

# Improving **Health** **and Wellbeing** in Gloucestershire

## **Five ways to wellbeing**

A public mental health message

## **Roads To Recovery**

New integrated countywide drug and alcohol service for Gloucestershire

## **Community Health Trainers**

Helping people to make healthy choices

## **NHS Health Checks**

Identifying health risks early

## **100 days of solitude**

How loneliness and isolation can affect our health and wellbeing

## **Reducing late diagnosis of HIV**

Increasing community awareness

## **Measles is on the increase**

Read more about our local campaign

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For more information on anything in this report please contact the Public Health team on 01452 328 600 or e-mail [alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

## Foreword

from Councillor Dorcas Binns –  
Cabinet Member for Public Health  
and Communities



I welcome this report, which gives a helpful insight into the ways in which public health functions are being embedded in the council as part of the new public health system.

All Directors of Public Health produce an independent report each year to highlight the key issues for the health of the local population. This report clearly demonstrates some of the ways we are focusing on improving and protecting the public's health. It shows how local solutions can be tailored to local problems using the levers at the council's disposal to improve health and reduce health inequalities. By raising awareness of this work, more connections can be made with partners to ensure that we maximise health outcomes for the people of Gloucestershire.

## Welcome

from Alice Walsh -  
Interim Director of Public Health



Improving the public's health and reducing health inequalities is everybody's business and we all have a role to play, whether as professionals, individuals or as part of our families and communities.

The public health system, along with the NHS in England, has changed substantially since last year's annual report and, for the first time in forty years, the statutory responsibility for health and wellbeing has returned to the local authority. As a result, Gloucestershire County Council has a new duty to promote and protect the health of the local population.



**Important changes have taken place in the way that public health services are organised, with local authorities taking on a bigger role.**



The county council is also tasked with leading the new statutory Health and Wellbeing Board, which brings together key partners in Public Health, NHS and Social Care.

As part of these changes, Dr Shona Arora, former Director of Public Health for Gloucestershire, has taken up a new role in the recently formed national organisation, Public Health England. I would like to thank her for her contribution to improving public health in Gloucestershire over the past decade and look forward to working with her in her new role.

While some things have changed substantially since last year, others haven't changed so much. Gloucestershire continues to be one of the healthiest counties in England and yet many people are still suffering avoidable ill health or dying sooner than they should

because of health inequalities. This year also saw a worrying number of people with measles in our county which highlights the fact that we cannot afford to be complacent when it comes to protecting ourselves and others around us from vaccine preventable infectious diseases.

Last year's report provided a comprehensive analysis of health needs and the public health challenges facing us in Gloucestershire, based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (last year's report is available for reference at [www.jsna.gloucestershire.gov.uk/dphannualreports](http://www.jsna.gloucestershire.gov.uk/dphannualreports)).

Since then, the county's Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed to focus on five priority areas for work in 2013/14 based on the health needs identified in our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

These are areas where joint working is required to make a step change in progress, namely:

- reducing obesity
- reducing the harm caused by alcohol
- improving mental health
- improving health and wellbeing into older age
- tackling health inequalities.

This year, I have chosen to focus on some of the ways in which we are working in partnership to respond to those challenges for people across all ages of the life course. This report presents some interesting health facts and tips and includes news and features highlighting some of the evidence based ways in which we are helping to shape health and wellbeing in our county. I hope you find it interesting and informative.

## Recommendations for the next 12 months to help shape health and wellbeing in Gloucestershire

### Over the next year we need to:

**Focus on prevention** – take early action to reduce the burden of disease and reduce preventable early deaths (see page 16 for a feature on measles)

**Target interventions** – based on evidence of need to reduce health inequalities, such as increasing access to targeted stop smoking services for pregnant women (see page 5)

**Add value locally** – by building on the assets we already have. One way we are doing this is by training front line workers to pass on information and advice to help people to make healthier lifestyle choices (see page 8)

**Focus on mental and emotional health and wellbeing** – five simple steps is all it can take to improve our mental wellbeing (see page 26)

**Take different approaches** – we need to work 'with' rather than 'doing to' our communities and to focus on 'strengths', not 'weaknesses'. One way of doing this is through an asset based community development approach (see page 14)

**Listen to customers and stakeholders** – for example, by adopting social marketing techniques to help us be more effective in encouraging people at risk of HIV infection to present earlier for HIV testing (see page 19)

**Work with partners** – to make public health everyone's business (see page 16)



## News



### Kitchen Challenge

“People have said that they gain increased confidence, self-esteem and self-belief.”

Kitchen Challenge enables adults at greatest risk of social exclusion to participate in a life enhancing and challenging opportunity. The sessions take place in various locations across the county, and are supported by Gloucestershire County Council Public Health.

Each challenge lasts for eight weeks and involves structured sessions of cooking, focussed on practical work and visits. This builds up to a celebration dining experience for invited guests. Participants are supported to achieve a diverse range of goals.

As a result of the sessions, people have said that they gain increased confidence, self-esteem and self-belief. This can be a catalyst for change which empowers individuals to take responsibility for their own future. It can therefore have a life changing impact.

## Launch of the Healthy Living Pharmacy programme

Healthy lifestyle advice will soon be available on the high street with the introduction of the county's first ten Healthy Living Pharmacies.



The Healthy Living Pharmacy (HLP) programme is a national initiative which is being rolled out in Gloucestershire with the support of Gloucestershire County Council Public Health, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and the Local Pharmaceutical Committee.

Staff in all ten HLPs are receiving additional training to provide support to customers with making healthy lifestyle choices like stopping smoking, eating healthily and cutting down on alcohol; as well as advice on self care and managing long-term health conditions.

The HLP programme makes use of the wide availability and expertise of pharmacies, which are typically open longer hours than other health services; and don't require customers to pre-book appointments.

Penny Rea, Pharmacist from Drybrook Pharmacy in the Forest of Dean, can see the benefits of the programme for her customers and staff:

“The HLP programme has provided the pharmacy team with a new focus and enthusiasm for our role in improving health and wellbeing; and an opportunity to work with partner agencies to promote health in the community.

The training has extended staff's expertise, and we are now actively engaging with customers around the benefits of healthy lifestyle choices. Our in-house Stop Smoking Service has achieved a 70% quit rate in the last year, and clients tell us they appreciate the flexibility and convenience the pharmacy service offers.”

It is hoped to roll out the programme to more pharmacies in the future.

For more information please contact the Public Health team on 01452 328 600 or e-mail [alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

## News

### Roads To Recovery



Following consultation with stakeholders and service users, a new integrated drug and alcohol recovery service called 'Roads to Recovery' has been launched in Gloucestershire.

The countywide service, provided by Turning Point, was developed in 2012 by Public Health in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Constabulary, service users and district council representatives.

