

## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & WELLBEING

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**PEOPLE: A good quality of life for all our residents**

**Public Health**

**Substance Misuse Update - Change Grow Live (CGL) - Inspire and Go2 adults and YP drug and alcohol service:** CGL has made some impressive adaptations to their service offer during the coronavirus pandemic to ensure high quality support continues for our some of our most vulnerable residents. The biggest risk of relapse or escalation in drug and alcohol use was isolation, so CGL quickly created a digital timetable of support that included the standard recovery programmes, health and wellbeing sessions, peer support and mutual aid, cooking, and other fun activities. CGL also bought 'burner phones' for service users for welfare checks, so they could continue to support their needs during the lockdown restrictions.

In addition, Inspire / Go2 also:

- Worked closely with The Oaks hotel to house and support homeless people during lockdown, which was well supported by Pennine Lancashire partners: <https://youtu.be/Z5ojp98NIBI>
- Implemented a new REACH worker post, to support homeless people experiencing multiple disadvantages who congregated in the town centre, which often caused challenges for town centre businesses. The impact of training to town centre staff, educating them around why people misuse substances (such as ACE's and trauma) has resulted in successfully smashing the stigma and discrimination these vulnerable service users experienced.
- Set up an innovative needle exchange 'deliveroo' service where service users could order the required stock and had it delivered to their home. This increased coverage of take-home naloxone (an opiate overdose reversal and lifesaving medication) from 55% to 75% meaning that 20% more service users had kits that could prevent drug related death. They also targeted hotspots of injecting such as hostels, and satellite spots where they parked the needle exchange van.
- Supplied digital devices and connectivity to the digitally excluded over 50s across the Lancashire-14 area via a partnership with Lancashire Digital Skills Partnership.
- Moved their professional development training to a digital offer has meant that they have reached even further, with some learners joining from abroad as well as locally, putting BwD on the map in relation to drug and alcohol training.

**Start Well – Feeding Future Generations programme:** BwD's Food Resilience Alliance has been awarded £13.5k grant funding from Food Power with UNICEF to

deliver a 20 week pilot programme of support for up to 25 pregnant mums and their families who have been affected by COVID-19 and may be struggling to afford food. The project is being delivered in partnership with BwD Council Children's Services, the Wellbeing Service, Blackburn Foodbank, the Health Visiting team and ELHT's Baby Friendly team and provides a comprehensive programme of support in the weeks leading up to the birth of their baby and for 12 weeks after to give babies the best start in life. This includes

- A personal Health Trainer
- Access to five weekly family food parcels from Blackburn Foodbank
- 12 vouchers for hot meals at their nearest Children's Centre with a café
- Supportive Breastfeeding groups
- HENRY parenting programme, including crèche
- Cooking on a Budget programme with weekly food box to practice at home
- £50 worth of vouchers to use to purchase fruit and vegetables from Blackburn Market

**Assets-based feeding help Before and After birth' (ABA) intervention study:** To build on our achievements as a Baby Friendly Borough, our Infant Feeding Partnership has secured involvement in a national infant feeding research study in collaboration with the University of Birmingham and UCLAN. BwD is now one of ten national pilot research sites across the country, which involves the recruitment and training of local volunteer Infant Feeding Helpers to test the newly developed 'Assets-based feeding help Before and After birth' (ABA) intervention. The ABA intervention was designed to be inclusive and improve infant feeding behaviours, offering a woman-centred approach. Recruitment and training of Infant Feeding Helpers will commence in the New Year, and 'mums to be' and new mums will begin to receive this additional support in spring.

### **Leisure Services**

Staying active has been a consistent and important Public Health message throughout the ongoing pandemic. Leisure teams have continued to make exercise available ensuring, when permitted to open facilities operated in the safest possible way and feedback from members of the public has been persistently positive about this. Technology is being utilised in every way possible to support residents to remain active (whether with us or at home) as part of a new, blended approach to delivering services. During the enforced closure periods of tier restrictions and national lockdown arrangements leisure staff have been deployed across a broad spectrum of roles right across the organisation to support the Covid response.

### **Healthy Lifestyles & Wellbeing Service**

The Wellbeing Service continues to be the point of contact for the public and partners to access any and all health and wellbeing support locally. Teams continue to deliver a broad range of live streaming and online support sessions alongside in-person delivery when permitted.

Wellbeing Service managers are leading the Council's integrated Contact Tracing response, supported by Health Trainers and wider teams across several department areas.

## Venues

Although there have been no events or shows at King George's Hall or Darwen Library Theatre for many months bookings from agents and artists continue to be positive with the 2021/22 calendar almost full and the rest of 2022 filling up. Promoters are also requesting dates much further ahead into 2023.

Both Venues were part of the national Save our Theatres campaign, recognising the important value of retaining access to culture. This was further emphasised by securing a £364,000 grant from the Arts Council Recovery Fund. This will help both DLT and KGH re-open with new technology such as electronic tickets, self-ticket scanning devices and the development of an 'at-seat' refreshment ordering app as part of new Covid secure operating procedures.

## Libraries

**Computer access** - despite the full lockdown and T4 restrictions, Blackburn Library continues to provide computer access to residents, enabling those without digital means to stay connected. Over 70 bookings were attended since November and customer feedback demonstrated a clear need for online access, *"I'm so grateful I was able to use a computer, I needed to get into my Universal Credit account and had nowhere else to go, I was desperate – thanks so much."*

Similarly, the **Call and Collect Service**, offering books and audio books to suit all ages, continues at both Blackburn Library and Darwen Library when the buildings are closed and to provide a quick alternate to a longer browsing visit when open.

**Believe in the Magic of Blackburn Town Centre** book, written by Christina Gabbitas and illustrated by Ursula Hurst, was officially launched from Blackburn Library via a series of digital events on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Commissioned by Blackburn BID and partners the book highlights and promotes the variety of cultural and visitor attractions that our town has to offer, including Blackburn Central Library, King George's Hall, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery and The Mall – all of which feature in this historical fantasy story. Primary schools across the Borough dialled into the daytime launch events, with over 3,000 children enjoying Christina's live book readings and follow up Q and A sessions.

## Arts & Heritage

**Turton Tower:** Funding secured from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund will support the Turton Seniors Wellbeing Covid Project. Part of the funding has been used to create a new socially spaced picnic area and to purchase 5 new picnic tables. This has been a huge benefit to the many visitors who walk around the gardens, woods and children's play area, for regular gardening volunteers and visitors to the new Woodland Café take away.

**Redecoration of the Egyptian Gallery:** During the current closure the museum has taken the opportunity to redecorate the Egypt Gallery. The gallery was last painted in the 1990s! This is not extensive gallery redevelopment and visitors will be reassured to know that Blackburn's Mummy remains at the centre of the gallery.