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## **Smoking**

Currently in the UK around 10 million people smoke. A significant portion of these people have a mental health condition (3 million). Levels of overall smoking have dropped since mid-1990's but the statistics speak for themselves; smoking continues to be a major issue and is now the primary cause of ill-health and premature death with 100,000 people dying each year. In the UK the tobacco market has made profits of more than 1 billion pounds last year. In Scotland there is a tobacco control strategy and in recent years new laws have been implemented to tackle the problem. These include the introduction of standard plain packaging for cigarettes (a first in Europe), smoke free hospital grounds with associated penalties and prohibiting smoking in cars with children present. There are new rules on the sale of E-cigarettes, including a ban for selling this product to under 18s.

The vision of the future for Scotland is to have a tobacco free generation by 2034.

There is a new poster campaign in all Scottish community pharmacies to make people aware of local services which people can use to help them quit smoking. These are free on the NHS. Even if you are just thinking about giving up it will help if you access the advice and support available. There is no better time to explore your options, you have nothing to lose. There is new government funding for smoking cessation services in Scotland and you are 4x more likely to quit if you take advantage of this specialist support. To find out if you are addicted to nicotine you can take an addiction test online at [www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree)



Initially you can contact your GP or pharmacy who will then signpost you to local services which may help you. You can call free for support on 0800 84 84 84. You will receive help from a trained Quit Your Way Scotland Advisor. You also have the opportunity to chat to an advisor online. For online help; visit [www.QuitYourway.scot](http://www.QuitYourway.scot) or [www.canstopsmoking.com](http://www.canstopsmoking.com). There are many ways in which an advisor can help and help will be tailored to your needs. They will give you information on local smoking cessation services available, including the different medications and the popular Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) options. They will also send you a free quit pack. Millions of people have used this service.

In your local area there will be both 1 to 1 support and group support. You are much more likely to succeed with this support which is also entirely flexible meaning you can speak to someone at a time that suits you. Do not be disheartened if you have tried before and failed to stop smoking as for many it may take several quit attempts to stop completely. Your local service will offer at least one session before you intend to stop; usually NRT is taken right away for a few weeks before stopping completely. Once you do stop you should also receive at least four further sessions. Progress will be monitored; you may have Carbon monoxide (CO) readings taken to establish how your body is responding to not smoking. Support will then continue including contact at both one and three months. If you are under 18 or pregnant you can also access support cessation services and also if you smoke E-cigarettes and wish to give up. Many smokers feel that cutting down how much they smoke is a good way of gradually coming off tobacco.



For many NRT is a good option as it is proven to boost your chances of success. There are several options you just need to decide what suits you the most taking your smoking habits into account. Your advisor will explore your options with you. These include patches, gum, inhalator and nasal spray. The question people often ask is should they switch to E-cigarettes? E-cigs are growing in popularity and contain nicotine as a liquid which produces a vapour upon heating which is then inhaled (called vaping). More research is needed to explore the impact of smoking E-Cigarettes on the body until we can say that vaping is safer than standard tobacco. This is reflected in the restrictions on sale on E-cigarettes as well as ordinary cigarettes. If you like the feel



of an E- cigarette a good option to consider is the NRT inhalator. A real issue at the moment in the UK is the sale of illicit tobacco. The ingredients present in this tobacco are not regulated and therefore contains higher levels of harmful chemicals. Smokers of illicit tobacco inhale more tar and nicotine and become as a result highly addicted.

So why should you give up your smoking habit? You will have a reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, respiratory diseases and a range of cancers. If you have COPD your symptoms will lessen. Those around you will no longer be at risk from second-hand smoke.

As well as focusing on all the health benefits you will gain upon your smoke free journey you may save yourself a lot of money, particularly if you are a heavy smoker. There is a cost calculator on the NHS inform website to find out how much money you could save if you stop smoking. Visit [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot). There is also the online Smokefree App which may help you on a daily basis. You can check how much money you have saved, how much time you are smoke free and how your health improves over time. You will be receive badges which reward you for your efforts! You can also receive support via text email and messenger. You can also join the smokefree online community via Facebook and watch the latest videos on You Tube. Other options to help you stop are alternative therapies such as hypnotherapy and acupuncture. Further information can be found at [www.nhs.uk/smokefree](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree).



