

WIGAN COUNCIL

WARNING AS CASES OF SCARLET FEVER RISE

Residents are being urged to ensure they are vigilant in spotting the signs for Scarlet Fever as cases rise across Greater Manchester. Cases of scarlet fever occur throughout the year but have a seasonal pattern with the highest incidence between December and May, peaking in March and April.

The symptoms of scarlet fever often include:

- A sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- Nausea and vomiting

This is followed by a fine red rash which typically first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. On more darkly-pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth.

It's important to be aware that there can be complications of Scarlet Fever.

Children who have had chickenpox recently are more likely to develop more serious infection and parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as:

- A persistent high fever
- Cellulitis (skin infection)
- Arthritis (joint pain and swelling)

Professor Kate Ardern, Wigan Council's director for public health, said: "It's extremely important that everyone ensures they know what to look out for in cases of Scarlet Fever especially with young children.

"If you think you showing signs of Scarlett Fever I would urge you to visit your local GP urgently to ensure you get the antibiotics needed to combat the infection, make sure that you take the full course of antibiotics prescribed by the doctor." "It is advisable to stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection."

If you think you, or your child have scarlet fever please visit your GP or contact the NHS on 111 as soon as possible

LOCAL BANDS BATTLE IT OUT FOR SPOT AT FESTIVAL

Community group, Strike a Chord, are calling for local bands to battle it out for a place in the next RocknStroll festival. The festival will be held in Lilford Park on Saturday 14th July but hopeful bands will need to enter the competition before the deadline on Friday 16th March.

Wigan Council part-funded last year's event, awarding money to Strike a Chord from Brighter Borough and the Community Investment Fund and the local authority is keen to support the festival again this year for its community spirit.

Bevan Thompson and David Dubois, founders of Strike a Chord, are encouraging bands from schools and colleges across the borough to send them videos to enter the competition Successful submissions will then be invited to attend the final, which will take place on Saturday 19th May in the Masonic Hall, Leigh, where bands will perform before the judges choose their favourite to play at the festival.

Speaking about the festival and competition, Bevan said: “Our first RocknStroll festival last year was a huge success thanks to all of the hard work our volunteers put in and the support from the local community. We’re really looking forward to this year and seeing the plethora of talent we know the town has to offer. By holding a battle of the bands style competition, we’re giving school kids and college students the opportunity to gain experience playing in front of other people, while also offering up a fantastic prize.”

Bevan and David set up ‘Strike a Chord’ in September 2016 to encourage young people to play instruments and set up bands. The community group also helps disabled people and disadvantaged people get into music.

Mayor of Wigan Borough said: “There are so many talented young people borough-wide so it’s great that Strike a Chord are giving them a platform to be heard and share their creativity. We really want to encourage our future generations to follow their dreams and it’s community events such as RocknStroll which help to celebrate and support this.”

If you or your child is part of a school or college band, they can submit a video of their band playing to david@rocknstroll.org.uk including the name of the band, where they are based and which school or college the band members attend.

ARTIST’S EXHIBITION INVOLVES THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

If you could create anything at all, how would you make your mark on your town? This is the question asked by Wigan-based artist, Jess Rotherham, who is calling for her whole community to explore their artistic flair as part of a new visual project.

Jess, 25, is one of eight artists-in-residence as part of Wigan Council’s Imago programme and is leading on the project ‘Ideas for a town’, which encourages the local community to take ownership of the places that they live through art.

Members of the public can sculpt, draw or write about their ideas before handing them into their local library or taking a photograph and uploading to the project blog. All submissions will then be included in Jess’ open exhibition from **10th March** in Wigan Library.

Speaking about the project, Jess said: “I am really keen to work with people across Wigan Borough and with people who don’t necessarily engage with art on a daily basis. “The sky is the limit! A lot of people have great ideas for public artworks and places and this project is all about creating a platform for those people to express themselves. Ideas don’t have to make sense and they don’t have to be realistic – I just want to give everybody the opportunity to be an artist. I’m excited for what will be an eclectic exhibition that has been contributed to by the whole community regardless of age, gender or background.”

Sculpture packs can be picked up from the Grand Arcade or Wigan Library’s mezzanine, which have all the materials needed including a backdrop, clay and figurines. There have been more than 60 submissions so far with ideas such as a tower of pies, a brick maze and even a spaceship.

Donna Hall, Chief Executive at Wigan Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority’s Lead Member for Arts and Culture Said: “The Imago Artist in Residence programme is a fantastic opportunity giving talented people a platform to engage with our communities, highlighting the fun and creativity that comes with arts and culture. “Our artists-in-residence are very committed to working with local people and we’re very excited to watch their projects develop. We encourage residents to find out more as each artist has a completely different approach to their work.”

