NHS
North East and
North Cumbria

Communications toolkit

Here to help winter campaign 2026/27

Updated: 27/10/2026 v1

About this toolkit



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

Working together across the region, we have created key messages and visuals to support our communications with the public this winter.

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 using the NHS App, the conditions people can seek advice and treatment from their pharmacist for, mental health services and much more.

Social media plan

Here to help winter messaging 2026/27

The messaging below forms part of NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board's organic social media plan.

In line with new social media recommendations, we are encouraging partners to support this campaign by adapting the messaging to suit their own audiences, rather than copying and pasting posts directly.

This will help create varied content that performs better with social media algorithms, potentially increasing reach and helping more people see the campaign.

Animations and images can be downloaded from our toolkit here.

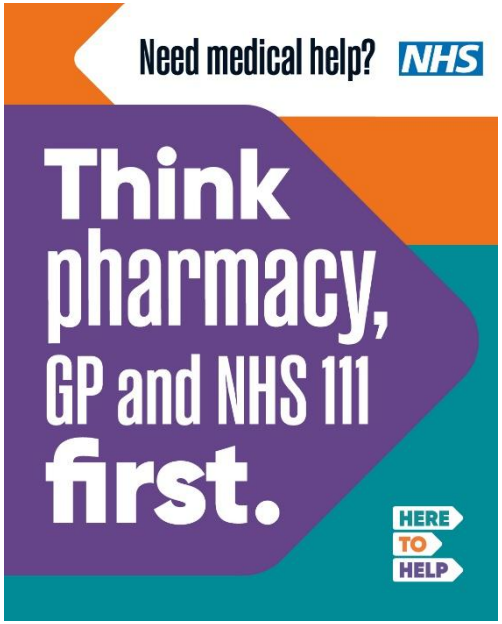
If you're not confident with downloading content, alternatively, you could simply share on your practice's social media channel direct from the ICBs social media channels.

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:
Facebook – NorthEastandNorthCumbriaNHS
X – @NENC_NHS
Instagram – nenc_nhs

Do you have digital screens? We have a range of digital assets that you can download here.

Think pharmacy, GP and NHS 111			
	Meta	**X**	**Visual**
Winter Think Pharmacy, GP and NHS 111 first	😳 Feeling unwell this winter? Know where to turn. You don't always need to see a GP or visit A&E to get the help you need. 💊 Think pharmacy first – get advice and treatment for common illnesses and minor health concerns. 📱 Use NHS 111 online – if you're not sure what help you need; NHS 111 can direct you to the right service. 🚑 A&E is for serious injuries and emergencies. Call 999 if someone's life is at risk. 💙 Get the right care, in the right place. 👉 Search 'NHS 111' online #HereToHelp	😳 Feeling under the weather this winter? Not sure where to turn when you're feeling unwell? Choosing the right NHS service can help you get the care you need, often quicker. Find your nearest pharmacy 👉 https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy/ #HeretoHelp	 Think pharmacy animation

Generic Think Pharmacy, GP and NHS 111 first	😳 Feeling unwell? Know where to turn. You don't always need to see a GP or visit A&E to get the help you need. 💊 Think pharmacy first – get advice and treatment for common illnesses and minor health concerns. 📱 Use NHS 111 online – if you're not sure what help you need; NHS 111 can direct you to the right service. 🚑 A&E is for serious injuries and emergencies. Call 999 if someone's life is at risk. 💙 Get the right care, in the right place. 👉 Search 'NHS 111' online #HereToHelp	😳 Feeling under the weather? Not sure where to turn when you're feeling unwell? Choosing the right NHS service can help you get the care you need, often quicker. Find your nearest pharmacy 👉 https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy/ #HeretoHelp	 Think pharmacy, GP and NHS 111 graphic

Pharmacy – Further messaging and visuals for pharmacy is availble on our website.

	Meta	X	Visual
Common conditions	❄️ Little health problems don't stop for winter! From head lice and verrucas to chickenpox and nappy rash, your local pharmacy can help. 💊 Get expert advice and treatment for common health concerns, often without a GP appointment.	💊 Your local pharmacy is here to help! Pharmacists are qualified healthcare professionals who can offer expert advice and recommend treatments for a range of common health concerns – often without needing a GP appointment. 👉 Find your nearest pharmacy: https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy/	

