

Report of Councillor Flint, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing Presentation

2022 - 2023



Walsall Council



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customer experience



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and engagement



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service efficiency
and performance

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Welcome

I am sure you will agree it has been another challenging year. Certainly, plans for the Public Health team to return to 'business as usual' were often thwarted by a resurgence of COVID-19 in early 2022; and yet, there is much to celebrate and to be thankful for.

This report summarises some of our key achievements from the last year. It outlines some of our areas of success, and the work we are proud to have achieved during the challenges of the last 12 months. Over the past year, we have started the redesign of sexual health, drug and alcohol services and wellbeing services. New services such as the Mental Wellbeing Bus and the POP young people's services have been introduced this year.

However, as a Council, we continue to face significant pressures from the financial position we now find ourselves in.

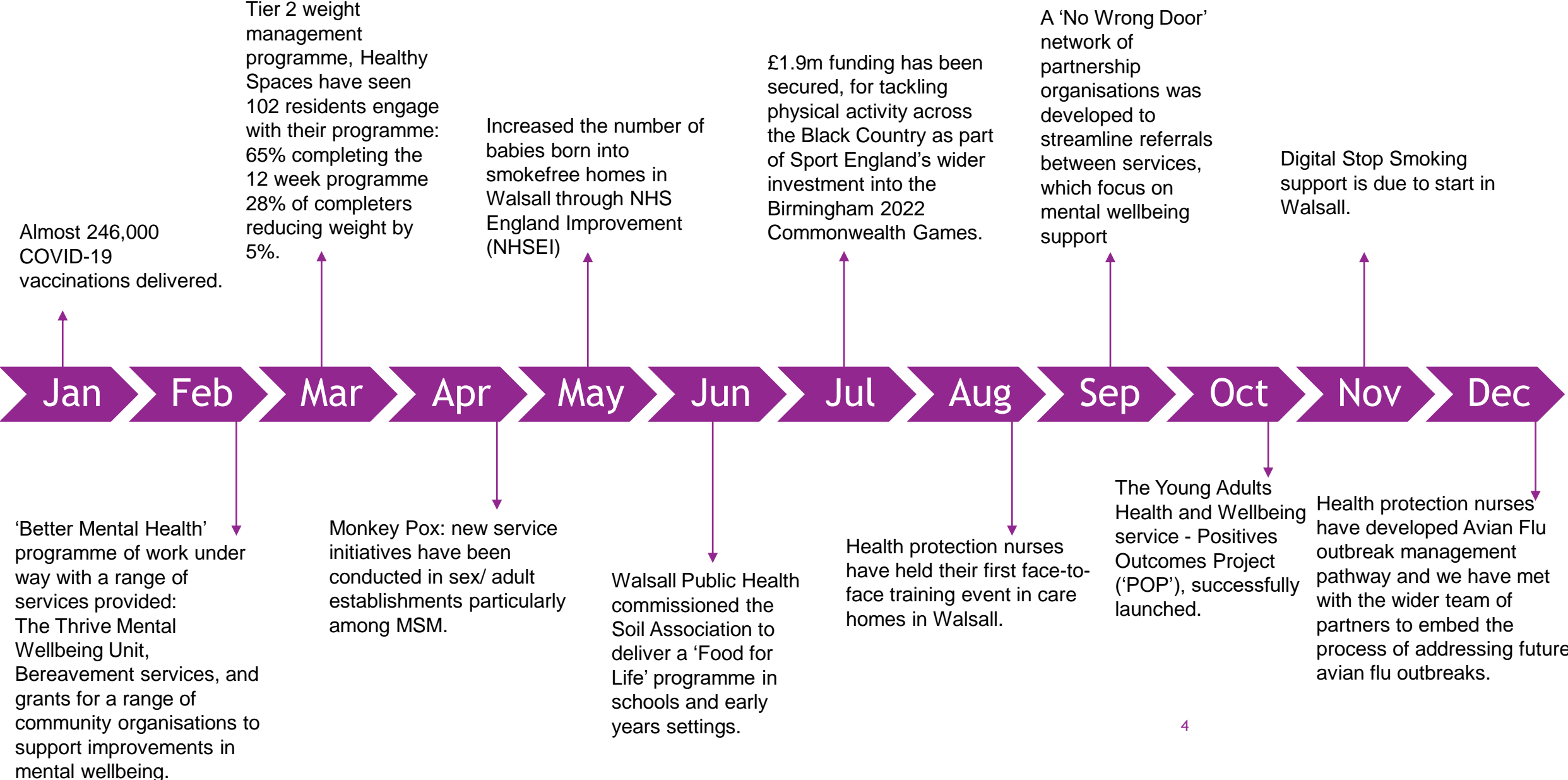
Over the next year, we will work to support the borough through its recovery and continue to implement our Council Plan. We are confident that Walsall will come out of this crisis stronger than ever, and continue to grow as a place of opportunity and ambition for all.

