

Heads up from Health Protection- November 2025

This months edition includes:-

- *Men's Health Month*
- *Cold weather advice*

A Guys Guide to Wellness!



As November is Men's Health Month, we are turning the spotlight on the importance of men participating in routine health screenings and staying up to date with vaccinations.

Every day, men across England risk losing their lives too soon to causes that could be prevented. Early detection saves lives—so this month, let's encourage men to take that vital step toward protecting their health.

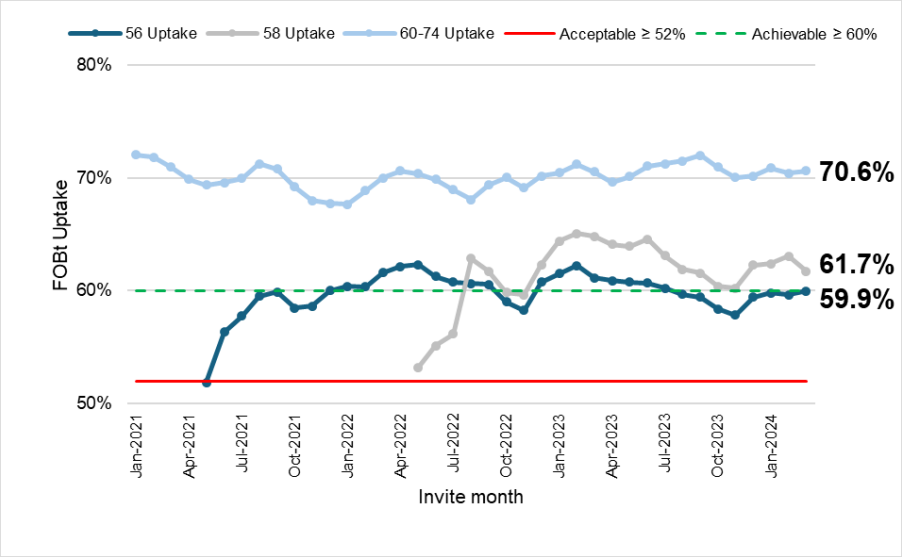
We know that men are less likely to engage with health services, evidence shows that across the NHS Health Check , a cardiovascular disease prevention programme, men are less likely to attend a health check (45.3%) compared with women (54.7%). As a result, fewer men than women are provided with the necessary advice, signposting and onward referral to manage and reduce their risk of heart attack, stroke and related conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, kidney disease and some forms of dementia (Men's Health Strategy for England: call for evidence - GOV.UK)

Participation rates for the bowel screening programme are higher among females compared to males. In 2023-24, 70.3% of females took part in the bowel screening programme compared to 64.9% of males, Bowel cancer screening standards data report 2023-24 - GOV.UK .

This is worrying as bowel cancer is one of the most common cancers in men and we know that around **around 90% with stage 1 (earliest stage) bowel cancer will survive their cancer for 5 years or more after they're diagnosed** Cancer research UK

As shown in the graph below, we can see that those at the younger end of eligibility (male and female) were less likely to return a sample.

(FOBt- faecal occult blood test - the test used in the bowel cancer screening programme)



1 - Recent FOBt by uptake by invite month and age group. England January 21-march 24

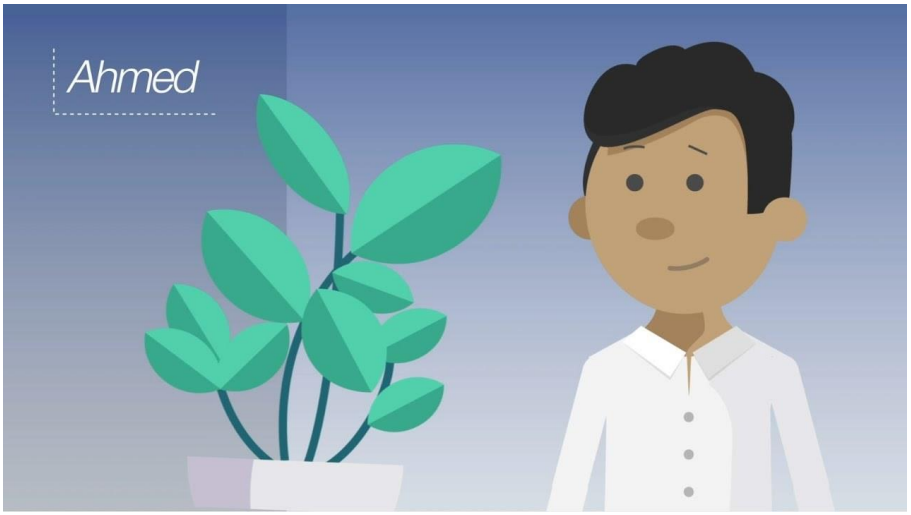
Prevention will always be better, and cheaper, than cure and as part of the NHS reforms one of the shifts within the 10 year plan is from sickness to prevention. We need more people, especially men, to engage with screening, vaccination and immunisation programmes which are a big part of prevention. Vaccinations help prevent or lessen the impact of infections whilst screening aims to spot conditions early when they are more treatable.