Roads to Recovery offers 24-7 support from hubs in every district with roving vehicles working across Gloucestershire to ensure that support is provided for those that need it most. The service includes harm

reduction/prevention, housing support, structured and unstructured support, all forms of prescribing and criminal justice services. This is a round the clock, round the county service. For the first time all services are at single points across the county with no wrong door for anyone to go through.

For further information please visit [www.turning-point.co.uk/gloucester](http://www.turning-point.co.uk/gloucester)

## Another record year for the stop smoking service

Over 4,000 people (around 80 a week) quit with the help of Gloucestershire NHS Stop Smoking Service last year – another record year for the service.

One quitter from Gloucester decided to climb Ben Nevis to celebrate her success:

“I found quitting with the NHS Stop Smoking service brilliant and have stopped smoking for over a year now. I would not have been able to give up smoking

without them. I'm so grateful for their support. After stopping smoking I decided to climb Ben Nevis - this was something I had wanted to do for 18 years since my last try – now I am so proud I have been successful – it would have been a lot harder if I had still been smoking.”

The NHS Stop Smoking service has over 200 advisers countywide and support is available at a range of locations, including pharmacies, GP practices, dental practices, children's centres and workplaces. Smokers can also drop in to the team's shop at 20 Southgate Street, Gloucester. The service offers a range of flexible, free support including one-to-one or group sessions and access to Nicotine Replacement Therapy.

For further information please phone 0300 421 0040 or visit [www.stopsmokingsupportglos.org.uk](http://www.stopsmokingsupportglos.org.uk)





## Mentalk

MENTALK helps young men develop their emotional literacy. The programme, run by Cheltenham Town Football Club, encourages men to discuss their problems, develop their skills to seek help and identify ways to improve their mental health and wellbeing, whilst addressing the issues of stigma that surround mental health.

Public Health has commissioned MENTALK to be delivered within a classroom environment, followed by further learning through football related activity. Each programme consists of five one hour sessions, covering the specific issues around mental health that young men may face.

Recent evaluation of the programme showed that there was an increased understanding of mental health and a more positive attitude amongst participants towards those who experience mental ill health. Participants who completed the programme also showed more willingness to talk about any emotional difficulties they were experiencing and to ask for help.

Further details are available from [olly.roberts@ctfc.com](mailto:olly.roberts@ctfc.com)

## SAGE

Living in such a rural county, one of the challenges for people in later life is making decisions about driving. Growing older involves many physical changes and some people do not have the good health and mobility that they enjoyed when they were younger. This can make driving more stressful and less enjoyable.

Gloucestershire County Council has a commitment to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads by 40% by 2020. To date, figures for children (0-15) and young road users (16-24) are reducing but figures for older road users killed and seriously injured on our roads are on the increase, in particular those over the age of 70. Older people are more likely to be seriously injured in a crash and are more likely to die from these injuries than younger people.

The unique award-winning SAGE programme – Safer Driving with Age – can support the older driver to take decisions about driving in later life. This has been developed by the Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership with support from Public Health. It is aimed at improving the safety of older drivers by providing practical guidance, support and coaching.

## Love Your Skin

Did you know that malignant melanoma, the most serious type of skin cancer, is the second most common cancer in young people aged 15-34?

The Public Health team has worked with five further education colleges across the county to promote sun awareness and encourage young people to protect their skin from the harmful effects of sunburn.

The 'Love Your Skin' campaign was originally developed by NHS Devon, and has been well received by the students involved in Gloucestershire. Teams of beauty students attended a workshop on sun awareness delivered by the Cheltenham based charity Cobalt. The students were also trained in the use of a UV scanner which can show up signs of skin damage and ageing. They went on to run mini campaigns on campus to pass on what they had learnt to their fellow students.





## Can you help us 'Make Every Contact Count?'

Every day, organisations working across the public sector come into contact with the public and service users; whether it's a health visitor making a home visit or children's centre staff meeting with parents.

The goal of the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) programme is to use these contacts as opportunities to pass on information and advice about making healthy lifestyle choices, such as getting active or quitting smoking. Depending on the individual and the situation, the conversation could be as simple as passing on information about the benefits of healthy lifestyle choices or signposting someone to local services.

Organisations who sign up to the MECC programme will receive training to help them gain the skills,

knowledge and confidence they need to be able to have these conversations and feel able to advise people on making healthy choices. We are planning to roll out MECC in Gloucestershire during 2013/14, and a pilot has already been run with the county's midwifery services.

For more information please contact the Public Health team on 01452 328 600 or e-mail [alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk)



## The Aspire Programme



The Aspire Programme is a unique service for adults who are living with long-term conditions and who face a number of barriers to being in work.

This is an important issue as those who have a long-term condition often face a greater number of barriers to occupation and respond well to specialist intervention rather than the universal approach that Jobcentre Plus provides.

Gloucestershire County Council Public Health funded the Aspire Programme during 2012/13. The programme is delivered by Occupational Therapists from 'People and Places in Gloucestershire CIC', which is an independent social enterprise.

The Aspire Programme offers one-to-one support to individuals to identify their personal goals, strengths

and assets. It also supports them to access opportunities in their community that will build upon these skills.

The individual's journey may include accessing voluntary placements, education, training or gradual entry or re-entry into the workplace. Advice and guidance is an integral part of the service, through individually tailored support that enables people to make informed choices. Clients are actively supported to explore opportunities in their local community; increase their ability to work with others; address the barriers that prevent access to meaningful activity; and develop future opportunities.



**The individual's journey may include accessing voluntary placements, education, training or gradual entry or re-entry into the workplace.**





# Art lift participants hold exhibition

'Arts on referral' programme, based in primary care, supported by bridge funding from Gloucestershire County Council Public Health and partner agencies in 2012/13.

Since 2007 the Gloucestershire Art Lift project has enabled NHS patients with a range of conditions to work with an artist for help with problems such as anxiety and depression, long-term physical health conditions, chronic pain and major life changes such as bereavement.

Although around a third of GP consultations are related to mental health issues, some problems cannot be solved by mental health treatment services. Improving mental wellbeing helps improve symptoms, and one evidence-based way of doing this is through creativity.

Each referral provides ten weekly sessions with an artist, offering a range of visual arts including drawing, painting, printing and mosaic as well as some writing groups. A wide range of patients from all walks of life have benefitted from the project, and many have continued meeting together once they have been through the programme.

Kath was referred to Art Lift by her GP after a sudden illness left her with a debilitating physical condition causing pain and loss of mobility. Attending the weekly sessions gave her a new identity and focus, and helped her to manage her symptoms. After completing Art Lift, Kath moved on to help set up a community art group in Brockworth.

For more information about Art Lift please visit [www.artlift.org](http://www.artlift.org)

## Mental Health First Aid Training



Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a 12 hour intensive course designed to improve knowledge and understanding of key mental health issues, as well as confidence in being able to help someone experiencing mental distress.