The Public Health Grant is invested in both external and wider Council service delivery, which ensures that public health is part of the core of all service deliveries. Following a review of all investments, the public health team will work with all recipients of the Public Health Grant investment, with new service level agreements drafted and signed for 2023/24 to ensure delivery of public health outcomes across the Borough.



Councillor Gary Flint
Bloxwich East Ward
Portfolio holder for
Health and Wellbeing

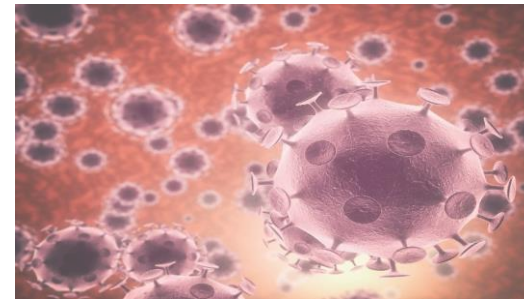
Highlights



COVID - 19

- Since the all-time high in January 2022, confirmed daily cases dropped from 1547 to 65 by late February before rising again in March temporarily to 327.
- Currently the latest 7-day average is around 48.5 cases per 100,000 (as of 17th December 2022).
- The highest number of cases tended to be amongst the eldest (85+), whereas the very youngest (0-5) had the lowest in comparison.
- In 2022, Walsall reported 159 deaths with COVID-19 stated on the death certificate.
- The Omicron variants have become the prominent strains, however they have had a lower impact on hospital admissions compared to Delta, as well as reduced severity in terms of patients entering critical care.
- Specifically, it is the Omicron BQ.1 Sub-variant that has recently become most dominant during testing.

- Vaccination uptake for Walsall has remained above the regional level for both doses and the first booster.
- Of all the residents in Walsall (aged 5+), - 72% have had the first dose, - 68% have had the second dose and - 50% have had the first booster shot.



Public Health led strategies, audits and reports

Walsall's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) ([Walsall JSNA](#)) and has been commended by many other Local Authorities, seeking advice and guidance on our approach. The JSNA is the main feed into the development of our refreshed 'Joint Local Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-25', (available [here](#)), which was approved by the HWBB July 2022. The Strategy has focused on three priorities, which were highlighted in the JSNA - Mental Health and Wellbeing, Children & Young People, and our Digital Approach - The Board have committed to work together to create a wellbeing centred Borough.

Walsall Multi-Agency Mental Wellbeing Strategy, 2022-2032

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the mental wellbeing, on our residents, and our own mental health and wellbeing is still being uncovered. The Walsall Multi-Agency Mental Wellbeing strategy has been developed to scope the challenges to mental health in our Borough; understand how our residents are doing, and implement both universal and more targeted approaches to supporting mental wellbeing.

Suicide Audit

The Walsall Multi-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy lays out Walsall's ambition for a Zero-Tolerance approach to suicide. One avoidable death by suicide is too many. As part of the ongoing suicide prevention work, in 2022 Public Health undertook an audit of deaths by suicide in Walsall residents to understand local risk factors and to help inform and to target support services across partners including bereavement services, youth justice and debt advice services.

Children's Alliance work

In 2022, a broad Needs Assessment of 0-2 year old children was completed by colleagues in Public Health and Children's Services, collaborating with other partners in the Borough. This valuable piece of work has informed and driven the priorities of Walsall's Strategic Children's Alliance Board, to improve the outcomes for some of the most vulnerable members of our borough; our children. This work identified the high rate of Infant Mortality in our Borough and further specialist deep dive into this area was commissioned with oversight from the strategic alliance board.