	💙 Little problem? Think pharmacy first! 👉 Find your nearest pharmacy, search 'NHS find a pharmacy' #HeretoHelp	#HeretoHelp	Little problems animation
Emergency contraception	🎄 Need emergency contraception over Christmas or New Year? Your local pharmacy can help, even during the festive period. ✅ No appointment needed ✅ Free and confidential support ✅ Advice on longer-term contraception options With pharmacy opening hours changing over the bank holidays, it's worth checking before you visit. 📍 Find a participating pharmacy and check its opening hours by searching 'NHS find a pharmacy' Don't delay if you need emergency contraception – the sooner you take it, the more effective it is. #HereToHelp	🎄 Need emergency contraception over Christmas or New Year? Your local pharmacy can help, even during the festive period. 📍 Find a participating pharmacy and check its opening hours: https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy/ #HereToHelp	 Ella Helmsley pharmacist video
Stock up/repeat prescriptions			
	Meta	**X**	**Visual**

Stock up on winter healthcare essentials	🎄💊 Stockings stuffed? Don't forget your medicine cabinet! 😳 Be ready for winter illnesses with essentials like paracetamol, plasters and remedies for indigestion, allergies and diarrhoea. 💚 Your local pharmacist can advise on what to keep in your medicine cabinet. 👉 Find your nearest pharmacy, search 'NHS find a pharmacy' Be prepared, stay well this festive season! ❄️ #HereToHelp	🎄💊 Stockings stuffed? Don't forget your medicine cabinet! 💚 Your local pharmacist can help you get winter ready, with expert advice on what to keep in your medicine cabinet. 👉 Find your nearest pharmacy: https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy/ #HeretoHelp	
Order your repeat prescriptions in plenty of time	🎄💊 Don't let running out of medication spoil your Christmas! With the festive bank holidays approaching, now's the time to check you've got enough repeat medication to see you through Christmas and New Year. ⏰ GP practices and pharmacies may have different opening hours, so plan ahead! 📱 Order your repeat prescriptions in plenty of time using the NHS App or your GP practice's usual ordering service. 👉 Find your nearest pharmacy, search 'NHS find a pharmacy'	🎄💊 Don't let running out of medication spoil your Christmas! ⏰ GP practices and pharmacies may have different opening hours over the holidays. 📱 Order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time using the NHS App or your GP practice. 👉 https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy/ #HereToHelp	 Order repeat prescriptions animation

	#HereToHelp		
NHS App – Further messaging and visuals for the NHS App is available on our website.			
	Meta	**X**	**Visual**
NHS app	❄️📱 Don't miss important NHS updates this winter! Your GP or hospital may send appointment updates, test results and messages about your care through the NHS App. 🔔 Switch on notifications to stay updated. ⏰ Check messages within 24 hours so you don't miss anything important. 💙 One less thing to worry about this winter! #TapTheApp #HereToHelp	Stay on top of your healthcare with the NHS App. 🔔 Switch on notifications so you know when a new message arrives. ⏰ Check your messages within 24 hours so you don't miss anything important. 💙 One less thing to worry about this winter! #TapTheApp #HereToHelp	 NHS App video
NHS app	❄️ Winter's busy enough without worrying about repeat prescriptions! With the NHS App, you can: 💊 Order repeat prescriptions without calling your GP. 🔔 Get updates when your prescription is ready to collect, where available. ⌚ Receive notifications on your phone or smartwatch. 👉 Download the NHS App and switch on notifications today!	❄️Winter's busy enough without worrying about prescriptions! With the NHS App, you can: 💊Order repeat prescriptions 🔔Get updates when your prescription is ready ⌚Receive notifications on your phone or smartwatch. 👉Download the NHS App and switch on notifications! #TapTheApp #HereToHelp	 Winter video of Tracy – NHS App

	#TapTheApp #HereToHelp		
NHS 111 – Further messaging and visuals for NHS 111 is availble on our website.			
	Meta	**X**	**Visual**
NHS 111	❄️ Need urgent medical help this winter but not sure where to turn? If it's not life-threatening, NHS 111 can help you get the right care. 📱 NHS 111 can assess your symptoms and direct you to the most appropriate service, whether that's a pharmacy, GP, urgent treatment centre or hospital. 💙 Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – including weekends and bank holidays. 👉 Visit NHS 111 online or call 111. 🚨 For life-threatening emergencies, always call 999. #HereToHelp	❄️ Need urgent medical help this winter but not sure where to turn? 💙 NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – including weekends and bank holidays. 👉 Visit NHS 111 online or call 111. 🚨 For life-threatening emergencies, always call 999. #HereToHelp	 NHS 111 carousel
Flu vaccinations – Further messaging and visuals for flu is availble on our website.			
	Meta	**X**	**Visual**

