

Hello Healthwatch members

Happy New Year to you all!

We hope this newsletter finds you well and taking care of yourselves. Hopefully you were able to relax over the Christmas period, although it was very different for all of us this year.

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.

Blood Testing Survey - finding out local people's needs around the Blood Testing Clinics.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, in April 2020 all blood clinics were merged into one at Lowe House. In September 2020 another clinic was introduced in Garswood, to keep up with demand.

St Helens CCG have carried out a review to see which clinics can run in accordance with social-distancing guidelines, in addition to those currently running at Lowe House and Garswood. They also want to find out about local people's needs around blood testing.

To find out which clinics can operate in a Covid-safe way and to complete a short survey to help the CCG to understand your needs, go to:

<https://www.sthelensccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/engagement-involvement-consultation-events-and-other-opportunities/blood-testing-engagement/>

If you would like to book an appointment to have bloods taken, at either Lowe House or Garswood please call **0800 953 0960**.

Here are some ideas to help you, if you need to self-isolate, brought to you by our colleagues in Halton

Self-Isolation Plan

10 days, 10 ways



Have medical contacts and advice ready	01	02	Have 10 days of food or deliveries organised
Have a simple first aid kit and pharmacy delivery arranged if needed	03	04	Caring for others? Plan who will be able to help
Know what financial support may be available	05	06	Remember to look after your mental wellbeing
Plan for keeping fit and healthy	07	08	Understand how to stop the virus spreading at home
Plan for cleaning your home if someone tests positive	09	10	Make arrangements for pet care

#StrongKindSafe

The Eve Appeal - encouraging women to book an appointment for their Cervical Screening.

A recent Eve Appeal survey found that nearly 1 in 3 women who chose not to attend their cervical screening test when invited in the last twelve months did so because of worries about COVID-19.

21% were worried about catching or spreading the virus, and 10% believed their appointment wouldn't go ahead due to the restrictions. 17% didn't want to attend, 13% felt too busy, 13% said it wasn't a priority for them at the time, 17% had had a bad past experience with screening and 15% said it would be too difficult for them to do.

Out of the women surveyed, 28% hadn't attended their screening if invited in the last year. This Cervical Cancer Prevention Week, The Eve Appeal wants to encourage everyone invited for their screening to attend. Anyone with concerns should call their GP beforehand or speak to the Ask Eve nurse service for advice and information.

Cervical cancer is almost wholly preventable with the HPV vaccination programme, cervical screening and good awareness of symptoms.

If you're due, book your cervical screening test this
#CervicalCancerPreventionWeek.

@eveappeal is there to help with any questions or worries on
nurse@eveappeal.org.uk <https://bit.ly/39A2ijl>

What's happening in St Helens?

Do you or someone you know have any experience of cervical screening during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Have you attended for screening and had a poor experience? Have you attended for screening and had a good experience?

Did you choose not to book an appointment because of concerns around COVID-19 or anything else?

You can help local service providers understand what local women are experiencing so they can improve their services.

Email us at: info@healthwatchsthelens.co.uk or call us on: 0300 111 0007 and tell us about your experiences, in confidence.

Chat Together

New digital support group for bowel cancer patients

Chat Together is a free online support group for people living with and beyond bowel cancer. It's a welcoming place to talk to others with bowel cancer and to meet new people. It's a chance to share experiences in a safe, supportive and informal environment.

Chat Together is a chance for patients to get together virtually and support each other from the comfort of your own home, at this time of isolation. You just need a smartphone, tablet or computer with an internet connection and somewhere quiet to sit.

100% of patients who have used the service found it helpful and 100% felt better connected following their chat group. 88% of patients could cope better after the chats.

“Chat Together has given me the opportunity to meet with people in a similar situation to mine, who understand what I’m going through. It’s a safe space where we can share our ups and downs. I’ve met a great bunch of people and it’s been a real lifeline!”

What you can expect

Chats take place once a week, via Zoom, over an eight week period.

You can choose between two Chat Together groups starting on:
Tuesday 26th January 7-8pm *or* Wednesday 27 January 1-2pm

Bowel Cancer UK are hosting a programme of chats throughout 2021 so if these dates don't suit, please register your interest and someone will be in touch.

Chats are hosted by Bowel Cancer UK staff and trained volunteers who've had bowel cancer themselves.

How to sign up

Bowel cancer patients can join up to Chat Together by registering on the website via this link: [Chat Together](#)

Or by visiting www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/how-we-can-help/supportevents/chat-together

Any questions?

If you have any questions about Chat Together, Bowel Cancer UK would love to hear from you. You can get in touch by emailing Sarah Wix, at:

sarah.wix@bowelcanceruk.org.uk



ST HELENS

Maternity Voices

Working in partnership to improve maternity services

Have you recently used or currently using

Whiston Maternity Services?

If the answer is Yes,

then we would like to hear from you!!

We have a Virtual Feedback Session that we would love you to join on Thursday 28th January 19:00+ Drop in & out as you feel able. Chat to Dani (Interim St Helens MVP Chair) & Ann-Marie (St Helens CCG) all about your experience, in a safe space.

If you would prefer to chat on a 1:1 basis or it is easier to just write & email in your experience, then please still get in touch, we want to hear from everyone, however you feel the most comfortable we are here to listen.

Email: Voices.MVP@gmail.com

Twitter: [@CM_MVP_Network](https://twitter.com/CM_MVP_Network)

Your experience will enable the Hospital Trust to develop and improve your local Maternity Services.



How to get your COVID-19 vaccination

If you are over 80 there are three ways you might be contacted to get your vaccination. Please do not try to book a vaccination if you have not received a letter.

1 Using a local GP service: GP services are working together in your area to vaccinate as many people as possible. You may be contacted by a different surgery to the one you usually go to.

2 Local hospital services: You might be contacted to have the vaccination as an inpatient or outpatient.

3 At a vaccination centre: If you live within 30 to 45 minutes of a vaccination centre, and haven't already been vaccinated, you may have received a letter asking you to book an appointment online at www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination. Or if you can't access the NHS website you can **call 119 free of charge**.

If you can't travel to a vaccination centre, or there is another reason you can't book an appointment at the nearest vaccination centre, you can choose to wait until your local GP services contact you if they haven't already. If this is your preferred option – you don't need to do anything now – wait for your GP service to make contact. More locations will become available through www.nhs.uk or 119 in the coming weeks so you could also try there again later.

If you receive a letter and already have an appointment booked to have your vaccination at a local GP service please ignore the letter. There is nothing you need to do and please attend your appointment.

If you have had your first jab, you will be contacted about getting your second.

For more information visit: www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination

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.