DPH Annual Report

The cost of living crisis is far reaching, affecting every corner of our Borough. It is having a huge impact on the daily lives of our residents; not least in how and what they eat. Therefore, the Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2022 is on the topic of food; including food security and accessibility, our resident's behaviours and perceptions of food and diet quality, as well as the food environment in Walsall. The report will make recommendations to inform the strategic Food Plan this year, which has the ambition for Walsall residents to have access to affordable and quality food within a sustainable, fair, and prospering food environment.

Black Country Integrated Care Strategy (ICS)

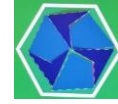
Walsall Public Health have been helping lead the development of the ICS strategy putting wellbeing at the heart of the strategy to reduce inequalities and focus efforts where most needed.

Celebrations and Challenges



Celebrations

- Key contributor which fed into our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and this feeds into Walsall's Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-25.
- Continuous insight product support to Public Health - e.g. Health Protection dashboards, COVID weekly dashboard and barometer updates; topic specific analysis.
- We have continued to work with our partners including Integrated Care Board, (ICB) to develop pathways that are used in the event of outbreaks of influenza and Avian flu. Our good practice, particularly our Avian Flu pathway has been replicated across the Black country.
- We successfully launched our Young people health and wellbeing service (Positive Outcomes Project) in Blakenhall and have successfully worked with the voluntary and community sector to deliver a range of mental wellbeing services, which have been submitted for an LGC award.
- Successful transformation and restructure of Public Health.



Challenges

- Delivering public health changes in an environment of resource constraint and COVID-19 recovery.
- Operating in an environment in which there is ongoing large organisational change.
- A key priority within the Healthy Child Programme 0-19 has been mitigating the national staffing capacity issues. In April 2022 Walsall were at 50% health visiting capacity and unable to achieve all their early year checks, which was raised as a safeguarding issue with Walsall's Safeguarding Executive and put on the Adult Social Care and Public Health risk registers. However, this situation is now improving considerably.



Communications

A Business Partner came into post in April 2022 to lead on the strategic development of communications for Public Health and Wellbeing to support the Public Health team with their communication needs / programmes.

Three priorities for the year 2022/23 were established:

- Protecting you and your family (health protection)
- Heart Health (health improvement)
- Eight Steps to Wellbeing (mental wellbeing)

Through the Business Partner model, we have enhanced communications on a variety of Public Health topics. This has included:

- Planning and delivering communications on the above priorities, including a campaign focused on winter vaccinations and safer behaviours, building on last year's activity.
- Promoting 'Tri-It' activities as part of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games to enable residents to have a go at a variety of sports and activities, free of charge.



- Partnership work with colleagues in the NHS, housing, education and among community groups to share key messages and support health-related communications.
- Media coverage to engage with residents about other aspects of health and wellbeing, such as wellbeing services, staying well during celebration events, weather alerts and physical activity.

Children and Young People Information sharing

Following work with a wide number of practitioners supporting the mental health of young people in the spring, it was identified that sharing of information is vital in the work they do. As a result Public Health information about recent evidence based findings or newly established local support is shared on a regular basis with Time to Talk Early Help teams which reach 400+ practitioners working with young people across the Borough.

Our intention is to continue to work in accordance to the latest guidance to ensure communications are relevant, engaging and up-to-date.



Health Protection

COVID-19 and Vaccinations

Walsall's Health Protection team has had notable successes on outbreak management across a range of settings and supported the NHS vaccination campaign.

Key activities included:

- **Supporting the school-aged vaccination programme and responding to incidents (including offering bespoke infection prevention and control guidance) across all educational settings in the Borough.**
- **Facilitating COVID-19 booster pop-up vaccination clinics in local venues, including community settings.**
- **Managing outbreaks in residential and nursing homes, alongside other winter infections including Norovirus and Flu.**
- **Continuing Infection Prevention Control support and education to care homes through provider forums and link worker meetings.**

Health Protection Support for the Borough

The Walsall Health Protection Team is dedicated to reducing the number and impact of communicable diseases in the borough. A duty health protection nurse continues to be available weekdays to answer first line queries from residents, workplaces, education settings or other organisations.

The team also provides bespoke infection prevention control guidance, which is reported on the bespoke online reporting system developed in-house. This system, allows the ability to record all information, identify any trends and run reports across different settings to inform future work.