Jess also has a studio at The Old Courts, Wigan, where she explores ongoing ideas that can last a lifetime such as her ambitious '5416 Mammal Hearts' project, which focuses on sculpting the heart of every individual mammal in the world.

For those who would like to work with Jess directly on their submission, there will be a free drop-in workshop on Monday 19th February suitable for all ages at the Museum of Wigan Life, 11 am-12:30 pm. Alternatively, visit the project blog at www.ideasforatown.tumblr.com for more information or to submit your ideas.

REVIVE YOUR LOVE OF READING THIS FEBRUARY

Throughout February, libraries in Ashton, Golborne and Platt Bridge are giving members the chance to broaden their reading horizons by wrapping books so there is no way of knowing what is inside before checking it out.

With a mixture of genres from fiction to non-fiction, crime to romance and even large print novels, there's a blind date on the cards for everybody. Simply head to one of the three libraries and pick a wrapped book from their Valentine's themed shelf before taking it away and getting lost in the midst of something new.

Lesley O'Halloran, Assistant Director of Customer Services at the Council said: "This is a fantastic idea thought up by one of our managers and is a light hearted way of encouraging people to be more adventurous in their reading. "As a result of the great response we've had since the beginning of February, we will look to roll this out across all of our libraries in 2019. "Library members have engaged really well with this idea and our teams regularly replenish the shelves by wrapping more books so make sure you don't miss out!"

Caroline, 36, picked up a book from Platt Bridge. She said: "The display drew my attention while I was waiting to discharge my books. What a great idea and I can't wait to see what the book is!"

Becoming a library member is free and simple to do online. Visit www.wigan.gov.uk/libraries for more information.

Residents who would like to see this offer at their local library can express their interest by emailing wigan.library@wigan.gov.uk with their preferred library location

BROWNFIELD LAND TARGETED FOR THOUSANDS OF NEW HOMES IN WIGAN BOROUGH

Thousands of new homes in Wigan Borough will be built on previously developed land, new figures reveal. Wigan Council has published its brownfield land register which identifies 130 disused sites suitable for new housing development.

The borough has a strong track record in delivering brownfield sites for housing, with almost 1,000 homes built on previously developed sites over the last two years - two-thirds of the total completed. The 130 identified sites have the potential to accommodate 9,600 homes in the future.

Wigan Council has a 10 year ambition to deliver enough quality housing to match demand and provide jobs and economic growth for the benefit of residents. As set out in its Economic Prospectus, the council aims to create 10,000 jobs, enable the building of 10,000 new homes and create 12,000 apprentices over the next decade.

Karl Battersby, Wigan Council's director for economy and environment, said: "The council is committed to maximising housing delivery on previously developed sites in the borough. "Brownfield land will make a significant contribution to addressing housing needs over the next 20 years. "A key objective for the

council is to reduce the amount of green belt release needed to meet housing needs. The sites in the brownfield register will contribute to this need.”

Around 70 sites within the brownfield register already have planning permission, totalling around 5,400 homes, with the remainder deemed to be available, suitable and deliverable in the short to medium term. Due to the borough’s mining and industrial past, a proportion of the brownfield sites have development constraints which need to be overcome, including contamination and mine shafts. The council is committed to unlocking these sites and to proactively work with landowners and developers to bring these sites forward.

Wigan borough’s brownfield figures are:

- 50.7% of the borough’s housing land supply (2017-35) is on brownfield sites (10,675 of 21,036 homes)
- 65.8% of net housing completions were on brownfield land between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2017 (958 of 1,456 homes)

Any landowners with brownfield land available for development should contact the council. The borough’s brownfield register can be viewed at: www.wigan.gov.uk/brownfieldregister.

NEW ELECTRONIC SYSTEM FOR WASTE PERMITS AT RECYCLING CENTRES

Residents who use a trailer or van to take items to one of the three recycling centres across Wigan Borough will soon be able to download and print their own permit within hours under a new online permit scheme. The scheme will launch in April when residents will be able to download a permit at any time of the day.

Currently residents have to apply by phone or email for a permit in advance and wait for it to arrive by post, which can take up to five working days. The printed permit will be scanned at the recycling centre and is being introduced as part of The Deal. To save time at the recycling centre residents are asked to sort their waste before they arrive as this will ensure a smoother passage for everyone.

Currently only those residents who use a twin-axle trailer or van to take items to the centres require a permit - residents who use a car without a trailer don’t require one. Residents are allowed one permit per month and it must have on it the address where the waste is coming from. Trade waste is not permitted at any of the recycling centres, including waste from shops, landlords, property developers or businesses.

Paul Barton, assistant director for environment, said: “Our old system was time-consuming so as part of The Deal we want to improve things for our customers and help them to recycle more, recycle right. This new digital offer will mean residents can quickly obtain a permit 24/7 at a time that suits them.”

