



What to know this Winter

Practical advice to keep yourself well
this Winter and how to access health
and care services in Stockport.

Advice to Stay Well

Your wellbeing needs to take extra priority, from getting your vaccines and medication in good time, to looking after your mental health.

We've included tips, advice and information so you get the care you need starting with where to go for help.

During the Winter it's essential for us all to be mindful of the pressures and increased demand on our GPs, hospitals and emergency services, leading to longer waiting times and strained resources. While it's crucial to know that emergency services like Accident and Emergency (A&E) are there for urgent and critical situations, there are alternative services that can help you with your health and social care needs:

Pharmacies: A valuable resource for minor illnesses, advice on over-the-counter medications, and general health enquiries.

NHS 111: Available 24/7 offering medical advice, information on local healthcare services, and can direct you to the most appropriate care based on your symptoms.

Your local GP Service: there are support staff in your GP surgery who can help with ongoing health issues, preventive care, and management of chronic conditions. The ['Who's Who at your GP practice'](#) guide can tell you more.

Community Services: Stockport offers various community-based services, such as family hubs, mental health support, and health and well-being programmes. Some of these services are provided by voluntary and community groups and cater to a range of needs, see our key services page in this booklet for more details.

NHS Find Services Support

Go to: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/ to find local NHS services such as a pharmacy, dentist, opticians etc (opening times may vary, especially during holidays, so check these before visiting).

By choosing to use alternative services for non-emergency situations, you not only contribute to the efficiency of the healthcare system but also ensure that those who truly need emergency care receive prompt attention.

Let's work together to keep our community healthy and resilient during the Winter months by making informed choices about where to seek medical and social assistance.

Advice to Stay Well

Winter comes with a higher risk of health issues, particularly for older people or those with long-term conditions and compromised immune systems. The cold, damp weather can aggravate existing health problems, making you more vulnerable to Winter illnesses. See these top tips to stay well.

Get your vaccines and boosters. Protect yourself and others by getting your COVID-19 booster and flu vaccination.

Keep warm during the day. Wrap up in layers of thin clothes. Keep doors closed to block draughts. Try to heat rooms you regularly use to at least 18°C and get help with your heating costs.

Keep moving. Move around indoors and try to get outside for a walk. Try to avoid sitting for more than one hour at a time.

Wrap up at night. Wear layers to bed, including socks. Use a hot water bottle or an electric blanket. (Don't use a hot water bottle and electric blanket together.) Keep your windows closed at night

Eat well. Make sure you eat a balanced diet with lots of seasonal fruit and vegetables. And try to eat at least one hot meal a day.

Stay hydrated. Regular hot drinks can help you keep warm.

Have your medication on hand. Make sure you have the right medicines at home in case you get poorly. Ask your pharmacist if you're not sure what medications you should have.

Stop the spread of germs. Protect yourself and others by covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze and wash your hands with warm soapy water. You may also choose to wear a mask in public spaces.

Look after your mental health. The Winter months can take a toll on our mental wellbeing, so make sure you're looking after your mental health, as much as your physical health. If you are feeling down, speak to someone – a friend, family member, or a healthcare professional like your doctor.

Getting Vaccinated This Winter

Flu and Covid-19 are both airborne viruses. You can help to prevent the spread of these viruses by covering your mouth when you cough and sneeze, frequent hand washing and choosing to wear a face covering in busier places.

Flu & Covid-19 Vaccines

It's important to get your seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccinations if you're at higher risk of getting seriously ill from these illnesses.

Who can get the COVID-19 vaccine?

You may be able get the NHS flu and COVID-19 vaccines if you:

- are aged 65 or over (including those who will be 65 by 31 March 2024)
- have certain health conditions or a learning disability
- are pregnant
- live with someone who has a weakened immune system
- are a Carer
- are a frontline health or social care worker
- live in a care home

Most children can get the children's flu vaccine. This includes children who were aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2023, school-aged children (Reception to Year 11) and children with certain health conditions.

How to get the COVID-19 vaccine

If you're eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, you can go to a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site to get vaccinated without an appointment.

The last date you'll be able to get your COVID vaccination is 31 January 2024. Find out more about the COVID-19 vaccine and how to get it.

How to get the flu vaccine

If you're eligible for an NHS flu vaccine, you can:

- **contact your GP surgery to book an appointment**
- find a pharmacy that offers NHS flu vaccination (if you're aged 18 or over)

Some people may be able to get vaccinated through their maternity service, care home or their employer if they are a frontline health or social care worker. You do not have to wait for an invitation before booking an appointment.

Find out more about the flu vaccine and how to get it.

Visit: www.england.nhs.uk for further information

In Need of Healthcare This Winter?

GP Enhanced Access Offer

This service is designed to make appointments available for patients outside of normal opening hours.

Any patients registered at a GP practice in Stockport can access these appointments as you usually would by contacting your practice. You may be offered an appointment at your registered practice or at another practice nearby.



Awaiting Treatment?

