

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

COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
CHIEF OFFICERS: Director of Public
Health
Thursday, 25 January 2024**

Build happier, healthier and safer communities

Public Health

Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) National Quality Improvement Award

Blackburn with Darwen's Public Health team has been awarded the National Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) Quality Improvement Award for its work on bringing down the rates of children's tooth decay in the borough. In 2019, 51% of the borough's five-year-olds had decayed, missing or filled teeth – the highest proportion in England.

This award recognises a public health team for establishing ways to improve public health practice. This was in partnership with Blackburn Rovers Community Trust, dental care provider AP Smilecare and Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living. Actions which form part of the Borough's oral health improvement strategy 2021 – 2026 include an oral health communications campaign; introducing tooth brushing in nurseries and schools; working with partners including Blackburn Rovers Community Trust to educate children on the dangers of sugary and fizzy drinks and community outreach to help make sure all parents know about the importance of regular tooth brushing with fluoride toothpaste, and the hidden sugars in foods targeted to young children.

By working with community health champions, and supporting initiatives to support those in the most isolated communities, the team are now seeing incredibly positive results and Blackburn with Darwen is no longer the local authority with the highest rate of dental decay for five-year-olds in England.

Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award

The Blackburn with Darwen Food Alliance, supported by Public Health, have been working hard to achieve the Sustainable Food Places Bronze award which is a national award to celebrate places that take a joined-up, holistic approach to championing sustainable and healthy food. In November 2023, it was announced that Blackburn with Darwen had achieved this prestigious award in recognition of the hard work being undertaken collaboratively across the borough to tackle some of our greatest social challenges; from food poverty and diet-related ill-health to the disappearance of family farms and the loss of independent food retailers.

Achieving this award is recognition of the excellent work that is going on across the borough by many different and varied organisations and businesses from all sectors of our community. We will continue to use the Sustainable Food Places award framework to support our implementation of the 'Food Environment' workstream under the Eat Well Move More Strategy as we strive to provide a healthy, vibrant, equitable and more sustainable food environment for all.

World AIDS Day (WAD) – 1st December 2023

Our vision for sexual health in Blackburn with Darwen is that: 'All our residents have equal access to sexual health services throughout their life and they can enjoy a life of good sexual health, free from prejudice or bias'.

As part of World Aids Day held on 1st December 2023 this year we have promoted and delivered online HIV training which has been available to anyone working in Blackburn with Darwen. The content included an update on HIV, routes of transmission, what it PrEP and how it to access, as well as promoting the undetectable = untransmissible health messages. In addition we utilised Patricia the mobile outreach bus to raise awareness of HIV and PrEP with our community partners.

On world aids day a candle lit vigil was held, providing a space for reflection, remembrance, and solidarity with individuals living with HIV. The event was supported by local singer song writer, Teri Birtwistle who played two acoustic songs that resonated with the emotional tone of the event. The event offered an opportunity for guests to stay, share hot refreshments, and participate in signing the book of remembrance.

Neighbourhoods Wellbeing and Prevention

NHS Enhanced Health Checks: Community delivery by Health and Wellbeing Team

Enhanced Health Checks (EHC's) 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. An EHC also provides additional time with a healthcare professional to fully discuss and understand the needs of the individual.

EHC's in the community have been delivered by Health & Wellbeing Coaches over the past 6 months with good uptake. There is now the drive to focus on engaging with harder to reach, vulnerable individuals for maximum impact on health inequalities. Adopting a collaborative approach, the Health and Wellbeing team are bringing together Health & Wellbeing Coaches, Social Prescribing Link Workers, GP Surgeries and Housing Needs to work closely together. Delivery has successfully taken place within Oakenhurst and Little Harwood GP surgeries and will be moving to Shifa Surgery and the Pheonix Hub in January 2024.

Household Support Fund

Household Support Fund (HSF) is now well established across Blackburn with Darwen and well accessed by both resident and professionals. So far this year a quarter of the applications are submitted by professionals (e.g. social workers) supporting our most vulnerable residents. Since April 2023 HSF4 has received 3420 applications and is currently receiving up to 150 applications per week with 93% of households applying receiving direct financial support. Those ineligible for financial support receive broader advice, information and connection to community partners.

Following recent Government announcements, there are no plans for this funding to continue beyond March 2024. The Neighbourhood, Wellbeing and Prevention teams are working to identify risks, and plan for a future without HSF and liaising with community partners.

Interfaith Week

The Integration & Community Engagement Team (formerly Social Integration) supported the Council in delivering a successful interfaith week in November 2023. The team worked with the Interfaith Forum to create a panel of faith leaders who were asked questions by pupils from St.Bede's, Tauheedul Boys and Girls High Schools, Darwen Aldridge Community Academy and Pleckgate High. The event in the Council Chambers helped raise awareness and understanding of other faiths. The team also supported the week by arranging events through its Asylum Multi-agency Forum (ASMAF). These events were open to the community and included a mosque tour (Masjid al-Momineen, first purpose-built mosque in Blackburn), an interfaith walk in Darwen and drop-ins for interfaith discussions, storytelling and refreshments and at our Asylum Seeker & Refugee Hubs in both Blackburn and Darwen.