



healthwatch
Walsall

Winter Newsletter

December 2024 ¹

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Message from Healthwatch Manager



Welcome to our Winter 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to our Winter 2024 Newsletter which I hope finds you keeping well during these cold and dark months. 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 held a very informative Annual Public Meeting towards the end of November and gathered information on a lot of issues being faced around health and care. We will very shortly be looking at our work priorities for 2025/2026 and would very much like to hear from you about any experiences you would like to share with us, so please contact us.

Our next piece of work will be around young carers, so if you are a young carer or know of a young carer who would like to participate in this work, again, please contact us.

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 or by telephone 0800 470 1660.

During the holiday period Healthwatch Walsall will be closed on 24th -26th December and 1 January 2025, 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.

Our Work Programme for 2024/2025



We started our 2024/2025 work projects earlier in the year around:

Patient Experience of Cancer Services at Walsall Manor Hospital

This survey is now closed and in the process of being analysed.

Patient Experience of Urology Services at Walsall Manor Hospital

This survey is now closed and in the process of being analysed.

Unmet social care needs for young carers

understanding of whether young carers in the Borough are aware of the support available and to assess whether they have unmet social care needs.

We are hoping to speak to as many young carers as possible particularly those who have not had chance to have their voice heard from as many communities as possible. If you know of a young person providing support or care to a relative and they would like to young carers.

So, if you are a young carer or know a young carer, please get in touch.



**Young Carers.
We would like to chat
with you.**

We would like to know how you are coping?
Get in touch with us...

healthwatch
Walsall

Tele: 0800 470 1660
Email: info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

 Engaging Communities Solutions

Link to the reports section of our website for these and many other issued reports:
<https://tinyurl.com/5n6zyxwd>

Out and About in Walsall



We continue to engage with Walsall communities, speaking to individuals and groups about their health and social care experiences and needs. We talk to the public to find out what has been working well and what has not been working so well for them. When we speak to citizens, we also have an opportunity to offer signposting, advice and information about services people can access to obtain support.

Below is a snapshot of places and groups we have visited.

- Public outreach Walsall Manor Hospital
- Enter and View to Umbrella Medical, Saddlers Medical
- Enter and View visit to The Grand Cedars Walsall
- Warm Hub at Walsall Bus Station
- Public outreach at Bloxwich Active Living Centre x 2
- Walsall Manoir Cancer and Urology department x8
- Men's prostate cancer support group
- The Beacon
- Walsall College Freshers Fair



And many more locations ...

This is not an exhaustive list but gives a flavour of where we have been since the last Newsletter. If you are a member of or run a group and would like us to give a presentation about our work, please let us know. We would be delighted to join you and to listen to your members.

INVITE US TO COME AND CHAT TO YOU & YOUR GROUP ABOUT YOUR...

-  **Health Care**
-  **Social Care**
-  **Mental Health Care**
-  **Get advice & information**

healthwatch Walsall

Tel: 0800470 1660
Email: info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

We held our Annual Public Meeting (APM)



This was held on Tuesday 26th November at Ryecroft Community Hub, Walsall, WS3 1TR.

We wanted to say a big thank you to all the members of the public, volunteers, and especially all the support organisations that offered free advice and information to people.

A special thank you to our two guest speakers, Dr. Anand Rischie and Angela Poulton, who spoke about 'Primary Care Transformation', what it is and what it means to patients.

We appreciate the experiences and views you shared with us and continue to look forward to meeting members of the public in all the Walsall communities, visiting local groups, and working with existing support organisations and new ones.

Link to the presentation slides: <https://tinyurl.com/mpfm6jnc>

Enter and View update



What is Enter and View

Part of Healthwatch Walsall remit is to carry out Enter and View visits. Healthwatch Walsall Authorised Representatives carry out these visits to health and social care premises to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement.

The Health and Social Care Act allows Authorised Representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families, and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists, and pharmacies.

Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation so that we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first-hand.

Healthwatch Walsall Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit, they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch Walsall Safeguarding Policy, the service manager will be informed, and the visit will end. The Local Authority Safeguarding Team will also be informed.

