

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

BRIDGE Forum notes for Wednesday 11th March 2026 11am – 12:30pm

The purpose of [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 [BRIDGE Forum 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. Laura Peers, from the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Service at Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (WCHC)

Laura provided [information on Norovirus](#), as over the winter period a lot of cases have been reported in hospitals and care homes across Wirral.

- Norovirus, also called the 'winter vomiting bug,' is an unpleasant bug that usually lasts around 2 days and is highly contagious. However, in those who are very young, elderly or those that have weakened immune systems, it can last longer.
- Symptoms are distinctive, as a sudden onset of watery diarrhoea and/or vomiting (which can often be projectile). Other symptoms may include abdominal cramps, headaches, muscle aches and pains, high temperature and tiredness.
- Alcohol sanitising hand gels do not kill Norovirus: you should wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with liquid soap and water.
- Norovirus can survive on surfaces for at least one week, and on refrigerated food for up to ten days.
- It is recommended to clean surfaces regularly with detergent and bleach-based disinfectants.
- An affected person can still be infectious for up to two days after their symptoms have abated. It is suggested to stay at home and try to limit contact with other people for at least 48 hours after symptoms have resolved. It is strongly advised not to visit hospitals or care homes during this infective time.
- It is recommended not to handle or prepare food for other people until a person has been free of symptoms for 48 hours.
- After rest and keeping hydrated, a person will usually feel better in 2 to 3 days.
- If symptoms persist after 2-3 days, it is suggested to ask for a telephone consultation with GP Practice, and to avoid visiting in-person at GP Practices, Walk-In Services or the A&E to prevent infection being passed onto others.

[Infection Prevention and Control - Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust](#)

2. Ryan Hamilton, NHS Blood, and Transplant Community Engagement Team

Ryan provided information about [Blood, Platelet & Plasma donation](#).

- The NHS Blood and Transplant ([NHSBT](#)) service works to save and improve thousands of lives every year through blood, stem cell, organ, and tissue donation.
- Their service relies on the generosity of volunteer donors. Each year in England donors give around 1.4 million donations of blood and 3,500 organs.
- Nearly 400 new blood donors are needed every day to meet demand.
- 80% of people are willing to donate their organs when they die, but only around 40% of people have registered their decision on the NHS Organ Donor Register.
- Anyone wanting to donate can register online from age 16+ at blood.co.uk
- The closest match between donor and recipient is found between people from the same ethnic background.
- Demand is higher than the number of donors for blood, stem cell, and organ donations for people from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds, Asian backgrounds, and minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds are also more likely to have rare blood or tissue types that make it harder for them to find a match, and because of this, patients from these backgrounds often wait significantly longer for a successful match than a white patient.
- To donate blood, you need to be generally fit and well, aged 17 to 65 if it's your first donation, or up to 72 if you've donated before (or older if you donate regularly), weigh between 7 stone 12 lbs (50kg) and 25 stone (158kg) and have suitable veins (this will be checked on the day).
- You cannot donate blood if you: have had most types of cancer, have some heart conditions, have received blood, platelets, plasma, or any other blood products after 1 January 1980, have tested positive for HIV, have had an organ transplant, are a hepatitis B or C carrier, have injected non-prescribed drugs including body-building and injectable tanning agents (although you may be able to donate if a doctor prescribed the preparations) .
- **Donation centres for Wirral include:**
 - [Birkenhead, Army Reserve Centre Wexford Ro](#), Chetwynd Barracks, Wexford Road, Birkenhead, CH43 9TF
 - [Greasby, Methodist Church Hall](#), 192 Greasby Road, Greasby, CH49 2PN
 - [Heswall, Heswall Hall](#), 111 Telegraph Road, Heswall, CH60 0AF
 - [Wallasey Village, Harrison Hall](#), Harrison Drive, Wallasey, CH45 3HL
 - [West Kirby, Westbourne Hall](#), Westbourne Road, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 4DH.
- **Principal local donation centres is at :**
 - [Liverpool, Donor Centre-St Paul's Square](#), Unit 1, 5 St. Pauls Square, LIVERPOOL, L3 9SJ

<https://my.blood.co.uk/eligibility/health>

[Home - NHS Blood Donation](#)



NHS Blood and
Transplant presenta

3. Mike Crawshaw, RinP Engagement Officer, NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme (Cheshire & Merseyside)

Mike provided us with an overview of *Healthier You*, the NHS diabetes prevention programme.

