

## Health and Wellbeing Topics - June 2024

### LGBT+ History Month – 1<sup>st</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> June



LGBT+ History Month is an annual celebration of the lives of LGBT+ people of the past. It is celebrated every February in the UK, with each year's celebration having its own unique theme. LGBT+ people have a long history of making incredible contributions to the UK. From King James VI of Scotland and I of England, whose romantic feelings for men are well-documented, to the Ladies of Llangollen whose home became a cultural hotspot in Regency society to Justin Fashanu who broke boundaries as the first professional footballer to publicly share that he was gay – there is no shortage of fascinating and inspiring stories to be found if you know where to look.

However, those stories have often been missing from the history books, which could give the impression that LGBT+ people have only come along in recent years. Those who identify as LGBT+ might struggle to find historical figures they relate to, leading them to feel isolated and uncertain about their future. The truth is that LGBT+ people have always been here, in every society and time period around the world. By telling the stories of LGBT+ figures from history, we hope to spread the message that these identities aren't going anywhere, and that LGBT+ people are valued and vital members of society.

Past themes have included everything from film and television to social justice. In 2024, the theme which has been set by Schools OUT is Medicine – #UnderTheScope. This is a fantastic opportunity to explore the contribution of LGBT+ people to advances in medical science, but also to reflect on the community's relationship with the world of medicine, such as the history of the AIDS crisis, the medical treatment of trans people and LGBT+ people's contributions to the NHS.

It's also an important theme because LGBT+ people are underrepresented in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) careers more widely. The campaigning group STEM Women reports that this shortfall could be as much as 20%. Therefore, we are excited to take this opportunity this LGBT+ History Month to highlight some of the unsung LGBT+ heroes of science and medicine, to show young people that there are diverse role models who they can aspire to emulate.

<http://www.hartgables.org.uk/> is a local charity that supports LGBTQ+ communities in Teesside and East Durham

### Cancer Survivors Day – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024



Held on the first Sunday in June, National Cancer Survivors Day, is a celebration for all those who have been diagnosed with cancer and, following treatment, have been given the all clear.

It is a day that is celebrated around the world and a chance to reflect on what cancer patients endure and the effect on their families. It is also the opportunity to say a huge thank you to all those who have made cancer survival possible from doctors and researchers to fundraisers and donors.

<https://cancersupportuk.org/> provide coaching and support groups for anyone who has finished cancer treatment and are struggling to adapt to a new normal

## National Carers Week - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June

Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face and recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. It also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support.

The campaign is brought to life by thousands of individuals and organisations who come together to provide support for carers, run activities, highlight the vital role carers play in our communities and draw attention to just how important caring is.

This year the theme is 'Putting Carers on the Map' highlighting the invaluable contributions of carers across the UK and ensuring their voices are heard loud and clear. Together we want to help increase the visibility of the carers among politicians, employers and throughout our communities. And by raising awareness we hope they will better recognise the challenges unpaid carers face and help them access the support they deserve.

Who is a carer?

A carer is someone who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability, illness, mental health condition, addiction, or who needs extra help as they grow older. It isn't someone who volunteers or is employed to provide support.

The impact of caring, impacts on all aspects of life from relationships and health to finances and work can be significant. Whilst many feel that caring is one of the most important things they do, its challenges should not be underestimated. Caring without the right information and support can be tough. It is vitally important that we recognise the contribution carers make to their families and local communities, workplaces and society, and that they get the support they need.

GEM Partnership have recently rolled out the [GEM Carers Leave Policy](#) to support anyone who may need to take leave to support a dependant with a long-term care need they are a carer for.

## Men's Health - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June



On the 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> June the world celebrates Men's Health Week. Men's Health Week is an annual observance that aims to raise awareness about the health challenges faced by men and promote strategies for better physical and mental well-being. This significant event encourages men of all ages to prioritise their health, seek preventive care, and engage in conversations about important health issues.

What is the life expectancy for men & women UK?

- The current life expectancy for men in 2024 is 81.92 years, with women living around 83 years.
- Healthy life expectancy in the UK for males is 62.4 years for males, 62.7 years for females

## What is MOT health check?

A health MOT is also called a health check-up or assessment. Being healthy and happy is what most of us aspire towards. Along with enjoying life to the fullest and spending as much time as possible with the people we love. Much like we wouldn't ignore taking our car for its yearly MOT, it's important we don't avoid occasionally giving your body a once over to make sure it is running as it should.

