

Hi Everyone,

We hope that you continue to stay safe and well during the current pandemic. As we begin to move out of “lockdown”, with shops re-opening and restrictions on meeting with other households relaxed for the foreseeable future, we at Voice of Experience Forum, have decided to discontinue the mini monthly newsletter for the time being. Should the government decide to re-impose these restrictions, then we will resume issuing updates and information in this way.



We have enjoyed providing you with information on Voice of Experience Forum's activities during this time, in addition to the different services available from voluntary and statutory bodies, which you may not have already been aware of. The quarterly newsletter, issued to all members, will continue as normal.

### **Sad Passing of our former Chair, Constance McKibben**

We are saddened to learn of the passing of Constance McKibben. As the Chairperson of Voice of Experience Forum, Constance was a guiding hand for many years. Constance was a tremendous asset and worked extremely hard to support our staff and members, guiding the group forward. She was regarded as a conscientious person, the kind of person whom one could rely upon.



She was knowledgeable and possessed sound judgement and was an excellent communicator. This was evident from the many meetings which she attended on behalf of the organisation over the years and the manner in which she retained information and fed this back to the group in a concise format.

Constance continued to keep in touch with the organisation after she stepped down from the Board in 2017. She also attended events where possible and supported Voice of Experience Forum in everything it did. Constance will be a huge loss to her husband Jim, her family and her dear friend Annie Johnstone MBE.

### **Welfare Calls**

Voice of Experience Forum are currently providing welfare calls to a number of our members who have requested them. This is a service which is being replicated by other organisations within the North Lanarkshire area.



To avoid duplication of services, maximise available resources and ensure that those in need continue to receive support, the call recipients will now receive befriending calls from North Lanarkshire Disability Forum who will take over the process of calling those members from the week commencing 10th August. One. All recipients have been advised of the date of transfer.

This approach aims to ensure that these support services can continue to meet the needs of our members long after Covid-19. To date we have made 558 calls, issued 476 letters and 476 mini monthly newsletters to our members.

## And in other news .....

### Blue badge renewal



Voice of Experience Forum feel that it would be useful to give an update on parking enforcement within North Lanarkshire Council for the benefit of those whose badges have expired/ are due to expire or are awaiting a reply to an application for renewal.

NLC have confirmed that the relaxation of enforcement should continue initially **until 30 September 2020** in regards to Blue Badges that have expired after 1 January 2020.

### TV Licence

You may be aware of plans by the BBC to begin charging over 75's not in receipt of Pension Credits, for their TV Licence. "No-one needs to take any immediate action, or leave their home, to claim for a free TV licence or pay for one," a statement said. TV Licensing have stated that they will write to all licence holders aged 75 or over with clear details about how to pay.



It has also emerged that a scam is in operation regarding fraudulent emails supposedly from the TV Licensing Board . Please do not reply or click on any links within emails—wait until you have received a letter from TV Licensing.

### G.P Surgeries

General Practices in North Lanarkshire remain open for all non COVID related enquiries.

- “ Most appointments will now be by telephone or video consultation. After your initial assessment by telephone, practice staff will advise what is most appropriate for you. Remember this may be another service – for example, self-care, dentist, community pharmacy or optician. Please do not turn up at the practice without an appointment, to help reduce the risk of spreading the virus.
- “ Patients will only receive a face-to-face appointment where necessary – for example, when a physical examination is needed or if tests need to be carried out.
- “ Measures will be in place to ensure safety and physical distancing – for example, reduced capacity in waiting rooms, one-way systems, hand sanitiser and face coverings.
- “ Appointment systems will change to avoid queues. You will receive a precise time for your appointment, please do not arrive early or late. Reception staff will advise you on their own process.

### Scams

**COVID-19:** anyone offering cheap sanitiser, masks or purporting to have test equipment is likely to be a scam. In some cases, the sanitiser has been known to cause damage to the skin. Do not pay for test equipment. The NHS or your GP will offer it free.

**NHS Test & Trace** – the original scam on this was shut down by the Fraud Action Line. However, it is operating from another phone number and will text you asking for payment, The NHS will never ask you to pay. Report to Fraud Action Line **on 0300 123 2040**