



Community Briefing – 27 February 2023

Opportunities to get involved and provide your views

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Are you a tenant living in a West Lancashire Borough Council home? If you are then we would like to hear your views on the housing services, we offer.

To do this we are asking tenants to take part in our **Tenant Satisfaction Survey**. The survey is designed to find out how tenants feel about the services they receive and the things they think could be improved.

Please take this opportunity to have your say before **24 March 2023**. Visit our engagement platform *Your Voice...West Lancashire* to participate:

<https://letstalkwestlancashire.uk.engagementhq.com/hub-page/tenant-hub>

Housing Allocations Policy Review

In July 2022 West Lancashire Borough Council invited tenants who had been rehoused and those with a live **Homefinder** application to share their views and comments on our current Allocations Policy.

Feedback has now been analysed and used to frame the new Allocations Policy to ensure the process is fair, open, and transparent. West Lancashire Borough Council are now inviting residents to view the revised draft, Policy.

Please take this opportunity to have your say before **22 March 2023**. Visit our engagement platform *Your Voice...West Lancashire* to participate:

<https://letstalkwestlancashire.uk.engagementhq.com/hub-page/tenant-hub>

Rent Statement Review – Focus Group

We are making changes to the existing rent statement to make it easier to understand for our customers and we want to hear your views.

If you are a West Lancashire Borough tenant and would like to get involved in a focus group, you can register your interest via our engagement platform *Your Voice...West Lancashire*.

Please visit: <https://letstalkwestlancashire.uk.engagementhq.com/hub-page/tenant-hub>

Updates from West Lancashire Borough Council

May Elections – Voter ID guidance



Elections are happening across England on 4 May 2023 and voters in England will need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections

This will apply to:

- Local elections
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- Recall petitions

From October 2023 it will also apply to UK General elections

If you don't have accepted photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

For more information about the types of accepted ID or how to apply for a free voter ID document visit: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id

Government Energy Bill Support Schemes – Alternative Funding

The government has announced two new schemes which will be available for those households who are not entitled to the £400 discount via the Energy Support Scheme.

Scheme One - Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding

This Energy Bill Support Scheme is intended to provide £400 of support for households across the UK that would otherwise miss out on the first part of the Energy Bill Support Scheme, as they do not have a domestic electricity contract. E.g., those who may pay for energy through a landlord and have no direct bill.

The government will be opening the scheme for applications from 27 February 2023 via: <http://www.gov.uk/apply-energy-bill-support-if-not-automatic>

Scheme Two - Alternative Fuel Payments

This scheme is also intended to deliver a one-off payment of £200 to UK households who are not on the mains gas grid and therefore use alternative fuels, such as heating oil, to heat their homes.

The government will be opening the scheme for applications from 6 March 2023 via: www.gov.uk/apply-energy-bill-support-if-not-automatic

Funding Opportunities - Cost of Living Support Hub

We have gathered information on the range of support available from the Council and wider organisations that can help people plan for winter.

Visit our Cost of Living Support Hub for more information on things like help with energy costs, financial and food support and debt help - www.westlancs.gov.uk/costofliving

Local Council Tax Discretionary Energy Support Scheme

The Council has funding to assist council taxpayers who are experiencing severe financial difficulties due to high energy bills. Visit our website for more information, eligibility criteria and how to apply - www.westlancs.gov.uk/bills-benefits/council-tax/council-tax-payment-difficulties

Discretionary housing payments

Discretionary housing payments can help people who need extra support with their rent when their housing benefit or universal credit housing costs do not meet the full value of their rent. If you are suffering severe financial hardship as a result, or your tenancy is at risk, you may be able to get a discretionary payment to help.

Visit our website for more information, eligibility criteria and how to apply - www.westlancs.gov.uk/bills-benefits/benefits/discretionary-housing-payments

Loan Shark Advice

West Lancashire Borough Council are supporting Stop Loan Sharks England's campaign **#LetsTalkLoanSharks** by encouraging people to have open conversations about illegal money lending and highlighting the support available.

Victims are often scared to talk about their loan shark experience due to fear of threats and reprisals. For more information visit: [/www.stoploansharks.co.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk)

Domestic Abuse Advice

Domestic abuse is not just physical violence, it can take many different forms, and people who are victims can be abused in many ways.

If you feel you, or someone you know is dealing with domestic abuse, you can find out about where you can get help at www.westlancs.gov.uk/more/community-safety/domestic-violence.aspx

Warm & Welcome Spaces - West Lancs

As part of the government's Warm and Welcome Spaces initiative, [Lancashire County Council](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk) libraries will become warm and welcome spaces over the winter months where people can shelter and get information and advice.