- Fully funded 9-month evidence-based lifestyle change programme for those who have been identified as being at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- After a patient has been referred, they will be contacted within 24 hours for an initial assessment, via text and email.
- Participants then attend 13 x 90-minute group or digital sessions. They receive extensive supporting resources, including handouts, trackers, and a pedometer.
- Three options for participants to follow the programme, either face to face, digital or remotely.
- Eligibility criteria:
 - over 18 years of age
 - have an HbA1c of 42-47 mmol/mol (6.0-6.4%) or an FPG of 5.5-6.9 mmol/l tested in the last 12 months
 - not have been diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. Be able to participate in NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme. If the patient has a previous diagnosis of GDM, they are eligible with a HbA1c < 42 mmol/mol or FPG < 5.5mmol/l tested within the last 12 months.

Where the patient is over 80 years, the GP should provide written confirmation, that they consider the benefits of the programme to outweigh any potential risks associated with weight loss for the individual.

- Women with previous gestational diabetes can make a self-referral by visiting the website healthieryou.reedwellbeing.com/gestational-diabetes
<https://healthieryou.reedwellbeing.com/about-the-programme/>

Tel 0800 092 1191

Email – mike.crawshaw@reed.com Daniel.cockle@reed.com



Healthwatch Wirral PCN NDPP Referral
Presentation 11.03.2 PP MC Version Jan 2



4. Michelle Richards, Best Start for Life – Parenting Journey Co-ordinator and EPEC Co-ordinator-information and updates for Empowering Parents

Michelle works for the Family Hubs Transformation team, and updated us about the *Best Start for Life* service expectations within family hubs which include.

- Best Start Family Hubs will be open to the 0–19 age range (up to age 25 for those with SEND), with a particular focus on early years, recognising the Plan for Change’s ambition to give every child the best start in life and improve child outcomes by age 5.
- There is an expectation that there is investment into evidence-based home learning environments that prioritise 3- and 4-year-olds initially. The Government will produce a menu of evidence-based interventions. Further guidance will follow.

- Parents, Carers and Young People were part of the process from the start- interviewing Family Hub Transformation Team. They have gone on to form a panel to continue shaping Family Hubs for families of Wirral. They have also gone on to train in Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) – they will be delivering peer led parenting support.
- Core multiagency team who work together to drive Family Hubs forward.
- Development of SEND Family Hubs steering group of all key partners to develop the SEND offer for Family Hubs.
- EPEC- Being a Parent – what is it and why is it different? This is an 8-week course (2 hours a week) that is designed to support parents and carers with practical tips and real-life tools to help their family thrive. This course is run by trained parent, carer and grandparent volunteers who have been where they are now. Parents will gain behaviour management strategies. Tips for managing stress – both theirs and their family. Tools for understanding and handling emotions. Better communication, listening and play skills. Stronger parent-child relationships. They use their own experiences to create a friendly, supportive environment where parents feel heard, understood and encouraged with no lectures, no judgement, just real conversations, practical advice, and support from people who get it.
- Next course is due to commence in April 2026.



5. **Richard Roberts, Wirral Foodbank** – news and updates.

Wirral foodbank is part of a nationwide network of foodbanks, supported by the Trussell Trust, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK, their aim is for a future without the need for foodbanks. They offer emergency support for a crisis situation and can provide three days' nutritionally balanced emergency food and support to local people who are referred to them in crisis.