Quality Improvement in Care Homes

Health protection nurses provide specialist infection prevention control support to colleagues in Adult Social Care and the NHS quality improvement team.

All care homes in Walsall are visited annually. The visits identify areas of good practice and identify any areas that require improvement and support CQC inspections of homes as well as ensuring they are compliant with the guidelines outlined by the Infection Prevention Society, e.g. work on catheter care.

Catheter-associated urinary tract infections are one of the most frequent device-related infections that importantly, could be prevented. Health protection nurses have improved the care of patients discharged from hospital into care homes with catheters. The report will be presented locally and regionally in 2023.



Health Protection

Health Protection Practitioners offer specialist support to care home teams to improve infection control practices within homes via the well-established 'Link Practitioner' network. These are employees of care homes who act as a role model and visible advocate for infection prevention within their workplace. We continue to work closely with the Walsall Healthcare Trust to facilitate safe discharges to the care homes to ease off acute bed pressures owing to the winter pressures.

Other important work undertaken by health protection practitioners this year includes:

➤ Development of Infection Prevention Control audit tool tailored to sex establishments in the onset of Monkeypox in order to support with Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) practises visits and good IPC practises to minimise risks of infection particularly among Men who have sex with Men (MSM).

➤ Successful promotion of vaccination programmes of Influenza, COVID-19 in at risk groups e.g. pregnant mothers.

➤ We are working towards an ambition to reduce antimicrobial resistance, AMR in the Borough.

Public health will continue to support work in the Borough and the Black Country to address health inequalities. This will be achieved by:

- Improving the uptake of immunisation in children. The uptake in Walsall is currently below the national target of 95%, and although there are some areas where uptake is relatively good, there are some where the uptake is significantly lower.

- Reduce TB transmissibility. We plan to conduct, together with the TB teams, latent TB screening and delivery of health promotion messages and teaching to ask risk groups and refugees and migrant groups.

- Implementation of initiatives to address air quality particularly in areas along the M6 corridor, as well as education and health promotion to Walsall residents regarding good indoor air quality.

- Promote and encourage blood borne virus screening in at risk groups e.g. in persons with substance misuse problems. This will be done closely with our TB teams and drug and alcohol teams.

- Working closely with Walsall care home providers to continue embedding good infection prevention and control practises within the care homes and to aim for improving quality of care and RAG rating in the homes. We will be rolling out a self-serve audit and training tool and software to be used by the care homes to increase efficiency of working.

- Continue to embed prevention learning and activity from COVID-19 as part of an all-hazard approach to prevention of all infectious diseases. Retain learning from the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the Council is in a position to hit the ground running again in the event of any future pandemic through working closely with the Emergency planning and resilience team to update pandemic plans.

Health Care

The role of integrated care systems and public health

The 2022 Health and Social Care Act brought notable changes to healthcare arrangements in England. The local Integrated Care System is still taking shape; however, it does offer opportunities, including those for public health.

Sexual and Reproductive Health

An in-depth review into sexual and reproductive health services in the borough is complete. The team will now seek to implement the findings from the review and build upon the positives that have emerged from the pandemic, including channel shift to online consultations, home testing and home sampling. Face-to-face appointments will continue as online solutions are not suitable for all.

In collaboration with NHS partners and residents, public health will also seek to improve access to sexual, reproductive health and HIV services in the Borough and ensure seamless pathways of care. It is essential that we continue to learn from our communities and ensure individuals can access inclusive sexual and reproductive health services that are responsive to their needs.

However, it is vital that we do not see sexual and reproductive health as being purely in the realm of treatment only. Most Walsall residents will need information and support for their sexual and reproductive health needs at some stage in their lives. Therefore, work will also take place to ensure there is development and access to high-quality information and education. Unfortunately, we continue to face significant challenges in Walsall. Good sexual and reproductive health is not equally distributed in the Walsall population and subsequently is a key driver of health inequalities across the borough.

Unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are some of the most important contributors to poor health and wellbeing, especially in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

We continue to see the spread of antibiotic-resistant sexual infections, have difficulties for some residents in accessing contraception and the need to support the National plan to eliminate mpox (monkeypox) transmission. Now more than ever it is more important than ever to ensure that sexual and reproductive health is prioritised and appropriately funded.