Our Enter and View reports in the last few months.

- Richmond Hall
Link to report: <https://tinyurl.com/4cm3eteb>
- The Grand Cedars
Link to report: <https://tinyurl.com/3zcdh3kr>
- Umbrella Medical (In draft status)
- Saddlers Health ((In draft status))



For our past Enter and View reports use the link: <https://tinyurl.com/5n6zyxwd>



Got a spare minute?
Have **YOUR** say on
Health and Social Care services in Walsall

healthwatch
Walsall
Share your story
Tel: 0800 470 1660
E: info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk
www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

Link to Have Your Say on our website: <https://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/share-your-views>



Have your say

You can share your services experiences 24/7

healthwatch
Walsall

Select Langu...



Contact us

Have your say News & reports Get involved What we do Advice & information

Search

Share your views

Tell us about your experiences of NHS and social care services. Giving feedback, both good and bad, can help improve services.

Take five minutes to share your experiences

NHS and social care staff are doing everything they can to keep us well during these challenging times, but there might be things that can be improved for you and your loved ones. Please take five minutes to share your story with us.

To understand how we will use your information read the 'How we use this information' at the end of the page.

If you have recently used a Walsall NHS healthcare or Local Authority funded social care service, please share your experience by visiting our website and click on 'Have your say'

This lets us know from a patients point of view what services work well and when services don't work well for people. We may be help you directly or we can let service providers and service commissioners when a service has gone wrong or is failing Walsall people.

Sharing your experiences can really make a difference to individuals and future service users.

Use the link to our webpage: <https://www.healthwatchwalsall.co.uk/share-your-views>



Volunteer with us



We have 12 roles that you can choose from so there is something for everyone. If you are thinking about volunteering and would like to find out further details, please telephone us on 0800 470 1660 or email us: info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk



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**

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

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

your
voice
counts

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

Messages from our partners



Walsall Community Association

Running since 1976, Walsall Community Association (formally the African Caribbean Community Association) has been a very important venue for the African Caribbean Community of Walsall and the wider West Midlands for over 40 years.

The WCA New Year's Eve Party is on Tuesday 31st December, Doors Open at 9pm Entry is only £10, Entry includes a Free Buffet, music on the night provided by DJ Richie. Everyone welcome to purchase tickets, please call 01922 615179.
36 Wolverhampton Rd, Walsall, West Midlands, WS2 8PR, Tel: 01922 615179
Email: walsallacca@msn.com

Walsall Pensioners

Recruiting from age of 50s meet at TM O offices Richard's House, Burrowes Street WS2 8NN, contact the office to see when the next meeting is telephone: 01922 471910.

Discussing a range of pensioner issues and often hold social events and days out..



Walsall Healthcare

NHS Trust

The Family and Carer Service

Unpaid carers are the unsung heroes of our community, selflessly supporting their loved ones which is often at the expense of their own health and well-being.

The Family and Carer Service helps staff to identify, recognise, and support these incredible individuals.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust is committed to IDENTIFYING, RECOGNISING & SUPPORTING all unpaid carers through their journey. Once we know who they are, we can ensure they feel valued and that they have access to the ADVICE, INFORMATION & SUPPORT they need.

The Family and Carer Service acts as a dedicated signposting service, connecting unpaid carers to the advice, resources, and support they require. This includes guidance on health and social care services, local support groups, benefits, and carers' rights.

Help us to identify Unpaid Carers and refer them to this vital service. Referrals can be made in A&E, as a member of staff, or by contacting Phone: 01922 721172 (Ext. 4050)
Mobile: 07855 963333
Email: wht.carers@nhs.net

As a point of contact, the service provides an empathetic ear, listens to carers concerns, and signposts them to the services and community resources. The service is also here to help and support staff in delivering on our shared commitment to unpaid carers.

Together, we can ensure unpaid carers get the right support at the right time and make a meaningful difference for those who care for others.



