

**Wiltshire Council**

**Health and Wellbeing Board**

**21 March 2024**

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**Subject: Public health workforce campaign**

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### **Executive Summary**

In November 2021 the chairs of the Health and Wellbeing Board requested options to inspire the organisations sitting on the Board to implement a workforce wellbeing campaign. The prospect of influencing the health and wellbeing agenda on such a scale presents a unique opportunity. A successful campaign, addressing mental health, was completed in 2022 and subsequently a decision was made to continue the good work.

Organisations were asked at the January 2023 Health and Wellbeing Board to make a commitment to physical health, enabling a healthy workforce through the implementation of smoking cessation interventions. This report provides an update on progress.

### **Proposal**

On 26 January 2023 it was recommended to the Board that the focus of that year's Public Health Workforce Health Campaign was to be smoking cessation. With it the outcome of the campaign was to be brought back to the Board in 12 months' time to see what had been embedded within organisations.

### **Outcomes**

Seven organisations provided a progress update with a combined workforce of c.29,000. Multiple interventions supporting smoking cessation have been implemented with a clear focus on the promotion of national stop smoking campaigns.

### **Next Steps**

The health and wellbeing of any workforce is an organisational priority and even more so given its priority at a national level, the links to the Wiltshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the continuing increase in health inequalities. A focus on all areas of workplace health is paramount. As such each organisation represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to maintain its commitment to this important agenda.

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**Kate Blackburn**  
**Director of Public Health**  
**Wiltshire Council**

**Subject: Public health workforce campaign**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an update to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the approaches taken by the organisations represented on the Board to improving their workforce health and wellbeing and to share good practice.

**Relevance to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

2. Employment is a primary determinant of health. Increasing the quality of work helps support prevention and early intervention, improving social mobility and tackling inequalities, which are key guiding themes of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

**Background**

3. Following a successful public health workforce campaign (2022-2023), focussing on mental health, the Board's member organisations agreed to continue the campaign in January 2023. The focus of this year's campaign was on promoting physical health and in particular smoking cessation. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on progress, share examples of good practice and provide recommendations for continued commitment to the workplace health agenda.
4. Good health and wellbeing are essential to successful, sustainable workplaces. Protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of our employees remains critical to the health and economic wellbeing of our population. Addressing economic inactivity due to ill health is now a Government priority. Since the pandemic, nationally 470,000 more people are out of the workforce on ill-health grounds, while many more continue to work despite long-term health problems<sup>1</sup>, highlighting the need for workers health to remain a top priority.
5. In January 2023 member organisations were asked to consider options to continue the campaign and opted to concentrate on smoking cessation. Smoking remains the biggest single cause of preventable death and ill-health in England with costs to the economy and wider society estimated at £17 billion a year<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Health Foundation, 2023. [What we know about the UK's working-age health challenge - The Health Foundation](#)

<sup>2</sup> HM Government, 2024. [Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping consultation: government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

6. All members agreed to implement the campaign and the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed that the outcome of the campaign was to be brought back to the Board in 12 months' time to see what had been embedded within organisations.

## **Progress**

7. There are eleven organisations represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board, and a request for an update on progress was made prior to publication of this report. A brief summary of the interventions implemented by the various organisations can be seen in appendix 1. It should be noted that Healthwatch Wiltshire only have four part-time employees and therefore were deemed exempt.
8. Seven organisations provided a progress update with a combined workforce of c29,000 staff.
9. There were a number of smoking cessation interventions implemented across the organisations, as recommended, with the internal promotion of national stop smoking campaigns being one of the most common approaches taken.
10. Other interventions included the signing of the NHS Smokefree Pledge, creation of a smokefree site, signposting to smoking cessation services and targeted training for managers to support staff quitting smoking.

