

We want to hear your views about Health & Social Care in Wirral - Listen. Connect. Share.

BRIDGE Forum notes for Wednesday 9th April 2025 11am – 12:30pm

The purpose of the BRIDGE Forum is to come together to share updates, themes, and regular information about Wirral Health & Social Care services, giving a voice to all sectors. A place that is shared with Community, Health & Social Care representatives.

if you'd like to join-in, share information, receive notes or speak at future meetings, or want to know more about the BRIDGE Forum, which takes place monthly each second Wednesday, please email us spare5@healthwatchwirral.co.uk.

Guest Speakers

1. Stella Ajuwa, Wirral Council RE: Direct Payments for Carers

Stella joined to talk about changes to Direct Payments. Direct Payments falls under Key Priority 2 of the Wirral Carer Strategy and focuses on Carers' health and social care support. This includes supporting Carers with health checks, vaccinations, flexible appointments, and promoting the Primary Care Carers Quality Standards. The main changes to Direct Payments in the last six months are:

- Since 01 April 25, Carers will receive Direct Payments directly into their nominated bank account.
- The pre-paid card system for Carers has now stopped.
- Since 13 Jan 25, the provider PeoplePlus is supporting Wirral Council to give advice on accessing Direct Payments and the pre-paid card system. PeoplePlus offer Direct Payment Advice and Support to all Direct Payment recipients as well as anyone thinking about accessing Direct Payments.

Web: [Wirral Council Direct Payments](#)

Web: [PeoplePlus Independent Living Services](#)

Tel: 0330 123 2815

Stella Ajuwa: stellaajuwa@wirral.gov.uk.

2. Katy Taylor, Healthy Homes, Wirral Council RE: Healthy Homes

Healthy Homes has been established in Wirral for over ten years, and sits within Wirral Council's Housing Standards Department. Healthy Homes support with all housing situations, with ongoing projects targeting the current ten selective licencing areas. In today's meeting, emphasis was given to:

- Community events, drop-ins and engagement days, working with other services such as Citizens Advice Wirral, Involve Northwest, Energy Projects Plus, GP Practices, The Stein Centre and Merseyside Police.

- Damp and Mould project aimed at four specific areas, with referrals from other areas.
- Community-wide door-knocking to engage directly with residents to encourage them to complete surveys and for signposting, referrals and support.
- Current [drop-in services on Thursday mornings in Birkenhead Library and Seacombe Children's Centre](#).
- Referral process is via email, aim is to reply within 48 hours. Other agencies can email on behalf for people who have no internet access and/or need other support. Printed leaflets & information available.

Web: [Wirral's Healthy Homes](#)

Email: healthyhomes@wirral.gov.uk

Katy Taylor: katytaylor@wirral.gov.uk.

3. Stephanie Pink, Public Health RE: projects directed at children & young people.

Stephanie discussed three projects that they are presently involved in:

- Oral Health Campaign – the North West is one of the worst places in the UK for poor oral health and dental decay. Packs containing a toothbrush and up to a year's supply of toothpaste are being distributed to targeted children on the Wirral. The campaign emphasises the benefits of regular toothbrushing twice daily with fluoride-based toothpaste, including engaging with children for toothbrushing sessions in childcare settings.
- Healthy Start Scheme – A pre-paid debit card is available for to those from 10 weeks-pregnant or with children under four years old, if on a low income and/or in receipt of certain benefits. Pregnant under 18's are eligible for this scheme irrespective of benefits/income. The Healthy Start card can be used in-store to buy plain liquid cow's milk, fresh, frozen and tinned fruits and vegetables, fresh, dried and tinned pulses and infant formula milk based on cow's milk, and to collect Healthy Start vitamins for pregnant women and children up to 4-yr's old. The card gives:

- £4.25 each week of pregnancy from the 10th week,
- £8.50 each week for children from birth to 1 year old,
- £4.25 each week for children between 1 and 4 years old.

There is no limit to the number of eligible children in a household that can be claimed for, application process is straightforward and funds are topped-up onto the pre-paid debit card every four weeks. Application is online through the NHS Healthy Start website, with support to apply also available through local libraries. <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/>

- Henry Programme – an eight-week community-based intervention for parents and carers of children up to five years old, aimed at preventing obesity and promoting a healthier lifestyle, targeting healthy eating and emotional wellbeing, starting in May 2025 at the Bromborough Family Hub and Ganneys Meadow

School and at the Seacombe Family Centre. Booking link will be shared when available.



Oral health, Healthy
Start and HENRY upd.

