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Liverpool law students offer 'pop up' advice sessions for visitors to St Chads Health Centre

- University of Liverpool students given free building space to run weekly "work and welfare" advice sessions for the local community



Local residents visiting St Chads Health Centre in Kirkby can now benefit from free 'work and welfare' advice sessions, thanks to a new initiative with students from the Law Department at the University of Liverpool.

A series of final year law students were keen to use their skills and knowledge to help local residents maximise their incomes, especially in the currently challenging financial times. Through discussions with key teams at St Chads Health Centre, free building space has been made available to the students to run weekly advice sessions, helping them to reach large parts of the local community that use the health centre on a daily basis. Patients, staff, and local residents visiting St Chads Health Centre can now benefit from:

- **Free, twice weekly advice sessions:** the University of Liverpool law students are holding pop-up sessions for visitors to St Chads every Wednesday afternoon from 1pm to 5pm and Friday mornings from 9am to 1pm. Sessions started in February and will run until the end of April;
- **'Work and Welfare' advice:** students have been trained to offer welfare benefits advice; basic employment advice; and advice on the availability of Statutory Sick Pay, disability and ill-health benefits. The students ask visitors some key questions needed for a benefits and employment rights check (such as disability benefits, minimum wage, holiday and maternity pay) and make referrals to further services as needed;
- **Joined up care in one location:** other health and social care providers based at St Chads are also now able to signpost their patients to the 'work and welfare' advice sessions if they have any financial worries, changed circumstances due to injury/illness, or help with applying for benefits. The combination of health and social care services alongside free legal advice offers an important boost to the joined-up care available to patients and local residents visiting St Chads.

Professor Lydia Hayes from the University of Liverpool said: *"At Liverpool Law School we know the best way to prepare our law students for the future is to enable them to learn the realities of law in action. It was great that CHP and Renova were so welcoming of the idea of a student-led pop-up legal advice service to support the St Chads community. At a point when people are accessing health care services it is not unusual for people to be thinking about issues like entitlement to sick pay, or disability support, getting repairs or adaptations to their homes, or ensuring they are getting all the income to which they are entitled. Our students have a track record of giving advice at the Citizens Advice and in Food Pantries across Liverpool. This health justice partnership at St Chad's is brand new and we can't wait to roll it out to other health centres."*

A number of University of Liverpool students have also spoken about their involvement in the St Chads initiative:

- **Megan Hughes, a final year law student said:** *"The weekly 'work and welfare' advice sessions offer us the chance to provide much-needed help and support to this community during an extremely difficult time. The current cost-of-living crisis has affected us all, and the lack of resources available in accessing help has increased vulnerabilities. We hope that the community will continue to visit us at these weekly drop-in sessions to ensure that we are able to offer support to as many people as possible."*
- **Labeeb Qaiser, a final year law student said:** *"We believe that empowering individuals with knowledge of their welfare rights leads to informed decisions and a stronger, more resilient community."*
- **Neeki Arkian, a final year law student said:** *"The locals of Kirkby are learning more about what rights, benefits and support they are entitled to, simply through a simple 5-minute conversation with one of us."*

St Chads Health Centre was built in 2013 to offer local residents a range of integrated health services all under one roof, in a modern health building conveniently located in Kirkby town centre and served by good transport links. St Chads is home to two GP teams; a dental service; a walk-in centre; District Nurses; X-ray facilities; physiotherapy; and a midwifery team. A range of bookable clinical rooms are also used for cardiovascular, respiratory, and diabetes services as well as talking therapies, weight management and many other clinics.

St Chads Health Centre was delivered under the NHS LIFT Programme which brings together [Renova](#), an investor in 17 community healthcare facilities in the North West, alongside [Community Health Partnerships](#) - Community Health Partnerships is the Head Tenant for St Chads, one of 308 LIFT healthcare buildings across England, and is an NHS property company wholly owned by the Department of Health and Social Care.

Denise Cottam, Corporate Social Responsibility Delivery Manager for CHP said: *"This partnership with the University of Liverpool underpins CHP's Buildings at The Heart of the Community Initiative where we encourage local community groups to make the most of our buildings. St Chads is ideally placed in the heart of Kirkby and the fantastic service offered by the law students will be a huge benefit to local residents, especially those facing financial challenges. I'm thrilled to see St Chads being used in this way."* Read more about CHP's Buildings at the Heart of the Community Initiative [here](#)

Renova General Manager Amy Lawrence said: *"St Chads offers residents a 'one-stop-shop' of vital health and social care services, so this initiative with the University of Liverpool is another fantastic way to further support the wellbeing of the local community. We are delighted to see students making use of the building and offering valuable advice that will help make a real difference to many local residents facing challenging times. Renova is this year celebrating 20 years of working with the NHS to support community health in the North West, and projects like this underline the huge benefits of partnership working to meet the changing needs of local residents."*

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