



Health Information Week

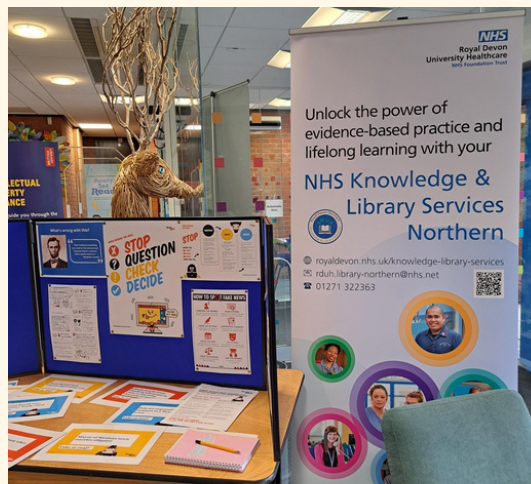


Royal Devon  
University Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust

## Inspiring Better Health

Connecting Communities:

### Reflections on Multi-Sector Partnerships to Improve Community Health during Health Information Week 2023 in North Devon



 **WATCH NOW**

Click [HERE](#) for a video summary of the week's activity  
<https://youtu.be/WFbRSMUEE48>

#### Health Information Week 3 - 7 July 2023

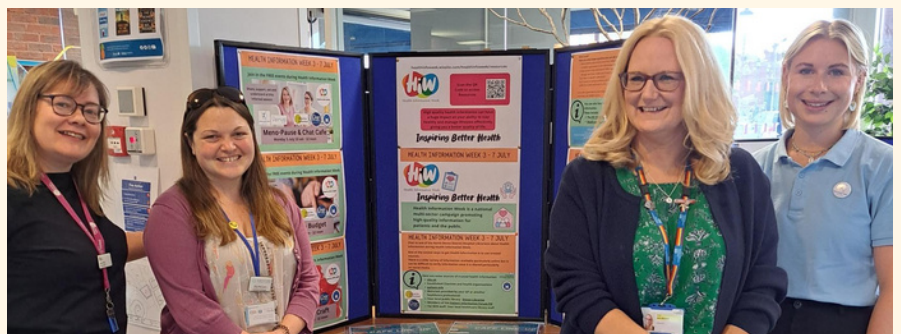
Health Information Week is a national, multi-sector campaign promoting high-quality information for patients and the public.

High quality health information can have a huge impact on people's ability to stay healthy and manage illnesses effectively, giving them a better quality of life.

We all need health information that we can trust. We also need to look after our well-being, whether our mental health or our physical health.

In response to these needs, the Health Information Week 2023 national project team decided to include the following suggested themes this year:

- Health Literacy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Women's Health
- Social Prescribing
- Children's Health
- Cost of Living
- Shared Decision Making



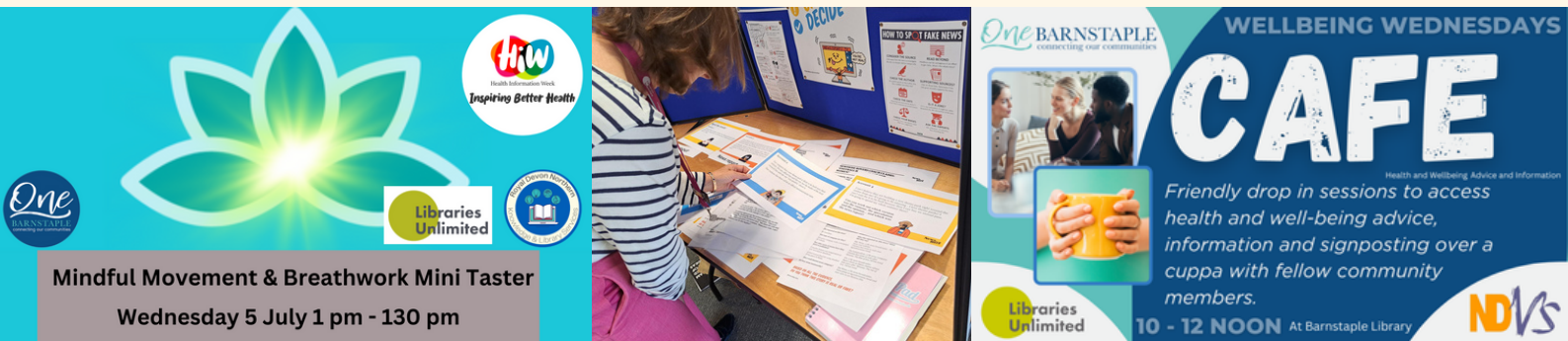
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Website: [royaldevon.nhs.uk/knowledge-library-services/](https://royaldevon.nhs.uk/knowledge-library-services/)



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## Inspiring Better Health



### Interaction summary:

The library served as an accessible, trusted health information resource for vulnerable people like the lady who travelled from South Molton needing help with medical forms and unsure where to turn. We provided critical guidance by referring her to specific support services. She left feeling relieved and empowered with actionable next steps. She said 'I didn't know where to go for help, so glad have seen you, I was really worried about this.' Her feedback underscores the value in connecting vulnerable community members to appropriate health services. The library's wealth of knowledge helps people gain the health literacy and information access necessary to manage their wellbeing.