Every year, the NHS Health Check is expected to help:

- save 650 lives.
- prevent 1,600 heart attacks and strokes.
- prevent 4,000 people from developing diabetes.
- detect at least 20,000 cases of diabetes or kidney disease earlier.

## What is MAN MOT?

How healthy are you? How healthy is your lifestyle?

MAN MOT is an interactive manual that helps you answer these questions using simple measures and checks. Then it challenges you: how will you get healthier? There are places throughout the booklet for you to record where you are right now and to keep an eye on the changes over time. There are 25 challenges in all - taking just a couple of them will improve your health.

### Full Contents List

How's your heart?

- Cholesterol
- Blood pressure
- Waistline
- Blood sugar
- Your risk of heart attack

How's your head?

- 14 key questions to monitor your wellbeing.

How's the rest of your health?

- Eating
- Drinking
- Smoking
- Physical Activity

What next?

- Your health priorities



## 5 Steps to keeping fit & healthy in later life



### 1. Ask for help

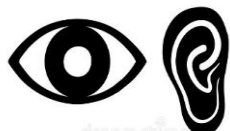
Medical care can make a big difference. It's also a good idea to get some routine tests done at the doctors to check your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. High readings increase your risk factor for stroke and heart disease, but any problems are completely reversible with medication.



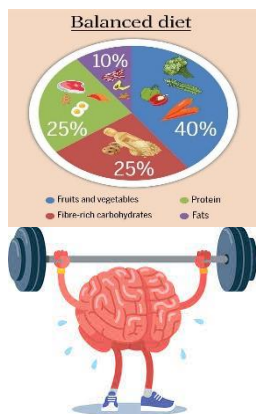
### 2. Keep your bones strong

It's true that our bones tend to lose strength as we get older. But even in later years, there's plenty we can do to prevent falls and fractures. Lower your risk by ensuring you get plenty of bone-healthy calcium and vitamin D daily.

### 3. Look after eyes and ears



As we age our hearing and eyesight can be affected, so it's important to get them checked regularly. Hearing loss is common in older people so see your doctor if you have to have the TV on loud or having trouble tuning into conversations. If you need a hearing aid, some are available on the NHS.



#### 4. Eat a balanced diet

Eating less can make it more difficult to get the nutrients you need to keep muscles and bones strong and healthy. In later life, you still need to eat healthy foods, though you need fewer calories. An ideal diet should be low in saturated fat, with lots of fruit and vegetables, wholegrains, oily fish, and small amounts of low-fat dairy and lean meat.

#### 5. Exercise your brain

Join a book or discussion club, sign up for a class at the local library or community college (some offer free classes for older adults), do word puzzles, number puzzles, jigsaw puzzles – whatever interests you. Make sure you challenge your brain by trying new things and playing against the clock rather than just repeating the same exercises over and over again.

### Diabetes Awareness Week - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June



Diabetes Week is a week to make some noise, raise awareness and shout about the things that matter to people with diabetes, shining a light on what it's like to live with day in, day out.

This year, we want to talk about the health checks you need when you have diabetes.

We know life with diabetes can feel like number, check and test overload. You might feel fine, or feel like you don't have the time. Or maybe you're not sure what checks you should be getting. But these regular diabetes health checks are vital to keep you healthy, so you can continue living life to the full.

Find out how you can get involved <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-week>, and if you have any questions, get in touch by emailing [diabetesweek@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:diabetesweek@diabetes.org.uk)

### Loneliness Awareness Week - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June



#### What is Loneliness Awareness Week?

Loneliness Awareness Week is a week dedicated to raising awareness of loneliness. It's all about creating supportive communities by having open, honest conversations. Loneliness is a natural human emotion - we are hardwired to need social connections. By talking about it, we can support ourselves and others.

#### Who runs the campaign?

Marmalade Trust is the UK's leading loneliness charity offering support for all ages and the only charity in the world specifically dedicated to raising awareness of loneliness. They launched Loneliness Awareness Week in 2017 and it grows in momentum each year across the UK and internationally.

