

Healthwatch Hartlepool will be holding its latest **Life Long Conditions** event on the 30th November from 10:30am till 1:30pm at the **Centre For Independent Living, Burbank St, Hartlepool**. The event will focus on **Staying Warm, Staying Healthy and Staying Safe**, this winter. Various organisations will be on hand to give advice and information.

A **Free** lunch and refreshments will also be provided. Anyone requiring transport to this event should contact the Healthwatch Hartlepool office on 01429 - 288146.

Dementia Advisory Service

The Bridge, a Dementia Advisory Service based at the Gemini Centre in Villiers Street, Hartlepool, is holding a number of information events during the month of November, that includes;

Dementia Awareness Sessions

Each session lasts around 45 minutes

The dates for the sessions are;

- Fri 17th November 11am
- Wed 22nd November 2pm
- Tues 28th November 3pm
- Mon 4th December 1pm
- Wed 13th December 10am
- Tues 19th December 11am

To book a place call 01429 - 868587

Carers Education Sessions

Do you care for a person living with Dementia?

The Bridge are holding a **Free** information session to support Carers of people living with Dementia on **Wednesday 15th November at 1pm**.

To book a place please call **01429 - 868857**

Coffee Afternoon Wed 7th November.

This is an opportunity to ask any health questions and speak with friendly Dementia advisors over a cuppa.

50+Forum Meeting

The next 50+ Forum meeting is taking place on the 8th November at 1:30pm at St Josephs Court Sheltered Housing Scheme, Victoria Road, Hartlepool. Please contact Healthwatch Hartlepool on **01429 - 288146**

Unhappy with your NHS treatment or care?

On the third Wednesday of every month 9.30am - 12pm, your local I.C.A Advocate will be at the Healthwatch Hartlepool Office, the ORCEL Centre, Wynyard Road, Hartlepool, TS25 3LB

Why not make an appointment or drop in for a chat?

Freephone: 0808 802 3000

Email: ica@carersfederation.co.uk

Tony Leighton
Public Engagement Officer
Healthwatch Hartlepool
The ORCEL Centre
Wynyard Road
Hartlepool TS25 3LB
Tel: (01429) 288146

Future Healthwatch Meetings at ORCEL;
Acute & Elders; Tuesday 14th Nov 10am - 12noon
Primary Health & Social Care; Tuesday 12th Dec 10am - 12noon
Members of the public are welcome to attend!

Healthwatch

Healthwatch Hartlepool are holding a number of community engagement events in November. Members of the public will be able to come along and tell them about their experiences good or bad, of health and social care services.

Headland Library

Tues 7th Nov 10:15am-12noon

Community Hub North

Wed 15th Nov 10.00am-12noon

The Annexe, Wharton Terrace

Wed 22nd Nov 10am-12noon

Central Library

Thurs 23rd Nov 10.15am - 12noon

Hartlepool Hospital

Mon 27th Nov 10am - 12noon

ORCEL, Wynyard Rd

Every Wed - 10am - 12noon

NHS leaders unveil action to boost flu vaccination and manage winter pressures

NHS England, Public Health England, the Department of Health and NHS Improvement have unveiled measures to boost the uptake of flu vaccinations along with package of new contingency actions to respond to pressures on frontline services this winter. Many people with flu show no symptoms, meaning healthcare workers who feel fit and healthy can unwittingly infect vulnerable patients. Getting vaccinated is the best way to stop the spread of influenza and prevent deaths. It can also ease pressures that a heavy flu outbreak would place on services such as doctors' surgeries and busy hospital wards. This action comes alongside a significant expansion of the national flu vaccination programme for key groups, aiming to offer the vaccine to over 21 million people. The national drive marks the start of Stay Well This Winter, an initiative from Public Health England and NHS England to help the most vulnerable people prepare for winter and avoid having to visit hospital due to common winter illnesses.

Professor Paul Cosford, Public Health England's medical director, said: "This year we are offering the nasal spray vaccine to more children than ever. Ensuring children get vaccinated is extremely important not only to protect them from flu but also to stop then spreading it to vulnerable groups they come in to contact with. For someone with a long term health condition like asthma or COPD, flu has the potential to turn very serious and we want as many eligible people as possible to get their flu jab."

