

Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for Wirral

2010-2011



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An overview by the Director of Public Health

The White Paper: 'Healthy lives, Healthy People' advocates a 'life-cycle' approach to public health in the 21st century. This recently published strategy outlines the national approach to tackling public health challenges, which includes protecting the population from serious health threats, helping people to live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives and improving the health of the poorest, fastest.

To do this, we need a new system that is 'fit for purpose' and able to respond quickly and effectively to the challenges of modern society. To support this, the proposed changes include:

- The creation of a new integrated public health service - Public Health England - which will take over functions from the Health Protection Agency and the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse from 2012;
- The transfer of public health improvement from the NHS to Local Authorities, led by a Director of Public Health, with ring-fenced funding and a new health premium to reward for progress made against the public health outcomes framework;
- Giving local government and communities new resources, rights and powers to shape their environments and tackle local problems;
- The setting up of health and wellbeing boards to ensure more local control of health services and increased partnership working between the NHS, social care, public health and other services.

There is no doubt that vast improvements in public health have led to people living longer, whereby more than four in five deaths now occur after the age 65. The nature of health threats has also changed dramatically, with most people now dying in old age and of non-communicable diseases. The biggest threats to life today are diseases that usually occur later in life or those brought on earlier by poor lifestyle choices.

Whatever the outcome of the White Paper consultation and the Health and Social Care Bill, there is merit in looking at health from a lifestyle approach, as evidenced by Professor Sir Michael Marmot's review, 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives.' This year's public health annual report takes a look at how Wirral is tackling this and makes recommendations for action to make further progress.



We have already achieved a great deal for the people of Wirral; the health of the population in general is improving, premature deaths from conditions such as heart disease are reducing and life expectancy is increasing. However, we still have considerable challenges ahead. 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' shows that men living in Wirral's richest areas can expect to live nearly 15 years longer than those from the poorest parts of the borough and that in parts of Birkenhead deaths from heart disease are 15% higher than the national average.

We need to use all of the evidence that is available to us to make an impact. Part of that evidence is provided through the annual Joint Strategic Needs Assessment or JSNA, which helps us to identify our priorities for targeted work. For example, we know that to narrow the gap in life expectancy more quickly than we currently are, we need to target people from the most deprived areas and men aged over 55.

'Healthy Lives, Healthy People's' life-cycle approach focuses on the different stages in people's lives, beginning before birth (with 'Starting Well') right through to old age (with 'Ageing Well'). With these stages come the challenges as well as the opportunities to improve health and wellbeing.

We have adopted this framework for our own report and so, by way of a response to 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People', this year's public health annual report sets out some examples of public health work that is being carried out in Wirral in line with the National Strategy. At the end of each chapter, we have summarised some of the key challenges we have to face if we are to make further progress in improving people's health. These have been made even more demanding because of the significant organisational change currently taking place within the NHS and to public health services. The key to success will be to maintain a focus on the outcomes we need to achieve against a background of strong and effective partnership working.

It is very clear that the long-term costs of ill-health are unsustainable. That is why we need a new, radical approach to tackling our most difficult issues. We welcome the forthcoming changes to the public health system, which will enable us to exert influence where it is needed most.

I hope that you find this report both useful and informative and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to it. I would also urge you to consider how you might play a part in addressing some of the challenges we have highlighted.

In every area I believe that we can work together to improve health and wellbeing for all those who live and work in Wirral.

Fiona Johnstone
Director of Public Health
NHS Wirral/Wirral Council

Starting Well

Starting life well through prevention and early intervention - with much stronger support for early years - is a priority under the new public health strategy. Measures such as supporting mums to breastfeed to protect and promote the health of both mother and baby are high on the agenda.

'Healthy Lives, Healthy People' acknowledges women's health and wellbeing before, during and after pregnancy as being critical in giving children a healthy start in life and laying the groundwork for good health and wellbeing in later life. It notes that maternal depression and anxiety in pregnancy and during a child's early life affects about 10-15% of pregnant women, with rates being nearly twice as high in mothers living in poverty and three times as high for teenage mothers.

The strategy also highlights opportunities to reduce infant mortality further by tackling maternal obesity (nationally, around 1 in 5 mothers could be overweight or obese), increasing breastfeeding rates and decreasing smoking in pregnancy (more than one in six mothers smoke during pregnancy).



