**Resources** to help **keep yourself well this winter** and beyond

People in north Cumbria are being encouraged to make the most of free online health and wellbeing resources to help keep them well this winter, as part of **Self-Care Week**.

Self-Care Week takes place this year from 15th to the 21st of November and focuses on helping communities to look after their own health, with this year’s theme encouraging people to “Practise Self Care for Life”.

Investing in your future self by making easy changes can make a big difference to your life and there is a range of free online resources and information available to help support people in north Cumbria on their self-care journey.

Helena Gregory, Pharmacy and Medicines Lead for NHS North Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group said:

*“Self-care week is a great opportunity to take time out from the pressures of daily life, to think about your health and wellbeing. In north Cumbria we have a range of things you can try, to see what works for your own wellbeing and look after your family.

“We would encourage everyone to explore them, whether you’re getting your medicine cabinet ready for winter or looking after a long-term condition.”*

**‘The Sound Doctor’** is available to access through [www.northcumbriaccg.nhs.uk/thesounddoctor](http://www.northcumbriaccg.nhs.uk/thesounddoctor) and includes a huge range of award-winning, bite-sized health advice films and structured education courses. They explain the most effective ways of managing long-term conditions bringing practical, effective and credible information together featuring advice from leading national and international experts, as well as patients living well with their conditions.

They are broken up into accessible, easy to watch sections, so that patients and their families can absorb the information at their own pace. The resource covers a wide range of conditions and topics including:

* Keeping well at work including stress and anxiety
* Ageing well at home
* Back Pain
* COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)
* Dementia
* Diabetes
* Heart Failure
* Lifestyle choices
* Sleep course
* And more…

Helena continued: *“Mental health plays a huge part in keeping ourselves well and with Covid-19 pandemic, we know that more people than ever will want help with this. If you live in north Cumbria, Togetherall and Kooth offer free online support for mental health challenges and increased anxiety, featuring anonymous communities and lots of information.”*

**Togetherall** is available at: [www.togetherall.com](http://www.togetherall.com/) and provides online peer-peer support, access to an anonymous community, lots of information, as well as courses and resources covering a range of mental health and wellbeing topics. It is free for anyone aged 16 and over who lives in north Cumbria and people can access it by simply entering their postcode into the website. It also has a range of resources and some really useful courses to help people better understand their feelings and how they can manage them.

**Kooth** is available at: [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) for young people aged 11-18 providing an online wellbeing community with free, safe and anonymous support. Features include a magazine, blogs and tips from young people as well as a forum, journals and live chat.

Helena added: *“There continues to be pressure across health and care, so people can help us by choosing services to suit their symptoms. The NHS111 online service at:* [*111.nhs.uk*](https://111.nhs.uk/) *or ringing 111 can offer advice on the best place to get help for you if you’re not sure what to do.

“Common ailments such as coughs and colds often can’t be treated with antibiotics and are best dealt with at home with rest and a well-stocked medicine cabinet. Local pharmacists are trained health care professionals who can give you advice on common illnesses without the need to go to your GP.”

“Looking after yourself with healthy food and activities you enjoy is a great first step in self-care, this winter and beyond.”*Self-Care Week is organised by the **Self-Care Forum** [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org/) , a national charity which aims to further the reach of self-care and embed it into everyday life. Their website also includes lots of useful resources and some of the examples of turning small steps into a ‘healthier you’ are detailed below.

**Get Active** – advice is to exercise for at least twenty minutes a day, it’s ideal if you can incorporate this into your day by ditching the car and walking to work, or walking the dog, taking the stairs or even dancing around the kitchen table to your favourite songs!

* **Eat Well** – We all know that healthy eating is crucial to our health so we can start by swapping unhealthy snacks for healthy options such as nuts, seeds and fruit. Ask your pharmacist for advice on managing your weight.
* **Adopting Positive Lifestyle Choices** – Take steps to stop those bad habits that don’t serve you well. This Self Care Week make a plan to stop smoking, reduce your alcohol intake and get active! Your pharmacist can help with lifestyle changes such as weight management and stop smoking services.

For more information on how to embed self-care into everyday life please visit <http://www.selfcareforum.org/> or <https://www.nhs.uk>