#### What can the campaign achieve?

Loneliness Awareness Week is vital in increasing awareness and understanding of loneliness and we can create a more connected society. Whilst seeing an increase in discussion on the subject, stigma remains and some key misconceptions still need to be challenged. Ask anyone to picture a lonely person and most will

imagine an older person living on their own. As such, we often rebuke and dismiss feelings of loneliness because 'that doesn't apply to me'. By identifying and acknowledging all the times that we have personally felt and experienced loneliness, we can start to change our viewpoint, accept it and understand how to take action to manage the feeling (and our social connections) in the future.

### What is loneliness?

We all feel lonely at times – it's a natural human emotion. We're biologically wired for social contact, and loneliness is our signal that we need more. The definition: Loneliness is a perceived mismatch between the quality or quantity of social connections that a person has and what they would like to have. Everyone's experiences of loneliness are different. It's subjective and personal to each of us.

### Is loneliness the same as being alone?

You don't have to be on your own to feel lonely – you might feel lonely in a relationship or while spending time with friends or family, on social media, in a city or in at university. You can feel lonely if you feel like you are not being acknowledged or understood by those around you.

You can feel lonely when the relationships in your life are lacking in emotional depth, if you've grown apart from someone or if communication has broken down. You might feel lonely when you're by yourself. Other people might choose to be alone and live happily without much social contact. Loneliness can also be characterised by its intensity, or how strongly it is felt, which can change from moment to moment and over different durations of time.

### Are there different types of loneliness?

There are different types, including:

- Emotional loneliness: When someone you were very close with is no longer there. This could be a partner or a close friend.
- Social loneliness: When you feel like you're lacking a wider social network of friends, neighbours or colleagues.
- Transient loneliness: A feeling that comes and goes.
- Situational loneliness: Loneliness which you only feel at certain times like Sundays, bank holidays or Christmas.
- Chronic loneliness: When you feel lonely all or most of the time

The Marmalade Trust is a charity dedicated to raising awareness of loneliness and empowering people to make connections. <https://www.marmaladetrust.org/>

## Cervical Screening Awareness Week - Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024

Going for your cervical screening isn't always easy, and everyone's experience is different. So many changes in life, from big milestones to how we feel day-to-day, can have an impact. This Cervical Screening Awareness Week, we're sharing different experiences from women and other people with a cervix: screening after giving birth, after menopause, after transitioning, after receiving the first invitation, and after being refused it altogether.

We'll also be sharing information, tips, and support on how to make attending your screening a little bit easier.

From 17<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024, join the conversation on social media and use the hashtag #CervicalScreeningAwarenessWeek or #CSAW24

### Cervical Screening Tips

Going for your cervical screening isn't always easy, and everyone's experience is different. So many changes in life, from big milestones to how we feel day-to-day, can have an impact. If you are looking for ways to make cervical screening (a smear test) better for you, there are lots of things you can try.

- Ask to book a longer appointment

- This gives you more time to ask questions and feel ready.
- Bring someone you trust  
They can be with you in the waiting room or during your appointment.
  - Ask for a smaller speculum  
A smaller size may be more comfortable for you.
  - Wear a skirt or dress  
You can keep it on during your appointment to help feel more covered.
  - Talk to your nurse  
If you need any support or have questions, your nurse can help.

Don't be put off if a tip doesn't work for you. It may take a while to try a few things before finding something that works for you. But we're always here to help you.

Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust is the UK's leading cervical cancer charity. They provide information and support to everyone that needs it as well campaigning for the best in cervical cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care. <https://www.jostrust.org.uk/information/cervical-screening>

### World Blood Donor Day – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Every year countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day (WBDD). The event serves to raise awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products and to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood.

A blood service that gives patients access to safe blood and blood products in sufficient quantity is a key component of an effective health system. The global theme of World Blood Donor Day changes each year in recognition of the selfless individuals who donate their blood for people unknown to them.

On World Blood Donor Day, celebrated on 14 June 2024, WHO, its partners and communities across the world will unite behind the theme: 20 years of celebrating giving: thank you blood donors!

The 20th anniversary of World Blood Donor Day is an excellent and timely opportunity to thank blood donors across the world for their life-saving donations over the years and honour the profound impact on both patients and donors. It is also a timely moment to address continued challenges, and accelerate progress towards a future where safe blood transfusion is universally accessible.

