

**22 January 2021**

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## **NEWS**

### **Looking for help? InformationNOW**

Looking for help to stay at home. Read our [home care](#) and [home care agencies](#)

articles and find out more about [attendance allowance](#). Visit [Your Equipment Newcastle](#) for items and products that may make things easier to pick things up or access shelves, plugs or open tins.

When your circumstances change, we have information that may help you with planning ahead such as, [Power of Attorney](#), [Wills](#), [Finding a Care Home](#) and [Looking after someone](#). All the articles link to local organisations that can help you.

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## World Braille Day

World Braille Day was on the 4th January. It is the birthday of Louis Braille, the inventor of this wonderful language. It is also a day when we can look at the progress we have made towards an inclusive environment for people with a visual impairment. Baby Boomers were taught Braille because it helped with literacy and then, with the advent of screen readers and audio, Braille dropped off as a key language. Braille does support literacy through spelling words and it is important to remember that over 50% of visually impaired people are not employed and potentially excluded. Most important though, is that people with a visual impairment have choice and Braille continues to be important to many. It enables active reading rather than passive audio listening. More than that, from dialling a phone number to checking a bank statement, labelling clothing, food stuffs and domestic appliances, the ability to read Braille helps people with sight loss be independent in so many ways every day.

For those of you interested in learning more about Braille contact the [RNIB](#), for those who want to learn Braille, contact [the Braille Foundation](#).

More on [Sight Loss and Visual Impairment](#).

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## Manifesto for a better normal

A group of north east user-led charities, including [Difference North East](#), [Disability North](#), Inclusion North, United Response, [Newcastle Vision Support](#), Just Fair, [Recoco](#) and [Skills for People](#), has worked together to come up with a 'Manifesto for a Better Normal'. Based on their experiences of supporting disabled people before and during the Covid crisis, they set out aspects of policy and practice that could be improved to support disabled people's rights. They are calling for organisations and the statutory sector to [make an EPIC plan](#):

- Extra money and support to protect the rights of disabled people
  - Personalised support
  - Involvement in policy and planning
  - Comply with the law in protecting the rights of disabled people
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## Burns night, 25 January 2021

You don't have to live in Scotland to celebrate Burns Night on Monday 25 January - the birthday of Scotland's national bard, Robert Burns. Born into rural poverty in a two-roomed cottage, near Ayr, in 1759, he became a prolific poet who wrote about everyday life using a Scottish vernacular that was already under threat from English in his own lifetime. Two and a half centuries later his work is still celebrated in Scotland and beyond and many of us will know a handful of poems, such as the traditional New Year's Eve anthem *Auld Lang Syne*, *Tam O'Shanter* and the romantic *A Red, Red Rose*. Originally, a day when his friends remembered him, today it has become a celebration of all things Scottish, including whisky, bagpiping and Highland dancing. Given lockdown we may not be able to celebrate in our usual way, but we can raise a wee dram with our smoked haddock, neeps and tatties.

See our list of [religious and cultural festivals 2021](#). Some dates are yet to be confirmed owing to the Coronavirus.

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## Sugar awareness week

Sugar awareness week is a good opportunity to take stock of what we eat, especially after the endless chocolates, sweets and drinks we have eaten over Christmas. As a nation, we eat too much [sugar](#). The recommended allowance of **free sugars** for an adult is 30g, or 7.5 tsp or 7 cubes per day. Yet, for example, many of us will drink one 330ml can of cola which contains 36g of free sugars, without thinking twice about it. Sugar contributes to obesity and ill health, including complications such as [diabetes](#); it also contributes to [tooth decay](#). Why not download the [food scanner app](#) so you can check what you are eating. and make a change.

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## Forestry England virtual tour

Now that we have been asked to reduce our outdoor activity, Forestry England have created [a virtual tour of their forests](#) for you to enjoy. They also have nature podcasts, forest yoga and you can [send in your memories of trips and activities too to win a prize](#).

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## REPORTS

### Greener prisons

Further research that shows the benefits of being close to nature. This report by Harmony Project is launched against the backdrop of a decline in the number of prison farms in the UK in recent years.