Beyond information, the library provided a judgement-free space for people to voice health concerns and receive compassionate listening from staff. One person sought reassurance about upcoming hospital visits, valuing a caring presence during challenging health circumstances. Others felt comfortable opening up about sensitive issues like sleep struggles, reinforcing the library as a trusted setting for candid dialogues about wellbeing. Though unable to offer medical opinions, staff could listen attentively and acknowledge the person's worries. Whether through formal resources or informal discussions, the library empowers people to address medical issues that weigh on their overall quality of life.

By listening to a person's particular needs around working to handle neighbourhood disputes, we were able to respond with tailored referrals to relevant organisations and One Barnstaple partners he could work with to resolve issues and maximise local impact.

In moments of intense stress about health worries, we guided people with actionable advice to address concerns. Particular examples of this were a person with concerns about memory loss they were experiencing and a person experiencing mental health issues after losing their job. By listening without judgement and making thoughtful recommendations, we delivered meaningful assistance during difficult times.

Overall, the interactions demonstrated the library's multifaceted role as an accessible health information resource, caring presence, candid dialogue facilitator, local impact connector, and source of customised guidance and reassurance. We were able to work together to empower community members to tackle pressing health and wellbeing challenges at individuals' point of need.





Health Information Week

**Inspiring Better Health**

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**Libraries Unlimited**

FRI 7 JUL  
10.00 – 12.00  
Barnstaple Library  
The Reading Tree  
FREE Drop in

**ZINE MAKING WORKSHOP**  
with zine maker Sam

**PRIDE OF PLACE**

Supported by:  
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND  
EXETER LIVE BETTER

## Our key findings this year demonstrate:

- There was a notable shift in the scope and complexity of public inquiries compared to the previous year, with more specific, individualised queries requiring specialised knowledge and tailored referrals, as evidenced by the provided interaction summary.
- The prominent location of the health information stands in the library foyer enabled convenient engagement and productive discussions. It proved an apt venue for the week's activities.
- The informal conversations represented valuable opportunities to provide a trusted source of health information and reinforce the initiative's focus on access to reliable resources. The atmosphere was comfortable to encourage open conversations.
- The featured health awareness materials and weekly themes resonated well with the public. We selected four of the themes this year and had a positive response.
- The interactions with people were meaningful, with more time spent in discussion with engaged participants.
- Attendance at some early week events could have been higher, though certain activities, like Wednesday's wellbeing cafe and mindfulness sessions, saw strong turnout. The zine workshop attracted a diverse demographic.
- While the interactive exhibit received favourable feedback, its subject matter around fake news and misinformation proved more challenging to convey this year.

Overall, Health Information Week provided valuable opportunities for in-depth engagement with members of the public on reliable health information and health topics. The interactive elements and activity during the week sparked interest, and the range of programming attracted diverse participants.

Lower turnout at certain events indicates a need to re-evaluate factors like timing, promotion, and topic relevance when planning for any future activity. Lessons learned this year, such as the success of well-attended sessions like the wellbeing cafe and mindfulness workshops, can inform efforts to boost attendance across partnership events moving forward.





Health Information Week



**Inspiring Better Health**



## Reflections and summary:

The library space serves as an important communal hub where people feel comfortable simply existing and connecting with others. As a trusted institution and reliable source of information, the library attracts those seeking knowledge and support.

During Health Information Week, the welcoming library environment enabled meaningful conversations about health topics relevant to library visitors' lives. With informational materials sparking initial interest, we could guide in-depth discussions about accessing and evaluating health resources.

The conversations highlighted the library's critical role in empowering community members to find credible information related to their wellbeing.

By dedicating time specifically to this outreach, the Knowledge and Library service at Royal Devon University Healthcare solidified connections working with One Barnstaple and Barnstaple Library and supported improving health literacy in the Barnstaple community. The activities during this week reinforced the library as an inclusive gathering place where people know they can find both human compassion and expertise to point them to trustworthy health guidance.

In summary, Health Information Week is an excellent opportunity to facilitate important health discussions and promote community health and wellbeing. Through thoughtful programming and materials, we facilitated connections and conversations. From addressing medical concerns, to providing reassurance during distressing times, to connecting people with local health resources, we offered individualised support. Visitors walked away feeling heard, helped, and empowered to take next steps for their health. These conversations leveraged our expertise to boost health literacy and accessibility to needed services. The positive feedback and experiences this week reaffirmed the library's essential platform for guiding people to information and resources to help them thrive.