We'd like more men (and women) to take up bowel cancer and diabetic eye screening as well as Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening, a programme **just for men** who are invited in the year they turn 65 yrs.

Last year uptake of AAA screening in Lancashire was good at 78.2%, just above the acceptable target of 75%. However, just under a third of individual GP practices were below target, nearly all of which were in more deprived areas. This is concerning as evidence shows that men living in more deprived areas are less likely to attend AAA screening, but twice as likely to have an aneurysm.

We know that 2,070 men in Lancashire missed their AAA screening invite last year, if you consider that 1 in 92 will have an aneurysm, this could equate to 23 missed aneurysms, any one of which could be fatal as they may have no symptoms (NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Screening programme).

For Information on these screening programmes and more, please visit our Heads Up Archive.



'Every day, men across England are dying early from preventable causes. Men are hit harder by a range of conditions, while tragically suicide is the leading cause of death for men under 50' .. *quote from Wes Streeting- Health and Social Care Secretary* (DHSC)

Across Lancashire there are a number of groups supporting men with their mental health and wellbeing, such as andysmanclub, menssheds and Talking Therapies.

Andysmanclub are a men's suicide prevention charity, offering free to attend peer to peer support groups across the United Kingdom and online. "We want to end the stigma surrounding men's mental health and help men through the power of conversation. #ITSOKAYTOTALK"

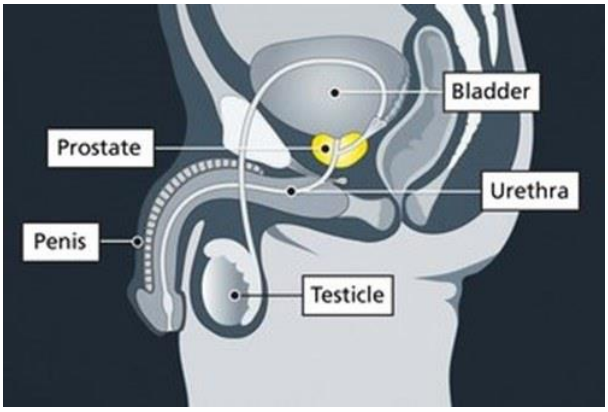
Men's Sheds are community-based spaces where men can come together to connect, share skills, and take part in practical activities like woodworking, gardening, or DIY projects. They promote social interaction, reduce isolation, and support overall wellbeing through friendship and purpose.

LSCFT NHS Talking Therapies is a psychological therapy service offering a range of free talking therapies to people aged 16 and over in Lancashire and South Cumbria.1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year. Many of us go through difficult times in our lives, which can leave us feeling worried, anxious or depressed and feeling unable to cope. Talking Therapies offer a range of brief psychological interventions including online, telephone and face-to-face treatment and therapy options to support people's differing emotional needs.

Prostate cancer

Prostate cancer affects the prostate gland a small walnut sized gland under the bladder.

Men are encouraged to be aware of prostate cancer symptoms and recognise if they may be at higher risk. Anyone with a prostate can get prostate cancer and risk increases with age, but it mostly affects men over 50 years of age.



Prostate cancer may have no symptoms at first. If it grows or spreads it can press on the urethra (the tube carrying urine from the bladder to the penis) and can cause changes to the way you pee, and symptoms including:

- Feeling like you need to pee even when you've finished
- Start / stop peeing
- Having a weak flow

Other symptoms can include

- Erectile dysfunction
- Blood in your urine or semen
- Pain in the back, hip or pelvis

Currently there is no national screening programme for prostate cancer but some men may have a higher chance of prostate cancer if:

- They are over 50 years of age.
- From a Black African or Caribbean background.
- Have a family history of Prostate cancer.
- Or have a close relative has had breast or ovarian cancer, as prostate cancer is sometimes caused by the same inherited genes.

