

Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board – 08 June 2023

Better Health Staffordshire Update

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a. To note the progress made on the Better Health Staffordshire programme.
- b. Continue to encourage your organisation to support the programme.

Background

1. Better Health Staffordshire (BHS) is the name given to the strategic approach being taken to encourage people to achieve a healthy weight – through improved diet and exercise.
2. Better diet and exercise clearly impact on physical health and mental wellbeing, but also have a range of other benefits, including reduced absenteeism from work/education as well as impacting on anti-social behaviour and drug/alcohol use.
3. Excess weight is a complex issue with no quick fix large-scale solutions, which therefore requires a long-term strategic approach with multiple actions/activities – similar to the approach taken with tobacco over the last 30 years, which includes diverse measures such as smokefree workplaces, advertising bans, expanded services and tax increases.
4. BHS provides a combination of both a long-term strategic framework, alongside a range of activities that will have an immediate impact for some people (see Appendix for a list of projects/programmes).
5. The Whole System Approach is the long-term approach recommended by central government. The paper outlines the background/rationale for this approach and summarises progress made, and challenges faced, in implementing this in Staffordshire.

Background and Introduction

6. This report details the latest progress and work delivered around the Better Health Staffordshire.
7. The national evidence suggests that there is no one single solution to the issues and challenges of excess weight that we currently face as a

population. We can only tackle excess weight if it becomes everybody's business, and it is prioritised and embedded in everything we do (e.g. in a similar way to how we made 'safeguarding' everybody's business – bus drivers, shop keepers etc).

8. Although there has been, and continues to be, a wide range of activities taking place associated with preventing or reducing excess weight amongst children and adults, the proportion of overweight children and adults continues to rise, both locally and nationally.
9. In July 2020, the Government unveiled a new Obesity Strategy (Tackling obesity: empowering adults & children to live healthier lives) to get the nation fit and healthy, protect themselves against COVID-19 and protect the national health service. At the same time, what was Public Health England now Office of Improvement and Disparities, launched a 'Better Health' campaign, which called on people to embrace a healthier lifestyle and to lose weight if they need to. This campaign is supported by a range of evidence-based tools and digital apps, providing advice on how to reduce weight and be more active. We have used the same branding in Staffordshire – to link the local work with the national campaigns and to encourage people to use the national tools.

Whole System Approach

10. The Public Health England definition of this approach is - "A local whole systems approach responds to complexity through an ongoing, dynamic and flexible way of working. It enables local stakeholders, including communities, to come together, share an understanding of the reality of the challenge, consider how the local system is operating and where there are the greatest opportunities for change - agree actions and decide as a network how to work together in an integrated way to bring about sustainable, long-term systems change".
11. The Whole System Approach does not rely on additional financial resources; it is about making the best possible use of the resources already available to improve a shared outcome.
12. This strategic approach is a combination of building sustainably for the long term, whilst also achieving quick gains (see Appendix for a list of current activities with an immediate impact), by creating local partnerships where partners and communities work together effectively over 10-15 years developing, implementing and evaluating a shared vision and actions, which tackle the causes of excess weight and promote a healthy weight and active lifestyle.
13. There is clear evidence of the benefits of physical activity in reducing crime rates and anti-social behaviour amongst young people in the UK.

Furthermore, a reduction in absenteeism for employers as happier and healthier people form a happier and healthier workforce. Other benefits include a reduction in future healthcare costs and future adult social care costs.

14. It is about maximising the opportunities in communities and partnerships, using Information, Advice and Guidance tools to enable people to help themselves and take a more active role in the own health and well-being.
15. In Staffordshire we have embraced the opportunity to work in partnership by developing new ways of working at a whole system level. We are 'change agents' and 'system actors' with the aim of causing a 'social movement' across Staffordshire. What this mean is: we intend to bring together groups of people with a shared idea and common goal for better health. With this alliance built across the county, we hope to create lasting effects by empowering healthy change in the members' lives and in their communities.
16. The Better Health Staffordshire movement will be a collective for action across 8 local partnerships – one in each of the district / borough councils.

Our mission

17. To encourage people to live their happiest and healthiest lives in Staffordshire.
18. To cause a social movement around Better Health across the County.
19. To create situations, together with local people, where they choose to Do Something Different.

Our Goals / wider system goals

20. To reduce overall levels of excess weight across the county and associated inequalities.
21. To enable and encourage our population to become more physically active.
22. To enable and encourage our population to eat healthier.
23. Healthy eating and being active not only contribute to reducing excess weight but have a range of other benefits to physical health and mental wellbeing, while improving workplace productivity and youth offending.
24. There are various measures of weight and physical activity that we will use to measure the impact of the programme – some of which can be found here [Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)

How are we going to achieve our goals?

