

### DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

## Mental Health Matters – Be Kind to Your Mind

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**Author/Lead Contacts:** Dr Jane O’Grady, Director of Public Health and Community Safety, Buckinghamshire Council

**Report Sponsor:** Dr Jane O’Grady, Director of Public Health and Community Safety, Buckinghamshire Council

**Considerations:**       **Information**       **Discussion**  
                                   **Decision**       **Endorsement**

Please indicate to which priority in the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, [Happier, Healthier Lives Strategy \(2022-2025\)](#) your report links to.

Start Well	Live Well	Age Well
<input type="checkbox"/> Improving outcomes during maternity and early years	<input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the rates of cardiovascular disease	<input type="checkbox"/> Improving places and helping communities to support healthy ageing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improving mental health support for children and young people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improving mental health support for adults particularly for those at greater risk of poor mental health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Improving mental health support for older people and reducing feelings of social isolation
<input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the prevalence of obesity in children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the prevalence of obesity in adults	<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing the physical activity of older people

### Description Detail

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 to promote mental health and well-being.

### Description Shared

- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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
✗ Traumatic events in childhood	✗ Drinking too much alcohol
✗ Living in poor quality homes and neighbourhoods	✗ Gambling
✗ Bullying	✗ Living in poor quality homes and neighbourhoods
✗ The internet and social media	✗ Worrying about money
✗ Caring responsibilities (without support)	✗ 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.

- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 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**

## Next steps

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, including the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy and action plans.

## Background papers

Appendices

Executive summary

Full report