The personal and financial cost of mental health problems is huge – around £26 billion to UK businesses alone. Delivering MHFA training, approved by the Royal Society of Public Health, contributes towards improving mental wellbeing and reducing the risk of suicide. During 2011 and 2012 Public Health commissioned a number of MHFA courses to those working with vulnerable people in the voluntary and community sector, as well as Youth MHFA courses to school and college staff working with children and young people.

Jeff, whose wife suffers with chronic depression, took part in one of the two courses provided specifically for carers.

"Everyone who is eligible should go on this course. It has answered a lot of unanswered questions for me, and I found it especially good because of the experiences of other course members. I feel more confident and have a better perspective on my wife's problems, so it will help me in the domestic situation. It will also help me to educate other family members and friends".

MHFA training will continue in 2013/14, as part of our approach to improving mental health and reducing the risk of suicide.



During 2012 a number of LITE sessions – a 3 hour introduction to the full course – have also been provided for organisations undergoing organisational change, including Gloucestershire County Council staff.

For more information please contact the Public Health team on 01452 328 600 or e-mail [alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk)



**Everyone should go on this course. It has answered a lot of unanswered questions for me... I feel more confident and have a better perspective on my wife's problems.**



## HENRY is here!

A healthy start is important for babies and young children. All the small things that a family can do – like sharing a meal and playing in the park – are stepping stones towards a healthy lifestyle for growing children.

HENRY (Health Exercise Nutrition for the Really Young) is a successful scheme that combines prevention and targeted early intervention to tackle child obesity. It brings together five elements that enable babies and young children to flourish: responsive parenting, whole family healthy lifestyles, nutrition, active play and learning, and emotional wellbeing.

HENRY has been running in Gloucestershire since 2011 and to date 152 practitioners have been trained to work in partnership with parents, on a one-to-one basis, to address weight issues and promote healthy lifestyles for the whole family.

**The course was great. I'll be able to work more effectively with individual families to help them achieve their goals.**

Gloucestershire practitioner after completing HENRY course.



The second phase of delivering HENRY is to train early years' workers to deliver informal eight week courses, for groups of parents and carers with young children, within children's centres.

These courses provide a supportive environment for families to learn together, exploring what makes a healthy family lifestyle, sharing ideas and encouraging each other along the way. This scheme is gradually being rolled out in children's centres in areas with high levels of child obesity. 86% of parents who've signed up for a course so far have completed the full eight week programme.

For more information please contact the Public Health team on 01452 328 600 or e-mail [alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

**I've been eating breakfast with my children, turning the TV off, doing more cooking and being more active.**

**I will miss the HENRY course...I feel like I've achieved and learned a lot over the weeks and feel confident to continue a healthy lifestyle for myself and my children.**

Parents after completing Let's Get Healthy with HENRY course in Gloucestershire.

## Feature

## NHS Health Checks

My GP has asked me to make an appointment to see him for a Health Check and I'm worried something might be wrong. Why do I need a Health Check?

The NHS Health Check is a national programme which is commissioned locally by Gloucestershire County Council Public Health. Everyone is at risk of developing heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and kidney disease. This risk increases with age. There are also certain things that will put you at even greater risk such as being overweight, physically inactive, smoking, high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels. The good news is that these conditions can be prevented – even if you have a history of them in your family. This check is part of a new national scheme to prevent the onset of these health problems. Everyone, between the ages of 40 and 74, who has not been diagnosed with the conditions mentioned will be invited for a health check once every five years, so that is why your GP is inviting you to attend.

### Why do I need this check? I feel fine!

The NHS Health Check helps identify potential risks early. By having this check and following the advice of your health professional, you can improve your chances of living a longer and healthier life.

### But don't these conditions run in the family?

If you have a history of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes or kidney disease in your family then you may be more at risk. Taking action now can help you to prevent the onset of these conditions.

### I know what I'm doing wrong, how can the doctor help me?

If you would like help we will work with you to find ways to reach your healthy weight, be more physically active and/or stop smoking. You may be encouraged to change your lifestyle and/or prescribed medication to help you lower the risk.

### If I am assessed as being at 'low risk', does this mean I won't develop these conditions?

It is impossible to say that someone will or won't develop one of these conditions. But taking action now can help you lower your potential risk.

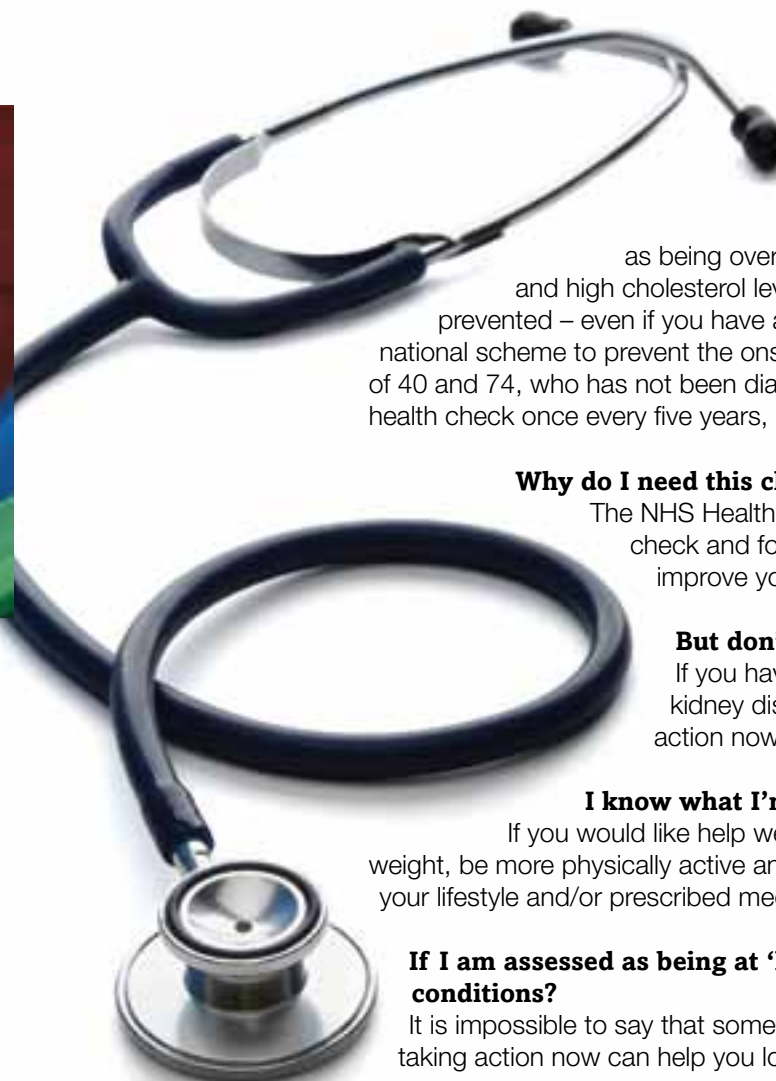
### I'm outside the age range for this check but have concerns about my health. What should I do?