25. The causes of excess weight are widespread and engrained and so there are no quick fixes. Like rates of smoking, huge change is possible but will take time and will need changes to the law/ national policy as well as local actions undertaken at partnership and place-based levels. Therefore, the programme is creating both a long-term approach for sustainable change as well as implementing schemes that will have an impact now.

Progress so far

Stage 1 - Three pathfinder areas

26. Three pathfinder (pilot) areas were agreed to design, test and build the methodology and campaign:

- a. Cannock Chase District Council;
- b. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council; and
- c. East Staffordshire Borough Council

27. The pathfinders involved a central team supporting local partners. A number of products (data packs, asset maps etc.) were developed and workshops delivered with local partners – the goal of the process was improve everyone's understanding of the issues and create a shared vision of what needs to be achieved and what each partner's contribution might be.

28. The final workshop saw each area produce an action register/list which will form the basis of the activity for the new partnership group in each area. These Action Registers are being developed into Action Lists based around the 3 priority areas of moving / activity, environment and food / healthy eating and with the goal of driving forward progress in health eating and maintaining a health weight.

29. In parallel with the workshops, Citizens Enquiry programmes were commissioned in each pathfinder area. The aim of this was to create the conditions to engage, involve and empower communities to understand, prioritise and co-produce solutions. These were to address what communities and organisations can do together to help people be healthy, with a focus on healthy weight and active lifestyles.

30. The priorities identified by our local citizens were:

- a. lack of knowledge of what's on in our local communities
- b. access to health and care services and community support
- c. support and relationship networks and space for people to meet

- d. cost of living crisis (impact on buying nutritious food, staying active, transport to access support and services)
 - e. rethinking food outlets and surplus food redistribution
 - f. community cohesion
31. Of the three Pathfinder areas both East Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands, are running local Better Health Partnership Meetings and are planning a year of thematic events based around Food, Physical Activity and the Environment to be delivered in partnership across the districts. These events will have guest speakers, both local and national subject matter experts as well as workshops celebrating what is already being delivered locally. There will then be an opportunity to share the Local Partnership Action Plan and agree and work on the actions together continually moving these forwards. For example, one of the actions that both new partnerships are committed to working on is getting more people moving, utilising all the green space the county offers us and more active travel / cycling etc.
32. Cannock have developed their own health and wellbeing app - "Cannock Chase Can" which matches the profile of individual residents to local information and activities including eating and moving well and link them to community support and resources. The app has been nominated for the Innovation award in the LGC Awards 08 June 2023
33. All the necessary preparatory work has been done in Cannock Chase and their first local partnership meeting is due to be held in the coming weeks.

Stage 2 Expansion

34. Building on the lessons learned from the three pathfinder areas, partnerships are close to launching in three further areas:
- a. South Staffordshire District Council
 - b. Newcastle-under-Lyme
 - c. Stafford Borough Council
35. Senior Officers in each of the three areas are supporting the second stage roll-out of the programme. We have revised and rewritten our offer and engagement tools and have reduced the number of workshops to maximise numbers that can attend. Further workshops will be delivered in June in Newcastle and South Staffordshire. We will begin our consultation and engagement with Stafford in June and July with the plan of delivering workshops in October. With a view to partnerships and action plans being in place in autumn.

36. There have been and continue to be several challenges in developing and implementing this plan of work. The remote working conditions necessary during the pandemic made partnership working difficult and slowed progress. Since then, the local partnership environment is a 'busy space' – the programme is 'competing' with numerous other initiatives that stakeholders are being asked to support. The team recognise these issues and are endeavouring to minimise the burden on partners, while ensuring that progress keeps pace.
37. Stage 3 rollout will see the team engaging with Tamworth and Lichfield and delivering workshops in November, with the plan to have their first local partnership meetings at the end of January 2024.
38. The Action Lists for each new district that joins will be developed into Action Plans which will be agreed by each Local Partnership and form the basis of their collective work to promote healthy weight and an active lifestyle.
39. Once all 8 districts are on-board by January 2024, the plan is to produce a system-wide Action Plan. This will have been agreed at a locality level and which addresses the key issues impacting excess weight and a lack of physical activity across the county with short and long-term outcomes to be achieved.
40. Public Health colleagues will continue to provide leadership role/provides subject matter expertise (alongside colleagues from other agencies), although the intention is for local partnership to own and drive the long-term programme of work.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Individual projects that form part of the broader BHS approach

Contact Details

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