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Warrington Public Health

World AIDS Day
1st December

What is World AIDS Day?

World AIDS Day takes place on 1 December each year. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

Over 103,800 people are living with HIV in the UK. Globally, there are an estimated 38 million people who have the virus. Despite the virus only being identified in 1984, more than 35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

Today, scientific advances have been made in HIV treatment, there are laws to protect people living with HIV and we understand so much more about the condition. Despite this, each year in the UK over 4,450 people are diagnosed with HIV, people do not know the facts about how to protect themselves and others, and stigma and discrimination remain a reality for many people living with the condition.

World AIDS Day is important because it reminds the public and government that HIV has not gone away – there is still a vital need to raise money, increase awareness, fight prejudice and improve education.

Please watch this [video](#) were Sandra Mason, HIV specialist nurse from Axess explaining why World AIDS Day is still so important



**World
AIDS Day**

Axess have create this short e-learning to support World AIDS Day

<https://www.warringtontraininghub.uk/Event/129327>

Local support

If you wish to speak with a specialist in confidence, please contact your nearest axess clinic or check out the website.

<https://www.axess.clinic>

Tel: **0300 323 1300** (Select area option)

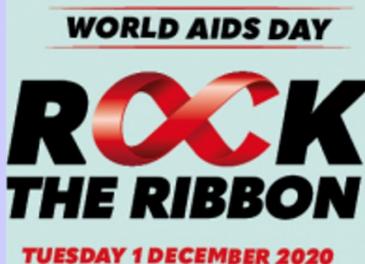
HIV home screening

Axess work in partnership with SH:24 to provide a free online sexual health testing service that provides confidential home-testing for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV.

Further information and support

The Terrence Higgins Trust www.tht.org.uk Call THT Direct on 0808 802 1221 for support, advice and information

National AIDS Trust www.nat.org.uk



Tips for managing loneliness this winter

The darker days of winter can be difficult, even at the best of times. The reduced social contact and uncertainty which the COVID-19 pandemic has brought, may mean that more of us feel lonely* or isolated this winter. Christmas is likely to be a particularly challenging time, for those of us who are unable to see loved ones, or to celebrate in the way we usually do.

Both [Mind](#) and [the NHS site](#) suggest practical tips to help us manage loneliness. They also give details of where we can go for support. The Mental Health Foundation has a page which focuses specifically on [loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). This covers strategies to help ourselves and ways to support others who might be lonely.

By looking after ourselves and by showing kindness to the people around us, we can a big difference, to how we feel and to others too.

**Recent research suggests certain groups have an increased likelihood of feeling lonely. You can find more details in the [COVID-19 Mental Health and Wellbeing Surveillance Report](#).*



Kindness and mental wellbeing

COVID-19 has demonstrated the importance and power of kindness. During the first lockdown we heard many stories of people who had gone out of their way to help others.

[Studies](#) have shown that being kind to others, also makes us feel good. Being kind is easy. Small gestures, such as checking on a neighbour who lives alone, or ringing someone for a chat, can have a big impact. As the pandemic continues it's important for us to be kind, both to ourselves and to each other.

The Happy? OK? Sad? site has a page on kindness and mental wellbeing, which includes links to free resources and tips for practising kindness.

The Mental Health Foundation also has a page on [acts of kindness during the coronavirus outbreak](#), with suggestions for improving wellbeing through kindness.



#DoGoodDecember

Action for Happiness has a ["Kindness Calendar"](#) for December 2020, which is free to download. The focus is on doing good for others. For each day in December the calendar suggests a simple kind act, which you could try.



Looking after our mental wellbeing

Each of the age-related pages on the [Happy? OK? Sad? site](#) has a section, “looking after our mental wellbeing”. This includes links to information, evidence-based resources and self-management strategies, which can help you maintain or improve your mental wellbeing. Information and resources relating to sleep and wellbeing has recently been added to this section of the site.

The Mental Health Foundation also has advice on [facing winter during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). It includes tips for to protecting your own mental wellbeing, as well as ways you could support your family and community.

COVID-19 and mental wellbeing

There’s also a page on the Happy? OK? Sad? site focusing on [COVID-19 and mental wellbeing](#). This covers the mental wellbeing of adults, children and young people. The information includes links to tips and suggestions for self-management, free CBT-based resources and government guidance.

Mental health support

Many local and national mental health support services have adapted during the pandemic, so they can offer support online or by phone. Some services may still offer limited face to face support, if that’s what someone needs. As guidance can change so quickly, the best way to find out what support a service is currently offering is to contact the service directly. You can find details of a wide range of local and national mental health support services on Warrington’s Happy? OK? Sad? site.