If you are outside the range but concerned about your health you should contact your GP.

### I'm within the age range but haven't been invited for a check. What should I do?

Speak to your GP when you next visit the surgery.

For more information please contact the Public Health team on 01452 328 600 or e-mail [alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk)





## Feature

# Asset Based Community Development

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is an approach that identifies existing local strengths or 'assets' – whether that be physical or individual skills – to build and empower communities.

ABCD takes a different approach to the conventional focus on people's needs and problems. This can help to identify different solutions, which can be more sustainable.

Within Gloucestershire, Barnwood Trust and a number of public and voluntary sector organisations are taking an ABCD approach to building inclusive and welcoming communities.

In October 2012, the Multi-Agency Dementia Partnership in Gloucestershire was successful in securing national funding to support local capacity building projects. Gloucestershire County Council Public Health also contributes funding to this partnership.

Community Builders will be employed in eight areas across the county where Barnwood Trust and partners are currently working. The areas taking part in the first stage of developing communities are:

- Moreton-in-Marsh
- Cam
- Gloucester, Matson
- Cheltenham, The Elms
- Cheltenham, Hesters Way
- Tewkesbury
- Cinderford
- Stroud

By finding out what is important to people within their community, we can support them by providing advice, practical support and small amounts of money to bring people together to do what they enjoy, work on what they care about, and share their skills and strengths. Barnwood Trust will offer specialist support to build the confidence and capacity of community members who might otherwise be isolated.

For more information please visit [www.barnwoodtrust.org](http://www.barnwoodtrust.org)

 **By finding out what is important to people within their community, we can support them.**



## Feature

# How the Community Health Trainer Service helped me

Community health trainers offer one to one support, information and guidance to people wanting to make changes to their lifestyles.

### Where did you first hear about the Community Health Trainers?

A Community Health Trainer came to a group activity that I attend. She talked about what the Community Health Trainer Service did, and about how you can improve your health by doing things such as eating healthily and doing more physical activity.

### Why did you get in touch with the Community Health Trainer Service?

I wanted to increase my levels of physical activity and build up my confidence. I also needed someone to help motivate me to do more physical activity. I like walking but as I live in a rural area I was concerned about walking on my own.

### What did the Community Health Trainer do to help you?

We discussed what may be the best ways for me to achieve the goals I wanted. She discussed a range of health issues with me and helped me set a series of mini goals. I had an exercise bike at home but hadn't used it for quite a while. One of my mini goals was to do 10 minutes on the bike and build up from there. I am now regularly doing at least 20 minutes on the bike!



Small changes, big difference!



The Community Health Trainer also informed me about the Walk4Health initiative that was running in my area. I hadn't heard of it before and thought this might help me as I wanted to do more walking.

### What did you achieve from working with the Community Health Trainer?

I have become more motivated to exercise, have improved my fitness and have lots more energy. I have met new people and have made new friends. Working with a Community Health Trainer has also helped me to improve my emotional wellbeing and confidence.

I'm a completely different person to what I was this time last year – I am fitter and have regained my confidence!

### What other services have you used or become aware of due to seeing a Community Health Trainer?

I didn't know about the Walk4Health initiative until my Community Health Trainer told me about it. I was very interested in it and when I attended the health walk I knew that I would like to become a Walk Leader. The Community Health Trainer asked if I would like to train to be a Walk Leader and as I said yes, she organised training for a group of us.

As a Walk Leader I do two - eight hour long walks a week, sometimes as leader and others as part of the group. I helped set up a local weekly walk which averages about eight people. After the walk we have tea and coffee and socialise.

For more information please visit [www.gloshealthtrainers.nhs.uk](http://www.gloshealthtrainers.nhs.uk)



## Feature

# MEASLES

## in Gloucestershire

From October 2011 to May 2013 there have been 96 confirmed cases of measles in Gloucestershire.

This represents a significant increase on previous years where on average five cases of measles were confirmed each year. The majority of the cases appear to be in children aged five to 16 years old but some adults have been affected too. It is thought that the rise in the number of cases of measles is largely due to parents not getting their child vaccinated with the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination. It is estimated that there are currently 5,932 young people aged 10-16 in Gloucestershire who have not received both doses of MMR.

The MMR vaccine is safe. There has been some controversy about whether the MMR vaccine might cause autism or bowel disease, following a study published in 1998. However this study has since been completely discredited. Subsequent studies during the last eight years have found no link between the MMR vaccine and autism or bowel disease.

Measles is caused by a very infectious virus causing cold like symptoms, a rash and high fever. Approximately one in every 15 children will develop more serious complications such as ear and chest infections, fits, diarrhoea and brain damage. The safest and most effective way to prevent measles is to give children two doses of the MMR vaccination, as part of the routine child immunisation programme. The MMR is offered to all children at 13 months and again between the ages of three and a half and five years.

If you are unsure if your child has received both doses of MMR, further information can be found in your child's red book or through your GP practice. If your child has missed a dose of MMR please contact your GP or Health Visitor who will be able to arrange an appointment.

## Public Health is everyone's business

The move of Public Health out of the NHS into Gloucestershire County Council from April 2013 has been heralded as a return of public health back to its roots. The move back to local government presents opportunities to build upon the existing work on health inequalities and the wider determinants of health in areas such as spatial planning, transport, community safety and housing.

However, it is important to recognise that working in a two-tier authority can present some challenges in terms of the logistics and resources of being located within one authority and working with another six. Although the discretionary services and additional capacity to work on public health issues varies between district councils, the two-tier system in Gloucestershire potentially provides a large resource to work on public health issues. In Gloucestershire, there is a strong history of joint working with the county and district councils and examples of some of the projects are listed below:

**Forest of Dean** Radon testing in homes  
**Gloucester** British Heart Foundation 'Hearty Lives' project  
**Tewkesbury** Exercise on referral scheme with local GPs  
**Cheltenham** Promoting uptake of sport and physical activity with disabled young people  
**Stroud** Kitchen Challenge social prescribing project  
**Cotswolds** Play and creative sessions for children at South Cerney Barracks

We need to make the most of our new opportunities for joint working to improve health and reduce health inequalities across Gloucestershire.

## Feature

## Providing public health support to the commissioning of healthcare

As part of the recent health and social care reforms, the responsibility for commissioning the majority of healthcare for Gloucestershire residents has moved to Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG). The GCCG is a clinically-led member organisation of all General Practitioners (GPs) in the county.