Web: www.henry.org.uk

Email: wirralpublichealth@wirral.gov.uk

Stephanie Pink: stephaniepink@wirral.gov.uk

Emma McDonnell: emmamcdonnell@wirral.gov.uk.

4. **Vanda Reeves, ADDvanced Solutions RE: learning and support for families of neurodivergent children & young people.**

ADDvanced Solutions, set-up in 2012, is an NHS and Wirral Council commissioned Community Interest Company (CIC) which supports people, and families of people, with neurodevelopmental conditions, delivering informal workshops.

- Most team workers have lived experience of neurodiversity, through own diagnosis or caring roles.
- Wirral Community Network Group, each Friday morning in school term time, 9.30 – 11.30am at **Gautby Road Community Centre**, CH41, offering opportunities for informal learning and support, discussing a different topic each week and sharing experiences and the local area offer. No need to book; just come along.
- ND Conditions Learning Programme, covering autism, ADHD, sensory processing difficulties and specific learning difficulties, SEND and Local Offer, gives parents and carers the knowledge and confidence to better understand and meet the needs of their neurodivergent children and young people, with open-access for families before, during and after diagnosis. The next Wirral programme will run across three Tuesdays; 22 April, 29 April and 6 May, 9.30am – 2.30pm or online across six Tuesday evenings.
- Learning Workshops - structured learning opportunities supporting parents and carers around specific areas, sensory processing difficulties, eating difficulties, sleep, school attendance, SEND, and encouraging independence.
- *ADDvanced Solutions* are commissioned to offer [ND Conditions Awareness Raising Training for Professionals](#).



ADDVANCED
Solutions WIRRAL_S

Web: [ADDvancedsolutions Wirral offer](#)

Email: info@addvancedsolutions.co.uk

Tel: 0151 486 1788.

5. **Jo Piller, Healthier South Wirral PCN RE: Prevention Pledge project**

Jo, Health Coach at Eastham Group Practice, is involved in the Prevention Pledge pilot scheme, part of NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB's Population Health Programme supporting Place-based approaches to prevention, which started in May 2024 with the

aim of being more proactive in the care they provide, creating well-defined, relevant and achievable actions and developing relationships with Wirral partner organisations.

Summary of commitments:

- 1- health checks and screenings for long term conditions. Group support and education programmes including a COPD support group.
- 2- VCFSE Collaboration. Workforce additional roles with a case study for each of the three Health Coaches.
- 3 – a ten-point plan for Primary Care, and a 10-point sustainability green plan for Primary Care.
- 4 – making every contact count. Virtual consultation for Menopause patients.
- 5 – creating a community garden in Eastham, creating healthy environments with gardens and green spaces.
- 6 – own workforce and staff- wellbeing initiative plans for this year and beyond.

Jo has spoken with Karen Prior, CEO HWW, about Care Navigation training with Healthwatch Wirral.

The Primary Care aspect of the Prevention Pledge will be rolled-out to other sites and interested organisations.

Web: [NHS Prevention Pledge](#)

Web: [Eastham Group Practice](#)

Tel: 0151 327 1391

Jo Piller: jo.piller@nhs.net.

6. Elena Vaughan-Chantler, Kooth team RE: Kooth and Quell

Kooth and Quell are BACP accredited, free, safe and anonymous digital mental health services with no waitlists and no referrals needed, providing online counselling, self-help tools and community support resources.

- Kooth is available for anyone aged 11-18 yrs.
- Quell is available for anyone 19yrs +.
- Websites and other resources are accessible 24/7, 365 days a year.
- Live chat with a qualified mental health practitioner, Mon-Fri 12pm to 10pm, Sat & Sun 6pm to 10pm.
- Easy registration, information for self-help, goal-setting and journal options.
- Levels of need assessed on registration, the Kooth team adapts approaches to support young people with SEND.



BRIDGE Forum -
Professionals Slide De

[Kooth website](#)

[Quell website](#)

Elena Vaughan-Chantler evaughan-chantler@kooth.com

AOB

Kevin Sutton highlighted the [*Annual Report of The Director of Public Health for Wirral 2024/2025 From Darkness to Light, from Harm to Hope: Journeys of addiction.*](#)

Upcoming BRIDGE Forum Dates in 2025:

14 May	08 Oct	10 Sept
11 Jun	13 Aug	10 Dec
09 Jul	12 Nov	

Healthwatch Wirral
Liscard Business Centre,
The Old School House,
188 Liscard Road,
Wallasey, Wirral
CH44 5TN



BRIDGE Forum

Tel: 0151 230 8957

Email: Spare5@healthwatchwirral.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchwirral.co.uk