## **Discussion**

11. Smoking is the single most important entirely preventable cause of ill health, disability and death in the UK, responsible for 80,000 deaths a year and 1 in 4 of all UK cancer deaths. Smokers lose an average of 10 years of life expectancy, or around one year for every 4 smoking years<sup>2</sup>.
12. In an update to [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) figures, the current prevalence of adults smoking in Wiltshire is 10.2%, which is better than the national level (12.7%) . However, there are substantial inequalities in smoking in Wiltshire, with the prevalence in adults in routine and manual occupations reported at just over 23%. According to Business in the Community<sup>3</sup> staff who smoke at work are 33% more likely to be absent from work than non-smokers.
13. The BSW Inequalities Strategy 2021-2024 provides a framework for system activity to reduce health inequalities. The strategy implements the NHS Core20PLUS5 programme and identifies routine and manual workers as a PLUS group in Wiltshire, largely due to higher smoking rates. A PLUS group is a locally determined population that experiences poorer than average health access, experiences and/or outcomes. The 5 clinical areas identified by the programme include CVD, maternity, respiratory

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<sup>3</sup> BiTC, 2019. [Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco: A Toolkit For Employers \(bitc.org.uk\)](#)

illnesses, cancer and mental health with smoking cessation included as a priority that crosscuts all five of these areas for adults.

14. Aligned to the key theme of prevention and early intervention the Wiltshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy clearly seeks to achieve change. It will do so by empowering individuals across the life course with advice focusing on smoking cessation and through partnership working, such as the public health workforce campaign, enable a healthy workforce through targeted preventative activity.
15. The focus on smoking cessation proved timely given the once in a generation opportunity to comment on the Government's plan to create a smokefree generation and tackle youth vaping<sup>2</sup>. Ultimately the plan is to create legislation whereby anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 will never legally be sold tobacco products with the aim of phasing out smoking completely. Until such time as that goal is realised work is needed to reduce smoking rates further including in the workplace.

### **Future Commitment**

16. Organisations have shown great application when implementing workplace interventions over the past two years, both in terms of addressing mental and physical health. Subsequently, it is felt that this momentum should be harnessed and continued. To that end organisations represented on the Board should continue interventions that support the collective workforce and align with the themes of the Wiltshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
17. Along with measures to address people leaving the workforce, employers need to develop new and better ways to support employees to remain well in work. People in employment are in worse health than previously. Compared to 2019, people in employment are 13% more likely to have a health condition and 30% more likely to have multiple health conditions<sup>4</sup>.
18. The JSNA indicates that our 65+ population currently represents just over a fifth of the overall population but by 2040 this age group will make up nearly a third. As people live longer they will be expected to work for longer yet are likely to do so with one or multiple health conditions, a key barrier to gaining employment and for staying in work.
19. As well as an ageing population recent evidence highlights a rise in work-limiting conditions that are being driven by sharp increases in reported mental ill health, particularly among younger workers<sup>5</sup>. Across the whole workforce, musculoskeletal and cardiovascular conditions remain the most common form of work-limiting health condition.

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<sup>4</sup> IPPR, 2022 – Getting Better? Health and the labour market

<https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/getting-better-health-and-labour-market>

<sup>5</sup> Resolution Foundation, 2024. We've only just begun: Action to improve young people's mental health, education and employment [We've only just begun • Resolution Foundation](#)

## Anchor Institutions

20. Employment is one of the five ways organisations act as anchor institutions, these being large, public sector organisations that are unlikely to relocate and have a significant stake in a geographical area<sup>6</sup>. Anchor workforce strategies involve thinking not only about how organisations can grow local workforce supply and widen access to employment for local communities, but also how to be a better employer and place to build a career for more people. Such strategies consider widening workforce participation, building the future workforce and being a good employer, which includes supporting I) fair pay and conditions of employment, II) health and wellbeing and III) professional development and career progression<sup>6</sup>.