- Wirral Foodbank is a local charity providing emergency food to local people in crisis since November 2011.
- The Foodbank principle is based on giving a small amount of food – in their case just three days' worth – to people who suddenly find themselves without any food or money to buy it.
- They believe that no one should go hungry and that emergency food is not the solution to poverty. Wirral Foodbank Plus, is a foodbank funded service, provided by Citizens Advice Wirral – it seeks to address the underlying reasons why people need their support and in doing so remove the need of foodbanks in our community.
- They collect and distribute non-perishable food; they are always in need of the following food items – tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, tinned tomatoes, long grain rice, pasta, pasta sauce, UHT milk, and tinned/packet soup. The majority of the food is donated by local people.
- If you would like to support Wirral foodbank you can donate food at various locations, including Tesco Bidston, Tesco Bebington and Tesco Heswall, Sainsbury's Upton, most Co-op stores, and all One-Stop Shops.
- Everyone who comes to the foodbank for emergency food needs to have a valid foodbank voucher. If you require emergency food, please contact Wirral Council on 0151 606 2005

(select option 4). This number is available Monday - Friday, 9am - 5.00pm. Outside of these hours and Saturday, Sunday, and Bank Holidays, please call Wirral Council Emergency Duty Team on 0151 677 6557. If your application is successful, you will be issued with an electronic voucher, which can be exchanged for a 3-day supply of essential food items at one of the following Wirral Foodbank Centres listed in the link below.

<https://wirral.foodbank.org.uk/locations/>

<https://wirral.foodbank.org.uk/>

Phone - 0151 638 7090

Email: enquiries@wirralfoodbank.org.uk

Address: Unit 14 Wirral Business Centre, Dock Road, Birkenhead, CH41 1JW

AOB- Information sharing, updates, and news.

1. **The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre** are inviting Carers who support people with cancer to share their experiences and take part in research to help improve future support services. Participants will be asked to take part in up to three short interviews. Participants' insights will help shape recommendations to better support Carers balancing their own health needs with their caring role. If you'd like to get involved, you can find more details below and express your interest via the study's [online form here](#).

Dr Lynda Appleton, Senior Researcher, The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust,
Tel: 07787253584



Carer study advert
v.1.1 24 April 2025.p



PIS - Carer v.1.2 01
Nov 2024.pdf

2. Celebrate Nutrition and Hydration Week: 16th- 22nd March 2026

Nutrition and Hydration Week is taking place from **16th-22nd March**, and we would like to encourage you and your organisations to get involved. The week is designed to bring people together to create energy, focus and fun, while highlighting the vital role that food and drink play in maintaining health and wellbeing. A key highlight of the week is the **Global Tea Party**, taking place on **Wednesday 18th March 2026**. We are inviting all our community partners to host a tea party—large or small, in any setting—and promote the importance of good nutrition and hydration. If you do take part, please consider sharing your celebrations on social media to help amplify the message. More information about the week can be found at: <https://nutritionandhydrationweek.co.uk/> - As part of our local campaign, **Public Health Wirral has produced a short video and the attached digital resources** focusing on the importance of hydration for health. Nutrition and Hydration Week provides a perfect opportunity to share these materials with your staff teams, volunteers, networks, and the people who use your services. Here is the link:

[Hydration and Urinary Tract Infections - YouTube](#) - We greatly appreciate the work you do across our communities and hope these resources will be helpful in promoting positive health messages. If you would like any further information, please contact us at: healthprotectionservice@wirral.gov.uk . Thank you for your continued support, and we hope you will join us in celebrating Nutrition and Hydration Week.



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Forthcoming BRIDGE Forum dates in 2026:

08 Apr 13 May 10 Jun 08 Jul 12 Aug 09 Sep 14 Oct
11 Nov 09 Dec.

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The Old School House,
188 Liscard Road,
Wallasey, Merseyside
CH44 5TN

Spare 5 BRIDGE Forum

Tel: 0151 230 8957

Email: Spare5@healthwatchwirral.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchwirral.co.uk

