



**TO: Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee**

**FROM: Public Health**

**DATE: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**PORTFOLIOS AFFECTED: All**

**WARDS AFFECTED: All**

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**TITLE OF REPORT: Wellbeing Champions**

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## **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 To provide a report on the Wellbeing Champions project commissioned by the Public Health Team, as requested at the Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is recommended to:-

a) Note this update report

## **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Wellbeing Champions (WBC) project is based on the evidence based intervention of Peer Support. Peer support is when people use their own experiences to provide help and support to each other. The potential benefits of peer support for young people has been well documented by the Department for Education and Public Health England. It has been found to reduce social isolation, increase self-confidence and improve quality of life.

3.2 The project aims successfully recruit, support and train young people, aged 12 – 18 to become Wellbeing Champion in schools, and youth settings. A Wellbeing Champion is a young person who has undertaken specific mentoring training in order for them to support other children and young people. Champions are recruited from settings to then deliver activities or sessions within that setting to improve the wellbeing of their peers. Activities can consist of listening, promoting wellbeing and resilience and signposting to further local support. Champions are recruited from diverse communities and neighbourhoods across our borough.

3.3 The aims of the project are that:

- Wellbeing Champions:
  - Are trained in Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention.
  - Have increased knowledge, skills and confidence in mental health and suicide prevention and so are able to initiate supportive conversations with peers
- Children and young people:
  - Know where to go if they are worried about someone
  - Start to access the Wellbeing Champions within their settings for support and advice

- Have increased awareness of services and resources that support emotional health and wellbeing, including the five ways to wellbeing via the Bee Yourself website.
- Have increased awareness to a wide range of positive activities such as sports, physical activity and volunteering opportunities.
- Are more resilient and have improved self-reported wellbeing.

3.4 The WBC project began in June 2021 and was originally delivered by Realign Futures for 12 months using funding from the Public Health England Better Mental Health grant. This was time limited and ended in May 2022.

3.5 Following this, the Public Health team agreed to fund the programme for a further two year period. However, an open tender process was required in line with procurement regulations.

3.6 The current contract is now being delivered by Child Action North West (CANW) and runs from August 2022 to July 2024, with a total value of £70,000.

## 4. PROGRESS

### To date the project has:

4.1 Developed and established project processes including development of:

- New branding and logos, in collaboration with young people
- A website and online referral form for young people to register their interest on <https://canw.org.uk/what-we-do/support-children-and-young-people/wellbeing-champions/>
- A training package that is age and topic appropriate for the WBC cohort
- A sign up process with settings to manage expectations of both the settings and the WBCs. This agreement was set up to ensure that the young people were being supported as WBCs in their settings, by the setting. With an important part of this agreement being that a dedicated staff member from the setting was identified and trained up to support the WBCs to build capacity within the setting.

4.2 Engaged new and existing schools and community settings:

- The project continues to work with the schools that had, through a previous contract Wellbeing Champions within their settings. These schools are Blackburn Central High, Our Lady and St John (OLSJ) and Tauheedul Girls School.
- 3 new settings have signed up to the Wellbeing Champions Project this year, these are: Witton Park Academy, Pleckgate High School and Blackburn Rover's Community Trust (BRTC.)
- Delivered additional engagement with Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (DACA), St Wilfrid's and Blackburn Youth Zone, who are keen to sign up to the scheme. They have all identified potential WBC in their settings.
- The project has also linked in with the existing providers of mental health and wellbeing support in these settings. These are the Kooth Support Worker and members of the Mental Health Support Teams from ELHT who support Secondary Schools in BwD.

4.3 Delivered the following outputs and outcomes:

- Identified, recruited and trained up 55 new Wellbeing Champions (target was 48)
  - 14 from Witton Park High School (finished their training in June)
  - 29 from Pleckgate High School (finished their training in June)

- 12 through Blackburn Rover Community Trust (BRTC) (finished their training in August)
- 6 members of staff from these settings have also been trained to support their WBC.
- A further 27 Young People have been identified as potential WBC and are awaiting training dates via their setting.
- The training has been well received by all participants and the evaluation scores show that it is effective in increasing the participant's knowledge of mental health and their confidence to talk to others about it.
- During Mental Health Awareness Week 2023:
  - Assemblies were delivered at Tauheedul School and OLSJ.
  - WBC at Blackburn Central High School held drop in sessions for their peers. They designed and made posters advertising the sessions and describing what they could help with.
  - WBC at Blackburn Rover Community Trust held a Wellbeing Session for young people
  - The project shared mental wellbeing and campaign resources with the WBC, to display in their schools and settings to provide information, support and advice to other young people.
- During 'exam season' WBCs in Witton Park Academy have been holding informal drop in sessions, at lunchtimes.
  - The WBC have been able to provide support and advice to their peers on the following topics - friendship issues, bullying, social media, pressures, boyfriend problems
- Improvements in the Wellbeing Champion's own wellbeing is being monitored using the WEMWEBS scale. This is being monitored annually from the time of recruitment and so as yet the results aren't available but this can be provided to the board when available.
- WBCs at Witton Park Academy and Pleckgate High School have prepared posters for September when schools return after the summer break in order to promote the WBCs and to identify themselves to the new year 7's
- The project has attended local wellbeing events, in order to raise the profile of the project with families and young people eg. Family Hub Open Days, Blackburn College Mental Health Fair, Darwen Health Week.
- The project has brought some of the WBC together over the summer to strengthen their social network and work on their confidence to be able to attend external community events in the future.

## **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no policy implications arising directly from this report.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no other resources implications arising from the contents of this report.

## **9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no equality and health implications arising from the contents of this report.

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

11.1 The recommendation in this report are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer.

<b>VERSION:</b>	1
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Frances Riley, Public Health Development Manager
<b>DATE:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2023
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>	N/A