Accessing NHS services during the festive season

Ahead of the festive period people in the Black Country are being reminded how to access health services. Due to the Christmas and New Year Bank Holidays, some services such as GP surgeries and pharmacies may be closed or operating reduced opening hours. A number of pharmacies across the Black Country will be open for periods of time on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

They can offer health consultations and provide free medication for many common health conditions without the need for a GP prescription under the Pharmacy First scheme. This includes coughs, urine infections, conjunctivitis, diarrhoea and indigestion.

[A full list of Black Country pharmacies and opening times can be found on the NHS Black Country Integrated Care Board \(ICB\) website.](#)

People who need medical help that isn't an emergency should contact NHS 111 in the first instance by visiting 111.nhs.uk or by calling 111.

NHS 111 can help direct people to the most appropriate local health service if they aren't sure where to go – this could include an out of hours GP, a pharmacy, a local NHS walk-in centre, or a hospital accident & emergency (A&E) department.

Dr Ananta Dave, Chief Medical Officer for the NHS Black Country ICB, said: "No one wants to get ill over Christmas, but it's really important to make sure you know where to go for urgent health advice and treatment over the festive period in case you or a loved one becomes unwell.

"A number of pharmacies will be open over the festive season and should be your first port of call for any minor illnesses. Pharmacists are qualified health professionals who can offer advice and medicines for a range of ailments. And, if symptoms suggest it's something more serious, they have the right training to make sure patients get the help they need.

"If you need medical help or have any health concerns over Christmas and New Year period, please do not be put off from seeking help. The NHS is here for you, and you should always seek help if you need it.

" 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. A&E departments and 999 are there to treat the most serious and life-threatening conditions.





Order repeat prescriptions ahead of the festive period.

People in the Black Country are being reminded to order any repeat prescriptions they may need ahead of the festive season. 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 in plenty of time before the festive period, 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 (ICB) said: "Running out of your usual medication can have serious consequences, especially if you use it to manage a long-term health condition and is the last thing you want to do while you're celebrating with loved ones over the festive season.

"That's why we're reminding 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 also 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. More information about pharmacy opening hours can be found on the NHS Black Country ICB 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.

[Pharmacy Bank Holiday opening hours](#)

Christmas day - Wednesday 25 December 2024

Boxing day - Thursday 26 December 2024

New Years Day - Wednesday 1 January 2025

[Click here to view the list of pharmacies open, and their opening hours, for the above bank holidays.](#)

Do you wish you could use the internet but don't have a computer or smartphone?

Maybe you need a bit of help getting online and knowing how to get the best out of your device?

Black Country Connected is an NHS-run programme that can lend you a Geobook laptop for three months, so that you can get online and:

- Access healthcare information and appointments
- Explore education and employment opportunities
- Do your shopping or banking
- Stay connected to others through social media and email.

Our computer experts will give you the training you need to use the device and explore the internet. If you decide you want to learn more, we can give you details of free IT courses offered by colleges across the Black Country as well as online courses to help improve your digital skills.

If you get on well with your device during the loan period, you may be able to keep it. All we ask in return is that you answer some questions to help us understand people's digital skills/usage better, so we can provide further opportunities in the future to assist people to engage with services/get online.

Want to find out more? Call our programme lead Emma Sharman on 07977 948 895, email emma.sharman@nhs.net or visit blackcountryconnected.co.uk



Do you wish you could use the internet but don't have a computer or smartphone?

Visit blackcountryconnected.co.uk to find out how we can help you



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Walsall Society For the Blind

Walsall Society For The Blind run a youth service and currently offer an opportunity and space for young people with a sight loss to meet

If you would like any more information, please email: lburden@wsftb.co.uk or call: 07359 027242



New Acute Respiratory Infection Hub opens for winter

A new acute respiratory hub has opened to provide specialised care for vulnerable and at-risk children aged 0-12 years old with respiratory conditions.

The hub, which has been developed by the Walsall Together Partnership, is a GP led service which offers same-day face-to-face appointments, acute interventions, diagnostics, treatment and follow-up care in the community, if required, for children experiencing chronic respiratory issues such as asthma and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

It runs Monday to Friday, from 12.30pm until 6.30pm, for referrals from healthcare professionals working in general practice and aims to reduce the pressure on hospital admissions for ARI over the winter period.

