

Communications toolkit

Easter bank holiday 2026

About this toolkit

This toolkit is for all NHS, local authority and voluntary organisation communications leads, GP practices and local community pharmacies.

With the Easter bank holiday ahead the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board are running messages and advertising for the public, informing them about using services wisely, being prepared and staying safe during the bank holiday.

This includes asking people to think pharmacy, 111 and GP first, as well as keeping A&E and 999 free for life threatening emergencies only. As well as specific campaigns to raise awareness of the conditions people can seek advice and treatment from their pharmacist, urgent treatment centres and much more.

This toolkit builds on the region's [here to help](#) campaign which signposts people to the most appropriate NHS service for their needs, and is backed by a region wide social media buy.

Our website

A public facing 'here to help' campaign webpage is available on the ICB website [here](#), with help and advice including staying well, choosing the right NHS service, looking after your mental health and keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet. Some of our social media and digital advertising directs people to these pages or nhs.uk where appropriate.

To find pharmacy opening times, people should visit the national [Find a Pharmacy](#) webpage.

Social media plans

Within this toolkit are social media plans which include posts you can adapt and instructions on how to access the relevant visuals.

The full social media toolkit and assets can be [found here](#).

How you can help

You can help us by:

- Posting and sharing content on your communication channels to help further promote the campaign across the region
- Getting in touch if you need any assets developed to meet your local needs.

Join us on social media so we can remind people that local community pharmacies are 'here to help'.

Please tag us in your social media posts:

Facebook – NorthEastandNorthCumbriaNHS

X – @NENC_NHS

Instagram – nenc_nhs

TikTok - @NENC_ICB

Your support in sharing these messages is very much appreciated.

For further help or advice please contact either: Abbie Mulgrew, abbie.mulgrew@nhs.net or nencicb.comms@nhs.net

Press release – repeat prescriptions and stock up

Get your repeat prescriptions in good time!

"Don't leave it too late to order your repeat prescriptions!" is the message from GPs and pharmacists ahead of the Easter bank holidays.

NHS leads across the North East and North Cumbria are reminding patients to ensure they have enough supplies of any regular medication, particularly for long-term health conditions.

Many GP surgeries and pharmacies across the region will be closed on the following bank holidays Good Friday – 3 April, Easter Monday – 6 April, Early May Bank Holiday – Monday 4 May.

Ewan Maule, clinical director of medicines, NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), said: "It can take up to three days – or sometimes longer – for prescriptions to be ready so if you take medicine every day, especially for a long-term health problem, running out could make you very unwell.

"Please plan ahead for the bank holidays, check to see what you already have, and if you do need more, make sure you only order what you need. If you do have enough, then you can wait and order more later at a later date."

Health leads also highlighted that ordering in advance helps reduce pressure on NHS services - if people run out of medication, it can result in increased calls to NHS 111 and unnecessary visits to urgent care.

Dr Neil O'Brien, ICB chief medical officer, said: "Not ordering in time and having to use emergency medication services not only puts patients at risk, but it also puts increased pressure on already stretched NHS services.

"The easiest way to order repeat prescriptions is by using GP online services, the [NHS App](#) or through your own GP practice website. If you do not have access to GP online services, you can contact your GP practice by phone to order prescriptions directly.

“If your GP practice is closed - remember NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, seven days week, to offer help and advice on a whole range of medical problems.”

As well as ordering repeat prescriptions, people are also being encouraged to stock-up their medicine cabinets with some basic essentials to cover them over Easter.

Dr O'Brien added: "To help cover for those days where GPs and pharmacies are closed, make sure you have plenty of over-the-counter medicines too for those minor issues.



"Paracetamol for adults and children, plasters, indigestion relief and anti-diarrhoeal tablets can all help you manage many minor illnesses or scrapes at home, and if you're unsure what you need, your local pharmacist can always help.”

END

Social media online toolkit

This social media plan provides text you can include in your social media posts. Animations and images can be downloaded from the toolkit [here](#).

Hastags: #HeretoHelp #NHS

Dr Neil O'Brien Easter video		
<p>1</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 3 April 2026</p>	<p>✓ Choosing the right NHS service can help get you the best advice - and often more quickly too.</p> <p>Dr Neil O'Brien shares advice to the public on how to stay well over this bank holiday Easter weekend 🖱️</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think pharmacy first • NHS111 online for medical help and advice • Keep A&E and 999 free for LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES ONLY 	
Stock up this Easter		
<p>2</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 2 April 2026</p>	<p>Easter is for egg hunts – not for hunting for plasters and painkillers! 🐣</p> <p>Make sure you're ready by keeping some basic medicine at home.</p> <p>Things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Paracetamol ✓ Plasters ✓ Indigestion tablets 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allergy medicine ✓ Something for diarrhoea <p>Need help? Your local pharmacist can give you advice.</p> <p>Check which pharmacies are open over the bank holiday here 👉 https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>	
<p>3</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 31 April 2026</p>	<p>🐣 Ready for the Easter bank holiday weekend?</p> <p>Remember to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📦 Order repeat prescriptions in time – but only order what you need! 💊 Keep a well-stocked medicine cabinet 📍 Think pharmacy first 🌐 Use NHS 111 online for medical help and advice 🚑 Keep A&E and 999 free for LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES ONLY <p>Check which pharmacies are open over the bank holiday here 👉 https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp ❤️</p>	

