

Here to help winter campaign 2025/26

Updated: 17/12/2025

About this toolkit

This toolkit is for all NHS, local authority and VCSE sector communication leads, GP practices and local community pharmacies.

Working together across the region, we have created some key messages and visuals to support our communications with the public this winter, such as supporting them to stay well and safe this winter and access the right NHS service for their needs.

The full here to help winter toolkit can be accessed [here](#).

This toolkit content covers the winter/festive period, when we know the NHS system experiences exceptional pressure. The toolkit builds on the region's [Here to Help](#) campaign which signposts people to the most appropriate NHS service for their needs, and is backed by a regional wide media buy. This includes asking people to think pharmacy, 111 and GP first, as well as keeping A&E and 999 free for life threatening emergencies only. As well as specific campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of getting vaccinated and the conditions people can seek advice and treatment from their pharmacist, urgent treatment centres and much more.

You can also find a fuller campaign toolkit for vaccinations [here](#).



Social media plan

Here to help winter messaging 2025/26

This social media plan provides content you can include in your social media posts. Animations and images can be downloaded from our toolkit [here](#).

You can help us by:

- Posting and sharing content on your communication channels to help further promote the campaign across the region
- Getting in touch if you need any assets developed to meet your local needs.

Your support in sharing these messages is very much appreciated. Please keep checking the toolkit as we may add new content.

We know that animations and videos are preferred content with viewers, so please try to use these where available.

For further help or advice please contact either: Lee Hansom, lee.hansom@nhs.net, Abbie Mulgrew, abbie.mulgrew@nhs.net or nencicb.comms@nhs.net

Please tag us in your social media posts:

Handles: **Facebook** – NorthEastandNorthCumbriaNHS, **X** – @NENC_NHS, **Instagram** – nenc_nhs

Hastags: #heretohelp

Repeat prescriptions - Further messaging and visuals for repeat prescriptions available [here](#).

Ordering repeat prescriptions in time

Schedule from:
Now to 20 Dec
&
27 Dec

Enough repeat medication to last you over the festive bank holiday?

Don't get caught short this Christmas and New Year!

REMEMBER to order your repeat prescriptions in plenty of time.

Use the [NHS App](#) or visit your local pharmacy or GP surgery online ordering system.

Find pharmacy bank holiday opening hours [here](#).

#HereToHelp



[Or download our animation](#)

Or



https://youtube.com/shorts/08mKcGG_iss?feature=share

<p>Forgot your repeat prescription?</p> <p>Schedule from:</p> <p>21 Dec to 24 Dec & 28 Dec to 31 Dec</p>	<p>If YOU forget urgent repeat medication over the festive bank holidays!</p> <p>You can use the 111 online emergency prescription service.</p> <p>Find pharmacy bank holiday opening hours here.</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>		<p>Alternatively:</p> <p>You can use the animation available in our online toolkit.</p> <p>https://youtube.com/shorts/08mKcGG_iss?feature=share</p> 
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Well stocked medicine cabinet - Further messaging and visuals for well stocked cabinet available [here](#).

<p>Stock up on healthcare essentials</p> <p>Schedule from:</p> <p>Now to 1 Jan</p>	<p>Be prepared over the festive holidays by keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home.</p> <p>Paracetamol, plasters, indigestion remedy, allergy relief and anti-diarrhoea medicine are a good place to start!</p> <p>Your local pharmacist can give you more advice.</p> <p>Find pharmacy bank holiday opening hours here.</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>		<p>Alternatively:</p> <p>You can use the animation available in our online toolkit.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>https://youtube.com/shorts/jGjLECGiPnE?feature=share</p>  <p>https://youtube.com/shorts/hku9GIU5xk</p>
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Think pharmacy, GP and 111 first

Schedule from:
Now to 1 Jan

Feeling ill this winter?

There are a number of NHS services available to you to provide the best health care for your needs.

Choosing the right NHS service will help get you the best advice, and often more quickly too.

- Think pharmacy first
- GP
- NHS 111 online for medical help and advice
- Keep A&E free for EMERGENCIES ONLY

Help reduce pressure on A&E and other services - so they can help those who need it most.



[Download our animation](#)

	Find pharmacy bank holiday opening hours here .		
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Minor ailments - Further messaging and visuals for minor ailments available [here](#).

