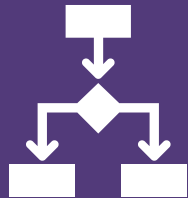


Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022/23



Introduction

Hello, I am Professor Kate Blackburn, Director of Public Health for Wiltshire, welcome to my annual report for 2022-2023. It has been another busy year for us in Public Health due to the continued long-term effects of the pandemic as well as the cost-of-living crisis, both of which have served to further widen inequality gaps.

Last year, I set out our long-term public health priorities, our four key themes and our three priority population groups. This presentation will take you through a collection of work the Public Health team have undertaken in pursuit of our ambitions during 2022-2023, as well as also highlighting some of the key challenges we face.

I would like to express my gratitude to you for taking the time to engage with our work, as well as to my team and our residents and partners we have collaborated with.

There is no silver bullet for solving health inequalities and improving population health, only together can we make a difference. I hope you enjoy looking back at just some of these highlights as much as I have.



Professor Kate Blackburn
Director of Public Health, Wiltshire

Priorities identified in the Director of Public Health Report 2021/2022

Key themes



Mental health
and wellbeing



Smokefree
Wiltshire



Workplace
health



Children and young
people's health

Priority population groups

- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, and Boater Communities (GRTB)
- Routine and manual workers
- 20% most deprived communities (with a particular focus on rural communities)

[Link to Director of Public Health Annual Report 2021/2022](#)

Contents

- 1) Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing JSNA
- 2) Working with the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater Community
- 3) Smoking Cessation
- 4) Children and Young People
- 5) Cost of Living and Food Insecurity
- 6) Health Protection and Improvement
- 7) Substance Use and Workplace Health

Acknowledgements

This report has been compiled by Wiltshire Council Public Health team

Further information and data about Wiltshire Public Health can be accessed on the Wiltshire Intelligence Network website here <https://www.wiltshireintelligence.org.uk/>



In 2022, the Public Health Intelligence team published the Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

This presents data on the current and future health needs in Wiltshire and provides a resource to assist with evidence-based planning for local services and initiatives. It is used to inform both the Health and Wellbeing and Integrated Care Partnership strategies with the aim of improving local health and wellbeing outcomes and reducing inequalities.

The Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing JSNA includes over 100 indicators across the following six themes:

- Alcohol, drugs, smoking, weight and physical activity
- Diseases and ill health
- Education and employment
- Housing, crime and the environment
- Life expectancy and causes of death
- Population and deprivation

The findings have been presented in a video, via a fictional story, known as 'Christine's story' accessible [here](#). Detailed data packs for each theme have also been produced which can be accessed on the Wiltshire Intelligence website, [here](#)

Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing JSNA 2022: Key themes

Ageing Population: Currently, just over a fifth of Wiltshire's population (22%) are aged 65 years and over, however, by 2040, this will be closer to a third. Although it is not a natural part of aging, the risk of developing dementia increases with age. Dementia diagnosis rate in over 65-year-olds in Wiltshire is estimated to be 58.5%, equivalent to around 4,300 people. By 2030, it is estimated that almost 11,500 people in Wiltshire aged 65 and above will be living with dementia. It is vital we work with our partners and our communities to prepare for the range of challenges presented by an ageing population and support people to effectively 'age well'.

Mental health and wellbeing: Mental wellbeing is embedded throughout all our work and is impacted by a range of complex factors. The JSNA highlighted that the prevalence of common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety, are rising in Wiltshire, as are self-harm rates, particularly in young women. The pandemic and its associated social restrictions are likely to have impacted on this as well as socio economic pressures arising from the current cost of living crisis. Improving mental and emotional health within our local population remains a critical challenge which we must tackle together.

Cost of living: Since late 2021, the UK has experienced a cost of living crisis. During 2022 we continued to see a rise in house prices and a reduction in levels of disposable income which have made access to food and fuel challenging for many. Although fuel poverty in Wiltshire is slightly lower than its geographical comparators, households in the most deprived areas of Wiltshire experience higher levels of fuel poverty with 17% of households in the most deprived areas fuel poor, compared with 7% in the least deprived. Cost of living also has a significant impact on rural communities, magnifying existing challenges such as reduced access and digital poverty.

Working with the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater Community

Warm and Safe Wiltshire

The Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boater (GRTB) community were omitted from the government energy support scheme. This meant they did not receive the £400 financial support payment given to households to help with energy and fuel bills during winter 2022.

Through Warm and Safe, in partnership with Julian House who have trusted relationships with the GRTB community, we supported eligible residents quickly by providing food and fuel vouchers.