Repeat prescriptions

<p>4</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 31 April 2026</p>	<p>Got enough of your regular medicine for the Easter bank holiday? 🐰</p> <p>If not – hop to it and order now! 🐰</p> <p>You can use the NHS App or your GP surgery’s online system.</p> <p>Remember check your medicine cabinet and only order what you need!</p> <p>Need to find a pharmacy near you? Click here 🖱️ https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>
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<p>General pharmacy</p> <p>5</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 4 April 2026</p>	<p>🤢 Poorly tummy, 🤧 itchy eyes or skin, 🤧 cold, 🗑️ sore throat or 🗑️ aches and pains this Easter bank holiday weekend?</p> <p>📍 Think pharmacy first!</p> <p>👩‍⚕️ Pharmacists are part of your expert NHS healthcare team on the high street and can help give advice and treatment for a range of common illnesses.</p> <p>📅 You don't need to make an appointment and can talk in confidence.</p> <p>📍 Find your nearest available pharmacy here 🗑️ https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>	<p>animation</p>
<p>UTI</p> <p>6</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>OUCH! 🤢</p> <p>🔥 Burning or stinging sensation when you wee? 🚽 Need to wee frequently or urgently? 💧 Now't much coming out?</p> <p>You may have a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI).</p>	


	<p>Did you know across the North East & North Cumbria, community pharmacies can provide immediate advice & treatment for UTIs for women aged 16-64?</p> <p> No appointment needed.</p> <p> Ask your local pharmacist today and say #ByeByeUTI</p> <p>#HereToHelp </p> <p>Available at participating pharmacies only: https://www.thinkpharmacyfirst.health/</p>	<p>30 second animation</p>
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Common Conditions

<p>7</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>Got an itch? </p> <p>Dry skin </p> <p>Eczema </p> <p>Thrush </p> <p>Fungal skin infections </p> <p>Head straight to your local pharmacy!</p> <p>Pharmacists are qualified experts in healthcare and medicines and can give you advice and treatment for a range of common health concerns </p>	<p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top. The main headline is 'Got an itch?' in large teal letters. Below it, a woman's face is shown with a concerned expression. To the right, there are several smaller panels with text: 'Treat dry skin, eczema, thrush or fungal skin infections fast.', 'Head to your local pharmacy.', and 'HERE TO HELP' with a green arrow pointing right.</p>
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	<p>👉 Find out more here: https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/think-pharmacy-first/common-conditions/</p> <p>#HereToHelp ❤️ #NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription</p>	
<p>10</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>Gut feeling? 🤢</p> <p>Constipation 🚽, diarrhoea 🤮, haemorrhoids, period pain?</p> <p>Head straight to your local pharmacy ...</p> <p>Pharmacists are qualified experts in healthcare and medicines and can give you advice and treatment for a range of common health concerns 🧑💻</p> <p>👉 Find your nearest NHS community pharmacy: https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy</p> <p>#HereToHelp ❤️ #NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription</p>	

<p>11</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>Little one not well? 🤒 🤔</p> <p>Headlice 🐛, verruca, chicken pox, nappy rash 🚽 ?</p> <p>Head straight to your local pharmacy!</p> <p>Pharmacists are qualified experts in healthcare and medicines and can give you advice and treatment for a range of common health concerns for your little ones 🧑🏻</p> <p>👉 Find your nearest NHS community pharmacy: https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy</p> <p>#HereToHelp ❤️ #NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription</p>	
<p>Self care</p>		
<p>12</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>Is your little one feeling unwell this Easter? 🤒 🤔</p> <p>Check out the Healthier Together website for helpful advice on caring for babies, children & young people ❤️ 🧑🏻 🧑🏻</p> <p>👉 www.nenc-healthiertogether.nhs.uk</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p>	