## Health & Wellbeing

### Exercise in West Lothian

At this time of year many of us are thinking about all that rich food we have eaten over the festive period leaving us thinking about ways we can shed those extra pounds. Not only do we need to now eat healthily and control our calorie intake but exercise is also extremely important in giving us a healthier lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight. We need to think about fitting exercise into our daily routine. There are many different options available depending on what appeals to you the most and what you feel you would enjoy. For many this is about being outdoors in the fresh air. In West Lothian you do not need to do this alone. There is a project delivered by the West Lothian on the Move programme called Put Your West Foot Forward (PYWFF) which offers both health walks and cycling in local communities. It is well organised and is run by trained volunteers which are there to support you in your fitness journey. On the councils website you can find out more about the health walks on offer across the West Lothian area. Visit [www.westlothian.gov.uk](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk). You can also watch videos about views of local volunteers and walkers themselves. A Physical Activity Atlas has been produced giving really useful information on local walking and cycling routes. The atlas is available in both hard copies and online at [www.westlothianhchcp.org.uk](http://www.westlothianhchcp.org.uk)





Training for volunteers includes all ability cycling and Bike lending library projects. For more information on PYWFF cycling skills courses, which includes essential cycling skills and bike maintenance or to borrow a bike contact the Health Improvement Team(HIT), tel 01506 775 626 or Email: at [hit@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:hit@westlothian.gov.uk)

The HIT is offering a drop in weigh in service which takes place weekly. This is a free service and is a great way to monitor your progress in losing weight. It takes place in Strathbrock Partnership Centre, Broxburn. To find out more contact the HIT.

If you visit your GP they may be able to refer you to a local gym for a specified period of time as part of your treatment programme to lose weight. You will also gain access to nutritional advice. If you are not referred by your GP Xcite leisure is now offering a concessionary scheme called Access Xcite. This service is available for people on certain benefits and offers discounted prices on a range of activities; i.e. adult access customers pay £2.00 per visit or a reduced membership price of £20.00 per month. Details of how to get started with Access Xcite are on the website as well as details of what is on offer at each Xcite venue including contact numbers.

There are special activities for maintaining health and wellbeing if you are over 50 years. This is the Ageing well project which is run by Xcite in partnership with NHS Lothian. It started in 2001. The following table gives details of many of the activities on offer within the community;

#### Ageing Well Over 50s Activities in West Lothian

Social Activities		Arts & Crafts, Knit & Natter, Singing for health, Sporting memories, Men's gp, Social Afternoons - live music, dancing singing, quiz
Exercise		Gentle exercise, Tai Chi, Fit Steps, Indoor curling, Yoga, Pilates, Golf, Walking Football, Walking gp, Seated exercise, Easyline
Dance		Ballroom & Latin, Line dancing, tea dances
swim		Buddy Swimming

You can download the current Ageing well timetable on the Xcite website. Visit [www.westlothianleisure.com](http://www.westlothianleisure.com). To find out more you can contact the Ageing well co-ordinator Avril Clerkson; tel 01506 237953/ 07768090008 or Email; [aclerkson@westlothianleisure.com](mailto:aclerkson@westlothianleisure.com)



There are other gyms in Livingston which are very competitively priced. It is well worth checking to see if the gym and classes offered suit you as you may save a lot of money if you join a budget gym. One such gym is PureGym. It is open 24hrs a day so you would be able to fit your workout into your daily routine easily. There is free parking available. What perhaps is most attractive is that there is no contract and no joining fee. Prices start from £9.99 per month. For more information tel 3450 0133514 or visit the website at [www.puregym.com](http://www.puregym.com)

Another budget gym is Xercise4less, which is the largest fitness facility in West Lothian. It offers over 200 free classes a month. A whole range of classes are available including Zumba Yoga and Pilates along with Bootcamp, Body attack and Body Combat. Facilities include ladies-only gym areas. Prices start from £9.99 for an off-peak membership. A contract is required and an admin fee will be charged when you join. To find out more tel 01506 537979 or visit [www.xercise4less.co.uk](http://www.xercise4less.co.uk).



If you've always wanted to run but did not think you would be able to you may find the NHS choices Couch to 5k running plan really useful. This is a nine week plan aiming to get you running in 9 weeks. To access this plan visit [www.nhs.uk/livewell](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell) . There are nine weekly podcasts to download from iTunes. There are also step by step instructions via an APP also available for download.



## **'Understanding BPD: Much More Than A Label'**

A 2-day course promoting positive attitudes towards people who may attract a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder

**Wed 28th and Thu 29th March 2018**

**10:00 - 16:00 hrs**

If you'd like to attend this course, please email us giving the following info:

- Full name
- Contact E-Mail address
- Whether your reason for attending would be for personal or work reasons
- Which area of the Lothian's you work/live e.g. Edinburgh/West Lothian/Midlothian/East Lothian.