This provided much needed support to members of the GRTB community who otherwise would not have been able to heat their boats, cook food or undertake repairs throughout the winter months.

Warm and Safe Wiltshire: User feedback

"Julian house linked me with the Wiltshire winter fuel payment allowing me to buy fuel and fire igniters. I was instantly warm and able to cook wholesome food improving my mental health."

Wiltshire Traveller Inequality Project

Over the last year, we have continued to deliver and grow our GRTB outreach and engagement programme through a dedicated outreach team, provided by Julian House.

Working collaboratively with this team, who have developed trusted relationships with the GRTB community, has enabled residents to engage more effectively with a wide range of services. This, in turn, has helped members of our local community address numerous and sometimes very complex challenges.

This initiative helped to support almost 200 members of the GRTB community in 2022-2023 through, for example, promoting vaccinations, safeguarding referrals, supporting residents to register with GP practices and facilitating close liaison with mental health services.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is a serious and long-standing area of concern within GRTB communities.

Through our commissioned domestic abuse service, FearFree, we have recruited an engagement worker who organised a domestic abuse awareness session for canal ministers and members of the boating community.

The session provided insight into the prevalence of domestic abuse within the GRTB community and FearFree subsequently received multiple calls seeking support.

Regular domestic abuse drop-in sessions for this community are now in place.

Geographical boundaries continue to create service access challenges. Future collaboration with neighbouring authorities and services is therefore essential to minimise impact of this.

Warm and Safe - Delivering Fuel to Wiltshire's Boater Population with 'Freddie' the Fuel Boat



Smoking Cessation

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and therefore one of our main priorities. Differential smoking rates need to be tackled if we are going to reduce health inequalities.

People living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, those in routine and manual occupations, and individuals with mental ill health are more likely to smoke and are at higher risk of smoking related illnesses.

Collaboration is key and further synergy across the integrated care system is needed to deliver a smokefree society. Like many areas in the country, we missed the target to reduce smoking at time of delivery rates to below 6% by the end of 2022. However, we remain committed to supporting smokefree pregnancies and commission specialist services in all three maternity providers across Wiltshire.

These teams work with smokers and maternity staff to better understand the impact of smoking in pregnancy and support them to stop. In partnership with the Local Maternity and Neonatal System, the services have provided vaping devices as a cessation aid alongside nicotine replacement therapy and behavioural support. This opportunity has improved engagement with the services as vaping has increased in popularity amongst smokers trying to quit.

Over the last year, our stop smoking services

Helped more than 100 pregnant people quit smoking
for at least a month

Contributed to the reduction of smoking at time of
delivery from 8.1% in 2021/2022 to 7.7% in 2022/2023

Stop Smoking Service: User feedback



“Very pleased with the support offered to me during my pregnancy and the non-judgmental conversations. To be able to text for support has helped with my anxiety as it made it more comfortable.”

Baby Steps: Ensuring the best start in life

Pregnancy and early childhood greatly affect a child's lifelong physical and emotional well-being. The Baby Steps Programme supports parents in the transition to parenthood, ensuring children get the best start in life.

In preparation for 2022-23, Baby Steps adopted a hybrid approach, combining in-person and on-line sessions.

This resulted in an increase in participation which rose by 11%, with a greater proportion of families coming from the most deprived areas of Wiltshire. Partner attendance also increased due to improved engagement.

Families citing social isolation and unemployment as reasons for referral increased by 39%, and substance misuse reasons rose by 26%.

Over a third of parents joining Baby Steps had significant mental health concerns and experienced better mental health outcomes after completing the programme, compared to all participants.

The Baby Steps Programme: User feedback

"I felt so supported by Baby Steps. I made new friends, and I could discuss my worries and experiences with them. I met lovely people and I felt understood. I highly recommend the Baby Steps course".



Phunky Foods: Targeted healthy lifestyle support

Phunky Foods is a healthy lifestyle programme which promotes healthy behaviours in children, young people and families. The programme is delivered through a combination of workshops and cooking classes in schools and communities.

Together with Phunky Foods, we worked with a number of primary schools to deliver Phunky ambassador programmes, parent child cook clubs, parent engagement sessions, competitions and various workshops to engage with around 1,000 pupils.

