

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING & PUBLIC HEALTH

**COUNCILLOR DAMIAN TALBOT**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Director of Public  
Health  
Thursday, 3 October 2024**

## **Build happier, healthier and safer communities**

### **Place Based - Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Strategy**

The Place Based Partnership are developing an All Age - Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Strategy. The document is a Blackburn with Darwen strategy employing public health and population health principals, that encompasses a vision that is shared across the Place Based Partnership and its constituent partners.

The purpose of this strategy is to have a shared strategy, that drive actions and holds the Partnership accountable over the upcoming next five years (2024 – 2029). The strategy:

- Describes the vision for Blackburn with Darwen for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and outline 6 strategic priorities that bring together the ambitions for improvement across the full mental health continuum.
- Describes the leadership and governance that provides the mandate for this vision and the contributions that can be made across all sectors
- Defines the values and the approach that underpin how the vision will be achieved and that align with other key documents in BwD.
- Presents the current picture in the borough, the assets and the needs drawing on local lived experience, and public health data.

Under the 6 Strategic Priorities will sit action plans for delivery across sectors.

The Strategy has been developed in consultation with members of the public, staff and people with lived experience of mental health and suicide. There was a formal engagement period for the Strategy between the 30th May – 10th July 2024, with multiple ways to contribute including an engagement session, an online survey and 20 focus group sessions. In total, approximately 300 people have shared their views and thoughts on this strategy, and these have shaped its development.

As part of the development of this strategy, the Place Based Board will form a subgroup, namely the Blackburn with Darwen Mental Health Delivery Group, with an accountable structure that will deliver the action plans in alignment with the values and approach of this strategy. The Place Based board will provide regular assurance updates to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Strategy is in its final stages of development and is due to go for sign off at the Place Based Board in September 2024, the Council Exec Board in October 2024 and the Health and Wellbeing Board in December 2024.

### **Local Authority Research Practitioner post**

The Public Health team have been successful in securing funding to contribute towards a two-year fixed term post for a Local Authority Research Practitioner. The team submitted a strong application to the Health and Social Care, National Institute for Health

and Care Research (NIHR) who are working with Specialist Centre for Public Health delivered by Newcastle University and partners which was awarded.

Local Authority Research Practitioner will support research delivery and performance across the locality and champion the role of research across Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and local partners. The post aims to ensure that local decision-making on policy and interventions are routinely based on robust evidence, which will ultimately improve health outcomes and the wider determinants of health for local residents.

### **Stop smoking service mobilisation service**

There has been a long-term national ambition for a smokefree generation. On 4 October 2023, the government published *Stopping the Start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation*. This plan included a programme of funding to support current smokers to quit smoking with additional funding provided to local authorities with the highest smoking rates to level up the communities who need the support the most and to address health disparities. Blackburn with Darwen received £237,341.

The National Institute of Health & Care Excellence (NICE) guidance (NG92) recommends that local services should aim to treat around 5% of their smoking population each year with a success rate of at least 35%, any less instigating exception reporting and investigation into the quality of interventions provided.

Following a tender process from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 there will be a new community stop smoking service being delivered by a new provider Solutions 4 Health in Blackburn with Darwen. Weekly mobilisation meetings are being held between public health and Solutions 4 Health to ensure milestones are met.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> birthday for Roots Community**

At the end of June 2024, it was the second birthday celebration of the Roots Community at St Luke's & Phillip's Church which had a range of partners including High Sheriff of Lancashire.

Roots was formed two years ago to provide a local forum for advocating recovery, either through empowers those in, or seeking recovery from substance misuse and brings together a range of motivated and passionate individuals and organisations who are working together to provide fantastic support to residents in BwD. Prior to Roots community, recovery activities was undertaken by the Lancashire user forum.

Roots Community is around supporting to build recovery capital (a range of internal and external resources that can be drawn upon to initiate and sustain recovery) and is relies on volunteers and staff who have mostly have a lived experience of addiction. The event included a range of lived experienced stories from adverse childhood experiences and trauma, their history of addition and the role of organisations such as roots community to support recovery.

In the recovery community there is peer support and a tailored approach for the person and in some cases, their families and carers too as they are important for recovery capital. Some of the initial activities can be volunteering for litter picking, the group felt this was important to start to embed back into the local communities. From wider wellbeing (five steps to wellbeing), volunteering is really important for our wellbeing [5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#). With gained confidence, self-esteem, hope, role models and connecting with other people in recovery there is training, development and employment opportunities to support long term sustainable recovery. More information is available on their website [Roots Community - Red Rose Recovery](#)

## **Workplace Cardiovascular Disease Health Check coming to Blackburn with Darwen**

Blackburn with Darwen is one of 48 local authorities selected as part of the national workplace cardiovascular disease health check pilot following an application for national funding. Starting in September until the end of March 2025, there will be 1,000 health checks carried out in large workplaces across Blackburn with Darwen as part of the Government's £10m Shared Outcome Fund.

The programme will see employers offering a comprehensive heart health checks that can detect people showing early signs of cardiovascular disease, but also stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. The check provides people with the information they need to reduce their risk of these health conditions and help them to access effective treatment or take preventative action. Prevention action could include making some lifestyle changes such as getting more active and eating healthily, to seeing your GP for further check ups.

Further details of the locations and dates of the health checks will be available during September and October 2024 and checks will be carried out by Blackburn with Darwen Council Health and Wellbeing Team.

### **Hollin Bank Proposed Selective Licensing Area**

The Council is preparing a potential new selective licensing area in the borough. The Housing Act 2004 gives the Council the power to introduce selective licensing for all privately rented properties in a given area to make sure that locally privately rented properties in designated areas meet the standards set out in the licensing framework ([Selective licensing in the private rented sector: a guide for local authorities - GOV.UK](#))

The proposed Hollin Bank licensing area is just outside of the town centre and extends across parts of Ewood and Mill Hill & Moorgate wards, a very small area of Blackburn Central ward is also included.

The public consultation programme on the proposed Hollin Bank selective licensing area started on the 7th May 2024 and ended on 26th July 2024 (29<sup>th</sup> July 2024 for online submissions). This has included leaflet drops to all properties within the area and contact by letter or email to all known landlords and letting agents.

A report outlining the consultation and representations on the proposed Selective Licensing area has been prepared. This will be reviewed and evaluated over the coming weeks by Officers. A summary of the findings and recommendation will be presented to senior officers and elected members in due course.