For more information about visiting the household recycling centres visit www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

MANAGE YOUR MONEY, DON’T STRUGGLE WITH DEBT

‘Don’t struggle with debt’ is the message of a new campaign launching in Wigan Borough. Wigan Council has teamed up with Unify and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau to help residents manage their money at one of the most expensive times of the year.

In the last twelve months, (October 2016 – November 2017) 1,718 people visited Wigan Council’s crisis desk due to having no food, no money or no gas or electric so the local campaign will encourage residents to get support if they are worried about falling into debt or are already struggling.

There is lots of local support and advice out there for people but sometimes it can be difficult find help before it is too late. Credit Unions can provide loans for individuals without a good credit history and interest rates start at just 12.7 per cent, compared to payday lenders which charge APR of up to 1,509 per cent. The council is warning residents against using a payday lenders or loan sharks and is instead urging people to apply for a cheaper loan through a Credit Union or seek advice for how to manage their finances.

Lesley O'Halloran, Assistant Director for Customer Services at Wigan Council said: "If you find that you are struggling with debt and are unable to manage repayments, it is important to think about which debts you need to deal with first. There can be serious consequences to not paying your bills and we don't want people falling into debt. "At this time of year it can be easy to spend money on things that aren't needed and there is support out there for residents who need help managing their money. There are cheaper and safer alternatives to payday lenders and loan sharks. Although they may seem like the easy option, people don't realise how much interest they charge and it can be so damaging."

Angela Fishwick, Chief Executive of Unify Credit Union, said: "Residents should take extra care when borrowing money to pay for the cost of Christmas. Always ask how much the repayments will be, and what is the total cost of credit and only borrow from licensed lenders. Don't be tempted to borrow from doorstep lenders charging on average 400 per cent APR or from payday lenders charging in excess of 1000 per cent APR. If you are struggling to repay your high cost loan, talk to Unify, we are here to help."

For help and advice on how to manage your money, visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/moneyadvice
Alternatively, email welfareightsadvice@wigan.gov.uk for information about the council's welfare outreach sessions.

ADVICE AT HAND EASIER THAN EVER

Starting Point Plus will now have longer opening hours and a new online service when Wigan Council begins offering the highly regarded support which has previously been provided by Age UK Wigan Borough.

To find out more go to www.wigan.gov.uk/startingpointplus.

The new phone lines will be available Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5 pm and 8.45 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. To contact the service call 01942 489011

THINK YOU CAN FOSTER?

To find out more about fostering and how to become a foster carer in Wigan Borough go to www.wigan.gov.uk/fostering and for more details on 'You Can Foster' go to www.youcanfoster.org

INCREDIBLE EDIBLE WIGAN

What is Incredible Edible?

What Can I Grow?

How to get involved

Is there Funding Available?

Keep up to Date with Events & Workshops

Go to <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/The-Deal/Deal-Communities/Incredible-Edible/index.aspx>

For lots more information

WIGAN COUNCIL'S GOOD TRADER SCHEME

Wigan Council's "Good Trader Scheme" is a directory of over 200 local, reputable businesses. All the listings have star ratings of up to five gold stars that previous customers have awarded them.

Ratings are given based on workmanship and customer service; the more satisfied the customer the higher the rating.

The scheme has been set up to ensure that the residents of the Wigan Borough are getting a fair deal when it comes to work round the home.

Trading Standards check out the traders' trading history before allowing them to be part of the scheme. Whether it's painting and decorating, joinery, or just tidying up your garden make sure you visit www.wigan.gov.uk/goodtrader. Or ring the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506.

If you are aged over 50 or have a disability Wigan Council Starting Point Plus can access the Scheme on your behalf, contact Starting Point on 01942 489011

HEART HEALTH HELPS WITH FIGHT AGAINST DEMENTIA

To find out more about dementia support visit www.wigan.gov.uk/dementia

TOGETHER FOR ADOPTION

To find out more about Together for adoption visit www.togetherforadoption.co.uk

COULD YOU BE ELIGIBLE FOR HELP WITH YOUR FUEL BILL?

Thousands of residents could be entitled to help reducing their fuel bill thanks to our AWARM Plus scheme.

With temperatures continuing to drop living in a cold home can have a detrimental effect on a person's physical and mental wellbeing. Wigan Council works closely with Wigan Care and Repair to visit homes across the borough and complete a Healthy Home Check, which assesses what help and support is available.

The AWARM Plus service is open to anyone who is currently living on a low income, has high energy costs and living with a long term health condition. The service offers a number of energy saving measures to help keep people warm and safe, including draught proofing, loft and wall insulation, benefit checks, energy switching and much more.

If you're struggling to keep warm at home or for more information on AWARM Plus and other schemes available visit www.wigan.gov.uk/warmhome or call [01942 239360](tel:01942239360)