As part of its role the GCCG has a duty to obtain appropriate advice from professionals who have a broad range of experience in the protection and improvement of the public's health. Part of the role of Gloucestershire County Council Public Health is to support the commissioning of healthcare in a number of ways. Gloucestershire County Council therefore has a duty to offer Public Health advice to the GCCG.

Gloucestershire County Council Public Health is helping the GCCG to ensure that the healthcare it commissions meets the needs of residents and also helps to address any differences in health and social care outcomes amongst various vulnerable population groups such as:

- older people
- children and young people
- people from minority ethnic groups
- people with disabilities (physical and mental)
- people living in areas of deprivation.

For more information please contact the Public Health team on 01452 328 600 or e-mail [alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:alice.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

## An example of joint working: Quality Premium – Weight Management

Adult weight management has been identified by Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group as one of its three priorities under the 'Quality Premium' incentive scheme for 2013-14.

GCCG and Gloucestershire County Council Public Health are working in partnership to develop community based weight management services for adults at increased health risk in each locality. This will build on existing weight management services but will also deliver new services in parts of the county where there is unmet need. Services will be piloted and evaluated by March 2014 and outcomes of the pilot, including the views of service users, will be used to inform future service development.

This work, along with a range of obesity prevention measures, will also contribute to delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Board priority to reduce obesity in Gloucestershire.



## Feature

# Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) brings together the latest information on the health and wellbeing of people in Gloucestershire. It also looks at the factors which influence health and wellbeing, including income, employment, environment and housing.

The JSNA can provide intelligence to support commissioning over the whole of Gloucestershire by helping us to understand more about our customers and service users, thus ensuring that services meet the needs of our community.

**JSNA** in Gloucestershire



How many people over 65 are there in Gloucestershire?

How do cancer rates compare with the national average?

How satisfied are local people with where they live?

What is the percentage of obese children in reception?

## Gloucestershire JSNA

The place to go for information on health and wellbeing.

- Data on health priorities by topic and locality.
- Interactive iJSNA incorporating over 400 indicators.
- Searchable JSNA library.

<http://jsna.gloucestershire.gov.uk>

### Accessing the Gloucestershire JSNA

The Gloucestershire JSNA is available online at: <http://jsna.gloucestershire.gov.uk>  
Key features of the JSNA website include:

- the iJSNA - a searchable database of over 400 health and wellbeing indicators at county, locality and GP practice levels;
- the JSNA library containing relevant health reports, publications, research and presentations;
- sites for health and lifestyle issues, such as smoking, weight management and sexual health.

### Who should use the JSNA?

The JSNA can be accessed by the public and professionals, including those working in health and social care, statutory and non-statutory organisations and other organisations collaborating in the commissioning process.

### An evolving tool

The JSNA will be continually developed and updated. Future versions of the JSNA will enable information to be captured on local assets and the views of service users.

## Feature

# Early Diagnosis of HIV



The world first began to hear about HIV and AIDS in the 1980s. The last thirty years has brought a much clearer understanding of how to test and treat this disease.

When detected early, therapy can now usually slow the progression of the virus so that people can expect a near normal life expectancy.

However, at the moment almost half of adults newly diagnosed with HIV are diagnosed after the point at which they should have started treatment. Along with increased vulnerability to illnesses and reduced life expectancy, those diagnosed late have a tenfold increased risk of dying within a year of diagnosis compared to those diagnosed early. Those who remain undiagnosed also carry an increased risk of onward transmission.

Great steps have been made over the last 10 years to promote the early diagnosis of HIV. These include the offer of HIV testing to everyone attending a Genitourinary Medicine (GUM) clinic, testing within antenatal services and testing specifically targeted groups known to be at higher risk of HIV.

Increasing awareness in the community about HIV, including testing and reducing missed opportunities for earlier diagnosis of HIV, is a priority for the

Gloucestershire Sexual Health Strategic Partnership. In Gloucestershire the offer of HIV testing within GUM services is taken up by 80% of people attending clinics.

In the early stages of infection, as the body works to fight the virus, some people who are infected with HIV will experience a short flu-like illness which could last up to four weeks. Most commonly this would include a sore throat, high temperature and a body rash; other symptoms could be muscle pain, swollen glands, tiredness and joint pain. After these initial symptoms disappear, HIV may not cause any noticeable problems for some years.

Given that these symptoms can be caused by conditions other than HIV, it can be missed. Therefore people who know themselves to be at risk of HIV, regardless of symptoms, should get an HIV test as soon as possible.

Details of where to get an HIV test can be found at [www.sexhelpglos.nhs.uk](http://www.sexhelpglos.nhs.uk) or [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)



## Feature

# What is Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning?

Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning (GHLL) is an accreditation scheme that builds on the contribution which schools and colleges are making to the health and wellbeing of their children and young people, through the National Healthy Schools Scheme.

GHLL provides a universal standard for everyone and a means of targeting resources at those children and young people who most need it.

GHLL is commissioned by Gloucestershire County Council Public Health and provides evidence based interventions in schools which contribute towards the new Public Health Outcomes, which are now the responsibility of the local authority.

GHLL was launched in July 2012 and since then 127 schools have registered and begun the process of reviewing their Health and Wellbeing provision. This review allows each school or college to assess how they are doing in the following five key areas:

1. School/College –
  - a) Ethos and Environment
  - b) Promoting Health and Wellbeing
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Healthy Eating
4. Physical Health and Wellbeing
5. Emotional Health and Wellbeing

On completion of the review the school/college chooses two areas for targeted intervention work, one of which must include 'Healthy Eating', because of the growing trend in obesity in children. Results from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP), which involves weighing and measuring all

children in Reception Year and Year 6, have shown an upward trend in overweight children in Year 6 in Gloucestershire and across the country.

Schools are encouraged to use data from the Online Pupil Survey (OPS) when choosing the other area for targeted intervention. The OPS was first undertaken in 2006 and since then has been carried out every two years in over 90% of schools in Gloucestershire for pupils in Years 4, 6, 8, 10 and more recently Year 12. The survey includes questions about topics such as healthy eating, physical activity, smoking, alcohol, drugs, sexual health and relationships, bullying and other lifestyle issues.

### Examples of programmes being delivered in schools include:

**'Whole school food overview'** for Years 1 to 6. This is a series of lessons about Diet and Health, Food Production, Social and Emotional Aspects of Food, Cookery Skills and Food Safety. The Emotional Aspects of Food helps children to understand what causes overweight and the importance of a balanced diet and to understand the influence that the media and advertising has on what we eat and how we view ourselves.

**'Social norms'** approach to behaviour change is based on the fact that behaviour and attitudes are the



most influential factors in shaping a young person's behaviour. Young people tend to overestimate the amount of risky behaviour (bullying, substance misuse, sexual behaviour etc) their peers are engaged in and underestimate the safe and protective behaviours of the peer group. We need to address these misconceptions by focusing young people on the fact that only a minority engage in risky behaviours and the majority exhibit healthy and positive behaviours. By correcting the misconceptions of norms of behaviours we are more likely to change the actual norms.