Smoking in pregnancy

Around 15% of Wirral mothers are smokers when their baby is born. Since 2009, all pregnant smokers attending Arrowe Park Hospital antenatal clinics are referred into local stop smoking services, enabling 63 (out of 109) mums-to-be to quit last year, resulting in a 58% success rate. This is an improvement on 2008-09 when 26 out of 59 pregnant smokers quit smoking (resulting in a 44% success rate). The initiative also enables health professionals to address other risk factors that could compromise the health and wellbeing of mother and child.

Case study

Elizabeth from Birkenhead had been a smoker for 24 years, but wanted to stop when she became pregnant. She said: "I had cut down but not stopped with my other pregnancies and this time I wanted to crack it completely. I was put in touch with the service via the hospital and it has been brilliant. It was also the phone calls and on-going support that helped – it was so easy to talk to people, they were so non-judgemental."

Measures to protect children, young people and adults from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke are on-going. Among them is the Smokefree Homes and Families scheme, which encourages smokers to pledge to make their home smokefree. Wirral Council's Environmental Health Division works in partnership with other agencies on this initiative.

Breastfeeding

Supporting mums to breastfeed and continue breastfeeding up to the recommended minimum six months remains a priority in Wirral. Children who are breastfed exclusively for this period present with fewer infections than partially or non-breastfed babies and there is recent evidence to suggest that breastfeeding has a positive impact on behaviour.

Wirral falls behind both England and North West averages for breastfeeding initiation (mums who begin breastfeeding) and those still breastfeeding at six to eight weeks. The rates differ widely across Wirral wards and highlight the inequalities across areas. For example, data suggests that 56% of women continue to breastfeed at six to eight weeks in West Kirby and Thurstaston ward, but this falls to 6% in Bidston and St James ward (based on 2009/10 data). Investment made through the NHS Wirral Strategic Commissioning Plan aims to improve breastfeeding prevalence and partnership working with the hospital and community workforce will address the issue of inequality.

In April 2010, NHS Wirral commissioned Home-Start to deliver a breastfeeding peer support programme. The initiative recruits and trains volunteers who have breastfed their own children and can therefore empathise with new mothers. In its first 12 months, Home-Start supported 769 women, more than half of whom were still breastfeeding at six to eight weeks (53%). This exceeds the England average of 44.4% (2009/10).

Midwives and health visitors have appreciated the involvement of breastfeeding peer supporters on hospital wards and at the pre and post birth stages. This programme has now been extended until 2013, with increased targets to support even more breastfeeding mums. The success of this approach has prompted plans to use a similar peer support network to help young people and adults with achieving a healthy weight.



Case study

Caroline (pictured) is a 27-year old first-time mum who gave birth to her son Sebastian in February 2010. When Sebastian was four weeks old, Caroline was referred by her health visitor for breastfeeding support.

The day after her referral Caroline received a home visit from Sara, Home-Start Breastfeeding Coordinator, who observed Caroline feeding her baby before recommending a few simple changes that would make the experience more enjoyable for both her and Sebastian. Before Sara's intervention, Caroline had been ready to give up breastfeeding and says she wishes she had known during pregnancy about the potential problems, especially in the early stages, so that she had more realistic expectations.

Sara re-visited Caroline to offer further support and also introduced her to Joan, a Breastfeeding Helper, who provided regular home visiting support on a one-to-one basis to advise Caroline about night feeding, expressing and storing milk and tips for getting out and about with her baby. Joan accompanied Caroline to local breastfeeding groups and with her encouragement, Caroline became more confident about feeding in public and eventually joined a social network of new mums. Caroline continued to receive regular telephone support and went on to breastfeed her baby for more than six months.

Another positive outcome of Home-Start has been the success of partnership working between the peer support programme and the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP). FNP programmes have specially trained registered nurses who deliver home visits to young first-time mothers. A study of the Wirral FNP in October 2010 revealed that of the 30 babies born since the programme started, 53% were breastfed at birth. This is a considerable improvement on comparable data for 2009/10 which suggests that out of 264 mothers under the age of 20, only 40 (15%) were breastfeeding at birth.

