



# HIGH WYCOMBE COMMUNITY BOARD

# PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS



**Public Health Team – Buckinghamshire Council**

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# High Wycombe Community Board Public Health Recommendations

Improving and levelling up the health and wellbeing of all our residents is a priority for the Council. Buckinghamshire is one of the least deprived local authority areas in England and consequently has better health overall than the England average. However, in Buckinghamshire the health of residents varies within, and between, community board areas. For example, people living in more deprived areas are more likely to live in poor health and die earlier than people living in less deprived areas. They are also more likely to develop multiple long-term conditions earlier, such as diabetes and heart disease. Different ethnic groups also have different risks of developing some long term conditions.

These differences existed before the pandemic and COVID-19 has worsened them. For example, people living in more deprived areas have a higher risk of being infected and experiencing complications of COVID-19.

One impact of the pandemic has been an increase in the unhealthy behaviours that increase our risk of long-term conditions. Many people have been less active, eaten less healthily and drunk more alcohol. People have also experienced poorer mental health and greater social isolation. COVID-19 has also impacted some people's income, employment, and children's education - all factors that can affect their health and wellbeing.

Supporting and improving residents' physical and mental health is vital and initiatives to do so will have wider impacts on economic recovery, workforce productivity and environmental sustainability. Our County-wide "levelling-up" health priority is Cardiovascular Disease (which includes conditions such as heart attacks and stroke) because this is a significant cause of early death, is more common in deprived and some ethnic minority communities, and contributes to worse Covid-19 outcomes.

## Community Board Profile Commentary

High Wycombe is a vibrant community with excellent community spirit and many active groups. The population is more ethnically diverse and younger than the Buckinghamshire average. It also has many community assets and higher access to public green space. These attributes are vital for improving the health and wellbeing of High Wycombe residents.

High Wycombe is the second most deprived community board in Buckinghamshire. The overall health of residents living here is worse than other community boards with lower life expectancy than the Buckinghamshire average.

This can be seen from birth – High Wycombe has the highest proportion of low birth weight babies and children living in poverty in Buckinghamshire and the second highest rate for emergency hospital admissions for under 5-year olds. Nearly 4 in 10 year 6 children living in this area are overweight or obese.

High Wycombe also has the highest rate of cardiovascular disease emergency admissions in Buckinghamshire. Before the pandemic we know that in adulthood, the proportion of people who were identified as smokers or were physically inactive was higher than the Buckinghamshire average. These behaviours lead to a higher risk of having unhealthy weight, heart disease and diabetes which is reflected by statistics showing that, before the pandemic, higher proportions of adults who were measured in primary care were obese, and more adults had diabetes than the Buckinghamshire average, despite the younger age of its population. There may be residents who are at high risk of heart disease and do not know, given that less than 40% of those eligible have had an NHS Health Check. Data is currently being updated for the post COVID period.

Poor mental health also affects many residents in High Wycombe. Before the pandemic, a higher proportion of adults seen in primary care were diagnosed with depression, compared with the other Community Boards, and the percentage of High Wycombe residents diagnosed with serious mental illness (e.g. schizophrenia) has also previously been higher than the Buckinghamshire average. The emergency admission rate for dementia is the highest in the county. Other issues in High Wycombe such as the high estimated risk of food poverty (1 in 5 residents) and the higher probability of loneliness in older people also play a role in the overall health of this community. Data is currently being updated for the post COVID period.

## Recommendations

There are many opportunities for the High Wycombe Community Board to work with Public Health and other partners to support residents to have healthier, happier lives. We propose that you focus on the following areas:

- Preventing diabetes, heart disease and stroke
- Improving mental health, tackling social isolation and reducing stigma
- Supporting children to have a healthy start in life

In each of these areas, proposed actions that your Board can take are categorised into different levels of input:

1. DEVELOP/FUND  
Introduce, expand, or develop initiatives supported by Public Health and/or other partners.
2. PROMOTE, SIGNPOST, REFER or TRAIN  
Communicate information about local activities and services to residents, or develop new skills.
3. PARTICIPATE  
Represent your community in shaping public health policy and actions across Buckinghamshire.

Six selected DEVELOP/FUND proposals are:

- Fund a new Active Communities programme across a group of settings in High Wycombe
- Fund the Active Movement programme in more local schools
- Support the provision of community NHS Health Checks in local venues
- Make your parks and playgrounds smoke free
- Enhance Healthy Ageing projects with community board funds
- Expand the Grow it, Cook it, Eat it programme

Further details on these actions and more can be found in the following pages.