Oral Health

Everyone, across their life course, benefits from good oral health. It improves a person's quality of life, their social confidence and self-esteem. It is also a vital component of general health and wellbeing. Walsall continues to benefit from water fluoridation, a safe and effective public health measure to reduce oral health inequalities and tooth decay rates. However, dental decay continues to be a public health concern and one of the most common chronic childhood diseases, even though almost entirely preventable. NHS England have secured recurrent investment to develop an oral health promotion team for the borough and Black Country. Public Health officers have been working closely with the Consultant in Dental Public Health and colleagues from NHSE and other local authorities to finalise the contract and workplan. This new service will launch on 1 April 2023 and will implement supervised toothbrushing schemes in early years settings, support care homes to improve the oral health of their residents, offer oral health training and finally distribute toothbrushing packs to vulnerable children and adults. During the current cost of living crisis Public Health Officers have also secured funding from the NHS England regional team to provide fluoride toothpaste and toothbrushes. This will help support people accessing foodbanks with their oral health, by providing oral health packs (toothbrushes and toothpaste). Other distribution points will include charities, warm spaces, and staff groups working with vulnerable groups



Inequalities

Partnership work. The inequalities team was newly formed as part of the Public Health restructure (March 2022) and are establishing a programme of work that focuses on reducing preventable differences in health outcomes.. The team have been working with Walsall Together colleagues on supporting the process for allocation of NHS Inequalities funding. With other team members, we have also supported the development of a research bid, which will focus on the needs and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community in Walsall, and also a successful bid to host a Population Health Fellow (jointly with Walsall Together) from September 2023.

Positive Outcomes Project – Young People’s health and wellbeing service. The POP health and wellbeing service, delivered by Bloxwich Community Partnership (BCP), was co-produced with young people and formally launched on 1st October 2022. The service focuses on mental and physical wellbeing, training/education/skills development, finances and employment opportunities. The service currently has a hub at the Electric Palace, Blakenhall and a mobile unit, with five further hubs planned to open over time. The service has developed a directory of support services that young people can access online.

Health in All Policies. We have planned a programme of work to support the ambition to take a health focused approach to reducing inequalities, and embedding this as part of all policy and strategy work developed in the Council.

Drugs & Alcohol - We have established a new Combatting Alcohol and Drugs Misuse Partnership Board in the Borough, which supports collaboration to prevent substance misuse, but also ensure timely and high-quality treatment and support for those who need it.

A needs assessment has been undertaken, which highlighted a number of areas in which we can improve our overall approach in Walsall, with a need to:

- Prevent/disrupt exploitation as well as support people who have been exploited,
- Engage with community leaders to support tackling drug supply chains, and to talk about drugs and alcohol
- Promote our services to young people and work with schools to prevent substance misuse, and support young people whose families misuse substances
- Improve referrals from other agencies and address under-representation of women, young people, Asian communities and LGBTQIA+ communities in our services, and increase outreach service provision
- Ensure dedicated support for families of people who misuse substances

A Walsall Combatting Alcohol and Drugs strategy, which addresses the needs identified and feedback from a provider workshop (Sept 2022), will be developed by the end of March 2023.

Expansion of our Drug and Alcohol core services, has been made possible through the availability of national funding, with a focus on additional key areas of identified need – needle exchange and naloxone programmes, outreach for vulnerable groups, expansion of recovery work, criminal justice partnership work, as well as psychologist and sexual health support for the services. A regional service provider has been commissioned to provide mentoring support for people who are due to be released from prison, as well as those who are vulnerable/involved in violence, and who have a drug and/or alcohol problem.

Mental Wellbeing

Walsall's 10-year multi-agency **Wellbeing Strategy "Together We Can"** launched in 2022 with the aim of improving residents' mental wellbeing and improving services. Walsall Council secured £368,000 from the national Better Mental Health Fund, to support the delivery of a suite of innovative community-based services over a 1-year period, which aimed to improve mental wellbeing of Walsall residents and tackle disparities.