<p>UTI message</p> <p>Schedule from:</p> <p>Now to 31 Mar</p> <p>Target more from:</p> <p>20 Dec to 24 Dec & 27 Dec to 31 Dec</p>	<p>OUCH!</p> <p>Burning or stinging sensation when you wee? Need to wee frequently or urgently? Now't much coming out?</p> <p>You may have a Urinary Tract Infection.</p> <p>Did you know across the North East & North Cumbria community pharmacies can provide immediate advice & treatment for UTIs for women aged 16-64.</p> <p>No appointment needed.</p> <p>Ask your local pharmacist today and say #Bye-ByeUTI</p> <p>#HeretoHelp</p> <p>Available at participating pharmacies only: https://www.thinkpharmacyfirst.health/</p>	<p>The image shows a woman with glasses and a purple top, holding a sign that says 'OUCH! Burning or stinging when you wee? Need to wee all the time?'. Below her is another sign that says 'Get immediate advice and treatment at your local pharmacy. BYE-BYE UTI!'. To the right of the signs are two green arrows pointing right, one with 'HERE' and one with 'TO HELP'. The NHS logo is in the top right corner.</p>	<p>Download our animation</p>
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<p>[NEW POST]</p> <p>Emergency contraception</p> <p>Now to 31 January</p>	<p>💊 Pharmacist Ella Hemsley explains how to get the EMERGENCY contraceptive (morning after) pill directly from your local pharmacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ No appointment needed ☑ Quick and easy access ☑ Free and confidential ☑ Get support with longer-term contraception options 		<p>Download our video</p>
<p>Got an itch? message</p> <p>Schedule from:</p> <p>Now to 31 Mar</p> <p>Target more from:</p> <p>20 Dec to 24 Dec & 27 Dec to 31 Dec</p>	<p>Got an itch? Tummy trouble? Tickly cough?</p> <p>Head to your local pharmacy.</p> <p>Pharmacists can offer advice and treatments for a range of conditions – just like having a prescription from your GP!</p> <p>#HereToHelp</p>		<p>Or you can use the animation available in our online toolkit.</p> 
<p>Flu vaccinations</p>			

<p>Flu vaccinations</p> <p>Schedule from: Now to 1 Jan</p>	<p>Make sure your festive season is un-flu-gettable!</p> <p>It's still not too late to get your flu vaccination to keep you and those around you safe during the festive season.</p> <p>If you're over 65, pregnant, in a clinical at-risk group, a carer, a health and social care worker, have a learning disability or live with someone who is immunosuppressed, flu vaccinations are available at your GP or local pharmacy.</p>	 <p>The poster features a purple background with a white snow-capped roof. On the left, a cartoon owl wearing a Santa hat and a red scarf looks towards the right. In the center, there are three green Christmas trees. On the right, another cartoon owl wearing glasses and a green hat looks towards the left. The text 'Make sure your festive season is un-flu-gettable!' is written in a white, cursive font at the top. Below it, 'Be Wise. Immunise.' is written in white. At the bottom right, there is a 'HERE TO HELP' button with an arrow pointing right. The NHS logo is in the top right corner.</p>	<p>Or you can use the animation available in our online toolkit.</p>
<p>Flu vaccinations</p> <p>Schedule from: 2 Jan to 28 Mar</p>	<p>Be wise – immunise!</p> <p>It's still not too late to get your flu vaccination to keep you and those around you safe during the festive season.</p> <p>If you're over 65, pregnant, in a clinical at-risk group, a carer, a health and social care worker, have a learning disability or live with someone who is immunosuppressed, flu vaccinations are available at your GP or local pharmacy.</p>	 <p>The poster has a purple background. On the right side, there is a cartoon owl wearing glasses and a blue hat. The text 'Be Wise Immunise' is written in large, bold, white letters. Below it, 'against Flu this winter.' is written in a smaller, blue font. At the bottom right, there is a 'HERE TO HELP' button with an arrow pointing right. The NHS logo is in the top right corner.</p>	<p>Or you can use the animation available in our online toolkit.</p>
<p>NHS111</p>			

NHS111

Schedule from:

Now to 31 Jan

Get to the help you need ... when you need it!