## Next Steps

Your Public Health lead, Louise Hurst ([louise.hurst@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:louise.hurst@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)), will be pleased to provide more information and support discussions as you explore which actions to work on this year, advise what support is available, and how these might fit in with your other priorities.

For more information and support on any of the actions suggested, get in touch with Louise Hurst at [louise.hurst@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:louise.hurst@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

## Further Considerations

Based on your local insight and knowledge there may be other health and wellbeing priorities you wish to consider for support and action and/or you may already have ideas to address needs identified by the community. The recommendations included in this document are not all encompassing and are intended to start a conversation on where and how the Community Board can get involved to improve local health and well-being.

Further opportunities for supporting a variety of health and wellbeing topics in your area can also be found in the Buckinghamshire Online Directory.

**Please see the following pages for the full list and details of proposed actions.**

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# Opportunities for Action – what you can do for residents’ health and wellbeing

## 1. Prevent diabetes, heart disease and stroke by promoting healthier behaviours and knowing your risks

Preventing Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is our Buckinghamshire-wide priority to “level-up” health. Heart disease, stroke and diabetes are very common, affecting hundreds of residents a year, more commonly in deprived and some ethnic minority communities. Heart disease and stroke account for 20-30% of the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in Buckinghamshire.

The good news is a significant proportion of new cases can be prevented by things we can do as individuals and community boards. We can reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and stroke by

- supporting residents to have healthier behaviours
- helping residents know their individual risk and getting advice to reduce this by for example increasing uptake of NHS health checks

The most important behaviours that reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dementia, and many cancers are 1. Not smoking 2. Being physically active 3. Eating a healthy diet and being a healthy weight and 4. Not drinking too much alcohol. Adopting these 4 healthy behaviours could prevent 75% of new cases of heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes; 40% of cancer cases; and reduce the risk of people suffering serious consequences of COVID-19 and flu. Healthy behaviours also bring other benefits, at all ages, from boosting school achievement to improving mental health and boosting the economy through increased workforce productivity and reduced sickness absence.

### How the High Wycombe Community Board can act to support this key area:

CONTACT [LOUISE.HURST@BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.GOV.UK](mailto:LOUISE.HURST@BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.GOV.UK) FOR MORE DETAILS ON ANY OF THESE ACTIONS

#### Develop / Fund

##### Active Communities:

This is an innovative project that takes a whole community approach to reduce sedentary behaviour by helping residents add extra movement to their daily routines. Currently, it is taking place in West Wycombe, Booker, Cressex & Castlefield, Abbey and schools in Oakridge and Castlefield.

The Community Board can fund additional Active Communities projects across a group of settings (e.g. local care homes, schools, community centres) in High Wycombe. Estimated costs start from £15K and will depend on the size of the community involved and number of settings chosen.

##### Grow it, Cook it, Eat it:

This programme brings communities together through a common interest to grow their own food, gives them access to fresh fruit and vegetables, and offers a way to engage in low impact exercise.

There are currently community growing sites in Desborough and Micklefield.

The Board can fund the extension of the Expert Gardener role for these sites beyond the first year (May 2022). This will help to embed the gardens more fully in the local communities.

The Board can also fund further sites across High Wycombe to spread the benefits for health and wellbeing as well as environmental and green priorities.

##### NHS Health Checks:

This is the cardiovascular disease prevention programme for people aged 40-74. It helps spot the

Help residents find out about and tackle their risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes by helping to organise pop-up sessions in community venues for

early warning signs of stroke, diabetes, or cardiovascular disease and offers individual advice on reducing risk.	residents to receive their NHS Health Check in a nearby, familiar setting.
<b>Promote, Signpost, Refer and Train</b>	
<p><b><u>Live Well Stay Well:</u></b></p> <p>Buckinghamshire's Healthy Lifestyle Service provides effective and evidence-based support for people to stop smoking, lose weight and be active amongst other support and advice.</p>	<p>Stopping smoking, losing weight, and getting more active are the best things residents can do to reduce their risk of CVD.</p> <p>The Community Board can promote the service through its own communication channels and encourage partners, for example, in the voluntary sector, to refer clients and residents to self-refer.</p>
<p><b><u>Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training:</u></b></p> <p>MECC upskills people to have effective and informal healthy conversations around making positive changes to physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Support MECC training within your local area by promoting its availability to your members and partners.</p> <p>You could also organise training sessions in partnership with Public Health.</p>
<p><b><u>Alcohol services:</u></b></p> <p><a href="#">One Recovery Bucks</a> and <a href="#">Switch Bucks</a> support adults and young people in Buckinghamshire affected by alcohol or drug misuse.</p>	<p>Promote these evidence-based local services to support individuals and families with alcohol or drug misuse concerns.</p>
<b>Participate</b>	
<p><b><u>Health behaviour campaigns:</u></b></p> <p>These are communications and engagement activities to promote healthy behaviours. Public Health organises the materials for partners to use for a variety of health and wellbeing campaigns.</p>	<p>Your Community Board can amplify health campaigns to your local community by promoting them through your own communication channels. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stoptober (October)</li> <li>• Healthy weight (Better You)</li> <li>• Alcohol awareness week (15-21 Nov 2021)</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Whole system approach to obesity:</u></b></p> <p>Public Health have recently commenced a 'Whole Systems Approach to Obesity', a health in all policies approach which brings stakeholders from across the county together to create effective local approaches, engaging communities and local assets, to address obesity in Buckinghamshire. An action plan jointly owned by stakeholders will be developed creating a joined up approach to addressing obesity across Buckinghamshire.</p>	<p>Participate in the Whole Systems Approach to Obesity workshops (Sept and Nov '21) and stakeholder events to ensure action plans developed meet the needs of your local communities and fully utilise the assets available.</p>