The objectives of the campaign:

- thank and recognize the millions of voluntary blood donors who have contributed to the health and well-being of millions of people around the world.
- showcase the achievements and challenges of national blood programmes and share best practices and lessons learned.
- highlight the continuous need for regular, unpaid blood donation to achieve universal access to safe blood transfusion.
- promote a culture of regular blood donation among young people and the general public and increase the diversity and sustainability of the blood donor pool.

For more information on giving blood <https://www.blood.co.uk/>

### MND Awareness Day – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024



## What is MND?

MND is the short term for motor neurone disease, which affects the nerves known as motor neurones. These nerves are found in the brain and spinal cord and they help tell your muscles what to do.

If you have MND, this means your movement will be affected and you are likely to get a wide range of symptoms. Select from the following for basic facts about the disease.

With MND, messages from the motor neurones gradually stop reaching the muscles. This leads the muscles to weaken, stiffen and waste, which can affect how you walk, talk, eat, drink and breathe. Some people also get changes to their thinking and behaviour, but the disease affects everyone differently. Not all symptoms will affect everyone, or in the same order. Symptoms also progress at varying speeds, which makes the course of the disease difficult to predict.

MND is life-shortening and there is no cure. Although the disease will progress, symptoms can be managed to help achieve the best possible quality of life.

MNDA The Motor Neurone Disease Association provide information and support to anyone effected by MND <https://www.mndassociation.org/about-mnd/mnd-explained>

## Learning Disability Week - Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024



Learning Disability Week is celebrated annually in the third week of June and this year, it takes place from June 17 to 23. The week aims to educate, spread awareness, and increase understanding of learning disabilities. People with learning disabilities are twice as likely to experience low self-esteem and self-confidence, social exclusion, and bullying that others don't face, leading to mental health issues. Being diagnosed with a learning disability does not mean a person is not intelligent. It means they need extra support and specialised care to overcome the challenges they face in a particular subject area and learn in their unique way

- Monday 17 June: "Do you see me?"
- Tuesday 18 June: "Do you understand me?"
- Wednesday 19 June: "Will you work with me?"
- Thursday 20 June: "Do you hear me?"
- Friday 21 June: "Do you include me?"
- Saturday 22 June: "Will you support me?"
- Sunday 23 June: A summary of the week

This year is all about busting myths about living life with a learning disability. For many people with a learning disability and their families, getting creative has been a way to stay connected and positive.

- 6.7% of adults with a learning disability are employed yet 86% of unemployed people with a learning disability want a paid job.
- 1 in 3 people with a learning disability spend less than 1 hour outside their home on a typical Saturday.



- Over 2,000 people with a learning disability and/ or autistic people are currently locked away in mental health hospitals.

### How can you get involved with Learning Disability Week?

If you would like to get involved with Learning Disability Week you can:

- Talk about and challenge the barriers that people with a learning disability face.
- Spread awareness of Learning Disability Week on social media.
- Donate to Mencap to help us continue to campaign for people with a learning disability to live happy and healthy lives.

Mencap is a national charity that provides information on learning disabilities and where support can be found for parents and carers all over the UK <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support>

### National P.T.S.D. Awareness Day – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024



PTSD Awareness Day originated in the USA. In 2010, Senator Kent Conrad pushed for official recognition of PTSD by designating a “day of awareness” in memory of Staff Sergeant Joe Biel, a member of the North Dakota National Guard who tragically took his own life after suffering from PTSD. In tribute to his memory, June 27, his birthday, was chosen as the official PTSD Awareness Day, which is now observed annually. The USA Senate further officially designated the entire month of June for National PTSD Awareness in 2014, and PTSD UK understands how vital it is to bring this focused awareness month to the UK.

Research shows that 10% of people will experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder at some point in their lifetime – but it’s estimated that up to 70% of people with PTSD & C-PTSD in the UK do not receive any professional help at all:

- Some people may realise they are struggling to cope after trauma but are unaware they have PTSD or C-PTSD. They may feel that their symptoms are just part of their life now – even if they’re debilitating and affecting every part of their life.
- For others who have a diagnosis, they may not know that treatments to help them recover are available. Just over a decade ago, people still thought that PTSD and C-PTSD were incurable conditions, but more recent evidence and research proves it is possible to be successfully treated many years after the trauma occurred – but the treatment options for PTSD & C-PTSD are not as well-known as they need to be.
- Additionally, people with PTSD & C-PTSD are often misdiagnosed as they can develop additional disorders such as depression, substance abuse, problems of memory and cognition, and other problems of physical and mental health. These ‘co-morbid’ conditions are what gets diagnosed, and the PTSD & C-PTSD is left to get worse in many cases.
- For many people however, they’re simply unable to articulate how they feel, or feel able to reach out for help.