Through this programme, a range of services were delivered exclusively by voluntary & community sector (VCS) organisations, ensuring an extensive reach into some of our most deprived underserved communities which included:

- The Thrive Mobile Unit, which includes financial guidance debt support and benefits maximisation (Bloxwich Community Partnership, Manor Farm Community Association, Sandwell & Walsall Citizen Advice and Walsall Community Transport)
- 'No Wrong Door' Coordination (Rethink)
- Mental Wellbeing Training for leaders, managers and supervisors (IPRS)
- New Invention Friends Together project (Frank F Harrison Community Association)
- Community bereavement support (Walsall Bereavement Support Service) & Community counselling

- Environmental based projects: young people peer mental wellbeing champions; Men's project; diverse communities (Mindkind)
- Walsall Black Sisters Collective
- Young Carers; Women's Empowering; Male Carer Support Project (Walsall Carers Centre)
- Walsall Creative Factory Wellbeing
- Women Outreach Workers

A detailed evaluation of the key services delivered is being used to shape the future mental health support offer. Of those evaluated, figures already show 81% of participants came from the 30% most deprived neighbourhoods in the borough.

It is clear that the interventions reached people who may not have usually presented to traditional services, and we see examples of co-production, buddying up of volunteers and participants, as well as a participant becoming a volunteer and subsequently a paid member of staff.

Impact and Sustainability

The depth of reach into our communities of these programmes was apparent in the evaluation. Wellbeing measures (ONS Personal Wellbeing measure) were conducted with a sample of participants as part of the evaluation resulting in 93% having a positive change in their "before and after" wellbeing scores.



Mental Wellbeing

Five of projects were jointly delivered by 8 VCS organisations from in and around Walsall, including one national charity. At a cost of just over £60 per person, these projects have directly benefitted more than 1,400 individuals over an 8-month period, including achieving at least £502,000 of debt reductions/income maximisation for 300 local residents, just 5 months into delivery.

Highlights of just some of the projects commissioned this year are outlined below. Over the next year we will continue to deliver on the mental wellbeing strategy, suicide prevention work. We will effectively commission a range of services including our counselling therapy and bereavement services, suicide prevention/mental health awareness training and the Thrive Mobile Unit. Rethink mental illness are also just in the process of finalising a local directory of mental health support services, which will be shared widely with partners once finalised.

We are also planning three Mental Wellbeing events in February 2023, to be delivered alongside DWP, with a focus on promoting population wellbeing, and the use of our wellbeing plans. These events will also include promotion of a series of community grants to support the wellbeing of young people, men, people who are neurodivergent and other residents who have an increased risk of mental illness. The events will be attended both by partners organisations and members of the public.

Examples of projects commissioned:

- ❖ **The Thrive mobile unit** - The Thrive mobile unit is a fully equipped minibus which delivers advice and support in a range of locations across Walsall, predominantly in our most deprived communities. The unit, which hosts the Black Country emotional support helpline number to encourage access to mental health and wellbeing support, is provided by a partnership of four established voluntary sector organisations
- **No Wrong Door** – This is a network of organisations coordinated by Rethink Mental Illness, which work together to simultaneously provide individuals with access to the support they require through a single point of access.
- **New Invention Friends together** - This project, led by Frank F Harrison Community Association, ran fortnightly drop-in sessions with a focus on getting people out of the house in the wake of COVID-19, to try new activities such as crafts and gardening, to reduce loneliness and isolation. Individuals are supported by a nominated peer to attend the activities
- **MindKind Projects CIC** – Mindkind provided support to three distinct groups: diverse communities, young people, and men, each giving participants an opportunity to come together to talk about mental health with a practitioner and to take part in nature-based activities,
- **Creative Factory Well-Being** - The project worked with 36 identified individuals and used the arts, walks and social meet ups to help them improve their wellbeing. Participants are buddied up with workers or volunteers who were recruited to provide support.

Health Improvement

Obesity

A new non-recurrent Government grant for obesity management was allocated to local authorities. This has been successfully utilised in 2022 as follows:

- Programme Starts, via 3 commissioned providers) = 2,008 participants
- 70% to 95% of clients across different providers were from high-risk targets groups, including men and those living in areas of increased deprivation.
- Completion at 12 weeks ranges from 60% to 80% across different providers
- Proportion of clients who lose weight at 12 weeks ranges between 63% and 90% across different providers

Social Prescribing and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework - Project mandates were developed and agreed through Walsall Together to streamline social prescribing in Walsall ensuring provision operates as a single system with more joined up services between providers and develop a wellbeing outcomes framework to implement a set of wellbeing indicators across Walsall. Subsequently, project officer resource was identified for both projects and funded through Walsall Together.

