

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

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PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Director of Public  
Health  
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## PEOPLE: Build happier, healthier and safer communities;

### PUBLIC HEALTH

**NHS Health Checks Offer Grows:** The NHS Health Check programme is a health check-up for adults aged 40-74 designed to spot early signs of stroke, heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease or dementia. Health Checks are commissioned through the Public Health Team and delivered by Primary Care and the Wellbeing Service in GP Practices and community venues across the borough. Working closely with the Wellbeing Service and Primary Care teams we are able to offer checks with portable machines in venues across the borough, and over the last four years we have successfully increased the number of checks delivered by over 80%. From April 2023 we are extending the Health Check programme further to include Enhanced Health Checks which will increase the number of NHS Health Checks delivered in Blackburn with Darwen by 40% over the next two years.

**Bee Yourself Website launches:** <https://bee-yourself.org/> is a digital resource for 8–11-year-olds to help support and improve their emotional health and wellbeing. The website also provides a secure area for professionals, a place for parents and carers to access trusted advice and a directory of activities and opportunities for young people linked to the 5 Ways to Wellbeing. Continued engagement and consultation with partner organisations and young people ensures that the site meets its aims of improving health and emotional wellbeing, increasing awareness of services and resources and improving self-management of wellbeing needs. Currently, the site is in a soft launch phase and all Headteachers, PSHE leads, and school nurses have been asked to provide feedback and suggestions. As it develops the resource will be promoted to young people more widely, and schools will be supported to promote the resources and create content that can be shared via the site.

**Oral Health Improvement One Year On Achievements:** The Blackburn with Darwen Oral Health Improvement Strategy was launched in May 2022, to coincide with national smile month. Almost one year on, the Public Health Team along with partners involved in the Oral Health Improvement Group have made significant progress in delivering our plans to improve oral health across the Borough. Achievements include; supervised tooth brushing in schools, targeted awareness raising campaigns, the first cohort of Kind to Teeth Parent Champions, training and awareness raising for parents, carers and professionals, and provision of toothbrushes and toothpaste and free flowing cups to every child at their 8-12 month health visitor check. A full report outlining achievements made during the first year of the strategy, and priorities for the next twelve months, will be presented to Executive Board in April 2023.

**Covid Responsiveness:** The work of the council Core Covid Response and Recovery Team will come to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March after over two years of delivery. The team has delivered some exceptional programmes to support our public sector partners; residents; communities and local businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of this activity

became national best practice, for example, our local Test & Trace programme. Staff in the team supported the roll-out of the county's first mass vaccination site at Blackburn Cathedral and helped residents successfully complete self-isolation with the innovative *10 Days Your Way* programme. As the work of the team comes to an end I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for the dedication, commitment and innovation shown by the whole team. Future Covid-19 activity will be coordinated by the Public Health team, as part of their wider health protection responsibilities, with support from other council departments as required.

**Covid-19 Spring Booster launched:** The Spring Booster campaign will start on 17<sup>th</sup> April and end on 30<sup>th</sup> June and will be delivered by GPs and Pharmacies. The NHS will contact eligible individuals with details on how to book appointments including; adults aged 75 years and over, residents in a care home for older adults, individuals aged 5 years and over who are immunosuppressed. With support from across the organisation we continue to provide support to advertise and promote the campaign and improve access with the aim of increasing uptake and reducing inequalities.

**Health and Wellbeing Board:** The Health and Wellbeing Board met on 7<sup>th</sup> March. The Board considered items relating to the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board Joint Forward Plan, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Partnership Strategy and approved the revised Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2028, noting the work that had been undertaken to ensure these plans reflected and were aligned to the needs of local people. The Board also considered updates on the Better Care Fund and proposed School Food Grant, and received and endorsed a presentation on trauma informed approaches.

## **NEIGHBOURHOODS, WELLBEING AND PREVENTION**

**Cost of Living: Household Support Scheme:** Cost of Living is supported via the Neighbourhoods and Prevention teams, and delivered by a team of staff responsible for delivering the Household Support Grant, known as the Help Hub. Between October 2022 and February 2023 the team received and administered 1461 applications, of which 67% were households with children with the remaining adult only households. 20% had long term medical conditions and 42% were in employment. Recently, the work done in BwD was featured on BBC news. The report highlighted our strength based and collaborative approach with partners to ensure that everyone who makes contact with us receives some form of support. Partner involvement is critical to the success the scheme, with Jubilee Tower Credit union giving out over £500,000 in fuel support and BwD Healthily Living 'Bill Busters' writing off thousands of pounds in energy debt for residents across the borough. Over 800 residents have been referred to The Oaks and Shelter for financial support and around 50 elderly residents have been referred to Care Network for energy efficiency/boiler advice and inspections. A large number are also referred to our own Wellbeing and Adult Learning services for support with health and wellbeing.

**Housing needs team shortlisted for LGC Awards:** The work of the council's Housing Needs Team has been shortlisted for the prestigious Local Government Chronical awards. Under the Housing category the work of the team with people at risk of rough sleeping at our PODS in Shadsworth was seen as both innovative and impactful supporting a really vulnerable group. The winner will be announced in June of this year.

**Road Safety advice to over 1500 schoolchildren:** The council's Road Safety Officer has completed a series of road safety inputs to schools across the borough. To date 17 schools have been visited providing road safety inputs to over 1500 children. Together

with Lancashire Constabularies Neighbourhood Policing Team bite size road safety training was delivered to 38 children taking part in a locally organised football tournament

**School Food Support extended:** A School Food Grant Funding programme has been established to provide funding to schools to enable them to feed children in the greatest need during the summer term 2023. The funding aims to respond to food poverty as a result of the cost of living crisis, including reports that some children regularly attend school unable to afford to buy lunch because their family circumstances mean they fall outside the restrictive free school meal eligibility criteria.

Funding has been allocated to schools based on the proportion of their pupils who live in the 25% most deprived postcodes and the size of the school. Schools can apply for a range of food-related interventions including funding further free or supplemented school meal for vulnerable families or provision of or improving the content of packed lunches. The total available grant is £420,000, funded via a combination of Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board, Public Health grant and Household Support Fund. Outputs from the funding will vary depending on what activity each school supports. However, if schools propose to use the funding for additional free school meals, this would provide 171,428 meals or feed 2,678 additional children throughout the summer term at no cost.

## **LEISURE**

**Regional Cross County Event:** On the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2023 Witton Park was the host of North West Regional Cross County Championships, the event is one of the biggest of its kind in the North of England.

The weather could have been kinder on the day but saw over 2000 runners of varying standards compete with times going towards their UK rankings.

The team at Witton were thanked by the organisers and race goers on the day for their hospitality and organisation, it is hoped that the success of the event will encourage them to hold the event at Witton again in the future.

**Swimming Galas – Darwen Leisure Centre:** Over the last four weeks Darwen leisure centre has been the host of two large regional swimming meets for Burnley Bobcats and Preston Swimming Club.

There are no other venues in the region, other than the Palatine Centre in Blackpool and Manchester Aquatics centre that can hosts events of this size. There were over 2000 swimmers at each of the events and the spectator galleries were full to their capacity for the entire day.

We have recently invested £12k on the timing equipment for the main pool which is due to arrive by the end of March 2023, this will allow us to maintain swim meets were times set can be used for regional and national rankings.

We currently host five large swim meets a year with a further ten single day events hosted by Blackburn Centurions and Chorley Marlins.

There has been a significant economic benefit of these events being held and Darwen Town Centre businesses have asked that they be informed of future events as many shops sold out by midday, especially the food eateries in order that they can plan extra staff manage stock and supplies.