## Support

21. Public Health have created an online resource to help support workplaces in Wiltshire. Hosted on The Enterprise Network website there are dedicated webpages on a variety of workplace health topics including but not limited to, mental and physical health, substance use and financial wellbeing. The website can be accessed by visiting [www.theenterprisenetwork.co.uk](http://www.theenterprisenetwork.co.uk) and the workplace health support pages can be viewed by clicking on the Workplace Health tab.

## Next Steps

22. Good health and wellbeing remain essential to successful, sustainable workplaces. The health and wellbeing of any workforce is an organisational priority and even more so given its priority at a national level, the links to the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the continuing increase in health inequalities. A focus on all areas of workplace health is paramount. As such each organisation represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to maintain its commitment to this important agenda.
23. Each organisation should commit to the following:
  - I. Continue to invest in workplace health
  - II. Continue to build on the excellent work done thus far on supporting both mental and physical health in the workplace and share best practice
  - III. Increase employment opportunities by adopting the [anchor institute](#) principles

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<sup>6</sup> The Health Foundation, 2019. Building healthier communities: the role of the NHS as an anchor institution. [Building healthier communities: the role of the NHS as an anchor institution - The Health Foundation](#)

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Report Authors:  
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## Appendix 1

Organisation	Intervention(s)	Outcome(s)
AWP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No response received</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No response received</li> </ul>
BSW ICB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No response received</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No response received</li> </ul>
Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of No Smoking Day and NFCC campaigns to staff</li> <li>- Providing guidance and training to staff on the NFCCs '7 Steps to Prevent Smoking Related Fires'</li> </ul>	
Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of Stoptober</li> <li>- Sign up to the NHS Smokefree Pledge</li> <li>- Health check ins for staff including advice/support to help quit smoking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Signatory of the updated NHS Smokefree Pledge</li> <li>- Weekly check ins, with staff asked about smoking status with cessation support/signposting offered</li> </ul>
HCRG Care Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wellbeing offer and 24 access to Employee Assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive feedback from colleagues on the advice and support given. Smoking rates are not high in the workforce but wider focus on health, particularly stress and emotional wellbeing, is more of a focus area</li> </ul>
Healthwatch Wiltshire	N/A	N/A
RUH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smoking cessation clinics for staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Between January 2023 and December 2023, 16 staff have accessed the Occupational Health smoking</li> </ul>

		cessation service. Of those, 8 have successfully quit smoking
Salisbury FT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of a smokefree site</li> <li>- Smokefree site task and finish group set up, 18 recommendations identified</li> <li>- Establishment of a SFT smokefree and LTP working group, which meets on a monthly basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smoking shelters have been rebranded as vaping shelters</li> <li>- Promotion of a smokefree site in all recruitment and external communications.</li> <li>- Occupational health promote smoking cessation and sign post to support services.</li> </ul>
Wiltshire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of Smokefree Service and quit tips to all staff via comms campaign</li> <li>- Promotion of Stoptober, internally and externally including Health Coach presence at main hubs and libraries</li> <li>- Delivery of manager focused training on supporting staff to quit</li> <li>- Review of smokefree HR policy undertaken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quit tips and appropriate signposting published via Wellbeing Wednesday internal comms platform over 10 week period Summer/Autumn 2023</li> <li>- Physical stands in various hubs/libraries across the county during Stoptober, providing advice to employees and residents</li> <li>- 2 x manager focused training sessions delivered on smoking cessation via internal training platform</li> </ul>
Wiltshire Health and Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No response received</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No response received</li> </ul>
Wiltshire Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continued Support and Signposting Through Wellness SharePoint Portal</li> <li>- Links have been created on the Wiltshire Police Well SharePoint - link directly to the NHS support pages for those seeking help and advice to give up smoking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to monitor the traffic to the SharePoint site to see how many staff/officers are looking for help.</li> <li>- A targeting campaign could be launched as part of the Wiltshire Police 2024 'Summer of Wellness' campaign running through July and August 2024</li> </ul>