

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

COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT

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

Public Health

Sexual Health Strategy and Delivery Workshop: The sexual health strategy workshop was held on 8th June 2023 and attended by more than sixty stakeholders representing various adults, public health and children's services.

The workshop aimed to provide an overview of the local and national sexual health landscape whilst also giving stakeholders an opportunity to share their perspectives on the gaps, needs, and actionable steps for improving sexual health across Blackburn with Darwen. A digital survey was also conducted, receiving responses from over forty professionals. The event showcased our community stakeholder engagement initiatives have been undertaken specifically targeting young people (including those with SEND) and also individuals living with HIV. Further focus groups are planned with LGBTQ+ community and we are working to ensure voices and lived experiences are heard from members of the ethnic minority and diverse communities.

Based on the analysis of public health data and insights, the following core priorities have been identified to:

- Increase STI testing rates, including improving Chlamydia detection rate and the proportion of individuals screened.
- Enhance early diagnosis and reduce onward transmission of HIV.
- Promote increased uptake of Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC) in both General Practice and Sexual and Reproductive Health services across all age groups.
- Enhance access and develop targeted approaches for diverse communities.
- Improve relationships and sex education across educational and youth settings

These identified priorities will serve as the foundation for developing the new sexual health strategy that addresses the specific needs of the community and aims to improve sexual health outcomes for all our residents.

Health and Wellbeing Board: The Health and Wellbeing Board met on 20th June 2023. The Board approved the Joint Strategic Need Assessment overview documents, which set out the health and care needs of the borough and its residents. The Board also received updates relating to the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board Strategy and Joint Forward Plan, noting the progress which had been made since the last meeting. The proposed Healthwatch work programme for 2023/24 was also presented and endorsed. A further presentation on the achievements of a programme of work to implement the Oral Health Improvement Strategy was commended for achieving better child dental health outcomes.

Neighbourhoods Wellbeing and Prevention

Cost of Living: Household Support Fund: Cost of Living is supported via the Neighbourhoods and Prevention teams, with Community Connector staff delivering the public applications for Household Support Fund, via the Help Hub. The latest funding period, running from April 2023 to March 2024 is referred to as Household Support Fund 4, with applications launched on May 30th 2023. In the first two weeks over 270 applications for support were made, of which 71% were households with children, 106 applications declared having someone with a disability living in the household. 43% were in employment with 84% also claiming some form of benefits. These early indications are showing a 20% increase in demand in applications. Partner involvement remains critical to the success of the scheme and a series of planning and consultation meetings have been held with partners to design the latest scheme for 2023/24 and a communications plan is now underway to promote the offer for residents.

Volunteer Celebration Event: The annual Volunteer Celebration Event was held on the 7th June 2023 at King Georges Hall and attracted over 130 active volunteers to attend the event along with the Mayor, the Leader, Strategic Director Adults & Health and a range of council officers. Across 13 council services, there are currently 2,380 active volunteers, of which 50% are currently employed and volunteer in their free time. The total impact of this is recorded as 6,000 hours over the past year based on volunteers logging their activity and it is estimated that the volunteer time figure is substantially higher than recorded activity.

Together an Active Future: Pennine Lancashire Lifestyle Hub: The Lifestyle Hub has received news that current funding arrangements have been extended until March 2025 at value of c£450k per year across the region. The Lifestyle Hub is a programme funded by Sport England's Together an Active Future and builds on the success of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Councils Wellbeing Service and provides the coordination of health and wellbeing referrals across Pennine Lancashire. It is designed to provide a simple entry point for health care professionals to refer people into in order to improve health and wellbeing and is led and coordinated by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council health and wellbeing teams.

re:fresh Leisure Centre Provision physical activity opportunities: The Together an Active Future Local Delivery Pilot is now moving into an exciting accelerator phase and work continues in Blackburn with Darwen to support this. Creating significant investment in creating healthy communities and encouraging people to move more with funding and delivery targets now in place up to March 2025. There are three key themes of work which capture and reflect strategic priorities for Blackburn with Darwen while raising the visibility and embedding the importance of physical activity being the norm for prevention, treatment of long term conditions and supporting mental health & wellbeing:

- **A focus on Darwen** – co-designing engagement activities and creating opportunities for young people to move more with a focus on issues around anti-social behaviour. Promoting mental health & wellbeing through physical activity by facilitating work on suicide prevention and 'Safe places, shared spaces'.
- **Investing in community collaboration** - Supporting volunteer groups who operate and manage community assets. Co-creating a framework to support governance, bid writing, leadership and engagement. Working and learning together, sharing resources and creating active hubs.

- **Challenging and improving physical activity** – Influencing how Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council approaches, prioritises, promotes and positions physical activity.

Leisure

re:fresh Leisure Centre Provision physical activity opportunities: Officers from across the portfolio have been working together to increase opportunities for residents to engage within leisure and physical activity across the borough.

A new timetable for the re:refresh Leisure programme has been developed for 2023/24. The programme has been increased to provide 110 hours per week of free and low cost gym access, swimming and other exercise opportunities across the borough. Swimming will continue to be free for children aged between 1 – 16 years where they are accompanied by an eligible parent or guardian. The previous £1 charge for adult gym and swim re:refresh sessions will be reintroduced. In order to promote the new re:refresh programme a six week communications campaign has been developed and an official launch will take place in late June 2023.

Public Health continue to fund targeted health and physical activity programmes within the Wellbeing Service and re:refresh teams within the portfolio.

As part of a borough wide programme, Public Health will continue to fund additional free community-based exercise sessions throughout 2023/24. These will target specific population groups which are known to undertake less physical activity than recommended. This includes those living with poor mental and physical health, older adults, vulnerable women and girls, people with learning disabilities and autism, and ethnic minority groups. These sessions will be delivered in partnership with community organisations at a variety of times and in venues that aim to reduce barriers to participation. Activities funded within 2022/23 included women's walking football, wheelchair basketball and other sports, seated exercise, walking groups, zumba and yoga. Over 300 hours of sessions were delivered in 2022/23, with more than 500 members of the public attending over a 9 month period.