A training course for early years' practitioners covers breastfeeding, weaning, allergies and intolerances, and is delivered by a Health Promotion Specialist in partnership with the Paediatric Community and Hospital Dieticians. Over the last 18 months, 40 practitioners from Local Authority and private day care settings have received training around the environmental, economic, social and health benefits of breastfeeding and how to support breastfeeding women. They also explored current guidance on weaning and learned about the common causes of allergy and intolerance and how these can be managed within their settings.

Social marketing campaigns in Wirral such as the 'Breast milk...It's amazing' campaign, which ran in December 2010, have played their part too by raising awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding, especially among fathers and grandparents. The campaign was coordinated with Knowsley, Liverpool and Sefton Primary Care Trusts to increase breastfeeding rates across Merseyside.

Underpinning all of the above, NHS Wirral has been working towards achieving the charity UNICEF's Baby Friendly initiative. This global programme from the World Health Organisation and UNICEF accredits NHS and community units that have put in place recognised standards to promote and protect breastfeeding and to support mothers who choose to bottle-feed. During 2010/11 Stage 1 accreditation was achieved for all community settings and Stage 2 accreditation was achieved for the hospital setting. Baby Friendly best practice standards are being pursued through training, awareness-raising and data collection.

Maternal health

At the start of pregnancy it is estimated that 15% of women in England are obese, with around half of women of child-bearing age being overweight. Obesity in pregnancy has been shown to result in increased risk of prolonged and 'difficult' labour, emergency caesarean section, stillbirth and subsequent obesity of the newborn child (NICE guidance references 2010).

NHS Wirral is working with the Cheshire and Merseyside Public Health Network (ChaMPs) on a piece of research to support pregnant women in healthy weight management. Part of this research seeks to better equip health professionals in supporting women with managing their weight through pregnancy.



Example of good practice

From the moment a baby is born, its parents become the most important people in that child's life - but even parents need a helping hand occasionally. This was evident when a number of families reported feeling lonely and isolated several months after their babies were discharged from Arrowe Park Hospital's Neonatal Unit, according to a report by FaB, a dedicated Family and Baby Support Service launched in March 2010 in response to the needs of these families.

The report noted that although the babies themselves had been discharged fit and well from the unit (and subsequently from the Neonatal Community Team), as time went on some parents found themselves struggling to cope.

Local children's centres provided the solution; they already had a valuable resource to help these families in the form of centre-based family support workers. A six-month pilot was set up whereby a support worker was deployed to the Neonatal Unit for one afternoon a week. Clearly visible to parents and staff, they were able to address issues directly as they arose.

FaB is an opt-out referral system, allowing referrals on all infants admitted to the unit to be made only with the family's consent. These referrals are then passed by the support worker to the family's local children's centre (a slightly adapted version of this scheme also exists for parents living outside Wirral). To ensure that family support workers feel confident about their new role they undertake two study days to familiarise themselves with the unit and neonatal care and receive bereavement training from the Alder Centre.

In the year under review, 119 families were supported through FaB, a counselling/support agency for anyone affected by the death of a child. Evaluation confirmed that between February and May 2010, nearly half of all families on the ward received support from the FaB support workers and 100% of these families said they were satisfied with the service. More than 37% have since registered with their local children's centre, enabling continuity of care.

Another safety net for new mums struggling to bond with their babies is the Mellow Parenting initiative commissioned by Wirral Council. The programme has specially trained practitioners supporting mothers with issues such as anxiety and postnatal depression. The sessions are provided in children's centres with childcare support on site.

The CHiCC* team, which leads the service, also provides on-going training and support for early years' staff. Many children's centre staff are highly skilled at identifying maternal mental health concerns at an early stage and are able to refer mums for counselling sessions.

*CHiCC is an acronym for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Children's Centres.



Tackling child poverty

NHS Wirral and Wirral Council recognise that poverty is damaging to children, families and entire communities and must be addressed through a clear strategy and targeted intervention. Tackling child and family poverty is critical to our wider efforts with partners to deliver longer-term objectives for prosperity and better quality of life for everyone in Wirral.

To inform the development of Wirral's strategy, the local authority has established an independent advisory group, the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group, which has representation from all political parties and includes Wirral members of the Liverpool City Region Poverty and Life Chances Commission to ensure links are maintained to this sub-regional work. It also represents the voluntary, community and faith sectors and service users, as well as partners such as Job Centre Plus and Wirral Metropolitan College.

