

September 2016 InfoNOW News

New research from Swansea University challenges the idea that older people are dangerous drivers. Analysis of data on vehicle accidents showed that drivers aged 70 are involved in 3-4 times fewer accidents.

[Read the story in full from BBC News.](#)

Local authority websites struggling to hit 'plain English' guidelines

Over 80% of websites surveyed fail to meet target readability standards

Read more from Digital by Default News [here](#)

Ofgem announces a cap on pre-payment energy meters

The energy watchdog, Ofgem, has announced that they will be implementing several of the Competition and Market Authority's (CMA) proposed remedies to combat the ineffectiveness of competition in the market. The [CMA](#) has found that most households are overspending on their energy bills and will impose a cap on prepayment meters which is expected to save users £75-£80 per year.

Prepayment meters allow people to pay for gas and electricity on a pay-as-you-go basis, as opposed to monthly or quarterly arrears. The price cap will limit how much suppliers can charge for standard variable prepayment tariffs, which will help make these tariffs more competitive and also help vulnerable customers, who tend to suffer the most detriment. Further information is available [here](#).

Residents worried about gas or electricity bills can contact Energy Services on 0191 278 3427 or email energy@newcastle.gov.uk.

Last chance to apply for free gas central heating

If your home does not have, and never has had, a central heating system. Check if you are eligible [here](#)

[Warm Up North](#) are taking referrals until mid-October for households with an income under £26k or on a means Tested Benefit to qualify, private sector households.

ReCoCo: The Recovery College Collective

New organisation on InformationNOW Tyneside Recovery College and many voluntary sector groups have come together to form the Recovery College Collective. The college is a place where people who experience or have experienced mental health difficulties can come together, make connections and develop their knowledge and skills in relation to recovery. It's also a safe place to go when individuals feel that they are in need of extra support.

The college runs a variety of creative, educational and support-based classes. All courses are free and open to anyone who would find them helpful in their recovery from mental illness, substance misuse, trauma or distress, or to anyone who might find them beneficial to their wellbeing.

[Read more here](#)

Benefit cap changes

The benefit cap was introduced in 2013 is:

- £550 per week (£26,000 per year) if you're in a couple (with or without children)
- £500 per week (£26,000 per year) if you're a single parent
- £350 per week (£18,200 per year) if you're single and you have no children / your children do not live with you

The Summer Budget 2015 announced that the benefit cap will be reduced to:

- £385 per week (£20,000 per year) if you're in a couple (with or without children)
- £385 per week (£20,000 per year) if you're a single parent
- £258 per week (£13,400 per year) if you're single and you have no children / your children do not live with you

The lowering of the benefit cap will start to be implemented from 7 November 2016 and will be managed over a number of weeks. The Department for Work and Pensions' implementation approach is in development and they will provide local authorities with more information on this in due course.

[Active Inclusion Newcastle Unit](#) started a project in July 2016 to support private rented and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenants who will be impacted by the lower benefit cap, to complement the support that [Your Homes Newcastle](#) (YHN) is targeting towards their tenants. The first stage of this is to trial a triage approach with those private rented and RSL tenants who are affected by the current benefit cap, with specialists in financial issues (Welfare Rights Service and Money Matters) contacting the households first, given that the impact of the cap is on a family's finances, and then using their engagement to assess other barriers to improving the households' financial situation and to residents gaining employment (if that is their only option). The learning for the first stage will inform the second stage of support to those households affected by the lower benefit cap.

For further information on what benefits and payments are included in the benefit cap, visit the [Gov.uk website](#)

If you think that someone you are working with should be exempt from the benefit cap phone Newcastle City Council's Welfare Rights Service consultancy line on 0191 277 2633 for further advice.

Watch What You Heat - Fire Safety Campaign

Electrical Safety First have launched a new fire safety campaign, Watch What You Heat, to coincide with the Great Fire of London anniversary. Full details, available [here](#).

Helpful mental health emergency information cards available

[Patient Information Centre](#)

This handy information card offers practical advice and contact numbers. The credit card sized hand-out has been produced by Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust's (NTW) Patient Information Centre in partnership with the

Newcastle Community Forum and HAREF: Health and Race Equality Forum.

As well as directing people to the Trust's self-help guides on the NTW website, it gives information on who you can talk to including local Psychological Wellbeing Services.

The card has recently been updated to reflect some changes in local helpline numbers and will be available to key community groups across the region and will also be available at doctors' surgeries, libraries and carers centres.

If you would like a supply of the cards please email: pic@ntw.nhs.uk

Building Financially Healthy Communities

Join the Financial Health Exchange for the next installment of their 'Building Financially Healthy Communities' event, taking place on 15 November 2016. The event aims to bring together a range of specialists from the financial health sector to consider how organisations can deliver meaningful change.

Speakers will focus on works and what doesn't work in order to highlight best practice and enable others to embed this learning in their organisations. Further information is available [here](#).

The Government is reviewing our museums and art galleries. Have your say

The Government's reviewing the purpose of museums and galleries in England. It wants your views on how they could improve (change to free entry at national museums' permanent collections isn't on the cards) and what you think the purpose is of national museums, such as the British Museum. [Take the Governments Survey here](#)

Opportunity for older people to do ethical consumer research (and get paid for it)

Use your knowledge and experience - help with consumer research

[Rica](#) is a consumer research charity that works with older and disabled people. they are looking to expand their consumer research panel - the RicaWatch panel.