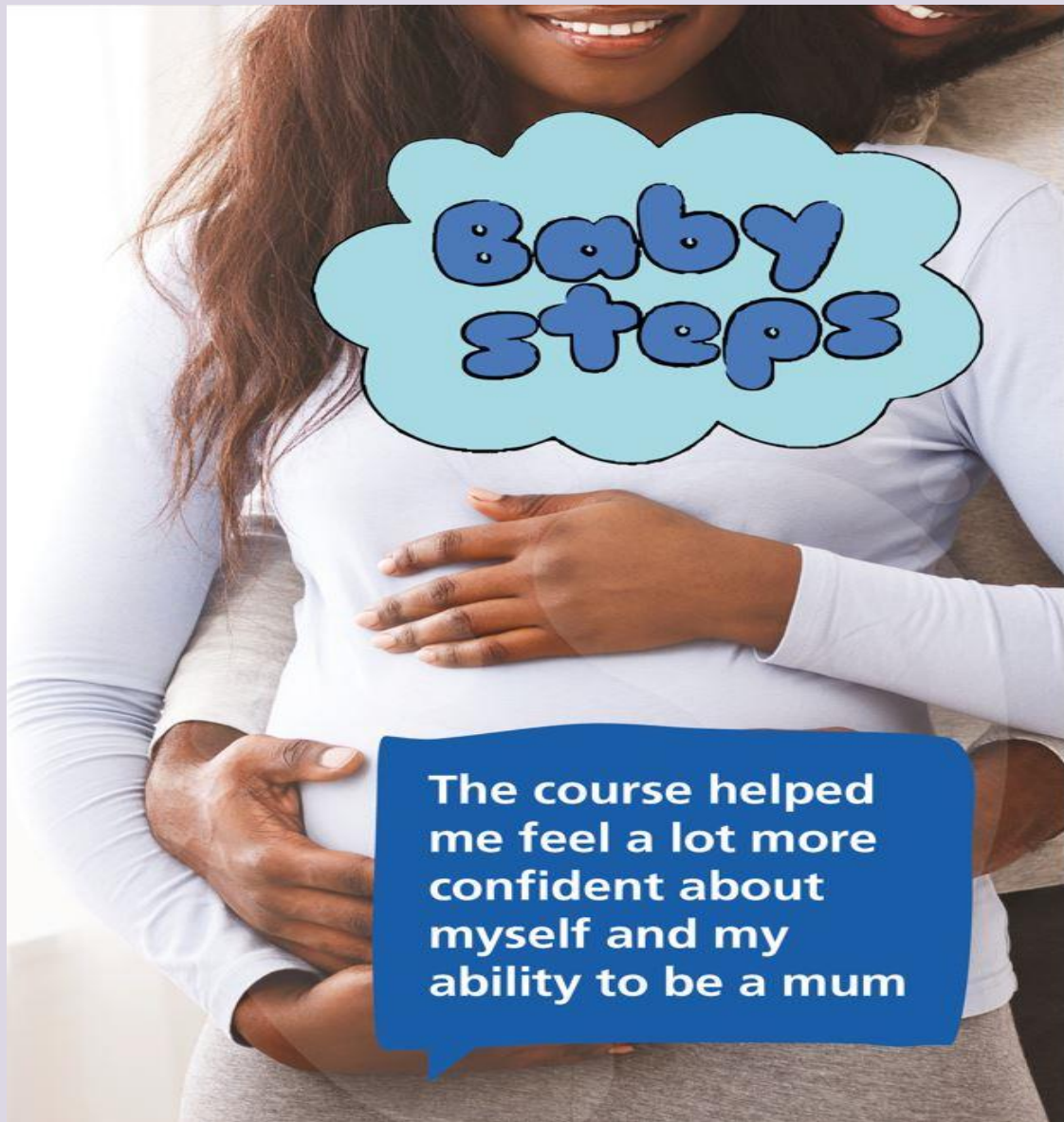
In collaboration with Phunky Foods, Young Carers and Carer Support Wiltshire, we also delivered cookery sessions for young carers between the ages of 17-25. Phunky cooking sessions were also provided alongside our 'Healthy Us' weight management programme for adults with learning disabilities.

Whilst these programmes have been successful, increased parent engagement is a key objective for 2023 and we will continue to work collectively with our partners, school and communities to achieve this.

The Phunky Foods Programme: User feedback



"Having the ability to cook simple healthy meals is a valuable life skill, even more so for young people who have extra responsibilities placed on their shoulders."



Cost of Living and Food Insecurity

Warm and Safe: Challenging the cost of living and rurality

[Warm and Safe Wiltshire](#) is delivered in partnership with Swindon Council and the Centre of Sustainable Energy. It acts as a single point of contact for energy advice and help with the aim of reducing fuel poverty and preventable excess winter deaths across Wiltshire and Swindon.

The rural nature of our county presents numerous challenges including heightened risks of isolation and fuel poverty, limited service accessibility, digital exclusion and reduced employment opportunities. All these issues are magnified by increases to costs of living.