Smoking Cessation and Tobacco Control - Stop Smoking provision was re-started in April/May and a pilot of a Digital Stop Smoking offer to determine effectiveness in Walsall is being implemented.

Physical Activity Framework – Has been developed and agreed through CMT. Director for Place and Environment identified as a lead for the project.

Commonwealth Games Legacy - Working with Active Black Country and Black Country Partners, £1.9m of Commonwealth Games legacy funding was secured for tackling physical inactivity. Several Tri-It events were arranged, which provided an opportunity for residents to participate in new activities.

Crowdfunding Pilot - In conjunction with Walsall Council External Funding Team, the Tackling Inactivity Fund was developed which provides local groups and organisations the opportunity to create and deliver projects supporting local communities to tackle low levels of inactivity. Walsall Public Health allocated a total of £60,000 to the two-year crowdfunding programme, with up to £3,500 available per idea (or 40% if low value) to boost projects towards their funding target.

Healthy Lifestyle Services

- One You Walsall has re-established its standard level of provision following the pandemic. 4153 referrals have been received between May and October 2022 (compared to 1576 for the same period in 2021). Average mental wellbeing score (measured through WHO-5 validated questionnaire) for those that completed targeted support increased from 51.3 at assessment, to 63.6 at 12 weeks and 67.0 at 26 weeks.
- Healthy Workplace – Public Health successfully bid to conduct a joint research project with Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Teams. This is exploring barriers and facilitators for increasing engagement with local employers. This will shape the offer for supporting employee health and wellbeing in Walsall.
- Public Health Team has secured publication in a national peer reviewed journal for an equity audit of the NHS Health Checks programme.

Wellbeing Service - A new wellbeing service has been designed informed by both the public and stakeholders. The service will provide support (e.g., signposting to existing services) for the wider determinants of health (e.g., employment, housing, debt etc) in conjunction with tailored advice/ interventions to promote healthy behaviours (e.g., weight management, stopping smoking, NHS Health Checks).

Beat the Streets - Approximately £100,000 of funding (inclusive of £20,000 Public Health match funding) has been secured to deliver a targeted Beats the Streets programme in Walsall. Beat the Streets is a simple competition that turns an area into a real-life game. Players walk, run, or cycle and record their journeys on sensors called Beat Boxes placed on lampposts for the duration of the initiative. Rewards and prizes are available for teams and individuals.



Health Improvement

Summary Highlights in Healthy Spaces

- Holiday and Food delivery over Easter, Summer and Christmas
- Huge number of volunteers delivering health walks, conservation tasks and other activity sessions 14,446 hrs, approx. £134,151.
- Litter volunteer co-ordination delivered 3,568 volunteer hours.
- 10 Parks and Green Spaces awarded Green Flag status, and a further 2 developed for submission in 2023. Staff training in Green Flag judging.
- Purple Horizons Nature Recovery Project delivered with Natural England and other partners. National launch in May 22.
- High profile events delivered such as Queens Jubilee celebration on Barr Beacon, Commonwealth Games Baton relay in Walsall Arboretum. 3 annual Bonfire events.
- Development of Green Bloxwich project with successful funding award from Government
- Black Country Geopark celebrations with Black Country mayors at Dudley canal tunnel.
- Funding for Woodland acceleration programme £150k agreed by DEFRA, which will provide x2 temporary posts to develop projects. Urban tree challenge funding awarded £205k
- Funding through UK Shared Prosperity £400k for improvement projects on Local Nature Reserves and parks
- Funding for tennis courts improvements from Lawn Tennis association £263k
- Funding for Reedswood Park improvements through levelling up funding for Parks £85k
- Consultation programme on Play improvement project.



Children and Young People (CYP)

Staffing and Support

Walsall Healthcare Trust and the Healthy Child Programme team have been actively recruiting both qualified Health Visitors and School Nurses as well as registered nurses/midwives and non-registrant staff (NNEBS/support workers) with the trajectory that all will come into post by June 23.

The team are developing a mixed skill mix of staff all of whom will deliver the appropriate checks and support to families and also looking to grow their own health visitors and school nurses. When the students currently studying to become public health nurses complete their courses and re-enter the workforce fully, there will be a 23% increase in Health Visitors and 16% increase in School Nurses.