"The outlook prognosis for prostate cancer is generally good, particularly if you are diagnosed early." Cancer Research UK

Speak to your GP if you are worried about your risk of prostate cancer.

What is Shingles?

Shingles is a painful viral infection caused by the reactivation of the chickenpox virus (varicella zoster) which remains dormant living in your nerves after you've had chicken pox . It typically begins with a burning or tingling sensation followed by a rash of fluid-filled blisters, usually on one side of the body, face, or around the eyes. It can be sensitive to touch and accompanied by flu-like symptoms such as fever and fatigue. In some cases, shingles can lead to serious complications including long-term nerve pain (post-herpetic neuralgia), vision loss, and hospitalisation.



Shingles Vaccination: Eligibility and Benefits

The Shingles vaccine is important because it significantly reduces the risk of developing shingles, helps prevent long-term pain and serious complications, and offers protection even if you've had shingles before.

Who Can Get the Vaccine:

- Adults turning 65 (on or after September 2023).
- Adults aged 70–79.
- Adults 18+ with severely weakened immune systems (e.g. cancer treatment, organ transplant).

Where to Get Vaccinated:

- GP surgeries will contact eligible individuals.
- Contact your GP if you think you're eligible but haven't been invited.
- Some pharmacies may offer it privately.

for more information, please visit one of our previous Heads Up bulletins It's A Shingle Thing.

Get Winter Ready: Stay Safe, Stay Informed

As colder months approach, being prepared for winter weather is essential for your safety and wellbeing. One simple but powerful step is signing up for UKHSA and Met Office weather- health alerting system emails. These free alerts run from 1st November to 31st March and keep you informed about severe weather warnings in your area, helping you plan ahead and stay safe during snow, ice, storms, and other winter hazards.

The system uses four colours:

- **Green**: No severe weather expected.
- **Yellow**: Be aware—possible low-level impacts like travel disruption.
- **Amber**: Be prepared—likely impacts such as power cuts or risk to life.
- **Red**: Take action—dangerous weather is expected with high risk to life and property.

To sign up:

Visit the Met Office email alerts page.

Choose your region (e.g. North West England), enter your email and confirm your free subscription.

Stay ahead of the weather — sign up today and be winter ready!

Its Not Just About The Temperature

Over and above temperature, there are other compounding risks such as drought, air pollution, wildfires or flooding that may exacerbate impacts on health. The Met Office publishes alerts for a range of high-impact weather conditions, including rain, fog, wind, thunderstorms, snow and ice.



Winter Wellness

Lancashire's **Winter Wellness** campaign helps you stay safe, warm, and well during the colder months. Here are some key tips to keep in mind:

- **Get vaccinated** – protect yourself from flu and COVID-19.
- **Wrap up warm** – wear layers and keep your home heated to at least 18°C.
- **Eat well** – hot meals and drinks help maintain body temperature.
- **Look after your mental health** – take breaks, stay connected, and seek support if needed.
- **Use Warm Spaces** – find welcoming places across Lancashire offering warmth and community.
- **Reach out** – services like Talkzone and Age UK offer support for young people and older adults.

Visit Winter wellness - Lancashire County Council for more advice and local resources.

Look out for next month's bulletin, which will include further guidance on preparing for winter and practical tips for staying safe and well during cold weather.

Meet the team





2 - image designed by AI copilot

The Health Protection Team are getting out and about, speaking to local residents to raise awareness on the national screening and vaccination programmes available.

In December, we'll be at...

St Annes Library - Wednesday 10th 10-2pm

Do come along and say hello.

In next months edition:-

- Winter Vaccinations
- Practical Winter Tips, Help And Advice

Health Protection Archive: All Previous Issues in One Place

Each month, we've shared updates, insights, and resources to support our work and keep everyone informed. Below, you'll find links to all past issues—feel free to revisit any that you may have missed or want to explore again.

Heads Up From Health Protection Archives

This information has been produced by the Heath Protection team at Lancashire County Council

If you require a printable version of this Health Protection bulletin please email the team at healthprotection@lancashire.gov.uk

(Information correct as at November 2025)