[An Action Plan for Greener Prisons](#)' draws on research which indicates that access to the natural world; growing food and working with animals, can improve mental wellbeing and reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Studies also suggest that active hands-on engagement with nature is effective in supporting marginalised people to reintegrate into society and in this case, reduce reoffending. Find recommendations on page 8.

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### Office of National Statistics (ONS) on the coronavirus

The Coronavirus pandemic has meant the ONS, like everyone else, has had to adapt quickly to support analysis and production of statistics that the country relies upon. The Royal Statistical Society has now recognised two figures from ONS in their 2020 Statistics of the year: their work on excess deaths in [care homes](#) has been awarded the 2020 UK Statistic of the year and their work to shine a light on the impact of the pandemic on [wellbeing](#) has been highly commended.

[This page](#) gives you all the insights they have performed during the coronavirus pandemic.

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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

**Help Healthwatch Newcastle to help you**

Are you a patient at any of these GP surgeries in outer west Newcastle?

- Denton Park Medical Group
- Denton Turret Medical Centre
- Newburn Surgery
- Parkway Medical Group
- Throckley Primary Care Centre
- Westerhope Medical Group

These surgeries are working together and want to find out what you think and what you'd like to see in the future. If you're a patient of one of these GP practices, please complete this [Healthwatch Newcastle survey](#) by Friday 12 February. There is a prize draw to win one of ten Morrisons vouchers. If you don't have internet access call Freephone 0808 178 9282 and someone will help you complete the survey over the phone.

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## Cervical screening awareness week

[Jo's Trust](#) is reminding us that we can prevent cervical cancer through a free health test that checks for a virus called high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cell changes. Still known as a smear test, screening may well be available at your GP surgery and precautions will be taken to keep you safe from coronavirus. Between the ages of 25 to 64 years you will receive a letter from your GP for a regular appointment up to every five years as standard. Catching cancer early is essential to keep you safe and well, so if you are nervous or unsure, then contact Jo's Trust helpline volunteers 0808 802 8000. They are also there to support you following diagnosis, cancer treatment and recovery.

More about [cancer, risks and screening](#).

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## RESOURCES

### Bright Sky helps to spot domestic abuse

Bright Sky is a website for anyone who thinks they may be experiencing domestic abuse, or who is worried about someone else. It includes questionnaires to assess

the safety of a relationship, plus a section on dispelling myths around domestic and sexual abuse. The website is focused on how to spot the signs of domestic abuse, advice on how to support someone you have concerns for, and ways to find help. They give you access to a unique UK-wide directory of specialist domestic abuse support services with contact details and nationwide helplines that are available 24/7.

More on [domestic abuse](#) and local support in Newcastle.

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## Online arts and culture

100% Digital Leeds have partnered with Leeds Arts Health and Wellbeing Network to host [free 30 minute lunchtime webinars](#). The next one is 27 January and will support people who want to [facilitate online](#).

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## Every Mind Matters

On 18 January [Public Health England](#) launched the Better Health - Every Mind Matters campaign to support the nation's mental wellbeing with the encouragement that 'When things aren't so good out there, make inside feel better'. Aimed at adults, but weighted towards those most at risk of mental health problems, they encourage people to create a free NHS-approved Mind Plan.

The Every Mind Matters platform has been continuously updated with tips and support on how to deal with change, cope with money worries and job uncertainty and how to look after your mental wellbeing while staying at home. It also includes practical tips and videos from experts on dealing with stress and anxiety, as well advice for parents and for children and young people.

InformationNOW had articles on [sleep](#) and [mental health](#).

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## Jesmond Library activities

Just a reminder that [Jesmond Library](#) continues to run [their book club](#) each month and new members are welcome. They are also operating their click and collect service, wellbeing for life sessions and a creative writing competition.

## What's new on InformationNOW this week

Organisations Updated

Gentle Dusk

Skills for People

Last updated: August 11, 2022

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## Recent Newsletters:

### [Friday 22nd March 2024 InfoNOW News](#)

InformationNOW Did you know you can get directions to an organisation with one click from an organisations page? Did you know you can change the website into over 100 languages? Did you know you can find informa...

### [InfoNOW News Wednesday 6th March 2024](#)

InformationNOW Updated User dashboard When you log into your dashboard as an organisation, you will now see a message 'Please send us your events using this from'. Clicking on the 'this form'...