When it's not life threatening but still urgent or

- You think you might need to go to a hospital or urgent treatment centre but you're not sure
- You need urgent advice and your GP surgery is closed.

NHS111 is here is to help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week online or by phone.
#HeretoHelp



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YCL_cJrn7Ko&list=PLxLQTUPR0agp5iHlnrUzSwa5tFoIYC2xG&index=25



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIcZwWnuk&list=PLxLQTUPR0agp5iHlnrUzSwa5tFoIYC2xG&index=24>

UTC

<p>Urgent Treatment Centre</p> <p>Now to 31 Jan</p>	<p>If you have a minor injury or illness that needs medical attention – but is not life threatening - you can get help at your nearest urgent treatment centre!</p> <p>Urgent treatment centres can treat many conditions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sprains and strains • cuts and grazes • suspected broken limbs • coughs and cold • ear and throat infections <p>If you're still not sure where to go or what to do, contact NHS111 online - or by phone - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - they can help assess and direct you to the right place to go.</p> <p>NHS, we're #HeretoHelp</p>		<p><u>Or you can use the animation available in our online toolkit.</u></p> 
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<h2>Dental</h2>			
<p>[New post]</p> <p>Urgent dental care</p> <p>Now to 4 January</p>	<p>There are 3 ways to get help when you have an urgent dental problem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Contact an NHS dentist ➔ Book an appointment at an urgent dental access centre ➔ Call NHS 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk <p>Find out more 🙌 https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/nhs-dentistry</p>		

Mental Health – Further messaging and visuals for mental health available [here](#).

<p>NHS 111 mental health option</p> <p>Schedule from: Now to 31 Jan</p>	<p>If someone’s mental or emotional state gets worse quickly, this can be referred to as a mental health crisis or a mental health emergency.</p> <p>If you, or someone you know experiences this, you should get help as soon as possible.</p> <p>24/7 support is available by calling NHS 111 and selecting the mental health option.</p> <p>A mental health professional will listen to you and help you find the right support for you.</p> <p>Find out more - https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-winter/looking-after-your-mental-health/</p>		
<p>[Updated post]</p> <p>Mental health crisis text service</p> <p>Schedule from: Now to 31 Jan</p>	<p>Are you feeling anxious or overwhelmed?</p> <p>Talk silently and anonymously to a mental health professional by texting the word ‘CALMER’ to 85258.</p> <p>We’re pleased to be working with Shout to offer free, confidential support by text message, 24/7.</p>		

<p>[New post]</p> <p>Talking Therapies</p>	<p>Struggling with feeling depressed, worrying a lot, social anxiety, post-traumatic stress, or obsessions and compulsions? NHS Talking Therapies are here to help.</p> <p>You don't need a diagnosis to get support. The sooner you reach out, the sooner we can help you feel better.</p> <p>Talking Therapies are free, and confidential. You'll be treated by trained clinicians, online, on the phone, or in person.</p> <p>Your GP can refer you, or you can refer yourself at nhs.uk/talk</p>		
<p>[New post]</p> <p>Mental health self care</p>	<p>There are some tried-and-tested ways to understand how you're feeling and feel better.</p> <p>Clinical experts, and people who've faced these problems themselves, have written our self-help guides. The guides give advice and walk you through some practical exercises. They're based on techniques proven to help people feel better.</p> <p>The guides cover topics like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alcohol • anxiety • bereavement / grief • depression • childhood and domestic abuse • eating disorder • hearing voice 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing anger • obsessions and compulsions • panic attacks • post-traumatic stress • postnatal depression • self-harm • sleeping problems • stress • and more <p>These self-help guides are available for free online. You can get versions in large print, Easy Read, audio and BSL.</p> <p>Online mindfulness and relaxation exercises might help you to feel better. And you can try free, online 'Recovery College' courses.</p> <p>Explore self-help information at https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/looking-after-your-mental-health/</p>		
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GP practices - Further messaging and visuals for GP practices available [here](#).