The Council and its partners recognise that poverty is linked to a wide range of problems, such as poor health, early parenthood, worklessness, poor housing and low levels of aspiration and educational attainment. The latest data shows that more than 24% of Wirral children are living in poverty. This represents about 17,000 children in total, the majority being under the age of 16. This figure is higher than the North West and England averages (22.8% and 20.9% respectively). In some pockets of the borough, the figure is as high as 72%.

These statistics mask much more significant child poverty rates and related deprivation within local communities. The Wirral Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment sets out detailed information about the local population and the range of issues which can influence deprivation and poverty. This information draws on the Wirral Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.



“Better early years support could make a big difference to children’s lives.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

Since 2007, half of all Wirral’s early years’ settings have signed up to the Health Promoting Early Years Programme (HPEYP), a spin-off from the very successful Wirral Healthy Schools Programme, which now has 100% of schools on board.

Wirral was one of the first areas in the North West to develop a HPEYP. Co-ordinated jointly by NHS Wirral and Wirral Council, the initiative is based on a ‘whole settings’ approach, involving parents and staff working together to stimulate the under fives into being more physically active and eating more healthily, and improving their mental health and general wellbeing. Last year 26 settings in Wirral achieved HPEYP status, a further 10 were working towards it and 20 agreed to commit to the programme in 2011

Example of good practice

Manor Childcare and Out of School Club, a registered charity, cares for 30 children at any one time. Their approach to promoting the benefits of a healthy lifestyle has resulted in parents actively seeking advice about healthy eating and exercise while their children learn to grow vegetables and cook healthy dishes with their carers.

Centre manager Jacqui Woods, a qualified nursery nurse, made the decision to become a HPEYP setting in 2008 to improve the quality of provision for the children, their families and staff. The healthy practices Jacqui and her team introduced on site soon filtered through to parents and into their homes. As a result, more children are enjoying freshly prepared meals and there has been a notable increase in the number of youngsters walking or cycling to the centre.

“Children’s centres locally will focus particularly on engaging with families where children are at risk of poor outcomes ...they will act as hubs for family support and as a base for voluntary and community groups.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

Children’s centres in Wirral are at the heart of a number of exciting initiatives that support parents and carers with young children. Activity varies from centre to centre, but may include breastfeeding support, advice on early years’ childcare and education, healthy eating advice or parenting skills classes.

Establishing healthy habits during a child’s early years is crucial to laying the foundation for a healthy future. Recent developments reflecting this philosophy include the roll out of the Active Tots programme across children’s centres in Wirral (promoting physical and social development in babies and young children) and the introduction of targeted weekly physical activity sessions for three to five-year olds, predominantly in areas of Wirral where obesity levels are highest.

Active Tots encourages parents/carers to engage with their youngsters through the use of large, eye-catching cards that demonstrate physical activity techniques such as crawling, jumping, balancing and throwing. The activity sessions are run through a 12-month programme designed to make physical activity fun as well as productive for youngsters.

Physical activity schemes are sustained by including free HENRY training (Health Exercise

Nutrition for the Really Young) for Wirral early years’ practitioners as part of a Department of Health funded North West programme. In the last 12 months, 25 practitioners from NHS Wirral and Wirral Council have attended this two-day course, to develop the knowledge and skills that will enable them to work effectively and sensitively with families and young children when addressing issues of childhood overweight and obesity. This evidence-based workforce development programme is underpinned by the Family Partnership Model, which supports long term behaviour change.





Immunisation

Immunising children against infectious diseases is one of the most important ways to protect against serious illness, disability and even death. Overall, Wirral's childhood immunisation programmes are successful, with high levels of children protected from preventable diseases.

However, not enough children are receiving the necessary two doses of MMR vaccine (which protects against Measles, Mumps and Rubella) by the age of five years. Wirral is currently achieving 88% on this target and needs to achieve at least 95% to reach an adequate level of protection for the population as a whole. The recent measles outbreak in Wirral is a reminder of why a high uptake of childhood immunisation is so important.

The drive to improve immunisation uptake for children remains a high priority in Wirral and every effort is being made to address the issues that contribute to a reduced uptake.