NHS 111		
<p>14</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>🙄 Feeling unwell this Easter? 🙄</p> <p>Choosing the right NHS service can help get you the best advice - and often more quickly too 🕒💡</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think pharmacy first • NHS111 online for medical help and advice • Keep A&E and 999 free for LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES ONLY <p>Help reduce pressure on A&E and 999 so they can help those who need it most.</p> <p>#NHS #HereToHelp</p> <p>👉 www.nhs.uk</p>	
Urgent Treatment Centres		
<p>15</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>🙄 If you have a minor injury or illness that needs medical attention – but is not life threatening - you can get help at your nearest urgent treatment centre! ✅</p> <p>Urgent treatment centres can treat many conditions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sprains and strains • cuts and grazes • suspected broken limbs • coughs and cold • ear and throat infections 	

If you're still not sure where to go or what to do, contact [NHS111](https://www.nhs.uk/111) online - or by phone - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - they can help assess and direct you to the right place to go 🕒




NHS, we're here to help ❤️

#HeretoHelp



Or
animation

Mental health		
<p>16</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>If someone's mental or emotional state starts to get worse quickly, it's called a mental health crisis ❤️</p> <p>If this happens to you or someone you know, it's important to get help right away.</p> <p>📞 You can call NHS 111 anytime, day or night, and choose the mental health option.</p> <p>A professional will listen and help you find the support you need 🤝💬</p> <p>👉 https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/looking-after-your-mental-health/</p>	<p>Need urgent mental health support?</p> <p>Call 111</p> <p>Select Mental Health Option</p> <p>We're here for you 24/7.</p> <p>HERE TO HELP</p>
<p>17</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>😞 If you're feeling depressed, worried, anxious, or have troubling thoughts, NHS Talking Therapies can help 💬</p> <p>You don't need a special diagnosis to get support. The sooner you ask for help, the sooner you'll feel better.</p> <p>Talking Therapies are free and private. You'll talk to trained experts, either online, on the phone, or in person.</p> <p>Your doctor can refer you, or you can ask for help yourself at 👉 https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/talking-therapies-medicine-treatments/talking-therapies-and-counselling/nhs-talking-therapies/</p>	<p>Struggling with your mental health and need support?</p> <p>NHS Talking Therapies are here to help</p> <p>HERE TO HELP</p>

<p>18</p> <p>Schedule from 26 March - 17 April 2026</p>	<p>There are some simple ways to understand how you're feeling and how to feel better ❤️</p> <p>Experts, and people who've faced problems themselves, have created helpful self-help guides. The guides give advice and show you some practical exercises to try, using methods that have helped others to feel better.</p> <p>These self-help guides are available for free online, and also available in audio, BSL or Easy Read.</p> <p> Online mindfulness and relaxation exercises might help you to feel better. And you can try free, online 'Recovery College' courses.</p> <p>Find links to self-help information at  https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/looking-after-your-mental-health/</p>	
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A&E and 999 - only use these assets in times of high pressure!

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**Only for
use in
times of
high
pressure**

⚠ This Easter - Please remember ONLY call 999 or go to A&E if you or someone else has a life-threatening emergency, such as:

- **signs of a heart attack** - chest pain, pressure, heaviness, tightness or squeezing across the chest
- **signs of a stroke** - face dropping on one side, cannot hold both arms up, difficulty speaking
- **sudden confusion** - cannot be sure of own name or age
- **suicide attempt** - by taking something or self-harming
- **severe difficulty breathing** - not being able to get words out, choking or gasping
- **choking** - on liquids or solids right now
- **heavy bleeding** - spraying, pouring or enough to make a puddle
- **severe injuries** - after a serious accident or assault
- **seizure (fit)** - shaking or jerking because of a fit, or unconscious (cannot be woken up)
- **sudden, rapid swelling** - of the lips, mouth, throat or tongue

If you need EMERGENCY care, call 999, or go to your nearest A&E.


British Sign Language (BSL) speakers can make a BSL video call to 999.

Deaf people can use 18000 to contact 999 using text relay.

If in doubt, contact [NHS111](https://www.nhs.uk/111), online or by phone, to get assessed and directed to the right place for you - including emergency care.

#HereToHelp



<p>20</p> <p>Only for use in times of high pressure</p>	<p>⚠️ A&E departments are extremely busy !</p> <p>Think pharmacy, GP or NHS111 first!</p> <p>Too many people who come to A&E don't need to be there. Their illnesses and injuries can be dealt with quicker by an alternative service freeing up emergency services for those who really need them.</p> <p>If in doubt, contact NHS111 online or by phone, to get assessed and directed to the right place for you - including emergency care.</p> <p>If you go to A&E and your condition isn't life threatening, you may experience a very long wait.</p> <p>#HereToHelp</p>	 <p>The poster features a red background with the NHS logo at the top right. The text 'A&E is very busy!' is written in large, bold, white letters. Below this, a dark blue arrow points to the right, containing the text 'Think pharmacy, GP & NHS 111 first.' and three smaller arrows labeled 'HERE', 'TO', and 'HELP'.</p>
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