**'Getting Court'** delivered in conjunction with the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire is designed for use in secondary schools or colleges. It is a series of lessons explaining the workings of the Crown Court system of England and Wales, alongside some innovative lessons to challenge pupils (e.g. to question if they would speak up for justice, no matter what the risk) as well as a host of other related learning opportunities.

**'Bullybeat'** a songwriting charity that offers unique one-day workshops and wider performance programmes, It provides children with the opportunity

to sing, write lyrics, perform and record their ideas both individually and as a team, evaluating their own progress and actively supporting the progress of their friends every step of the way. This activity will help a school achieve one of the criteria necessary to become a BIG AWARD organisation. Accreditation is dependent on a school achieving the following criteria:

- a bullying intervention focus group
- a bullying intervention policy that complies with BIG's standards
- regular staff training
- involving parents and carers in bullying intervention work
- a peer support/peer mentoring system
- regular bullying awareness raising activities
- recording and monitoring
- a short, written testimonial from a young person

Nineteen schools are currently working towards their BIG anti-bullying accreditation.

For more information please visit [www.ghll.org.uk](http://www.ghll.org.uk)

“By correcting the misconceptions of norms of behaviours we are more likely to change the actual norms.”



## Tips

# Easy ways with fruit & veg to help you meet your 5-a-day

Fruit and vegetables provide us with vitamins, minerals and fibre and are low in fat and calories. So they make excellent snacks and may help towards being a healthy weight and protect against serious conditions including heart disease and cancer.

Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and 100% juice all count – but it is important to remember that a glass of juice only counts as one portion no matter how much you drink, as it contains very little fibre. Pulses such as chick peas and haricot beans can count towards your 5 A DAY – but only as one portion.

**Keep the cost down** – it's much cheaper to buy fresh fruit and vegetables when they are in season. Local markets often have a wide selection to choose from and you may pick up some locally grown produce at affordable prices.

**Healthy snacks** – keep the fruit bowl visible and accessible at home so the whole family can tuck in. You may want to keep fruit and vegetable sticks to hand at work so that you can reach for them when you are hungry.



## Eat less salt and fat

Most of us have too much saturated fat in our diets. You can cut down on salt by checking the labels of the convenience food you buy as these often have a lot of salt. Cook rice, pasta, and potatoes without salt and try not to add salt to food on your plate. You can easily reduce your fat intake by eating less red meat - why not have regular weekly fish nights instead.



## Tips

# Quit smoking

The health benefits of quitting smoking are immediate.

After 20 minutes, your blood pressure and pulse return to normal. After 24 hours, your lungs start to clear. After three days you can breathe more easily and your energy increases. Keep it up and you're adding years to your life.

Stopping smoking is not easy but support is available from our stop smoking service. It will also help if you make a list of reasons why you want to stop smoking and avoid situations in which you are most likely to want to smoke. Just take one day at a time and keep reminding yourself of the money you are saving!

For further information please phone **0300 421 0040** or visit [www.stopsmokingsupportglos.org.uk](http://www.stopsmokingsupportglos.org.uk)

## Get a sexual health test

Many people don't notice any symptoms when they have a sexually transmitted infection (STI), such as Chlamydia or gonorrhoea.

You can't tell by looking at someone whether they've got an infection, so it's important to get a check-up if you've ever had unprotected sex. Getting tested and treated for STIs is easier than you think and most infections can be cured.

Further information is available at [www.sexhelpglos.nhs.uk](http://www.sexhelpglos.nhs.uk)

## Be more active

- Getting out into the fresh air walking or on your bike burns calories and gets your heart pumping. It can also lift your mood, put a smile on your face and improve your general health and wellbeing – can a car journey do all that?
- The benefits of physical activity aren't limited to losing weight. Even if you're slim, you'll still get health benefits from exercising. Even a small amount of regular activity can lower the risk of developing major diseases by up to 50%. It can also improve your mood and help relieve stress. Try building in a small amount of activity into each day – why not walk to work? It burns as many calories as jogging over the same distance and is good for your heart and lungs.





## A clearer picture of health in Gloucestershire

Overall the health of people in Gloucestershire is good and generally better than the England average; however like everywhere, the health of some of our communities is not improving at the same rate as others. Gloucestershire County Council Public Health work to reduce these health inequalities.

# Gloucestershire Health Facts

Did you know?

## Premature mortality

from all cancers has decreased by 23% between 1993 and 2010

## 82 out of every 100

people over 65 are in good health - higher than the national average

## Over 12,000

free condoms are provided each year to under 25 year olds as part of the c-Card free condom distribution scheme

## The rate of injuries due to falls

in people aged 65 and over in Gloucestershire (1,360 out of every 100,000 people) is significantly lower than the England value of 1,665.'

## Over 4,000

people have quit smoking with the help of Gloucestershire NHS Stop Smoking Service

## 18%

of Year 6 children are obese, which is lower than the national average

## Gloucestershire has an ageing population,

By 2035, people aged over 65 will increase from 19% to 28% of the population

But

An estimated **1 in 4** adults are obese

Between 2002/03 and 2009/10,

alcohol attributable hospital admissions increased by **69%**

**37,967** households are considered to be in fuel poverty.

There are still around **900** deaths from smoking-related diseases each year

**12,365** older people are in contact with family/friends/neighbours less than once a month

**18,300** children are living in poverty

**Only 14%** of adults are physically active

## News

# Reducing the impact of loneliness and isolation on our health and wellbeing

Chronic loneliness – when someone feels lonely all or most of the time – has a significant and detrimental impact on our physical and mental health and wellbeing.

In Gloucestershire we have begun to map our picture of loneliness and isolation, supported by resources from the 'Campaign to End Loneliness'. Results so far indicate that there could be more than 10,000 people over 65 at risk of loneliness and isolation in Gloucestershire.

A new national survey of over 1,000 older people showed that people aged over 65 spend, on average, more than six waking hours alone every day. This equates to a significant 99 days a year.

The survey also found that 24% reported feeling lonely 'some or most of the time' and 1 in 5 of respondents aged over 75 could go a whole weekend without seeing or speaking to another person.

We can help to prevent or reduce loneliness and isolation by:

- raising awareness within communities and agencies in contact with older people most at risk
- providing practical help and resources, such as improving transport and access to services
- helping people to maintain their social and community connections
- helping people to plan for future life events that are associated with loneliness and depression, and providing support when they occur.



## British Red Cross and Mears Safe at Home team up to support Gloucestershire people

The British Red Cross and Mears Safe at Home have launched an exciting new project in Gloucestershire aimed at reducing social isolation and helping people become safer in their own homes. This is commissioned by Public Health.

