

6.6 Chapter summary and key priorities for action

Key Priorities for action:

To bring about population level improvements in lifestyles and reduce the impact of preventable disease we need to:

- *Work with partners to support children and young people to become strong, resilient individuals able to make healthier lifestyle choices*
- *Create and maintain an environment in Walsall that promotes physical activity and helps residents to improve their health, using planning mechanisms and policy development to the full*
- *Work with partners to deliver multi agency prevention and intervention strategies for tobacco, drugs and alcohol to reduce the substance misuse associated harm to individuals, their families and their communities*
- *Ensure that GPs and frontline staff in all partner agencies are fully engaged in encouraging and supporting residents to adopt and sustain healthy lifestyles. The 'Every Contact Counts' initiative provides a real opportunity to do this systematically and on a scale that could bring about real improvements in health*
- *Coordinate the provision, promotion and marketing of key health improvement programmes such as the NHS health checks programme, free leisure activities, subsidised swimming, smoking cessation and weight management, and ensure closer working between providers*
- *Encourage large employers to promote and improve the health of their workforce, for example through participation in the NHS Healthy Workplace Programme*
- *Work through the Area Partnerships to ensure that local people are at the heart of our strategies to improve lifestyles and prevent ill health*

Other local priorities should include brief interventions in primary care and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies; continuing work with pregnant women who smoke (one-to-one sessions to address sources of stress) to help them to quit smoking; and expansion of the workforce development program to help support people with long term illness and absenteeism.