Dr Anand Rischie, Associate Medical Director for Walsall Together, said: "Over the winter we tend to see a rise in respiratory infections and the hub will be key to helping us support the most vulnerable and two-year-old children across Walsall who are experiencing chronic respiratory conditions. It is just one of many initiatives the partnership is working on to collectively improve respiratory care for our younger generations who, with the right treatment and ongoing support, can help them manage their condition and prevent them from becoming ill in the first place."

Feedback so far has been positive with one patient saying "The doctor was amazing and was so thorough with my child. She spoke to him not just me and made a normally scared two-year-old comfortable and at ease with the whole examination."

The hub is part of a broader initiative by the partnership, which is also investing in several preventative measures to identify early signs of asthma expanding WHG's ACEing Asthma program, which supports families from disadvantaged communities to manage their condition and improving their living conditions to prevent crises.

Connie Jennings, Director of Stronger Communities for WHG, said: "whg are delighted to deliver the ACEing asthma programme as part of the support offered within the ARI hub. ACEing asthma is a partnership health and housing programme, with social prescribers supporting families to access the services they need to manage their child's Asthma, keeping them out of hospital and in school healthy and happy."

The partnership will also collaborate with existing services such as family hubs and the voluntary, faith, community, and social enterprise sectors to provide preventative care. Additionally, there will be an increase in diagnostic testing in primary care to diagnose children with asthma earlier and implement effective asthma care plans to help manage their condition.



Rethink
Mental
Illness.



Black Country Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Sanctuary Hubs

Feeling lonely, overwhelmed or that things are too much for right now? **The Sanctuary Hubs are here for you.**

The Hubs are open for you to drop-in every **Monday - Friday 6.00pm to 11.00pm** and **Saturday and Sunday 12(noon) to 11.00pm**. If you can't visit a Sanctuary Hub you can self-refer or be referred with your consent by contacting the Black Country 24/7 Helpline by phone or text.

**Dudley
Sanctuary Hub**

DY1 Community Centre, Stafford Street
Dudley, DY1 1SA

**Sandwell
Sanctuary Hub**

Hope Place, 321 High Street
West Bromwich, B70 8LU

**Walsall
Sanctuary Hub**

1 Queen's Parade, Bloxwich
Walsall, WS3 2EX

**Wolverhampton
Sanctuary Hub**

84 Salop Street, Wolverhampton,
WV3 0SR

If you need urgent help with your mental health or you are struggling to cope, please call NHS 111 and selection Option 2.

You can also access this service by
texting 07860 025 281





DEMENTIA CARERS TOGETHER

Starts October 2024 at Community Engagement Centre, Ford Street, Walsall WS2 9BW

**Are you caring for someone living with dementia in Walsall?
We can provide information and advice in a friendly, group setting:**

- ◆ An opportunity for carers to regularly meet and share experiences
- ◆ Find out about local and national initiatives
- ◆ Group activities

GET IN TOUCH TODAY!

Book your place or find out more. Contact **Pat Roberts** on **01922 638825** or **pat.roberts@greensquareaccord.co.uk** or **Gina Gardner** on **07971 808837** or **gina.luczkiwicz@nhs.net**



Follow us on Facebook: @HealthAndIndependence

Follow us on Twitter: @Healthindepend



Black Country and West Birmingham
Clinical Commissioning Group

Foodbanks

Walsall North Food Bank

Pelsall Methodist Church, Chapel Street.
Open Tuesdays, 11am – 1pm, and Fridays
1pm – 3pm. Telephone: 07582 869895.
Website: walsallnorth.foodbank.org.uk

Bloxwich and Blakenall Food Bank

Blakenall Village Centre, Thames Road,
Blakenall, Walsall, WS3 1LZ. Open Thursdays
11am – 1pm. Telephone: 07747 301374.
Website: bloxwichblakenall.foodbank.org.uk