[You can read about the RicaWatch panel here](#)

There are 3 ways to join the RicaWatch panel:

- [Join online panel here](#)
- Request a print or large print copy of the registration form
- Register over the phone - telephone Rica on 020 7427 2460.

Rica pays panel members:

- **£20 for a phone mystery shop**
- **£40 for a home/shop mystery shop visit** to cover individual expenses and will pay, in addition, necessary personal assistance/extra travel expenses.

Research work is:

- irregular and they can't guarantee how much involvement they can offer you - it depends on project work in your area
- under your control - Rica always contacts its panel members to check the research is appropriate to where people live/availability.

If you've any questions, ring Chris on 020 7427 2460.

Get Online Champion Training

Wednesday 19th October

This course has been designed specifically for staff and volunteers from community and charity organisations, it is perfect for anyone with good IT skills who want to gain the confidence and skills to help get their customers online. The next available date for this course is Wednesday 19th October, to register your interest please email

Getonline@newcastle.gov.uk

Health and Race Equality Forum are looking for Trustees

The Board of Trustees of [Health and Race Equality Forum HAREF](#) is seeking

interested people to join this committed leadership group of our small yet impactful organisation. HAREF is also seeking a Chair of the Board of Trustees.

HAREF is a network of people across diverse Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, and various health services and organisations across sectors. The network exists to support members to work together to reduce health inequalities and improve BME access to health services. HAREF grew out Newcastle's Health Action Zone's Race Equality Area of Special Action and was originally an area of work within Newcastle Healthy City. HAREF became an independent company with charitable status in 2012 with charitable objectives to promote equality and diversity in the North of England and in particular the elimination of health inequalities amongst black and minority (BME) communities for the public benefit by;

- Encouraging and facilitating engagement in service developments
- Raising awareness of health inequality issues by publications, lectures, media, public advocacy and other means of communication
- Cultivating a sentiment in favour of equality and diversity through the dissemination of information and public advocacy

About you:

Committed to the values and principles of HAREF you will contribute your time and energy to working in HAREF's best interests. You are able to work effectively in a team and to think with a long-term vision. You have experience of working strategically as well as substantial experience and skills in at least one of the following areas:

- Health and / or race equality practice
- Finance and accounting
- Marketing and / or business development
- Leadership and management
- Fundraising
- Legal practice and / or governance
- Chairing a strategic group (particularly for applicants interested in taking on the role of Chair)

About the role:

The main requirements of the role are to: participate in regular Board of Trustees Meetings (currently every six weeks on a Tuesday morning), undertake advance reading in preparation for meetings, and carry out follow up tasks as agreed. There are approximately 2 additional half-day strategic planning sessions per year, and sub-committee work may also feature. Trustee roles are voluntary, though HAREF pays reasonable out of pocket expenses. Trustees have ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of HAREF, ensuring that it is solvent and well run, delivering the charitable objectives for which it was set up. The Board's key tasks are to:

- formulate strategic objectives and oversee their implementation;
- ensure policies and practices are in keeping with HAREF's charitable objects and legal requirements;
- ensure HAREF's sustainability and good reputation

For further information and to express an interest in this role, please email kate@haref.org.uk

They welcome applications from all people who meet the Trustee specification. They are particularly seeking applications from people from BME communities as it is their hope to ensure that they make up at least 50% of their Board of Trustees.

Fix it Shop

[Scotswood Centre](#) **4PM - 6PM**

Bring your DIY jobs in, or help to fix up other community items. Open to everyone.

[See their full programme here](#)

Family Estrangement Support Group

[Stand Alone](#) received funding from the Big Lottery to run regular support groups to help those affected by family estrangement.

In association with Community Counselling Cooperative, a North East collective of counsellors, we run two distinct groups which follow a theme, such as coping with the living loss, moving forwards, or reconciliation. One group is for those who have become estranged from their children or grandchildren. (The other is for those who

have become estranged from their parent/s, which understandably brings up different issues and that is why they keep this one distinct).

They have found that the lead up to Christmas can be a time when people experiencing family estrangement find difficult, so this group will run from September through until November, fortnightly, and will enable those going through similar experiences to get together and talk issues through in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. The group meets on an early evening in the centre of Newcastle, and tea, coffee and biscuits are provided. Transport links are good - by metro, bus or train, and there is parking nearby which is free after 6.30pm.

There is a one-off registration fee of £15 to pay, and it is free to those on benefits. The group is facilitated by two experienced counsellors.

[Download the flyer here](#)

BSL and Deafblind Courses

[Deaflink](#) are running new BSL courses starting this September. Find out more on their website

Want to practice BSL or meet Deaf people and other BSL students. Find out more here.

Drawing and Painting at Shipley

[Shipley Art Gallery](#)

Every Friday from 23 September

10am to 11.30am

Get to grips with a range of drawing and painting techniques, enabling you to complete projects and create beautiful images.

[Book here](#)

Alzheimer's month

The Health Resource Centre Thursday 27th September 2016 10:00-11:30

[HealthWORKS Newcastle](#) are running 'I remember when' memories board- where clients, staff and passers-by will be asked to write down a memory to be added to the memory board to be framed and mounted in the centre. Contact Angelina Charnley and Shifa Begum for more information.

Manisty House Open House

Atherton Drive, Benwell, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7UN

Wednesday 21 September 2016 between 10am and 2.30pm

One and two bedroom flats available to people aged 50 or over who enjoy independent living within a safe, secure setting.

No appointment needed - open to all. Come along to view the property and have a chat with friendly, local staff.

For more information call (0191) 273 1595 or 0300 100 0303. Or visit their website or email housing.options@affinitysutton.com

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