

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

BRIDGE Forum notes for Wednesday 10th June 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. Stephen Jones, Senior Programme Manager, Cheshire & Merseyside Cancer Alliance.

Stephen provided us with an overview of the early diagnosis strategy 2026-2029, which aims to improve rates of early diagnosis in cancer patients, diagnostics and pathways to treatments. The strategy aims are:

Supporting timely presentation:

- Engaging with communities.
- Delivering campaigns across the region.
- Improving knowledge of cancer signs and symptoms in combination with healthy lifestyle advice among people at greater risk of developing preventable cancers, e.g. current smokers, people classed as obese, and people with increased alcohol intake.

Primary care pathway improvement:

- Supporting the early cancer diagnosis elements of the Primary Care Network Direct Enhanced Services (PCN-DES) contract.
- Developing dashboards to drive intelligence led planning and allow clinicians to gain patient insights.

Referral pathway improvement:

- HRT pathways.
- Prostate community clinics.
- Inclusion of Faecal Immunochemical Testing (FIT) in colorectal pathways.

Lung cancer screening programme rollout:

- Rolling out the lung cancer screening programme across Cheshire & Merseyside, with 100% rollout by March 2029.

Improving screening programme coverage and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV vaccination rates):

- Improving coverage in breast, cervical and bowel screening programmes.
- Supporting bowel screening age extension work.
- Improving HPV vaccination rates.
- Targeted social media.

Risk stratified case finding:

- Risk stratification and enhanced risk stratification for patients at high risk of pancreatic cancer.
- Feasibility study for risk stratification in never-smokers.

Innovation and pipeline interventions:

- Targeted interventions for early diagnosis, including direct access pathways, multi disease collaboration approaches and intelligent full blood count testing.
- The CMCA Innovation Programme.

https://cmcanceralliance.nhs.uk/application/files/2117/7445/3241/Early_Diagnosis_Strategy_2026-2029_-_Cheshire_and_Merseyside_Cancer_Alliance.pdf

2. Keith Bennet, UECUP Programme Director, WUTHFT.

Keith provided us with details of the Urgent Emergency Care Upgrade Programme (UECUP) which started at WUTHFT's Arrowe Park Hospital site in April 2022.

- Phase 1 commenced April 22, where part of the existing hospital site was demolished, the Urgent Care Treatment Centre (UTC) was relocated and 8 new ambulance arrival bays were created in this area, which helps to provide better privacy and dignity for arriving patients. Patients are now triaged at the ambulance arrival zone, handed over by the ambulance crew, and then taken to the appropriate area for treatment.
- Phase 2 commenced in October 23, with the new extension and paediatric department completed by June 24. This phase also included clinical relocation and new staff facilities, including a staff room with an area to make and consume refreshments, vending machines, a quiet room, and a training facility room, showers and lockers for staff.
- Phase 4 was started in June 24, with the Majors and ambulance assessment areas completed by July 25.
- Phase 3 then commenced in September 25 and is on target to be finished by end July 26, which includes work on the main entrance, Minors, Majors and UTC.
- The new entrance will have a digital patient log-in, with staff available to assist any patients needing help.
- Soft landscaping provides a more aesthetic area around the entrance, with plants donated by the building company Tilbury Douglas.



3. Jonathan Bennett, Gambling Related Harms Reduction Lead, Citizens Advice Wirral.

Jonathan gave an overview of the Gambling Related Harms (GHR) Strategy 2025-2030 and the services available via Citizens Advice Wirral, which include confidential advice and aftercare for those directly or indirectly affected by gambling for individuals struggling with gambling addiction, their loved ones, and those experiencing financial, emotional, or social challenges as a result of gambling. Gambling can affect every aspect of life – financial, mental, and emotional. The [Citizens Advice Wirral Gambling Support](#) service can support anyone impacted by gambling, including friends and family members, by offering practical and emotional assistance to rebuild stability and well-being.