The Positive Steps service helps people of all ages make practical and lifestyle changes to keep them safe and well. The service combines the expertise of Red Cross volunteers and Mears Safe at Home staff to reduce obvious safety risks, such as loose carpets, as well as personal risk factors, such as disability or social isolation, which can affect people's confidence and independence.

Anyone in Gloucestershire who would like help to improve their safety and wellbeing at home can contact the service to book an initial visit. People can either refer themselves or be referred by other support agencies.



# Tips **Five steps to mental wellbeing**

## 1 **Connect**

Connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing those relationships.

## 2 **Be active**

You don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find the activity that you enjoy, and make it a part of your life.

## 3 **Keep learning**

Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and renewed confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike?

## 4 **Give to others**

Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks.

## 5 **Take notice**

Be more aware of the present moment, including your feelings and thoughts, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness 'mindfulness', and it can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

## **Cut down on alcohol**

Many of us like to unwind with a nice glass of something after a long day. However, the odd glass in the evening can quickly become two or three regular glasses most evenings and the cash and calories can build up. Regularly drinking over the recommended guidelines can lead to serious health problems, from liver damage to a greater risk of getting cancer or having a heart attack.

One in four people in Gloucestershire drink alcohol at levels that are hazardous or harmful to their health. If you are worried, you can check how much you drink by visiting [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life), which has plenty of tips to help you cut down and even a free drinks tracker app you can download to help you keep track of how much you are drinking.

## **Know your body**

One in three people in England is diagnosed with cancer at some time in their life. Cancer usually affects older people, but it can occur at any age.

Detecting most cancers early means that treatment is more likely to be successful. Sometimes, noticing a small change, like a lump, changes to a mole, or unexplained weight loss, can be early signs – so get yourself checked out! You may also be asked to have an NHS screening or health check – it is important that you attend, to make sure that you are doing everything you can to look after yourself.

## 2014 Calendar of health topics

### January

**31st** National Bug Busting Day (headlice)  
Love Your Liver Month

### February

**1st** National Wear Red Day  
**4th** World Cancer Day  
**14th** Healthy Relationships Day  
National Healthy Heart Month

### March

**12th** National No Smoking Day  
Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

### April

**7th** World Health Day  
Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

### May

**12th – 18th** Mental Health Awareness Week  
National Sun Awareness Week  
National Dementia Awareness Week  
National Walking Month

### June

**9th – 15th** Men's Health Week  
Bike Week  
National Falls Awareness Week  
Carers Week  
Diabetes Week  
National Breastfeeding Awareness Month

### July

**1st – 7th** National Childhood Obesity Week  
**14th** Disability Awareness Day  
**24th** National Samaritans Awareness Day

### August

**1st – 7th** World Breastfeeding Week  
Learning Disabilities Week

### September

**10th** World Suicide Prevention Day  
**16th – 22nd** National Sexual Health Week  
**17th – 23rd** National Cholesterol Week  
**23rd – 29th** Rural Health Week

### October

**1st** International Day of Older People  
**10th** World Mental Health Day  
Breast Cancer Awareness Month  
Stoptober – nationwide month long quit smoking campaign

### November

**7th** National Stress Awareness Day  
**14th** World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Day  
**19th – 25th** National Road Safety Week  
**30th** Carers' Rights Day  
National Alcohol Awareness Week  
Bowel Cancer Awareness Month  
Lung Cancer Awareness Month  
Men's Health Month and Movember – prostate and testicular cancer awareness

### December

**1st** World Aids Day  
Stay Warm and Well campaign  
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month  
Christmas Drink/Drive campaign

Dates given where known

# Letters

## NATIONAL CHILD MEASUREMENT PROGRAMME



I received a letter from the NHS to say...

I received a letter from the NHS to say that my child was significantly above the healthy weight range for his age. They advise that my child should not be put on a diet so what do you suggest I give him to eat to help him lose weight?



Making lifestyle changes is not easy...

Making lifestyle changes is not easy and habits can be hard to break, but there are things you can do that have been proven to work by families who have tried them. Whatever their weight, it is important that children eat properly and do plenty of physical activity to build a healthy body.

Not being active means our bodies don't burn off enough fat which leads to gaining excess weight.

- Get them running around after school instead of sitting down in front of the TV.
- Get them up and about after eating, moving around helps digestion.
- Reduce the amount of time your child spends in front of the TV or computer screen to 2 hours maximum per day.
- Try and find an activity that you can all do together at the weekends.

It is important that children have regular meals which are made up of a variety of different foods so they don't miss out on essential nutrients. There is no need to offer an overweight child different meals from the rest of the family.

- Try and be a healthy role model – think about your own eating habits.
- Eat together whenever you can and sitting at the table is better for your digestion.
- Why not involve your child in the preparation and cooking of a meal – besides learning about different foods they are more likely to appreciate what they are eating.
- Breakfast is really important for children to give them the energy they need to start the school day so don't let them skip it!
- Try and include a portion of fruit and vegetables with every meal to be sure your child eats the recommended five portions a day.
- Cut down on snack foods such as crisps, biscuits, cakes and pastries as they are often high in fat, sugar and calories.

Swapping sugary snacks and drinks for ones that are lower in sugar can really make a difference to a child's calorie intake for example:

- Diluted fruit juice is better than fizzy drinks or squash.
- Fresh fruit, carrot sticks or bread sticks are better than sugary biscuits or sweets.
- Swap to cereals which are low in sugar or try toast and fruit instead.

For more information visit: [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) or call 0300 123 456



# Letters

## MENTAL HEALTH



I'm not sure what to do about my friend...

I'm not sure what to do about my friend. She is 15 and in the same year as me at school in Gloucester and we have been friends since the beginning of secondary school. She has been off school quite a lot over the last year and when we were having a sleepover a few weeks ago I noticed that she had some scars and cuts on her legs. She told me that she sometimes cuts herself when she is feeling stressed out, but that she is fine now and asked me not to tell anyone. I told her that she can talk to me if she feels worried or upset.

Since then she has seemed fine and we haven't talked about it, but last week she was not at school. I texted her to find out what was wrong and she texted me saying that she feels really down and everyone would be better off without her. Also when I looked on her Tumblr blog I saw that she had re-blogged a lot of negative images about depression and suicide. I don't know what to do because I am worried she might do something serious, but I don't want to get her into trouble or for her to be angry with me for telling.



It's really good your friend has you...

It's really good that your friend has you to help her, because sometimes when we are young it can feel as if problems will never go away and can't be helped.

I do understand that you don't want to break her confidence but at the same time, in a way, when someone tells you how they are feeling they are asking for help. I think that you should talk this through with an adult who knows both of you and who you trust – one of your parents or one of the staff at school. If you know the school nurse, she would be a good person to talk to.