One example of this is a fairly recent innovation in which community health nurses can immunise children as part of 'Healthy Child' drop-in clinics. Schemes currently running from Victoria Central Hospital and at Seacombe Children's Centre have so far led to nearly 40 children receiving vaccinations that were missed previously (for a variety of reasons, including refusal by parents and missed appointments for scheduled vaccinations).

This service has been welcomed by families and health colleagues. As well as offering immunisation to families whose children are behind in their vaccinations, the clinic also provides

easy access to the health visiting team for health reviews, one-to-one breastfeeding support, baby weight checks, sleep or behaviour concerns, dietary advice and support with postnatal depression. Consideration is currently being given to replicating this model in other Wirral locations.

Oral health

Children's centres, along with early years' settings, engage youngsters and their families in oral health promotion through schemes such as the Bright Smiles campaign, which promotes regular brushing with fluoride toothpaste.

In spite of a general decline in the prevalence of dental decay in recent years, levels of the disease continue to remain unacceptably high, notably in disadvantaged areas. However, Wirral's Fluoride Milk programme - in which 4,000 children receive fluoridated milk in schools to cut levels of tooth decay - is one of the most successful of its kind in the UK.

Wirral's Oral Health Promotion Team continues to work closely with the Health Promoting Early Years' Team to promote the benefits of oral health to parents and families. This included the provision of training, education and resources to thousands of parents and staff working with young children. The continued success of this partnership working depends on future funding for training opportunities.



The challenges for Starting Well

Wirral is working in partnership to follow the recommendations made within the national Healthy Child Programme (HCP) for 0-5 year olds. In order to sustain this momentum within the new public health landscape, health and social care staff working in early years' settings should deliver brief health promotion interventions. These would include smoking cessation, oral health, nutrition, breastfeeding awareness and weaning. **It is recommended that the employers instructed should ensure that Health and Social Care staff are trained and empowered to deliver brief interventions.**

Wirral's breastfeeding rates are consistently lower than the regional and national rates. The number of public places that promote and welcome breastfeeding needs to increase. **It is recommended that the Wirral Breastfeeding Steering Group ensures a proactive response to encourage and increase the number of breastfeeding-friendly places.**

Progress has been made in making maternal mental health services accessible through children's centres, enabling issues to be addressed early and preventing their development into more serious illness. However, an increasing number of pregnant

women are overweight or obese. **It is recommended that the Childhood Obesity Steering Group should explore the best means by which to prevent and manage unhealthy weight gain during pregnancy.**

Extreme poverty and deprivation is experienced by some communities in Wirral. The challenge remains to engage all partners and organisations, and particularly the communities themselves, in addressing this issue and improving life chances. The Wirral Child Poverty Strategy will be a critical driver in delivering this. **It is recommended that all relevant staff should ensure that the recommendations of the Child Poverty Strategy are embedded in their workplans, and should work collaboratively to implement them.**

Uptake rates for the MMR vaccination must be improved in order to achieve the 95% needed across the local community. **It is recommended that the Wirral Immunisation Steering Group should ensure that all of the key actions within the Immunisation Action Plan are progressed.**

Developing Well

“The shift of power from central government to schools and local communities provides new opportunities and incentives to forge local partnerships to deliver better health outcomes for children and young people.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

It is recognised that good schools understand the connections between pupils' physical and mental health, their safety, and their educational attainment and within the new public health landscape, schools will be able to draw on additional expertise from local health professionals and children's services to best meet the needs of their pupils.

Improving outcomes for children and young people is at the heart of Wirral's Children and Young People's Plan and examples of how the plan's aims and objectives have translated into action can be seen throughout this section of the report.



Childhood obesity

“Progress has been made in tackling childhood obesity – the rise among 2-10 year olds from 1 in 10 children in 1995 to almost 1 in 7 in 2008 appears to be levelling off. However, more than 1 in 5 children are still overweight or obese by age 3. Rates are higher among some BME communities and in lower socioeconomic groups.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

There are around 8,000 obese children and young people in Wirral. The most recent data from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) 2009/10 suggests that in Wirral the prevalence of obesity in Reception-aged children has increased to 10.6% (from 9.6% in 2008/09). For Year 6 children, data suggests that prevalence has remained relatively stable at 20.3% (from 20.6% 2008/09).