## 2. Co-ordinate community activities and promote resources to improve mental health, tackle social isolation and reduce stigma

The COVID-19 pandemic has had negative impacts on many people's social support networks and mental health. People who experience poor mental health and/or social isolation can be at higher risk of experiencing physical ill health and wider challenges. Community-level efforts to improve social connectivity and mental health resilience, for example, group-based physical activity sessions or campaigns to reduce stigma, can bring wide-ranging benefits to both individual and community health and wellbeing.

In the High Wycombe Community Board area, there are high levels of loneliness, social isolation, and mental health conditions, including dementia, that are associated with social isolation. Physical activity can be protective against some mental illness, including dementia, so activities that encourage social connection through physical activity offer a dual benefit.

### How the High Wycombe Community Board can act to support this key area:

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<b>Develop / Fund</b>	
<p><b>Healthy Ageing Collaborative:</b></p> <p>This is a joint initiative between Public Health, Adult Social Care, and the voluntary/community sector. A series of projects to address the emotional and cognitive impacts of isolation and lack of social contact amongst older people will be developed and tested from September 2021.</p>	<p>The Community Board can enhance the test and learn projects by matching the current funding and/or funding additional projects.</p> <p>The Board can also play a key role by encouraging the local VCSE groups to engage with the programme.</p>
<b>Promote, signpost refer and train</b>	
<p><b><a href="http://bucksmind.org.uk">Buckinghamshire Mind - Champion the Change (bucksmind.org.uk)</a></b></p> <p>Champion the Change Buckinghamshire is a partnership of local organisations and people who are committed to ending mental health stigma and discrimination and create hope for those affected by mental illness. Their activities include holding 'Big Bucks Chat' Awareness Days and welcoming people with experience of mental health to become champions.</p>	<p>Promote Champion the Change events, for example, Bucks Big Chat Awareness Days, through your communication channels.</p> <p>Encourage residents and board members to become champions. Champions can organise small community activities, share their stories, and/or create resources for schools, workplaces, and sports clubs.</p>
<p><b>Moving Minds</b></p> <p>Through this initiative, people with mild-moderate poor mental health are invited to take part in community physical activity sessions. The sessions are delivered by trained instructors and aim to build peoples resilience, self-esteem confidence and support mental health recovery. The sessions will act as a stepping stone for accessing other community based physical activity.</p>	<p>Promote the Moving Minds sessions through your communication channels.</p>
<p><b>Mental Health First Aid Training:</b></p> <p>Mental Health First Aid (<a href="https://www.mhfa.org.uk/">MHFA</a>) England provide a variety of online and face-to-face courses, including</p>	<p>Board members can attend and promote training sessions covering Mental Health First Aid, Suicide First Aid, Psychological First Aid.</p>

<p>Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aid training. Further training will also be available via <a href="#">Bucks MIND</a>.</p>	
<p><b>Participate</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Annual mental health communications:</u></b></p> <p>There are a range of communications campaigns throughout the year that promote ways to improve mental health, reduce stigma and/or promote places to get support.</p> <p>You can take part in awareness raising to reduce stigma and help signpost residents who want to get involved in supporting the mental health of their community or those who may benefit from information on services that are available for them to access.</p>	<p>Promote national campaigns through your own communication channels, such as World Suicide Prevention Day (September) and World Mental Health Day (October), using local Buckinghamshire council information, media, tweets and more resources available via Comms and Public Health.</p> <p>Share information on local services that are available for residents to improve their mental health.</p> <p>Have a themed community board meeting on Mental Health and invite local organisations to talk about their work/support that is available.</p>

### 3. Support children to have a healthy start in life by promoting healthy behaviours and environments during pregnancy and throughout childhood

A healthy start in life has life-long impacts on future health, educational attainment, future employment opportunities and mental wellbeing even into older age. A healthy start begins before pregnancy with healthy parents-to-be and continues via healthy families and schools. Supporting parents to adopt healthy behaviours (e.g. not smoking) is important for a healthy pregnancy and childhood, and it increases the likelihood that children will absorb and copy the parents’/carers’ healthy habits and lifestyles.