Half of adults aged 55 and over have experienced common mental health problems, say Age UK

Nearly half of adults (7.7million) aged 55+ say they have experienced depression and around the same number (7.3 million) have suffered with anxiety, according to new YouGov research for the charity Age UK – revealing the scale of the mental health challenge facing older people in the UK today.

The death of loved ones (36 per cent) ill health of themselves (24%) and financial worries (27 per cent) are the most common triggers for mental health problems, yet worryingly more than a third (35%) say they did not know where to go for help and support. This comes as NHS England has published new guidance – ‘**Mental health in older people**’ – to help GPs spot the tell-tale signs of anxiety and depression, and identify a range of mental health problems including those which specifically affect older people. One in 5 (21 per cent) of the people who reported suffering from anxiety or depression said that their symptoms had in fact worsened as they’d got older. Research indicates feelings of loneliness and isolation could play a major role in the problems older people are facing. Nearly three-quarters of older people (72 per cent) think that having more opportunities to connect with other people (e.g. joining local activity groups) would be the best way to help people who are experiencing mental health problems. As well as having opportunities to connect with other people, more than a third (35 per cent) felt that talking therapy such as counselling would best help older people with anxiety and depression.

Research has found older people respond extremely well to talking therapies; the recovery rates for patients aged over 65 years of age who completed a course of talking therapy through the Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies programme (IAPT) were shown to be positive.

One in 4 older people (25 per cent) said they felt it was more difficult for older people to discuss mental health issues such as anxiety or depression, compared to younger people. The top reasons given were:

- When older people were growing up, society didn’t recognise depression or anxiety as a health condition
- Depression and anxiety used to be seen as a weakness, so it’s not something the older generation are comfortable discussing
- The older generation were taught to approach life with a “stiff upper lip”

Age UK and NHS England are hoping to encourage older people to seek help and are calling on GPs to spot the warning signs.

Age UK runs a range of services to help support older people with mental health problems from Men in Sheds clubs to dedicated counselling services. There is also a free guide called **Your Mind Matters** focusing on improving mental wellbeing which is available on the **Age UK website** and via the **Advice Line on 0800 169 6565**.

Patient Rights

Information about NHS services

You have a right to detailed information on local health services, including quality standards and maximum waiting times. This information can be obtained from your GP, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), local HealthWatch, NHS Trust or hospital-based Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS).

The Department of Health has produced a Code of Practice on Openness in the NHS which states that patients should have access to available information about NHS services and policies, including information on standards under the NHS plan. A charge may be made for this information.

If you require any information from, for example, a CCG or a hospital Trust, you should, under the Code, receive a reply within 20 working days of your request.

The NHS must not discriminate against you when providing information about NHS services. For example, information must be available in formats which blind people can access. NHS Direct can provide interpreters in many different community languages.

You can compare the performance and customer ratings of your local health services on the MyNHS website at **www.nhs.uk**. The site is intended to help you choose where to go for your health services. For example, you can search standards for food quality, staffing, patient safety and mental health.

Health Information Services

You can get information about NHS services from the NHS Choices website at: **www.nhs.uk**. The website gives you information about:

- local medical services, including how to find your nearest dentist, GP, hospital or pharmacist
- how to choose the best hospital or clinic for a particular treatment or procedure
- common diseases and conditions such as diabetes, and guides to common procedures, such as hip replacements
- how to make a complaint about an NHS service
- how to lead a healthier life.

You can also get advice and information about health problems and NHS services through the NHS 111 service.

Information from your health care provider

Health care providers such as doctors, nurses and other practitioners must try to make sure that things are explained to you in a way you understand. If they don't do this, it could be argued, for example, that you have not given proper consent to treatment. If it's difficult for you to communicate for any reason, for example because you don't speak English or you have a disability which affects your communication, they should take steps to present the information in a way you will understand. This could mean, for example, providing a language interpreter or a sign language interpreter.