Self-harm can be a way some people use to try to manage difficult emotional feelings. Although many people self harm with no intention of suicide, what you have heard and seen from your friend suggests that she may be at risk of suicide.

What you can do without breaking her confidence is encourage her to seek help. Ideally her GP would be able to assess how she is feeling and get the right help for her and you could offer to go with her. You can also give her the following numbers:

**Samaritans** offer 24 hour help for people in distress, and they do not have to be suicidal to ring 08457 90 90 90 or email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org).

**Teens in Crisis** is a Gloucestershire based helpline which will help you or your friend find support, but does not offer counselling 01594 546117, or email [admin@teensincrisis.org.uk](mailto:admin@teensincrisis.org.uk).

**Rethink Gloucestershire Self Harm Helpline** is open on Monday and Friday evenings, 4-9.30 pm as well as Saturdays and Sundays from 5.30-11pm. 0808 801 0606. They also offer a texting service on 075 37410022.

**Young Minds** also offer web based advice and information for young people and their friends 0808 802 5544 9.30 am – 4pm, or email [help@getconnected.org](mailto:help@getconnected.org) Website [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

You could offer all these contact numbers to your friend by email or text if you don't want to talk to her directly. You can also use them yourself, as it can be very stressful when you are worried about a friend.



## Letters FUEL BILLS



My father has been struggling to pay his fuel bills...

My father has been struggling to pay his fuel bills and as a consequence he is not using his heating when he should. He is an 82 year old widower living in his own home and is too proud to ask for help, but I know there must be some as I keep hearing adverts on the local radio that mention support for heating and other things. Please can you advise where he can get some advice and support?



**I suggest that you ring the Warm and Well Advice line...**

I suggest that you ring the Warm and Well Advice line on behalf of your father. They will make a home visit to take a look at his property and give advice on how he can lower his gas and electricity bills. They can measure how much energy his appliances are using with an electricity monitor and suggest ways to lower his electricity bills.

They can also link him up with other partner organisations who can help him to assess his wider income to see if this could be improved and look at how he pays for his fuel to see if switching tariffs or suppliers will save him money. If his boiler is old he may be eligible for a grant to replace it, which will reduce his fuel bill. The adviser from the Warm and Well Advice line can help him to apply for any grants he is eligible for towards heating or insulation measures. It is a free and impartial advice line **0800 500 3076** Monday to Friday 9.00am -5.00pm.

## CANNABIS



I'm 19 and I've been smoking cannabis for several years...

I'm 19 and I've been smoking cannabis for several years. I used to just smoke on weekends with my mates but recently I've started doing it on my own as well and smoking it on a daily basis. I'm feeling disinterested in my day-to-day life a lot of the time and sometimes I feel a bit edgy. My mates say it's harmless and doesn't cause problems – are they right?



**Many people believe that cannabis is a harmless drug...**

Many people believe that cannabis is a harmless drug, but current research suggests otherwise. Here is some important information which you should strongly consider and also tell your friends.

You may be familiar with some of the better known problems: of its negative effects on self motivation, memory, the ability to concentrate and to think. But there is a growing body of evidence linking cannabis use with the development and worsening of mental health conditions. The use of cannabis and particularly the stronger strains (such as Skunk) is strongly associated with apparently healthy people experiencing unwelcome or strange thoughts or beliefs, paranoia and hallucinations.

The likelihood of having bad experiences increases the more you smoke. It is said that cannabis is not addictive and it is not physically addictive like heroin or alcohol, but a potentially strong psychological dependence can develop – especially in individuals who use it on a daily basis.

For more information you can visit FRANK: **www.talktofrank.com**. If you have problems reducing or stopping your use on your own, then you really should seriously consider seeking professional help. Your local drug service will be able to help (Turning Point **0300 1231512**).

## Letters ALCOHOL



I am a 34 year old woman, working and own my house...

I am a 34 year old woman, working and own my house. I have two teenage children at school. Every evening my partner and I share a bottle or two of good red wine. We both enjoy this and it takes the edge off the day. I have recently seen a leaflet saying this could be a problem for my health when I am older. Is this true?



**You describe quite a common scenario...**

You describe quite a common scenario, but you really should consider the impact this could have on yourself and your family.

The current guidelines recommend that to reduce alcohol related risk to health, men should limit their intake to 3-4 units of alcohol per day and women should limit their intake to 2 -3 units of alcohol per day. A 750ml bottle of red wine with an alcohol content of 13% contains 9.8 units. So, even if you only share one bottle each evening, both you and your partner are drinking more than the guidelines recommend.

Drinking may help you wind down in the evenings but it could actually make you more stressed overall – and this will have a knock on effect on those around you. Also, drinking to deal with day-to-day problems can lead to dependence. You will find that gentle exercise is a far healthier and more effective way of taking the edge off the day.

In the longer term, regularly drinking to excess increases the risk of you developing significant health problems including high blood pressure, diabetes, liver damage (including cirrhosis and cancer), heart disease and several cancers.

It's also worth considering that alcohol prevents you from getting the right kind of sleep – it can leave you feeling more sluggish and add to your daily pressures.

You don't have to cut out alcohol entirely to be healthy.

Try to stay within the recommended daily amounts and perhaps consider not drinking alcohol on some days or limiting your intake to one small glass of wine with your evening meal.

You can find more information at **www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/cutting-down-alcohol.aspx** or if you're worried you can speak to your GP. If you have difficulty cutting down you could seek advice from your local drug and alcohol service, (Turning Point on **0300 1231512**).

PS. Did you know that each bottle of red wine will contain roughly 600 calories; so if you share two bottles in an evening, that's nearly one third of the recommended daily calorie intake for a woman and over one quarter of that for an average man; you might want to ask, are you doing enough exercise to burn this off?

# Everything you need to know about the flu jab!

## Pregnant?

The flu jab will not harm your baby – in fact it protects both of you.

**Get the jab.**

## Over 65?

You need a flu jab every year as the virus changes.

**Get the jab.**

## Health condition?

Getting the flu can be more serious if you have asthma, diabetes, or a heart, chest, liver or kidney problem.

**Get the jab.**

**FLU  
SAFE**  
GET THE JAB

## H1N1

The flu jab will protect you from the H1N1 virus.

**Get the jab.**

## It's safe!

The flu jab can't give you flu, and the jab is perfectly safe.

**Get the jab.**

## Weakened immune system?

Flu can be fatal if you are already suffering from a weak immune system.

**Get the jab.**

## Are you a carer?

Get a free jab if you receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer of a person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill.

**Get the jab.**

**FLU  
FACT**

Flu can be a really serious illness

To book your free jab, contact your GP today.

[www.nhs.uk/flu](http://www.nhs.uk/flu)

**NHS**