Contact Julie or Anne at:

[learn@capsadvocacy.org](mailto:learn@capsadvocacy.org)

or

07910 021 537



## General Interest



### Universal Credit (UC)

UC is replacing 6 existing legacy benefits in the UK. These benefits will be merged into one payment. Benefits being replaced are Employment Support Allowance, Income support, Job seekers Allowance, Housing Benefit, working tax credits, and child tax credits. It can replace earnings if you are not working or can be used as a top up if you are working and on a low income. It includes people who have an illness or disability and lone parents. The government aims to encourage and help people into work. You will be able to earn a certain amount before your benefit is affected. This is called a work allowance.

Universal credit is being introduced in stages in the UK. You do not need to take any action until the DWP sends out a letter about moving to UC .UC will replace legacy benefits in May in the West Lothian when UC claims will then be processed. UC is claimed and managed online. You can find out if you qualify for UC using the CAB eligibility checker. Visit the government website at [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit). You can still receive UC if you are in receipt of other benefits such as DLA or PIP. They will not be affected. To discover how much UC you may be awarded you can use the calculator on the government website. You should not lose any money when you move over to UC. You may get the same or a little more. This is called transitional protection. Also check the website to find out what information you will need to make a claim. This will include proof of identity. If you need help to get online the Jobcentre or library will offer support. If you have any questions there is a dedicated Universal credit helpline; tel 0800 328 9344.

For people in Scotland who make a claim on or before 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017 you will be given the option of being paid once or twice a month. Payment is made into a bank or building society account. Both income and circumstances during the assessment period are used to determine the amount of benefit you will be awarded. The benefit amount includes housing costs. You may decide therefore to set up Direct Debits for rent and other bills. Any council tax reduction is not part of the UC amount. You will need to apply separately. From February 2018 there will be no seven day waiting period before any claim can start. There is in total 5 or 6wks before any payments are made. If you are waiting you can apply for an advance. See the government website or you can call the UC helpline. You will need to pay this back. The Advice shop offers advice on benefits. Tel 01506 283000. You can visit their website; [www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop) If you have an illness or disability a work capability assessment may be required as part of the assessment process for UC. You must complete an associated questionnaire (UC50). You can do this via a paper copy or online at the government website.

For many people waiting period for UC is just too much and they struggle with rent arrears in particular. The demand for food banks has increased in certain parts of the UK. There is a need as a result for increased welfare support for such people. For many UC payments are



less generous. At the moment only £50% of claimants will get an advance on their benefit. UC itself is not really going to save the government any money. When it is rolled out fully (there have been several delays) it will pay around 7 million people more than 60 billion pounds a year. The transition period to UC will take 5 years. As well as having the option of twice monthly payments in Scotland there are plans to pay rent directly to landlords. UC is estimated to cost a million working families £2,800 a year by 2022. It will be interesting to see what the future holds for UC and the reality that it will move many into poverty.



## Useful Contacts

Advice shop  
Telephone: 01506 283 000  
Website: [www.westlothian.gov.uk](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk)

ASH Scotland  
Telephone: 0131 225 4725  
Website: [www.ashscotland.org.uk](http://www.ashscotland.org.uk)

Health Improvement team  
Telephone: 01506 775 626  
Website: [www.westlothian.gov.uk](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk)

NHS Inform  
Telephone: 0800 22 44 88 (helpline)  
Website: [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

Pure Gym  
Telephone: 0345 013 3514  
Website: [www.puregym.com](http://www.puregym.com)

Universal Credit  
Telephone: 0800 328 9344 (helpline)  
Website: [www.gov.uk/universalcredit](http://www.gov.uk/universalcredit)

Xcite Livingston  
Telephone: 01506 237 970  
Website: [www.westlothianleisure.com](http://www.westlothianleisure.com)

Xercise4less  
Telephone: 01506 537 979  
Website: [www.xercise4less.co.uk](http://www.xercise4less.co.uk)

If you have any ideas you think would be of interest for future newsletters or if you just need to ask any questions please phone or e mail advocacy. The help will be very much appreciated! Thanks.

Mental Health Advocacy Project West Lothian SCIO. Mental health Resource centre, Strathbrock Partnership Centre, 189a West Main Street, Broxburn, West Lothian, EH52 5LH Tel :( 01506) 857230 F: (01506 852954) Email:

[admin@mhap.org.uk](mailto:admin@mhap.org.uk) *Mental Health Advocacy Project (West Lothian) is a Scottish incorporated Charitable Organisation Charity No. SC01 1560*

This newsletter was produced by Claire. I am a service user with a severe and enduring mental health problem. I currently am a volunteer with the Advocacy project in Broxburn and produce this newsletter for them. I am also a member of the reps group and service users forum that advocacy runs. I am also a member of their Management Committee.

