

Hello Healthwatch members

We hope this newsletter finds you well and taking care of yourselves. We know that this lockdown is hard on you, but it's helping to keep people safe and reduce the spread of the virus. Hopefully some of you have had the vaccine and are feeling positive about the future.

This newsletter contains information relating to COVID-19 as well as other information about health and care services that we hope you find useful.

Don't forget to visit our website and follow us on Facebook and Twitter for advice on how to keep safe.

COVID-19 survey - Your experiences of accessing health care and support during the pandemic.

Last year we ran a survey to find out what people's experiences were of trying to access care and support for their health conditions. A year on, many things have changed and people are experiencing different things. We felt it was important to run another survey to find out what you're feeling now and how easy it is for you to get the treatment and care you need.

Many thanks to those of you who have already completed the survey, but if you haven't here's a reminder of the link.

Just go to: <https://healthwatchsthelens.co.uk/covid-19-follow-survey>

Your experiences can help people who deliver your services to understand your need, what's working well and what needs to be improved.

Please share the link with your family and friends.

Merseyside Police and PCC welcome the launch of the 'Ask for ANI' scheme

'Ask for ANI' has been created to help victims get emergency support in a safe and discreet way by using the code word 'ANI' (Assistance Needed Immediately) in their community pharmacy. This alerts staff and means that the victim needs an emergency Police response or needs help to contact a domestic abuse specialist support service.

Participating pharmacies will display posters in their window and around the shop to let customers know that they can approach a member of staff to seek help.

When a victim uses the code word or asks for help, the member of staff will ask them to accompany them to a consultation room. They will then check whether the victim is in danger and want the Police to be called. If so, they will be given a phone to dial 999 or they will make the call on the victim's behalf.

Alternatively, if the victim does not need emergency help at that time, the staff member will assist them to contact a national domestic abuse helpline or local support service. They may also contact the Police on the non-emergency 101 number.

The scheme is voluntary and all participating pharmacies, including all Boots stores, will display posters to show victims they can assist.

Merseyside Police want to stress that they will respond to all incidents of domestic abuse, and victims will be dealt with in a sensitive manner. There is also support available to victims through domestic abuse support services across Merseyside, who have still been operating throughout lockdown.

"Victims should not suffer in silence, and I am hoping the Ask for ANI scheme, will provide another way in which victims of domestic abuse can seek help." (Detective Chief Inspector Bev Hyland from Merseyside's Police's Protecting Vulnerable People Unit.)

Healthy Start Vouchers Available

St Helens Children's Centres are promoting the Healthy Start vouchers across St Helens Borough.

The scheme is open if you're pregnant or have children under the age of four and:

- are in receipt of income-based support/job seekers allowance/universal credit
- are 10 weeks pregnant or have a child up to 4 years old.
- are pregnant and under 18.

You can receive 1 voucher for £3.10 per week, for children under 4 years old, 2 vouchers totalling £6.20 per week for babies under 1 year, to purchase milk, fresh, frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables. In addition, you will receive a voucher for Healthy Start vitamins for children up to 4 years and vitamins for pregnant women and women with a child under 12 months.

Application forms for the scheme can be found at:

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>. Paper copies are also available in all Children's Centres.

We understand that some of you might have concerns about what the COVID-19 vaccines contain.

There are no meat derivatives or porcine products, including gelatine, in the Pfizer BioNtech or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines.

NHS



Accessibility or Disruption to Cancer Services that support you



As part of Macmillan's ongoing work in the North West to gather insight from people living with cancer, the Macmillan Engagement Team are interested to hear about the experience of people who have accessed cancer services over the last year.

Macmillan have begun to see how health services are adapting to offer appointments differently. In addition, people have told the organisation that in some instances there has been disruption to services with appointments being cancelled or rearranged.

Please use the link below to share your experience. This will help Macmillan to particularly understand people's lived experience of cancer appointments over the last year.

Go to: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/NWAccessibilityanddisruption/>

(Please note the closing date for the survey is- Monday 8th March)



**For information, support or just someone to talk to,
call 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk**

Don't forget to check out our website and Halton & St Helens VCA's website for more ways to get help and support during this difficult time.

www.healthwatchsthelens.co.uk www.haltonsthelensvca.org.uk

Remember, we're all working from home but the team at Healthwatch St Helens still want to hear your experiences of using health and social care services.

Visit our website: www.healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

Email us at: info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk

Call us on: 0300 111 0007 and leave your name and number so we can call you back.