PTSD UK is a UK charity dedicated to raising awareness and providing support for individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder <https://www.ptsduk.org/>

### Deafblind Awareness Week – Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024





Deafblindness is a combined sight and hearing impairment which affects over 450,000 people in the UK. It doesn't always mean no sight or hearing, although for some people this is the case. Deafblindness affects everyone differently, some people need to make small changes to the way they go about everyday life and some people will rely on others for communication and getting about. Deafblind Awareness Week marks the birthday of Helen Keller. Born in 1880, Helen Keller was an author and political activist who is well known for being the first deafblind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Fast forward 144 years and her legacy still lives on! Deafblind Awareness Week is a key event in our calendar and every year, we strive to help more and more people understand deafblindness and how it affects people.

For more information and support for anyone who is living with or is a parent or carer of anyone with complex disabilities the following charity's can support:

<https://www.sense.org.uk/>

<https://deafblind.org.uk/>

<https://actiondeafness.org.uk/>

World Wellbeing Week Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024



What is World Wellbeing Week?

Now in its fifth year, World Wellbeing Week returns in June 2024 to provide the opportunity for participants worldwide to celebrate the many aspects of wellbeing, from meaningful, purposeful work to financial security, physical, mental and emotional health, social resilience and empathic corporate and civic leadership, community relations and care for the environment. Wellbeing has never been so important to our lives and livelihoods.

Wellbeing is defined as the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy. To acknowledge World Wellbeing Week, we have listed some strategies and activities that you can implement into your daily routine to improve your overall happiness and wellbeing.

Exercise

Exercise is not only important for our physical health but also for our mental health. Exercising improves brain function and is known as a stress reliever, and can also reduce anxiety and depression. Exercising will increase your energy and have a positive impact on your quality of sleep. You don't need an expensive gym membership—why not go for a walk on your lunch break, or walk to the shops instead of driving?

Connect with people

Connecting with people can reduce anxiety and depression, help us regulate our emotions and lead to higher self-esteem and empathy. Seeing people we care about can instantly lift our spirits. There are many ways we can connect with people—why not join a new club or group activity, volunteer for a cause you care about, or even grab a coffee with an old friend?

### Meditate

Meditation can provide immediate relief from anxiety and stress and help improve focus and concentration. There are many ways we can introduce meditation to our daily routine. Spend five minutes sitting or lying in a comfortable position, shut your eyes and pay attention to the way you breathe. As you inhale, slowly count to four—hold this breath for a second—then breathe out, again counting to four. Shift perception. When we are in a bad mood, under stress, or worrying, we have more negative thoughts. If we can learn to spot these negative thoughts, we can challenge them, and come up with more balanced alternatives. Replacing negative thoughts with thoughts that are more balanced and helpful will allow us to appreciate life more.

### Do something nice

A nice gesture for someone else will not only increase their happiness, but it'll help you, too. It doesn't have to be a big gesture—you can buy someone a coffee or lunch. Take time out of your day to do something nice and see how your mood lifts.

## International Sunglasses Day – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024

National Sunglasses Day is a commemorative date held annually on June 27 celebrating the importance of wearing shades to protect the eyes from the sun's harsh ultraviolet (UV) rays. Not only do they make a fashion statement, but they also play a crucial role in protecting your eyes from harmful UV rays. Prolonged exposure to UV rays can lead to various eye problems, including cataracts and macular degeneration. This day encourages everyone to wear sunglasses regularly, highlighting their role in eye health and overall well-being.

For more information contact <https://www.melanomauk.org.uk/news/international-sunglasses-day>



## Healthy Recipes

We are creating a hub of healthy recipes on the GEM HR App. Do you have any healthy recipes you have seen online or make as part of your weekly meal prep?. We would be very grateful if you do can you send them to [Ruth.Jackson@gempartnership.com](mailto:Ruth.Jackson@gempartnership.com) so we can add them to the GEM HR App.