To find support service information:

1. Go to www.happyoksad.org.uk
2. Click one of the blue age related buttons “adults”, “young people”, or “older people”
3. Then look under the dark heading “information and support”



The [I need urgent help](#) page on the Happy? OK? Sad? site, has details of mental health services you can contact, if someone needs help right now.

Local NHS Mental Health Crisis Line

The Mental Health Crisis Line is:

- available **24 hours a day, seven days a week**
- for people experiencing a **mental health crisis**, who need **urgent support**
- for people concerned that a **friend or family member** is in a mental health crisis
- for people who **live in Warrington**, Halton, Knowsley or St Helens
- for **people of all ages**, including children and young people

Stay Alive App

The Stay Alive app is for anyone who feels suicidal. It's also for anyone concerned that someone else may be considering suicide.

The app has been localised for Cheshire and Merseyside and updated. It includes:

- Information on how to access local and national crisis support.
- A ‘life box’ where you can store photos that are important to you.
- A safety plan.
- Fact-based reasons for staying alive.
- Bereavement resources.

You can download the app free from the App Store or Google Play. More details about the app can be found on the [Grassroots Suicide Prevention website](#)

Thinking about suicide? Worried about someone?

STAYALIVE

Download the award-winning #StayAlive app. Now upgraded for 2020 with a range of new features and access via web browser.

- Safety Plan**
A customisable plan for keeping you safe from suicide.
- LifeBox**
A place to store your life-affirming photos or videos.
- Find Help now**
Quick access to large database of UK national and local support.

PATIENT SAFETY AWARDS WINNER

GRASSROOTS preventing suicide together

GET IT ON Google Play | Download on the App Store

Need urgent help with your mental health?

Live in **Halton, Knowsley, St Helens or Warrington?**
Call us on our new **Freephone number!** We can help.

0800 051 1508

www.nwbh.nhs.uk/help-in-a-crisis

How to be happier while working from home

Millions of people need a home office for the first time and many people may never go back to working in the office full time. Unfortunately levels of depression have increased and surveys show that many people say working from home has made them feel more stressed.

Top tips to keep us happier at home:

1. **Let in the light** -Sunlight, alongside fresh air and access to nature is fundamentally good for your mental health. Sunlight triggers the brain to release the hormone serotonin. It helps people to feel calm and focussed, boosts their mood and reduces anxiety.
2. **Shut out the noise**— Noise can be hugely distracting when trying to work. Noise can tap into your ‘fight or flight’ response, a stressful sound induces parts of your brain to send out distress signals. Which in turn can prompt a release of adrenaline into the blood where your blood pressure goes up.
3. **Declutter**—Studies have found that clutter can raise your level of cortisol, a stress hormone. Clutter can lead to over-stimulation. High levels of cortisol are associated with anxiety, depression, headaches and sleep disruption. While a certain amount of clutter in a relaxing home may not be a problem, if it’s now a workplace, you may need to cut down on distraction
4. **Stand Up**— If you’re working from home, you may now be missing that walk to the bus stop or train station, or walking up and down long corridors to meetings etc. Therefore you are likely to be moving less! Keeping active can help you mentally as well as physically. Physical activity is a natural anti-anxiety treatment, relieving stress, boosting physical and mental energy and enhancing wellbeing through the release of endorphins.
5. **Use plant**— Connecting with the natural world can have mental benefits. For example, reducing blood pressure, anxiety and stress and improving attention, memory and sleep.
6. **Social connect...and not just online**— If you find yourself unhappy working at home, think about what you miss about going into the office and try to compensate for whatever you’ve lost. For many people, top of the list is social contact. For example chatting in the office or lunch queue, in the lift or on the stairs. It matters to so many people. Humans are social animals, staring into a screen or Zoom is not enough.

Read more at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-54886125>

Watch out for dangerous toys this Christmas

Lots of us will be doing our shopping online this Christmas due to Covid-19 restrictions and shop closures. Buying presents online - especially children’s toys - can also be a great way to discover some bargains and save money. However, the number of dangerous toys sold online to unsuspecting families is on the increase - so it’s good to be aware when buying presents this year.

For example, did you know that if you buy a toy from a third party seller via one of the well-known online marketplaces, it might not meet UK safety standards? Online marketplaces are simply offering a shop window to sellers around the world and aren’t legally required to check if a toy is safe before allowing it to be sold. Some of these toys may be dangerous and, as a result, could cause serious injuries to children.

Dangers can include:

- Magnets so strong they can burn through the gut if swallowed
- Long cords which can strangle a child
- Dangerous levels of chemicals
- Small parts that can choke or suffocate
- Easy access to button batteries that can get stuck in a child’s food pipe, cause internal bleeding and even death.



[The Child Accident Prevention Trust](#) is sharing tips to help everyone buy toys safely this Christmas.