The Warm and Safe Wiltshire service delivered a project supporting people in rural areas impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, with heating upgrades and fuel vouchers.

Between June 2022 – April 2023, Warm and Safe Wiltshire supported almost 300 households, many of which were in rural areas, with heating upgrades, and fuel vouchers.

Warm and Safe Wiltshire: User Feedback

“You have given us the best quality of life – I cannot thank you enough. The whole house is lovely and warm, we can completely relax and enjoy it. I didn’t realise the impact it was having on my mental health and how much I have been worrying.”



Food Insecurity

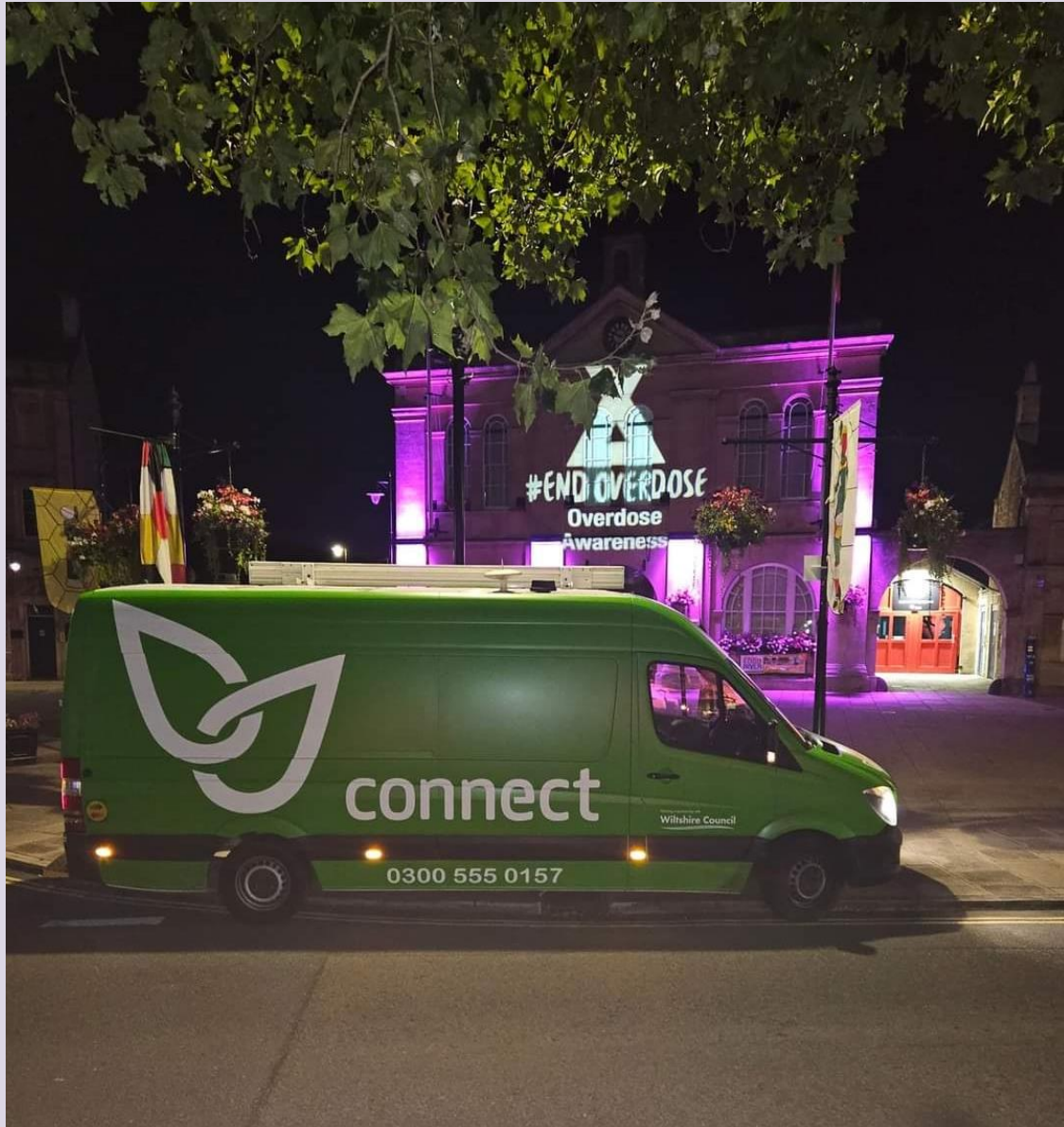
Food insecurity contributes significantly to poor health. As well as being linked to both malnutrition and obesity, it is also associated with inequalities in rates of cancer, diabetes, and coronary heart disease. It can also negatively impact on mental health, causing stress and anxiety in both children and adults.

