

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

COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
CHIEF OFFICERS: Director of Public
Health
Thursday, 5 October 2023**

Build happier, healthier and safer communities

Public Health

Breastfeeding celebration event

A breastfeeding celebration event took place on a Saturday in Witton Park on 1st July 2023. Despite the wind and rain on the day, around 200 people attended and took part in the activities, which included circus skills with the Re:refresh clowns, pedalling a smoothie bike, seed planting with Lancashire Wildlife Trust, storytime, rhyme and puppets with the Library, face painting, crafts and a beautiful feeding tent.

Stallholders shared public health messages around breastfeeding, safer sleep, stopping smoking, food and nutrition, as well as giving information regarding the 0-19 Service, Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND), Fostering, Homestart, Sling Library, Humraaz, University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) School of Midwifery and the Children's Centres. The event was supported with volunteers from Red Rose Recovery and the Bureau of the Arts. Families gave positive feedback regarding the range of activities available and appreciated the fact that they could access support from infant feeding specialists on the day.

There are plans to grow the annual celebration event but also ensure that breastfeeding awareness stalls are present at a range of community events. The intention is to increase visibility and recognisability of the 'Believing in Breastfeeding BwD' branding and use every opportunity to reiterate the messaging. The breastfeeding initiation rates for new mums in Blackburn with Darwen is over 80%.

Age Well Mental Health campaign

A new Public Health Campaign was launched in July 2023 and runs throughout 2023/24. Bespoke to Blackburn with Darwen, the Campaign aims to:

- Improve awareness of mental wellbeing amongst older people and professionals who work with this age group;
- Encourage individuals to take steps to improve their own mental wellbeing or that of someone they are worried about;
- Raise awareness of local mental wellbeing projects with older people and professionals so they know about them and how to access them;
- Provide training for professionals in older people's settings on mental wellbeing.

The Campaign is being run in partnership between BwD Age UK and the Public Health Team. For more information and to download the leaflet, see our website: <https://bewellbwd.com/news/ageing-well/>

School uniform exchanges

A series of school uniform pop-up shops were organised by the Child Poverty Strategy Group and were held in Blackburn and Darwen libraries from 22nd to 26th August 2023. They were used by residents to donate and pick up pre-loved school uniform before the start of term. Stock was donated by council staff and residents on the day and from our Family Hubs throughout summer. Both pop-ups were well attended, and positive feedback was given by those who picked up uniforms.

'It's so expensive to buy branded items with the school badge on so it's great to be able to take this. We usually get the cheap ones from a major supermarket so it's nice that we have an official one now.'

Branded items such as blazers, PE kits and jumpers were in demand and were the first items to be taken in both shops. Further signposting was also provided to Rummage Rescuers and SAMS who also stock pre-loved uniforms. All uniform that was remaining was sent to the Family Hubs so the community can continue to donate what they can and take what they need. Schools that were requested frequently were noted and follow-up work will be undertaken to encourage them to create their own pop-ups and inform parents of where pre-loved uniform can be found. Learning from these pilot pop-ups will be taken forward to next summer's shop activities.

Dental surveys for school children

The University of Central Lancashire's dental school have been awarded the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) dental epidemiology contract for up to five years. In 2023/24 a full census survey will be undertaken where we hope to check every five year old's teeth. This is an 'opt in' survey and therefore schools have been requested to support in ensuring consent is received from as many parents as possible for their children's teeth to be checked. The data will support us to commission and effectively target oral health interventions within the borough and to evaluate and demonstrate our existing work is making a difference.

Neighbourhoods Wellbeing and Prevention

NHS Enhanced Health Checks

This is a new development, which is taking a collaborative approach to delivery; with the GP Federation supported by Public Health and Neighbourhood, Wellbeing & Prevention Teams in addition to the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Sector. Enhanced Health Checks aim to focus on prevention and reducing ill-health from cardiovascular disease (CVD), which still causes 24% of deaths, by taking a holistic view that addresses the social and wider determinants of health. This is achieved by supporting Blackburn with Darwen residents at greater risk of preventable disease, who require additional support into a range of community services that address social, financial and emotional vulnerabilities. An enhanced health check provides additional time with a healthcare professional to discuss the needs of the individual.

The council's Health and Wellbeing Team is taking the lead with GP engagement, training and targeted health check delivery in the community which is strengthening our existing relationships with Primary Care.

The councils Wellbeing Service is the referral pathway for those requiring support following a health check, where there is the expertise for physical activity and health

coaching, however if appropriate, connecting with Social Prescribing and Integrated Neighbourhood Teams ensures holistic and patient centred support.

Household Support Fund

Household Support Fund (HSF) 4 covers April 23 to March 24 and is providing £3.2m of direct financial support available to residents to support with the cost of living crisis. At present the Household Support Fund national funding is only in place until March 2024. The primary route to access this support is through an online application process, administered by Community Connectors within Neighbourhoods, Wellbeing and Prevention who provide a bespoke, strength based and trauma informed service to support residents access the fund – this ‘front door’ is referred to as the Help Hub. .

In 2023/24 the team have processed:

- 1373 applications and responded to over 300 phone calls.
- 96% of households that apply and respond to support receive financial benefit from the scheme covering aspects including food, white goods, children’s beds, gas and electric payments, fuel efficiency, finance, benefit and debt support, employment and well-being.
- 31% of applicants have someone in the household in work (this includes over 90 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council employees);
- 63% are households with children;
- 42% of households supported report someone in the house with a disability. A supplementary payment to electricity support is now also given to any household that has an electric aid that supports their disability with increased electric usage.

In addition to the application process, the fund has supported schools to extend and fill gaps in the free school meals and holiday activities food provision. Over 7000 extra pupils, from 3000 families have benefited from this support and been provided with a hot meal for free at their school.