In the first twelve months of the strategy they aim to:

- Map the new gambling prevention/support services (post April 2026) and reconfigure the Wirral Gambling Harms Strategy to include these and invite them to the steering group.
- Identify where gambling-related harms screening questions are being asked to explore opportunities for development of a centralised database.
- Begin GRH workshops in schools/colleges via YGAM.
- Target GP surgeries in areas of highest deprivation to complete RCGP GRH training.
- Deliver a GRH education & social media campaign for Wirral.
- Encourage premises licences for gambling in Birkenhead to provide staff with GRH training and safer gambling messaging in their premises.
- Complete a Wirral gambling harms needs assessment which will direct the most effective use of Wirral's prevention budget.

Gambling data in the UK shows that:

- 48% of adults gamble every four weeks
- 39% of adults gamble online
- Only 17% gambling in-person (28% when including the national lottery)
- £16.8 billion is the total gross gambling yield in 2025;
 - £12.6 billion excluding national lottery. £7.8 billion remote gambling (13% rise from previous year), £4.8 billion land-based gambling (3.8% rise from previous year)
 - £2.6 billion from gambling machines with 190,965 machines in licensed premises.
- Prize Draw Competitions (PDC's) are a rapidly growing and are under-researched industry in the UK, and are not currently regulated under the 2005 Gambling Act. Key notes:
- Poor transparency- 12% of PDCs display (the likelihood of winning), 18% (method of selecting winners) and 35% (rules of play)
- Only 40% of PDCs offer some form of self-exclusion
- 12% of PDC players experience harms compared to 5% for gambling
- People experiencing gambling harm spend on average (£712 per year) for PDCs compared to non-gamblers (£59)
- Percentages of harm:
 - Men (17%) Women (8%)
 - 18-34 (28%) 55+ (1%)
 - Ethnic minority (35%) White (9%)

- Low income (15%).
- Examples of PDC include:
 - Omaze
 - Salexamo
 - Easy Big Wins
 - Lockos competitions.

[The Primary Care Gambling Service](#) works in partnership with other local services to deliver holistic support for the client, and offers:

- Free 1-1 or group online or in-person support for adults over 18 affected by gambling-related harms (gamblers/affected others).
- 10 days between referral and being in treatment.

jonathan.bennett@citizensadvicewirral.org.uk



Gambling awareness slides (1)

AOB- Information sharing, updates, and news.

1. **Healthwatch Wirral and CWP** are holding a special BRIDGE Forum on Wednesday 24th June from 11am- 12.30pm, aimed at Carers who support someone with mental health needs.

Contact Spare5@healthwatchwirral.co.uk or phone 0151 230 8957 to request a joining link for MS Teams.



2. **ABL Wirral** offers free, practical Brief Advice training designed for staff who interact with the public. This one-hour session helps participants deliver simple, effective 30-second conversations to encourage people to stop smoking or using tobacco.

Format: Online via MS Teams

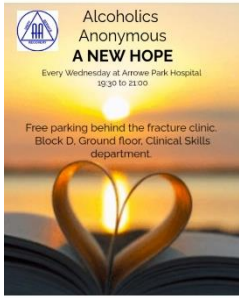
Duration: 1 hour

Suitable for: All staff who interact with the public.



VBA training flyer Summer 2026 v2.pdf

3. **Alcoholics Anonymous** are holding meetings every Wednesday evening at Arrowe Park Hospital, 7.30pm-9pm, held in Block D on the ground floor in the Clinical Skills Department.



4. **Savera UK** shared news of a Warrington & Cheshire networking event, held online on 22nd June, 10am-12pm. To book, please contact Mala on tel 07701 235102.



5. **Russell** from Together All Are Able shared news of a **coffee morning** on 22nd June at the New Hope Centre, Wirral.
Address: Old Mission, Guildford Street, Wallasey, Wirral, CH44 0BP
Phone: 07793 558474 or 07344 782430 for more details.

Forthcoming BRIDGE Forum dates in 2026:

8th JULY (AUG - No BRIDGE Forum) 9th SEPT 14th OCT 11th NOV 9th DEC.

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