If you are awaiting hospital treatment, you can seek advice and support via the [whileyouwait.org.uk](https://www.whileyouwait.org.uk) website. This includes information, advice and resources about how to stay well, manage your physical and mental wellbeing, frequently asked questions, the average hospital waiting times and what to do if your condition gets worse. Your NHS is working hard to get people seen as quickly as possible.

Ensuring You Get The Medicines You Need

- Seek advice from your local pharmacy on what medications would be useful to have in over the holiday period.
- Remember to order your prescription seven days before it runs out, especially during any bank holidays

From early 2024 some patients will be able to request their own medication directly from their GP. This will mean that for those patients, the pharmacy will no longer order prescriptions for them. Your GP will tell you when this change comes into effect for you. We will share updates in 2024.



What is Available in Stockport?

Winter can be a difficult time, especially given the Cost of Living Crisis that is affecting so many of us. Here at Healthwatch Stockport, we want to make sure that you have all the information and advice that you need this Winter.

Food Support

If you need an emergency food parcel, there are several food banks across Stockport. The locations can be found here: www.stockport.foodbank.org.uk This service is by referral only. To access a food bank, you require a voucher, visit Stockport Foodbank for further details.

Warm Stockport

Access the [interactive map](#) to find your nearest warm space. These spaces are for anyone to relax in and enjoy outside of their home which may be expensive to heat. Many will host activities as well as providing hot drinks and food.

Contact Healthwatch Stockport if you don't have online access.

Heating & Energy Help

Looking after your home is essential to staying warm and well. There are schemes to help you with the cost of heating. Find support for this and the cost of living on the [One Stockport cost of living hub](#)

Healthy Living Resources

Visit www.healthystockport.co.uk to learn more about things happening in your locality to keep your mind and body healthy.



Know What You're Entitled to

Citizens Advice: for advice on finances, benefits and any one-to-one support, call 0808 223 1133 or attend a drop in session (Monday- Friday from 9:30am-4pm,) at Fred Perry House, Edward Street, Stockport, SK1 3UR.

Pension Credit: If you are over state pension age, you could be eligible for extra income support. Find out by ringing 0161 474 1042.

Disability Stockport: Offering information on benefit entitlement for people with disabilities. Call 0161 480 7248 for find out more.

Council Helpline: 0161 474 2140 (Monday to Thursday from 9am-5pm and Friday from 9am-4:30pm)

Useful Contacts

NHS 111

Phone or access online for urgent medical assistance that is not an emergency.

NHS Pennine Care - 24/7 mental health helpline to support anyone in Stockport. 0800 014 9995

Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Helpline - 0333 332 3800

Key Services

The Wellspring – support for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. Call 0161 477 6344 (0161 474 2818 after 5pm) or visit The Wellspring, Harvey Street, SK1 1YD

Adult/children social care services – for general enquiries and concerns, phone them on 0161 217 6029 or dial 0161 217 6024 for the Minicom. To contact them out of hours, call 0161 718 2118

Open Door Stockport – for mental health support and a safe space if you need urgent help. Call 0161 549 9717 or visit 72–74 Princes Street, Stockport, SK1 1RJ

Signpost for Carers – for support for adult carers call 0161 442 0442 or for young carers call 0161 947 4690

Stockport Women's Centre – offering support and counselling to women in Stockport. Call 0161 355 4455 to register for services

Age UK Stockport – supporting older people in Stockport. Call 0161 480 1211 or visit www.ageuk.org.uk/stockport to find out more

Stockport support hub – offering support and signposting to a variety of services available in Stockport. Call 0161 474 1042 or visit www.stockportsupport.com

Stockport Homes – for housing support and money advice, call 0161 217 6016

Walthew House – support for people with sight or hearing loss in Stockport. Call 0161 480 2612 or visit www.walthewhouse.org.uk

Stockport Foodbank – visit www.stockportfoodbank.org.uk for more information

Disability Stockport – offering support for those with disabilities in Stockport. Contact 0161 480 7248

Stockport Without Abuse – supporting women, men and children suffering from abuse. Call 0161 477 4294 Monday to Thursday from 9am to 5pm, and Friday from 9am to 4:30pm

Stockport Family – if you or your family need support, call 0161 217 6028

Stockport Mental Health Carers – visit: www.mhcarersgroupstockport.co.uk/
(Please open in Chrome)

healthwatch

Stockport

To help improve health and care for you and your family, we use your feedback to influence the way services can be improved, by producing reports to present to the very people who run our services in Stockport. Complete the surveys on our website, use our feedback centre or give us a call to have your say.



There are different ways that you can get involved with Healthwatch Stockport and the first step is to join. On joining Healthwatch Stockport, we will send you our Information Round-up (IRU), monthly bulletin as well as regular updates and invites to our events and more. Joining is free and you can have as much or as little involvement as you want.



Whether you would like to share your feedback about health and care services, are looking for local support, we are here to help. Please contact us or visit our 'Feedback Centre' on our website.

If you choose to call, phone lines to our Information and Advice service are open 10am - 2pm Monday to Thursday from 8 January 2024.

Follow us on our social media for more updates



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www.healthwatchstockport.co.uk
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