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For immediate release

Wiltshire Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023/24

Health coaches, a boaters' survey and webinars to promote wellbeing in the workplace are some of the key activities Wiltshire Council's public health team has focused on in the past year.

The details and impact of the work is summarised as part of the [latest independent annual report](#) on the health of people in Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council's Director of Public Health, Kate Blackburn, is required to produce an annual report each year to highlight the health of the population, raise awareness of local health issues and make recommendations for change.

Wiltshire's population demographics are detailed in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, in summary:

- Current population of 510,400, 51% female and 49% male, expected to increase by 7% to 547,864 by 2040
- Over 65s makes up nearly a fifth of the population, but by 2040 this age group will make up nearly a third of the total population
- Wiltshire is in the least deprived 30% of local authorities nationally

In 2022, the public health team established 10-year Public Health Priorities which included identifying four Public Health Across Boundaries (PHABs) themes.

These are the key themes taken into consideration for all work being planned, delivered or transformed.

A key development in 2023 - 2024 has been targeting the approach to three priority population groups, where the team is working to help reduce inequalities. These groups are:

- Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, and Boater (GRTB) Communities
- Routine and manual workers (where English isn't their first language)
- The 20% most deprived communities (particularly rural areas)

This year's report shares some of the projects that have focused on those priority populations within each of the four themed PHAB areas including:

- Mental health and wellbeing. A recent boaters' survey captured responses to questions across multiple topics, from health and wellbeing to finances, safety, stigma, and facilities. The delivery of the Senior Games, supporting an all-inclusive physical activity programme for older residents in care homes and assisted living.
- Workplace wellbeing. Providing a number of workplace health developments with free webinar sessions to enhance wellbeing in the workplace, online resources on The Enterprise Network website, and a series of care worker events to support the care workforce manage non-COVID infections and support staff wellbeing.
- Children and young people's health. Working with Phunky Foods school and community programme to promote healthy behaviours and arranging a focus group and event for boating families to provide feedback on antenatal pathways and maternity services.
- Smokefree Wiltshire. Recruiting two health coach apprentices in Bemerton Heath to engage their community with behaviour change programmes and the expansion of the council health coaches stop smoking service to now include an option for e-cigarette provision for those seeking to become smokefree.

Kate Blackburn, Wiltshire's Director of Public Health, said: "This year's report shares some great examples of how my Public Health team has used diversity, innovation and passion to improve health and wellbeing and reduce the inequalities in outcomes that we see in the population.

"I'm particularly proud of the boaters' survey and genuine engagement of the team alongside wider council and community partners, which took place along the entire length of the canal in Wiltshire. The engagement and findings will help to shape better services and activities for our boaters.

"In the year ahead, we will be building on our Smokefree Wiltshire work, as smoking remains the leading cause of preventable health inequalities in Wiltshire. Alongside national commitments to the 'Smokefree Generation', I look forward to updating on local developments in the interventions we are offering to help significantly reduce the smoking prevalence across the county in next year's report."

Cllr Ian Blair-Pilling, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Public Health said: "The Public Health team's work over 2023 into 2024 has particularly focused on strengthening relationships and connections across the communities of Wiltshire, demonstrating why trusted local relationships are so very critical.

"The team continue to take an approach to their work that is committed to supporting the council's business plan, and this year's report particularly shows the team's commitment to the whole life approach to prevention, tackling disparities in opportunities that exist across the county and gaining better understanding of our communities to ensure the right services can be provided in the right place at the right time to meet our distinctive local needs."

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