

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

BRIDGE Forum notes for Wednesday 9th September 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. Leila Saeed, Senior Public Health Practitioner, Public Health Delivery Team

Leila told us about the Stoptober campaign which is held annually to encourage smoking cessation. Anyone who stops smoking for 28 days is more likely to succeed in quitting for good. The Stoptober campaign aligns with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance, for preventing smoking and promoting quitting, mass media campaigns around smoking cessation and promoting local support to quit smoking.

Why Stoptober matters:

- National Focus for quit attempts
- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable illness and death of 10.7% of the residents in Wirral.
- Encourages participation and shows smokers that there is help and support available.

The Stoptober 2026 toolkit provides:

- An overview of available resources and how to use them
- Key messages
- A case study
- Relevant facts and stats
- Media/press release/website/radio templates
- Information on national quitting smoking tools
- Evaluation guidance.

Stoptober and stopping smoking resources available via the Department of Health & Social Care website are linked [here](#).

[ABL Health](#) works closely with Leila and commissioners in Wirral to provide a stop smoking service and quit programmes. ABL Health's role is to receive referrals.

The next Smokefree Wirral workshop is on Tues 29th September. Contact Leila at leilasaeed@wirral.gov.uk to participate or for more details.

2. Dominic Griffiths, Business Relationship Manager, Energy Projects Plus

Dom gave us updates on winter preparations for help available for vulnerable people through this winter. If any services are working with households that are struggling with energy bills, keeping warm, or have damp and mould in their homes, they can be referred to Energy Projects Plus who will offer help and advice.

What is the Energy Price Cap?

- Originally introduced in 2019 to protect loyal customers who never switched from overpaying (when suppliers used to subsidise better deals for new customers).
- Due to massive increase in charges from gas/oil distributors, the Price Cap is now default for most households.
- Price Cap is determined by OFGEM, and changes every 3 months based on fluctuations in wholesale costs.
- In August, OFGEM announced a 3.6% average rise in the Price Cap, taking effect from 1st October to 31st December, roughly double the expected 2% rise.
- Predictions suggest there may be a 13% rise in January, followed by a 2.1% drop in April.
- Cheaper deals on the market right now are largely fixed over 2yrs, and are only marginally cheaper than the Price Cap.
- Price Caps only cover 3 months of each year, but are always presented as annual costs. This masks the fact that for many people, especially those in fuel poverty, almost all of their annual heating usage takes place across October to March.
- OFGEM also presents the figures based on average usage. A mixture of energy efficiency drives, and unaffordability, is bringing average usage down.
- As well as new, lower average usage figures, the UK Government has promised to abolish VAT on electricity from 1st October, which reduces the electricity component on this Price Cap rise, which is largely due to gas costs.
- National press advises the new Price Cap will be £1,723 per year, based on national averages. In the legacy MANWEB areas of Merseyside and North Wales, our costs are higher, at over £1,800.
- Heating Grants are available for Health Improvements.

Services can refer clients to EEP via secure online referral form: www.epplus.org.uk/referrals, or NHS staff may refer patients to “Energy Projects Plus” via EMIS

Briefing sessions for teams:

- “Introduction to Affordable Warmth”
- “Making Homes Warmer, Forever”

Email training@epplus.org to arrange a session at a time that suits you.

dominic.griffiths@epplus.org



3. Linda Wall, Dementia Advisor, Alzheimer's Society – Wirral

Linda shared details of the Alzheimer's Society and the services they offer as well as research, lobbying, and government training. In Wirral they have a small team providing one-to-one support with families who are affected by dementia.

- The number of people with dementia in the Wirral in 2025 was 5,320, and it is estimated that by 2045 it will increase by around 45% to 7,730. This increase will be steepest among the older age groups.
- The number of people aged 90 and over living with dementia is expected to almost double in 20 years from 1108 to just over 2000: an increase of 86%.
- In Wirral, the number of people estimated to live alone by 2045 is estimated to rise across all age groups.
- By 2045 it is estimated there will be a 45% increase in the total number of people aged 65 and over living in care homes; an increase in the care home population of approx. 1027 people.
- Currently, according to NHS England, people with dementia occupy 25% of acute hospital beds and people with dementia stay in hospital twice as long as other patients.
- Wellbeing needs to be prioritised, as well as putting money into health care. Alzheimer's Society wants to improve access to community support so that people with dementia can live independently in the community for longer.
- Alzheimer's Society aims to lower the rate of hospital admissions through preventative actions that reduce the risk of falls, of UTIs and other related health issues.

The Alzheimer's Society speak to people with dementia who live alone, family members who are concerned about them, unpaid carers for whom every day is a new struggle - and the same themes come out again and again; there is a need for more forward planning, for thinking about future care needs and future housing needs and getting Lasting Power Of Attorney (LPA) in place before any crises occur. There is a lack of preparedness for emergencies within these families. And there is often a lack of awareness of what local groups and services have to offer. The Dementia Advice Service enables families living with dementia to have some of these vital conversations.

www.alzheimers.org.uk

www.facebook.com/alzheimerssocietyuk/

www.twitter.com/alzheimerssoc



Wirral leaflet.pdf

AOB- Information sharing, updates, and news.

1. **Nicola Connor, Participation and Engagement Lead, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP)** shared information about Ask Us Wirral delivering Citizens Advice Basic Training, in-person for services staff on 21st September, 2pm – 4pm at VCH Flourish. Nicola also shared the CWP wellbeing booklet and the CP Hub of Hope leaflet. Contact nicola.connor6@nhs.net for details about the training, and with any other questions.



Wellbeing booklet
V2 APPROVED 09-09



HoH - Mono - CWP
- Community.pdf

2. **Re-engage** holds a free social activity group for people aged 75+ on the last Tuesday of every month, from 1pm to 3pm in the community room at Wallasey Village Library & Community Centre, St George's Road, Wallasey, CH45 3NE. Please register in advance by calling 0800 716 543.



Wallasey Village
Library group .pdf

Forthcoming BRIDGE Forum dates in 2026:

Weds 14 Oct

Weds 11 Nov

Weds 09 Dec.

Healthwatch Wirral
Liscard Business Centre,
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