Physical activity in childhood is important for physical and mental well-being. Not only does physical activity protect against becoming overweight and longer term physical health problems, it can build children’s self-confidence, reduce anxiety and improve self-esteem. Children should participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day.

Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to become obese adults. For some families, we also know that food poverty comes with serious consequences for the health of children. Good nutrition and access to a balanced diet is essential for good child development, education and health and well-being.

#### How the High Wycombe Community Board can act to support this key area:

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<p><b>Develop / Fund</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Smoke free parks and playgrounds:</u></b></p> <p>This is a voluntary ban on smoking in community parks, where children and families are often present. This protects children and adults from second-hand smoke and means children are less likely to observe role models smoking which reduces their risk of taking up smoking.</p>	<p>Identify playgrounds and/or parks in your area to make smoke free and put up signage to show residents that this is a smoke free area. You can encourage community participation by, for example, having local schools enter a ‘no smoking’ sign competition and use the winning design in your chosen parks. The average cost for each playground is likely to cost around £600, depending on how many signs are needed and for how many parks in your area.</p>

<p><b><u>Active Movement</u></b></p> <p>A behaviour change programme which incorporates achievable activity into daily life. This programme runs in schools and empowers schools to make their environment non sedentary.</p>	<p>The Board can fund the Active Movement programme in additional schools in High Wycombe. A group of schools will need to be identified for this programme and costs are around £3k per school.</p> <p>For an example of this programme in a school, see <a href="#">this link</a> describing what has been done in Thomas Hickman School.</p>
<p><b><u>School Wellbeing Service Days:</u></b></p> <p>Secondary schools can host a wellbeing day for pupils and staff to learn about services that can support their mental health and wellbeing and reduce stigma for young people around discussing mental health.</p>	<p>Support schools in your area to develop and organise a wellbeing service day to promote local services to pupils and staff.</p> <p>Together, you can invite services to speak about what they offer, give out leaflets signposting to services and more.</p>
<p><b>Promote, signpost refer and train</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Healthy Start:</u></b></p> <p>This programme provides free vouchers to eligible families (pregnant women and families with at least one child under 4, who are on a low income and in receipt of benefits) to help buy basic food and milk as well as vitamin supplements.</p>	<p>The Board could increase awareness of the Healthy Start programme within the community by working with businesses to ensure they are signed up to the scheme and actively promoting it within their stores without the need for the individual to ask if they accept vouchers.</p> <p>Consider putting funds towards establishing a post covering the higher food poverty areas of Bucks to support this piece of work in collaboration with Bucks Food Partnership, Helping Hands, BHT 0-19 service and Public Health.</p>
<p><b><u>Moving Mums:</u></b></p> <p>The physical activity of women and girls is a priority in Buckinghamshire’s physical activity strategy and the Public Health team has identified that a physical activity project for new mums and/or mums to be would be beneficial for the community. Initial development is anticipated to start in early 2022.</p>	<p>The Board can support Public Health to identify partners and community assets for a Moving Mums working group, with the option to lead, co-chair, or co-ordinate, to explore opportunities for delivering a pilot project.</p> <p>There are several opportunities for the Board to be more involved once a pilot project has been identified, including gathering insights and promoting the project.</p>
<p><b>Participate</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Physical Activity Strategy:</u></b></p> <p>There is a steering group and an action plan for this strategy in Buckinghamshire.</p>	<p>Representatives of your community board can attend and contribute to quarterly meetings and inform the action plans.</p>



**Tobacco Control Alliance and Action Plan**

Buckinghamshire has a tobacco control strategy (and accompanying action plan) that is overseen by the Tobacco Control Alliance. The strategy aims to save lives and improve the health of thousands of people in Buckinghamshire by minimising their exposure to tobacco and works towards the national ambition for a smoke free generation.

Representative(s) from your community board can be part of the Tobacco Control Alliance and participate in quarterly meetings to inform the Buckinghamshire strategy and action plan for tobacco control.