



Report to Cabinet

Date:	Cabinet 14/11/23
Title:	Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022-23
Cabinet Member(s):	Angela Macpherson Deputy Leader and Member for Adults and Health Zahir Mohammed Deputy Member for Public Health
Contact officer:	Dr Jane O'Grady
Ward(s) affected:	N/A
Recommendations:	Cabinet are asked to note and endorse the report and recommend that the council and partners respond to these recommendations by incorporating their actions into the existing mental health action plans and the Buckinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan.
Reason for decision:	The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to produce an annual report on the health of the local population and the Local Authority has a statutory duty to publish it.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Each year the Director of Public Health produces an annual report on the health of the population. This year the report focuses on mental health. The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022-23 describes the factors that support good mental health, identifies groups that are at risk of poorer mental health and makes recommendations for the Council and its partners to promote mental health and well-being. The report is a call to action for partners in Buckinghamshire. Partner

organisations will be asked to reflect the recommendations in existing multi-agency plans, for the Start Well, Live Well and Age Well Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 Mental health is as important as physical health for our health and wellbeing. It underpins our ability to build strong relationships, to do well at school or in our jobs, and shapes how we interact with the world around us. Good mental health often leads to better physical health as well as a reduced chance of dying at a younger age.
- 2.2 People in Buckinghamshire generally enjoy higher levels of good mental health and wellbeing compared with the England average. However, good mental health is not experienced by everyone and many of us will experience periods of poor mental health during our life. Fortunately, there are many things we can do to improve and protect our own mental health. There are also actions that schools and organisations can take to support the mental health of those who live, learn and work in Buckinghamshire.
- 2.3 These preventative actions are the focus of the annual report this year. The report does not consider the different types of mental health conditions and does not cover treatment and support for mental illness. These are important subjects that would require a long and detailed report in their own right. Many people with a mental health condition enjoy a good quality of life and many of the preventative actions in the annual report may support them, in addition to formal treatment.
- 2.4 Using formal research and local data, it is possible to identify the things that promote and protect our mental health and the factors that can have a negative impact. These are listed in the table below and considered in more detail in the main report. It is not surprising to find a strong overlap between the factors that are important to children and young people and those that are important in adulthood.

Factors that promote and protect our mental health

Children and Young People	Adults
✓ Support for the mental health of mothers during pregnancy	✓ Physical activity
✓ Mental health of fathers and a supportive family	✓ Getting enough sleep
✓ Having support from friends	✓ Having a good diet
✓ A positive school environment	✓ Quitting smoking
✓ Physical activity	✓ Having a social network
✓ Being around nature	✓ Ongoing learning
✓ Involvement with arts and music	✓ Being around nature
	✓ Involvement with arts and music
	✓ Good quality work
	✓ Volunteering
	✓ Mindfulness

Things that can have a negative impact



Children and Young People	Adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Traumatic events in childhood ✗ Living in poor quality homes and neighbourhoods ✗ Bullying ✗ The internet and social media ✗ Caring responsibilities (without support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Drinking too much alcohol ✗ Gambling ✗ Living in poor quality homes and neighbourhoods ✗ Worrying about money ✗ Unpaid caring responsibilities (without support)

The things that affect our mental health do not change as we grow older. However, two additional factors become important as we age – the impact of retirement and increased risks of becoming socially isolated.

2.5 While the factors listed above can affect everyone, some people in Buckinghamshire are more likely to be vulnerable to poor mental health. National research has demonstrated a link between poverty and mental health and this is evident in Buckinghamshire. Data from before the pandemic found that people living in the most deprived fifth of Buckinghamshire were more than twice as likely to have an emergency admission for mental health or self-harm compared with those living in the least deprived fifth of the county.

2.6 While not all mental health conditions and disorders can be prevented, individuals can take steps to improve their own mental health by focusing on the protective factors listed in the tables above. The practical actions people can take are included in the main report alongside information about advice where people can seek support if they need it.

2.7 In the final section, a number of recommendations regarding actions that schools, Buckinghamshire Council, the local NHS and employers and voluntary sector organisations can take to promote good mental health are made. These actions are grouped into five areas:

1. **Support our children, young people and their families**
2. **Encourage lifestyles that protect mental health**
3. **Provide opportunities for people to build their social network, learn new skills and give to others**
4. **Take action on the things that increase people’s risk of poorer mental health**
5. **Encourage open conversations about mental health**

3. Other options considered

3.1 The recommendations in this report aim to improve mental health in Buckinghamshire. It links with other local plans including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Opportunity Bucks. If the recommendations are not supported and implemented there is potential that valuable opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents is missed.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 This is a report setting out a high level summary of mental health in Buckinghamshire, the factors that support it and those that can have negative impacts. There are no direct financial implications of adopting this report.
- 4.2 No direct legal implications for this report.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 This report relates to Corporate Plan Key Priority: Strengthening our Communities.
- 5.2 Value for Money: This is a high level report covering a diverse range of areas and therefore cannot be covered by a single value for money assessment. Individual policy decisions may flow from the report which will have individual value for money assessments.
- 5.3 Other Considerations: This report is for partners as well as Buckinghamshire Council and will be disseminated and presented after approval by Cabinet in a variety of partnerships.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 The report has been shared with the Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Adults and Health.
- 6.2 Local members will be sent copies of the report after Cabinet Decision and the report is also being presented at the Health and Wellbeing Board.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 A communications and engagement plan will be put in place to share the report.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 The report will provide an evidence base to support the implementation of the Health and Well-being Strategy and inform Opportunity Bucks workstreams and partner plans.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 The Director of Public Health Annual Report is included as an appendix to this report.



10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email to democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