To find your nearest warm space visit: www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/cost-of-living/warm-and-welcome-places/

In addition, Lancashire County Council are asking district councils to find out if there are any locally based VCFSE (voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise) provisions that are available, who can offer drop-in shelter and support over the winter period. These spaces must be publicly accessible places, are free of charge and where people are welcome to keep warm and comfortable. If this is something that you feel you can offer, please [email](mailto:CustomerEngagement@westlancs.gov.uk) Customer Engagement Team: CustomerEngagement@westlancs.gov.uk

Activity and Wellbeing Updates

Nifty Fifties



Banks and Burscough Leisure Centre's have weekly 'nifty fifties' clubs. The sessions are facilitated by 'voluntary members' and include activities such as circuit, badminton, tai chi, fitness suite, bowls, day trips etc.

The clubs are very welcoming and promote an enjoyable, healthy atmosphere!

If you would like to get involved, please do not hesitate to call:

- Burscough 01704 895266
- Banks 01704 651622

Wigan Athletic – Premier League Kicks



Wigan Athletic Community Trust are working in Skelmersdale to offer 16-to-18-year old's free football, with opportunities to represent Wigan Athletic Community Trust against Northwest Kicks Teams.

Sessions are currently on Wednesdays at West Lancashire College Sports Hall, Skelmersdale Campus, College Way,

Skelmersdale, WN8 6HL between 6-8pm

For more information, please email: r.wood@wiganathletic.com or call 01942 318090

West Lancashire Leisure Access Card Membership

More Leisure Community Trust are offering a Leisure Access Card which gives eligible residents in West Lancashire up to 50% discount on a whole range of activities including: Gym, Swimming, Badminton, Squash, and Health Suite for £2 annually.

The card can be used at all three West Lancashire Leisure Centres (Ny Bevan Pool, Skelmersdale, Park Pool, Ormskirk, and Burscough Racquet & Fitness Centre.

For more information and eligibility criteria visit the [website](http://www.westlancsleisure.com/west-lancashire-leisure-access-card-membership/): www.westlancsleisure.com/west-lancashire-leisure-access-card-membership/

ACT F.A.S.T.



A stroke is a serious life-threatening medical condition that happens when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off.

The sooner a person receives treatment for a stroke, the less damage is likely to happen.

If you suspect that you or someone else is having a stroke, dial 999 immediately for an ambulance.

Symptoms of a stroke are:

- **Face** – the face may have dropped on 1 side, the person may not be able to smile, or their mouth or eye may have dropped.
- **Arms** – the person with suspected stroke may not be able to lift both arms and keep them there because of weakness or numbness in 1 arm.
- **Speech** – their speech may be slurred or garbled, or the person may not be able to talk at all despite appearing to be awake; they may also have problems understanding what you're saying to them.
- **Time** – it's time to dial 999 immediately if you see any of these signs or symptoms.

[For more information visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/stroke](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stroke)

Better Health – Start for Life Introducing Solid Foods

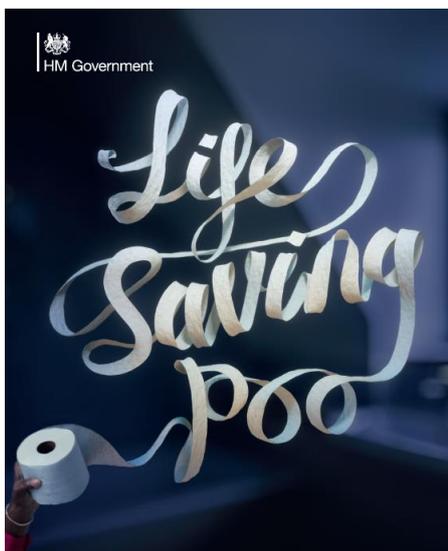


Weaning is a crucial milestone for you and your baby, children's food preferences and eating habits are formed early in life.

It can be confusing to know when to start weaning your baby and introducing solid foods.

For tips and recipes for each weaning stage, visit www.nhs.uk/better-health/start-for-life/weaning

NHS – Screening saves lives - Help us help you



Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK.

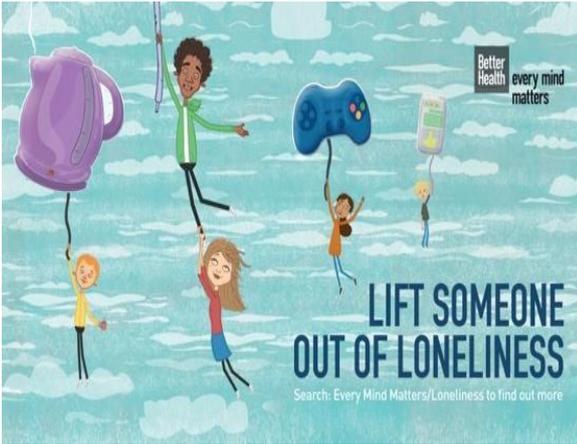
The latest data shows that almost one third of people who were sent an NHS bowel cancer screening kit in England last year did not go on to complete it.