<p>Phone lines busy</p> <p>Schedule from: Now to 31 Jan</p>	<p>GP phone lines can be very busy, especially in the mornings.</p> <p>Save yourself a wait by calling later in the day, if possible, for non-urgent appointments or test results.</p> <p>Alternatively, if available, you can use your practice's online booking services, available on their website, or use the NHS app.</p>	 <p>The graphic features a hand holding a smartphone displaying the NHS app interface. A yellow banner across the phone reads 'GP phone lines busy?'. Below the phone, a yellow arrow points right with the text 'Go to your NHS account for services and advice.' and 'HERE TO HELP'. The NHS logo is visible in the top right corner of the graphic.</p>	<p>Or you can use the animation available in our online toolkit.</p>
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	<p>You may also be able to email your practice for medication requests and other general queries.</p> <p>Need help using the app?</p> <p>Visit www.nhs.uk/helpmeapp</p> <p>Or visit your practice website for more information.</p> <p>#HeretoHelp</p>		
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Self-care - Further messaging and visuals for self-care available [here](#).

<p>Infection control</p>	<p>Winter bugs are here! STOP the spread.</p> <p>Hand washing is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of infection.</p> <p>Wash your hands with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based gel to help protect yourself, patients and staff this winter.</p> <p>#StoptheSpread</p>	 <p>The image is a green-themed graphic for NHS. It features the text 'Winter bugs are here... Stop the spread.' in white. Below the text is a hand being washed with soap suds. At the bottom, there is a dark green banner with the text 'Wash your hands with soap and warm water, or use an alcohol-based gel to stop the spread of germs.' and a 'HERE TO HELP' logo.</p>	
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<p>Little orange book</p> <p>Schedule from: Now to 31 Jan</p>	<p>Poorly baby or child this winter?</p> <p>Download the LITTLE ORANGE BOOK!</p> <p>It contains online advice for parents of under 5s on a wide range of illnesses in children from common minor concerns to more serious conditions.</p> <p>Find out more here: www.nenc-healthiertogether.nhs.uk</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>		
<p>Healthier together</p> <p>Schedule from: Now to 31 Jan</p>	<p>"We know it can be a worrying time when your child is unwell."</p> <p>Dr Anna-Mary Brough, consultant paediatrician, advises how the Healthier Together app or website can help you decide whether you can best manage your child's illness at home or whether they need to see a doctor.</p> <p>Visit the Healthier Together website www.nenc-healthiertogether.nhs.uk.</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>		<p>Healthier Together <small>CC BY-NC-ND</small> North East and North Cumbria NHS <small>524 subscribers</small> Subscribe</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vX2bsBbKw</p>

<p>[New post]</p> <p>Healthier together</p> <p>Schedule from: Now to 31 Jan</p>	<p>Little one not well?</p> <p>Visit the Healthier Together website for online advice to help manage and improve the health and wellbeing of babies, children and young people.</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>		 <p>Healthier Together Website offers clear, trusted advice to help parents and carers</p> <p>County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MToj1A3iqM</p>
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<h2 style="color: blue;">Smoking</h2>			
<p>Quit smoking</p> <p>Schedule from: Now to 31 Feb</p>	<p>“Quit smoking this New Year. If you keep trying you will get there.”</p> <p>Former smoker John had a heart attack from smoking – but he’s never felt better after quitting.</p> <p>Stopping smoking gives life back. Find advice and free friendly local support at FreshQuit.co.uk</p>		

Every moment in life is precious. Make this New Year the one where you quit smoking for good:

- Better health and feel fitter
- More money
- Feel less stressed
- To be there for your family like Cathy

Stopping smoking gives life back. Find advice and free friendly local support at FreshQuit.co.uk



FOR HOSPITAL TRUSTS AND ICB USE ONLY.
A&E and 999 only use these assets in times of high pressure!

<p>A&E</p> <p>Only for use in times of high pressure</p>	<p>A&E departments are extremely busy</p> <p>Think pharmacy, GP or NHS111 first!</p> <p>Too many people who come to A&E don't need to be there. Their illnesses and injuries can be dealt with quicker by an alternative service freeing up emergency services for those who really need them.</p> <p>If in doubt, contact NHS111 online or by phone, to get assessed and directed to the right place for you - including emergency care.</p> <p>If you go to A&E and your condition isn't life threatening, you may experience a very long wait.</p> <p>#HereToHelp</p>		<p>Or use this animation</p>  <p>1861 - NHS - Animation_NHS 111.</p>
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