

16th December 2022 InfoNOW News

Opening times for foodbanks and support services over the festive holidays

You can find out more about when [services are available during the festive holidays on InformationNOW here](#).

Many services are closed during the Christmas and New Year holidays. If you are unsure if a service is running, please contact them directly before you travel.

Email Lauren.Hoy@Newcastle.gov.uk before 22nd December with your opening times to be added to this article.

InformationNOW Christmas holidays

[InformationNOW.org.uk](https://www.informationnow.org.uk) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Please note Lauren is taking annual leave from 23rd December until 11th January. I will reply to emails and publish organisation updates as soon as possible when back to work.

If you need to update your organisation's details you can [log in to update your details](#) at any time.

[Forgot your password? No problem! Reset it here](#)

Household support fund

Newcastle City Council is distributing money from the government Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people and families. This money is being used to fund:

- Free School Meal Vouchers for eligible children during Christmas and February half term school holidays
- Cost of living “top up” payments for people who receive housing benefit who were not entitled to the Government’s Cost of Living payment
- From early January 2023 hardship payments for food and or utility bills for householders who are in financial difficulty through a supported application process

More information about the scheme can be found on [Newcastle City Council website](#)

Read more on InformationNOW about [Emergency funds and support](#)

New prepaid cards for Healthy Start Scheme

The NHS Healthy Start Scheme is for people who are pregnant or have children under the age of 4, who receive certain benefits. You get a free prepaid card that's topped up every 4 weeks to buy:

- plain liquid cow's milk
- fresh, frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables
- fresh, dried and tinned pulses
- infant formula milk based on cow's milk

You can use the card in shops that accept Mastercard payments and sell at least one of these Healthy Start foods.

You can use the card to collect Healthy Start Vitamins at [Byker Sands](#), [Fawdon Children's Centre](#), [Galafield Centre](#), [Nunsmoor Centre](#), [Healthworks](#), [Riverside Community Health Project](#), [Geoffrey Rhodes Centre](#) and [Kenton Centre](#).

Find out if you are eligible and how to apply on the NHS Healthy Start Website. Please note vouchers are no longer available.

[Watch the video about accessing Healthy Start Scheme in Newcastle](#)

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Newcastle's Best Ever Winter programme is back



During the Christmas break 46 projects from a wide range of community settings including leisure venues, youth centre provision, community centres, schools and churches are delivering targeted sessions for children who are in receipt of free school meals.

All the sessions will provide healthy food, physical and enriching activities from arts & crafts, ice skating, dancing, swimming, and cooking lessons. Details of the activities available can be found on the [Newcastle Support Directory](#).

[Read more about Newcastle Holiday Activities](#)

Healthworks long Covid service

6 week programme starts January 13th 2023

Sessions take place on Tuesdays 5.30 to 6.30pm and Fridays 11am to 12pm

[Healthworks](#) long COVID Programme is a FREE 6-week exercise programme for people with Long COVID symptoms. Their specialist Health Improvement Practitioners will provide personalised advice and support to help you manage your symptoms. They can connect you to further support from their service to help you with things like stop smoking, manage your weight or diabetes.

When they get your referral they will call you to give you more information. They will ask you some questions your current fatigue levels, fitness levels. They'll ask about your hobbies and previous fitness levels.

Week 1 – 6

During your first session and last session, you will complete a few questionnaires about your fatigue levels, wellbeing and activity levels. This is to allow us to evidence the effectiveness of the service.

The exercise programme includes: A weekly check-in to find out how you are and if you any other support to improve your health and wellbeing. You'll be given a series of stretching, breathing, cardio and strength exercises to improve your stamina and overall strength. Don't worry each station has 3 levels of intensity. The exercises are adapted to suit your needs.

How can you take part in the programme?

If you live in Newcastle, you can self refer. Your GP can refer you or you may be referred by Newcastle Hospitals Long Covid Recovery Team. **To book your place contact [Healthworks](#)**

Newcastle Carers new interim CEO

[Newcastle Carers](#) are delighted to announce the appointment of the organisation's new Interim Chief Executive Officer, Austin McNamara from Monday, 21 November 2022.