New strategic posts such as the below are also being developed to increase capacity and strategic reach in the Healthy Child Programme team

- Clinical Lead for Emotional Health & Wellbeing 0-5
- Clinical Lead for Prematurity and Medical Needs 0-5
- School Nurse for Inclusion

While certain checks were not able to be offered in Quarters 1 -3 of 2022/23, all children were seen by a qualified health visitor at their new birth visit and at the 2 year old check. Any children who were identified as requiring additional targeted or specialist support were also seen at their antenatal visit, the 6 week check and at 12 months.

All families were contacted at each key developmental stage and offered access to the newly established 0-5 years Single Point of Access support which has had the added benefit that all families can reach their health visiting service by phone more easily at any point.

Healthy Child Programme 0-19 Procurement

In December Cabinet agreed to extend the Healthy Child Programme 0-19 for 12 months. This allows the Public Health team time to align with the national direction around procurement of NHS services as well as being sure there is a full Healthy Child Programme team delivering all checks and offering greater support to families and practitioners in Walsall.



Healthy Child Programme 0-19 - Men

In line with the Council draft Working with Father's strategy and the increased focus on supporting men as parents, Walsall Public Health are supporting provision of a Dadpad app and Dadpad information to new fathers. This will be promoted widely in places where men are likely to go to. It is anticipated it will reach 15,000 men over 4 years. A key emphasis in this work will be on supporting father's mental health in the first years and also in increasing their ability to cope when their baby cries.

Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing - Toolkit

Work has been ongoing to support Children and Young People's emotional health and wellbeing. In April a toolkit was produced offering young people, parents, school staff and practitioners a mapping of what support is available across Walsall if young people need support, whether listening conversations at a lower level to higher levels of specialist support.

Children and Young People (CYP)

Strategy

Walsall currently works to the Black Country CYP Mental Health Strategy but have recognised that a Walsall specific strategy for Child and Young People Emotional health is required. This will set objectives in place to maintain resilience as well as ensuring that the support offered, when needed, is what young people and parents want and need.

In order to support the planned strategy, the Walsall Information Group (WIG) and Public Health are undertaking a robust Needs Assessment looking at national and local evidence, which particular groups might be vulnerable, services currently offered, gaps and consulting with our young people. Projected completion date is March 2023. This NA will form the basis of the local strategy, which the multi-agency Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing group will take forward.

Teenage pregnancy

Walsall has made great progress to reduce the under 18 conception rate. The rate in 1998 was 67.2 per 1,000 while the latest data for quarter three 2021 shows a rolling rate of 20.3 per 1000. Walsall's total decrease from 1998 is 73.7% this supersedes the England decrease of 71.1 and the West Midlands 70.2. Despite this good progress, our rates still remain higher than comparable areas and more work is needed. The aspiration is that Walsall will follow best practice and evidence of what works e.g. the Teens and Toddlers youth development programme which has proven to have an impact on vulnerable young people and was highlighted as good practice by OFSTED and CQC.

Teenage Pregnancy prevention

Teenage pregnancy cannot be tackled by one organisation alone; a strong partnership of key organisations is needed to ensure a common understanding and action around the underlying issues related to teenage pregnancy. This will be further developed through the Walsall Teenage Pregnancy Strategy group and currently draft Walsall Teenage Pregnancy Reduction Strategy 2023 – 26.

Children and Young People Healthy Weight

Food for Life continues to support children in primary schools and in early years settings to increase the nutrition of the food served in the venue but also help the children identify where their food comes from and how it is grown. It also supports parents through Cook and Eat sessions and the teachers in delivering the food related curriculum.

The sudden increase in overweight and very overweight children seen over lockdown when children were not in school was seen to decline in the National Child Measurement 2021/22 Programme. This indicates the value of the food served in schools and the school routine in supporting child weight

The Food for Life contract was extended by 12 months in the December Cabinet meeting to allow the Public Health team to look at how work can be extended beyond the school gates over the next 12 months using a greater partnership approach.

Healthy Start - Work has been underway to increase the numbers of pharmacies offering healthy start vitamins and to publicise the importance of this free programme to expectant and new mothers and children under 4. This will continue in 2023 with greater work in Family Hubs to promote this initiative.