Humanity First

Saddlers Centre Walsall Town Centre

Walsall Community Food Pantry

Inside the Potter's House Church, 29 – 31
Freer St, Walsall WS1

Black Country Foodbank

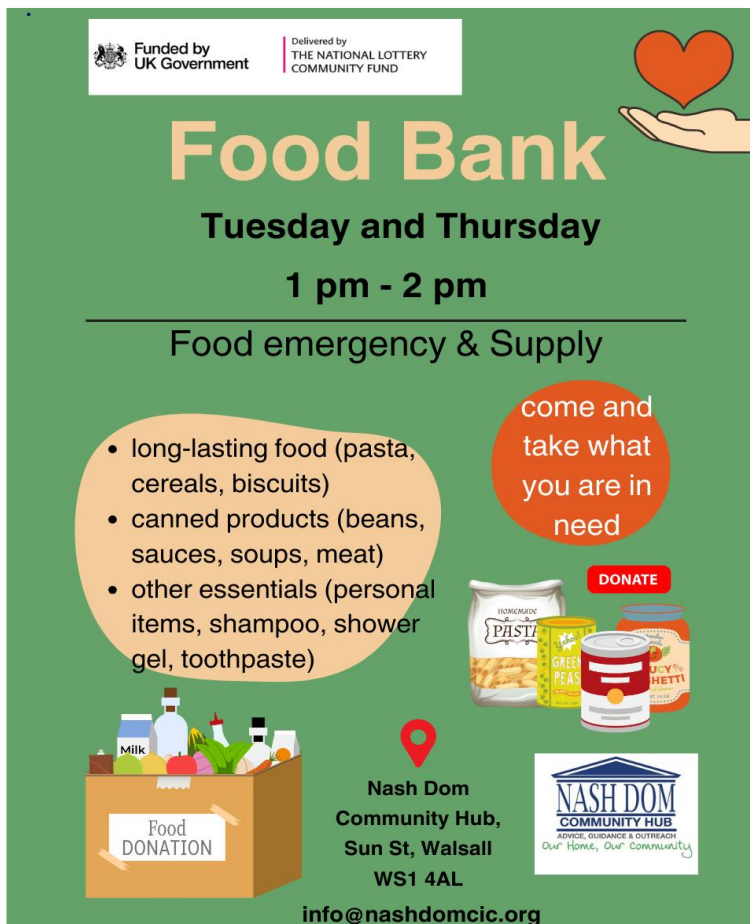
Central Hall, Ablewell Street, Walsall, WS1
2EQ
Telephone: 01922 639700

Breaking Bread Food Bank

93/94 Walsall Street, Wednesbury, WS10
9BY
Wednesday 10am – 3pm Friday 1pm –
7pm
Telephone: 07794275119

Ashmore Park Pantry

St Alban's Church, Griffiths Drive, Ashmore
Park, WV11 2LJ
Tuesday 12pm – 2pm Friday 4pm – 6pm
01902 732317



Funded by UK Government | Delivered by THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND

Food Bank

Tuesday and Thursday
1 pm - 2 pm

Food emergency & Supply

- long-lasting food (pasta, cereals, biscuits)
- canned products (beans, sauces, soups, meat)
- other essentials (personal items, shampoo, shower gel, toothpaste)

come and take what you are in need

DONATE

Nash Dom Community Hub,
Sun St, Walsall
WS1 4AL
info@nashdomcic.org

NASH DOM COMMUNITY HUB
ADVICE, GUIDANCE & OUTREACH
Our Home, Our Community



MERRY CHRISTMAS

To all Walsall residents...

HAPPY NEW YEAR

2025

Engaging Communities Solutions | **healthwatch** Walsall



healthwatch

Walsall

How to contact us

Office: Blakenall Village Centre
79 Thames Road
Blakenall Walsall
WS3 1LZ
Tel: 0800 470 1660
Email: info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk

Find us and our reports on our Social Media platforms

Facebook: @HealthwatchWSL
X (Twitter): @HWWalsall
Instagram: healthwatchwsl
YouTube: Healthwatch Walsall 2020



Committed to quality

We are committed to the quality of our information. Every three years we perform an in-depth audit so we can be sure of this.



Engaging Communities Solutions

Share your Walsall Health and Social Care services experiences by getting in touch by using our services review platform “Have Your Say” on our website. Link: <https://tinyurl.com/3778j3ps>