Austin joins the organisation from local charity [The Key](#), a regional youth development charity, where he was the Interim Chief Executive Officer for nearly 18 months.

Read more on InformationNOW about [Looking after someone](#)

Don't get into debt this Christmas

If you're struggling to make ends meet and need cash fast, the thought of a [Loan Sharks](#) might seem tempting, but these lenders are not your friends.

Debt can quickly spiral out of control – it's important to think before taking out a loan and consider other options.

[There are affordable credit options](#) available to people in Newcastle

[Moneywise Credit Union Ltd](#) is the credit union in Newcastle. Anyone who lives or works in Tyne and Wear can use their services

ReCoCo The Recovery College Collective New courses for 2023

[ReCoCo: The Recovery College Collective](#) have a brand new prospectus for Newcastle and Gateshead. See the full range of courses [download the prospectus here](#). If anyone would like lovely hardcopy newspapers, they can deliver bundles of 50 to you organisation. Contact them to request copies.

ReCoCo run 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.

It's 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.

They have two centres: one is based at Carliol Square and the other at the Retreat in Saltwell Park

They are encouraging people to get in touch directly with them rather than using a referral system. Support services can still refer people to them if needed.

After contacting ReCoCo you can attend an introduction session (a group session) to hear about how things work, what to expect, code of conduct etc. If you would like to take part, you can enrol on either that day or within a day or two.

Read more on InformationNOW about

- [Addictions](#)
 - [Adult learning, skills and training](#)
-

Money saving and sustainable ideas for Christmas

Christmas can be an expensive time of year and we often end up spending more than we need to. Over spending can cause stress and debt and we may buy presents that we regret, simply because we can't think of anything else. Why not try saving money, helping the environment or a good cause? Family and friends will appreciate a small thoughtful gift or why not plan some new traditions or festive fun instead?

Here are three ideas that we have added to our article:

1. Create your own **charitable advent calendar** at home by buying an item of food that your local foodbank needs each day and then donate them in January when they receive fewer donations
2. Visit [Salvation Army](#).to check if there is an appeal running in your area or if your local centre has an Amazon Wish List you can buy a gift from
3. Buy one of [Refuge's](#) Christmas parcels online and your money will go towards the cost of toys and games for a child escaping domestic abuse or pay for Christmas dinner for women and their children in the charity's refuges

[Read more on InformationNOW about money saving ideas and sustainable ideas for Christmas](#)

This week's events and activities at a glance...

[Visit our Events and Activities section](#) to see what's happening this week.

Search by postcode or choose your location from the drop down list to find out what's near you.

[Search for Christmas events and activities here](#)

New organisations

Homeshare UK

[Homeshare UK](#) is a service that matches older people who have low level care needs and a spare room in their home, with a younger person who needs somewhere to live. In return, for being given somewhere affordable to live, the younger person (Homesharer) can help support the older person. It also means everyone involved has company and companionship.

Before a HomeShare match is made there are some safety checks carried out this includes:

- **All Homesharers** have an [enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) check](#) and must provide 3 references and a financial check
- **All Householders** must provide 2 references. (DBS guidance means an enhanced DBS cannot be carried out on the older person as they are 'vulnerable'. Instead HomeshareUK ask the older person to provide their own basic DBS which costs £18 or request another reference. They work closely with any professionals or services working with the person to collect more information. They also carry out a property inspection.
- There is a £100 initial registration fee which is to be paid by the Homesharer. This covers the cost of the vetting costs and their enhanced DBS. This is only requested when Homeshare are confident they can find them a match.
- Once the arrangement begins there is a monthly fee for both parties. £50 per month for a Householder and £250 per month for a Homesharer. The fee is paid to Homeshare UK.
- There is no rent to pay

The Thrift Shop, Little Sisters of the Poor

[The Thrift Shop](#) provides cheap and low cost clothing, as well as household items ranging from curtains and bedding to china and glass.

[Read more on InformationNOW about support for people on a low income](#)

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Best Wishes

Lauren

Lauren Hoy: Prevention, Information and Advice Lead at Newcastle City Council

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