Flu vaccinations	❄️ 'Tis the season to get protected 🎄 Flu can spread quickly, especially during the colder months. If you're eligible, getting your flu vaccine is one of the best ways to protect yourself and those around you 💉 ❤️ Getting vaccinated can help you stay well and reduce your risk of becoming seriously ill from flu – so you can make the most of the festive season. 💪Get your flu vaccine from your GP, local pharmacy or book online, search 'NHS flu vaccine' #BeWiseImmunise	Flu can spread quickly, especially during the colder months. If you're eligible, getting your flu vaccine is one of the best ways to protect yourself and those around you 💉 ❤️ 💪Get your flu vaccine, book online today - www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/vaccination-and-booking-services/book-flu-vaccination/ #BeWiseImmunise	 Tis the season flu graphic

Blue to New – Further messaging and visuals for breathe easier is available on our website.

	Meta	X	Visual
Blue to New	❄️ Still relying on your blue inhaler this winter? Cold weather can make asthma symptoms worse and your blue inhaler alone may not be enough. 💙 An asthma review can help you manage symptoms, find the right treatment and reduce asthma attacks. 👉 Book an asthma review with your GP practice today. Don't stop or change your inhalers without medical advice	❄️ Cold weather can make asthma symptoms worse, so now's a good time to check you're getting the right treatment. 💙 Your blue inhaler might not be enough to keep your asthma under control. 👉 Book an asthma review with your GP practice today. #BlueToNew #HereToHelp	

	#BlueToNew #HereToHelp		
Breathe easier – Further messaging and visuals for breathe easier is available on our website.			
	Meta	**X**	**Visual**
Breathe easier	Winter can be tough on your lungs, especially if you have COPD. ❄️ Breathe easier this winter - with three simple steps 🚭 Stop smoking – smoking damages your lungs, speeds up breathing problems, and makes your medication less effective. 💉 Get your winter vaccinations – Cold air can weaken your immune system, protect yourself from flu, RSV, and COVID-19 (if eligible). 🫙 Use your inhalers the right way, every day – helping keep airways open, control symptoms and prevent flare-ups. Find out more by searching 'NHS COPD' #BreatheEasierThisWinter #HereToHelp	❄️ Breathe easier this winter - with three simple steps 🚭 Stop smoking 💉 Get your winter vaccinations 🫙 Use your inhalers the right way, every day Find out more at 👉 https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-copd/ #BreatheEasierThisWinter #HereToHelp	 Breathe easier carousel
Dental – Further messaging and visuals for dental is available on our website.			
	Meta	**X**	**Visual**

Urgent dental care	There are 3 ways to get help when you have an urgent dental problem: ➡️Contact an NHS dentist ➡️Book an appointment at an urgent dental access centre ➡️Call NHS 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk Find out more by searching 'North East and North Cumbria NHS dentistry' #HeretoHelp	There are 3 ways to get help when you have an urgent dental problem: ➡️Contact an NHS dentist ➡️Book an appointment at an urgent dental access centre ➡️Call NHS 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk Find out more👉 https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/nhs-dentistry #HeretoHelp	 NHS dental care animation

Mental Health – Further messaging and visuals for mental health is available on our website.

	Meta	X	Visual
NHS 111 mental health option	💙 Struggling with your mental health? You don't have to face it alone. If you or someone you know is in a mental health crisis, support is available 24/7 📞 Call NHS 111 and select the mental health option if you're: • Having thoughts of self-harm or suicide • Feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope • Too anxious to leave the house • Hearing voices or seeing things that others can't	💙 If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 📞 Call NHS 111 and select the mental health option. 🚨 If someone's life is at immediate risk, call 999 or go to A&E. #HereToHelp	

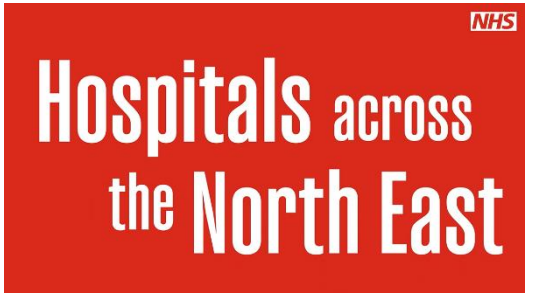
	A trained mental health professional will listen and help you get the right support. 💙 Whatever you're facing, help is available 🚨 If someone's life is at immediate risk, call 999 or go to A&E. For deaf people or those with hearing loss, use NHS 111 SignVideo or Relay UK (18001 111). #HereToHelp		
Mental health crisis text service	💙 Feeling anxious, stressed or overwhelmed? Sometimes it's easier to text than talk. 📱 Text CALMER to 85258 for free, confidential mental health support from Shout, available 24/7. 💬 You don't have to explain everything at once. Just send a text to start the conversation. You don't have to face it alone. #HereToHelp	💙 Feeling anxious, stressed or overwhelmed? Sometimes it's easier to text than talk. 📱 Text CALMER to 85258 to connect with a trained mental health professional from Shout. It's free, confidential and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. #HereToHelp	