Everyone should be able to access and afford enough good food to live a healthy life, however the combined impacts of the pandemic and the current cost-of-living crisis have contributed to increases in food insecurity. Recent statistics from the Trussell Trust suggest a 59% increase in the number of food parcels they have provided to homes in Wiltshire between April - September 2022.

Our collaborative initiative with Phunky Foods and the work of our Health Improvement coaches are just two examples of the measures we have in place to support and encourage healthy lifestyles, however, increases in living costs has made accessing food and achieving a healthy diet unaffordable, particularly for certain groups already experiencing significant health inequalities.

Food insecurity indeed presents a notable challenge and will be a key focus area of our collective work with partners, services and communities in 2023.

Substance use - Our designated outreach vehicles



Health protection: Outreach

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “The 2 public health interventions that have had the greatest impact on the world's health are clean water and vaccines”. It is essential that our local population are informed and have timely access to immunisations, particularly as some groups are less likely to get vaccinated than others. Together with the NHS, we delivered various projects to support this. Building on the success of previous years, we organised a vaccination boat which journeyed down the Kennet and Avon Canal in October 2022, administering almost 200 Covid-19 and flu vaccinations to members of our community who may experience reduced access to services. Pop-up vaccine clinics were also set up at various strategic locations across the county, including Venom Nightclub in Westbury, and delivered in excess of a further 1,500 Covid-19 and flu vaccines to local residents early in 2023. A roaming vaccination service further enabled vaccine provision across a wider array of locations including care and sheltered housing settings, foodbanks, refuges and homeless drop-in centres. These initiatives not only facilitated wider vaccine uptake, but also enabled our teams and clinicians to build relationships and signpost people to other public health protection and improvement services such as health screening, mental wellbeing support and help to stop smoking.



Health Improvement Coaches

The service offered by [Wiltshire Health Improvement Coaches \(HICs\)](#) aims to help reduce health inequalities and support our residents to live healthier lives for longer. In order to maintain and improve service accessibility during the current cost of living crisis, adaptations were made to existing working practices. Modes of delivery were expanded to include virtual appointments, targeted group courses and travelling to meet clients in their local communities in order to maintain engagement whilst avoiding the need for service users having to pay costly travel expenses.

For clients living in more rural locations as well as those experiencing digital disparity, coaches have provided postal resources that replicate the face-to-face client experience to support them on their behaviour change journey which has proven highly beneficial in maintaining engagement. Coaches have further assisted clients to access tablets through the digital inclusion scheme as well as support with food and fuel via Warm and Safe Wiltshire. The cumulative effect of these changes has been a significant increase in the proportion of clients accessing service support from our most deprived areas over the last year.

Vaccination Outreach - The Vaccination Boat and Pop-Up Clinics



Substance use: Outreach

Drug and alcohol use not only impacts on an individual's physical and mental health but it can also have long term effects on families, communities as well as our frontline services.

In response to the 2021 UK drug strategy, we have been able to increase substance use outreach provision with the aim of making the drug and alcohol service more accessible in our more deprived and at risk communities.

Funded by government grants awarded to Wiltshire, this extended outreach programme has involved the purchase of two designated vehicles that will be used for delivering substance use services, support and advice. This is a much needed, additional resource, particularly given the rural nature of Wiltshire, as it means that harm reduction advice and life-saving interventions such as needle exchange and the provision of naloxone, which can reverse opioid overdose, can be more readily accessed.

The short-term nature of available funding for this initiative indeed poses a significant challenge and we recognise the need for ongoing, long term, investment in this area. Through our commissioning processes and service development over the coming year, we will continue to identify ways in which to better support those affected by substance use and reduce barriers to accessing specialist care and support.

Wiltshire Workplace health website

Many of us spend a large proportion of our time in work and our jobs and workplaces can have a big impact on our physical and mental health. Workplaces therefore provide an opportunity to improve overall population health.

Over the last year, we have developed an online resource to support our Wiltshire workplaces in the promotion of good workplace health. Hosted on The Enterprise Network website, these webpages cover a variety of workplace health topics including mental and physical health, substance use and financial wellbeing.

Combining resources in this way means that existing, new, and growing businesses have a dedicated website that can be easily accessed by employers and staff alike for information regarding health and wellbeing and how it can be improved within a workplace setting.

Continuing to build on this resource and engaging with local employers to promote good workplace health will be key focus for 2023.

The website is now live and can be accessed [here](#)

