street. Open Tuesdays, 11am to 1pm, and Fridays 1pm to 3pm. Telephone: 07582 869895. Website: [walsallnorth.foodbank.org.uk](http://walsallnorth.foodbank.org.uk).

Bloxwich and Blakenall Food Bank – Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road, Blakenall, Walsall, WS3 1LZ. Open Thursdays 11am to 1pm. Telephone: 07747 301374. Website: [bloxwichblakenall.foodbank.org.uk](http://bloxwichblakenall.foodbank.org.uk).

## Our Social media platforms

Visit our various social media platforms for information on events, meetings, health and social care awareness days and much more.



@HWWalsall



@HealthwatchWSL



Healthwatch Walsall 2020



Healthwatchwsl

If you are a group or an organisation that may have some interesting public information or updates about health and social care in Walsall then please contact to see if it can go in our next Newsletter.



Link to surveys: <https://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/take-part-these-important-surveys>



# healthwatch

## Walsall

Share your health or social care services experiences by visiting our 'Have Your Say' section of our website

Contact us

Blakenall Village Centre  
79 Thames Road  
Blakenall  
Walsall  
WS3 1LZ

Tel: 0800 470 1660

Email: [info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk)

Website: [www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk)