Mental health support	💙 Feeling anxious, stressed or struggling with your mental health? 📖 Our FREE NHS self-help guides offer practical advice and exercises for anxiety, low mood, sleep problems, grief and more. ✨ Explore mindfulness, relaxation exercises and free online Recovery College courses. 📱 Guides are available in Easy Read, large print, audio and British Sign Language (BSL). 💙 Support is just a click away. 👉 Explore our free resources, search 'North East and North Cumbria looking after your mental health' #HereToHelp	💙 Feeling anxious, stressed or struggling with your mental health? 📖 Explore our FREE NHS self-help guides, created with clinical experts and people with lived experience. 👉 Explore our free resources: https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/looking-after-your-mental-health/ #HereToHelp	 Mental health talking therapies/self-help graphic

Self-care - Further messaging and visuals for self-care available here.

	Meta	X	Visual
Healthier Together	🎄 Schools are breaking up for Christmas, but winter illnesses don't stop for the holidays. 😳 Not sure what to do if your child becomes unwell? 💙 Healthier Together has trusted NHS advice to help you care for your child at home, spot signs to look out for and know when to seek medical help. 📱 School's out, but help is still here! Search 'Healthier Together'	😳 Not sure what to do if your child becomes unwell? 💙 Healthier Together has trusted NHS advice to help you care for your child at home, spot signs to look out for and know when to seek medical help. 📱 School's out, but help is still here! 👉 Visit www.nenc-healthiertogether.nhs.uk #HereToHelp	 Healthier Together animation

Infection control – to be used during periods of high pressure	🦠❄️ Winter bugs are here! STOP the spread. 🛑 🧼 Hand washing is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of infection. 👏💧 Wash your hands with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand gel to help protect yourself, patients and staff this winter. #StoptheSpread	🦠❄️ Winter bugs are here! STOP the spread. 🛑 🧼 Hand washing is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of infection. 👏💧 Wash your hands with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand gel to help protect yourself, patients and staff this winter. #StoptheSpread	
Infection control – to be used during periods of high pressure	🦠❄️ Winter bugs are here! 🛑 STOP the spread. If you are feeling unwell, please DO NOT visit loved ones in hospital to help stop spreading infections and protect patients and staff 💙 #StoptheSpread	🦠❄️ Winter bugs are here! 🛑 STOP the spread. If you are feeling unwell, please DO NOT visit loved ones in hospital to help stop spreading infections and protect patients and staff 💙 #StoptheSpread	
A&E – Only to be used during periods of high pressure			

A&E – to be used during periods of high pressure	🚨 If you need EMERGENCY care, call 999 or go to your nearest A&E. 🏥 🤟 British Sign Language (BSL) users can make a BSL video call to 999. 📱 Deaf people can use 18000 to contact 999 using text relay. If in doubt, contact NHS 111, online or by phone, to get assessed and directed to the right place for you – including emergency care. 🔎 Visit nhs.uk to find out more. #HereToHelp	🚨 If you need EMERGENCY care, call 999, or go to your nearest A&E. If in doubt, contact NHS111, online or by phone, to get assessed and directed to the right place for you - including emergency care. Find out more 👉 **NHS.UK** #HereToHelp	 A&E animation
A&E – to be used during periods of high pressure	🚨 A&E and 999 are extremely busy! Think pharmacy, GP or NHS 111 first! 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. 📱 If in doubt, contact NHS 111 online or by phone to get assessed and directed to the right place for you – including emergency care.	🚨 A&E and 999 are extremely busy! Think pharmacy, GP or NHS 111 first! Too many people who come to A&E don't need to be there. If in doubt, contact NHS 111 online or by phone to get assessed and directed to the right place for you. 👉 Find out more at NHS.UK #HereToHelp	 A&E animation

	⏰ If you go to A&E and your condition isn't life-threatening, you may experience a very long wait. 🔎 Visit nhs.uk to find out more. #HereToHelp		