If you are aged between 56 to 74 and you've been sent a bowel cancer screening home test kit don't put it off and return it.

Early diagnosis is vital, as detecting bowel cancer at the earliest stage makes you up to nine times more likely to be successfully treated.

For more advice visit: www.nhs.uk/bowel-screening

Better Health – Lift someone out of loneliness



Feeling lonely is something that all of us can experience at any point and can have a huge impact on our wellbeing. Sometimes admitting we feel lonely can be hard but it's important to remember that many others experience feelings of loneliness too, and that this feeling can pass.

It can often feel easier to reach out to someone else who may be feeling lonely and there are plenty of simple, free actions you can take, such as going for a walk, sending someone a text, or inviting someone for a hot drink.

If you're feeling lonely this winter, search 'Every Mind Matters' for support and advice or go to <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/lifes-challenges/loneliness/>.

Better Health – Learning to talk



Due to COVID-19 there has been a rise in the number of children starting school with language skills poorer than would have been pre the pandemic.

Department of Education in conduction with the Department of Health and Social Care's office for Health Improvement and Disparities have launched a support hub where parents carers can find a host of ideas/activities that they can do with their children to develop their communication, language, and literacy skills before starting school.

For more information and advice, including pregnancy, birth and parenthood visit www.nhs.uk/start4life

Better Health – QUIT SMOKING



Quitting smoking is one of the best things someone can do for their health.

Many people will try to quit with willpower alone, but it's much easier with the right help.

There are lots of different support options and tools available to help you find the right way for you!

For more information and tips to help you succeed visit Better Health website www.nhs.uk/betterhealth

Stay Well this Winter

Though 111.nhs.uk people can:

- find out how to get the right healthcare in their area, including whether they need to see a GP or seek urgent care.
- get advice on self-care.
- get a call back from a nurse, doctor or other trained health professional if they need it.



People should still call 999 and go to A&E in an emergency – when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk. For more information about how 111 can help visit www.england.nhs.uk

Health and Social Care Workers Winter Vaccinations 2022

Health and care services face a challenging winter and, as we enter the colder months, we could face a twin threat from flu and COVID-19 with both viruses in greater circulation.

Frontline professionals are among millions who can get a further dose of the COVID-19 booster and the flu vaccine this season.

If you are a frontline worker and want to find out more visit: www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations

Winter vaccinations – boost your immunity this winter

Eligible cohorts for the COVID-19 autumn booster vaccine: Pregnant women

- People 50 years old and over
- People aged 5-50 in groups at increased risk
- Residents in care homes
- Health and social care workers

Eligible cohorts for the free flu vaccine:

- People with certain health conditions
- Pregnant women
- All children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2022
- All primary school children (from reception to year 6) and some secondary school aged children
- Those aged 6 months of age upward in a clinical risk group
- Those in long-stay residential care homes
- Carers in receipt of carer's allowance
- People 50 years old and over

For more information visit: www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations



NHS Healthy Start



The NHS Healthy Start scheme helps young families and those who are pregnant to access healthy food, milk, and vitamins via a prepaid card.

Eligible people can apply for the scheme online or if they cannot apply online can call 0300 330 7010.

Eligibility for the scheme depends on the benefit the person receives and what their income is.

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

Other Updates

[Grants Online](http://www.grantsonline.org.uk) is the UK's most comprehensive and up to date UK grant funding information service. Updated on daily bases, Grants Online informs you of grant funding opportunities from the European Union, UK Government Agencies, the Lottery as well as Grant Making Trusts & Foundations.

For more information visit website: www.grantsonline.org.uk where you can:

- register for grant funding alerts
- subscribe to their free monthly E-newsletter and keep up to date on latest funding opportunities
- use their grant finder search, where you can filter by region, category and agency/organisation

Energy Bills Support Scheme – Beware of scams!

The government is urging consumers to stay alert to potential energy bills support scheme scams and report these to the relevant authorities. If individuals receive a message that asks for their bank details or to click on a link, it is very important that they report it promptly.

Individuals are encouraged to send a screen shot of the message to report@phishing.gov.uk and to energy.bills.rebate@beis.gov.uk

Lancashire Adult Learning

Lancashire Adult Learning (LAL) aims to provide learning opportunities for all adults across the region. LAL currently offers an extensive range of subjects to learners, with over 2000 courses.



For more information on the extensive range of subjects they offer visit their [website](http://www.lal.ac.uk/about-us/). (www.lal.ac.uk/about-us/)

Learn my way

Getting online can help you to save money, find work, stay in touch with friends and family and much more. But it can be daunting and hard to know where to start.

Learn My Way has free courses for you to learn digital skills to stay safe and connected.

Visit [Learn my Way website](#), where you will be able to access content such as:

- Using the internet
- Video calling
- Online shopping
- Online safety
- Job finding
- Accessing GP services
- Online banking and much more