In line with the Healthy Child Programme, Wirral health visitors carry out child health reviews (for children aged between two and two-and-a-half). They use this opportunity to record each child’s Body Mass Index (a calculation that uses height and weight to estimate the amount of body fat) and if concerned, refer parents to a dietician. Training around diet and nutrition is provided for all health visitors by qualified dieticians.

Wirral’s three local child weight management services support a number of families to increase their physical activity levels, understand food labelling and portion sizes and to eat more healthily. An external evaluation of the programmes conducted during 2010 praised members of staff for ensuring that participants had a positive experience during their sessions. Although evaluation confirmed increased levels of confidence among the children taking part, it also highlighted the low uptake by families in greatest need of healthy guidance.

The Environmental Health Division’s Food Safety Team discusses child nutrition with childminders as part of the registration process. The team is also proactive in addressing the high levels of salt and trans fats in takeaway foods and has been working closely with Trading Standards to develop fact sheets for fast food outlets. These resources offer advice about reducing salt and fat levels and substituting unhealthy ingredients for healthier options.

“The National Child Measurement Programme will provide local areas with information about levels of overweight and obesity in children to inform planning and commissioning of local services.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

The NCMP involves routinely weighing and measuring all Reception and Year 6 children and provides the only reliable indicator of childhood obesity levels. Therefore, the sharing of information with other relevant agencies is crucial if action is to be taken at local and national level. Last year Wirral was showcased as an example of best practice for the way in which it shared NCMP data with partners including schools, children’s centres and local child weight management services.

In Wirral, the programme has been enhanced and now proactively identifies children who would benefit from specialist weight management services. To support this activity, NHS Wirral has provided additional healthy lifestyle lessons (linked to the programme and to the Department of Health’s Change4Life public health campaign) to all primary schools. Lesson plans and free resources, such as pedometers, are provided to each school following their NCMP appointment to maximise the programme’s impact.



Healthy schools programme

Wirral continues to work closely with schools through the Enhanced Healthy Schools Programme (EHSP), the Weight Management Programme and Health Services in Schools Programme to improve the health and wellbeing of young people. It is also intended to develop a peer support programme for young people (and adults) with weight problems. Support will be provided by volunteers who have been through local NHS weight management programmes and therefore understand the issues.

Example of good practice

West Kirby Primary School has worked in partnership with the Wirral Healthy Schools team for more than nine years. They were one of the first schools in Wirral to register on the government's Change4Life website, ensuring that they integrated the key health and wellbeing messages into the work they were delivering through the Healthy Schools Programme.

One of the school's many incentives involved Year 5 pupils undergoing training from a snack company called 'Fruit to Suit'. They learned how to carry out market research, promotion and stock control, which subsequently led to the school tuck shop selling dried fruit and seeds and bottled water at break-time. This not only raised awareness among pupils about the availability of healthy snacks, but it also led to a better understanding of healthy eating. West Kirby was also the first school in the borough to have three walking routes for their Walking Bus.

"Good schools will be active promoters of health in childhood and adolescence, because healthy children with high self-esteem learn and behave better at school."

'Healthy Lives, Healthy People'

Every one of Wirral's schools is committed to the National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP), which has healthy eating and physical activity as two of its key themes. The NHSP, launched in 1999 as a government cross-department initiative to promote a 'whole school' and 'whole child' approach to health, is a key delivery mechanism for Department of Health programmes such as Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives and the Healthy Child Programme.

Wirral is one of only five programmes nationally to have achieved National Healthy Schools Status in 100% of schools. One of the programme's strengths is its extensive partnership working. Last year the Wirral Healthy Schools team presented workshops to pupils, school councils, staff, governors and parents to support the understanding of food issues and the importance of healthy eating messages.

"We expect excellent health and pastoral support to continue to be a hallmark of good schools. Good schools understand well the connections between pupils' physical and mental health, their safety, and their educational attainment..."

'Healthy Lives, Healthy People'

Pupils at 28 of Wirral's 29 secondary schools have access to health and wellbeing services on the school site, with minimum disruption to their education, through the Health Services in School Programme.

Bespoke services have been designed for Wirral's special schools, faith schools and a regular clinic for young people engaged with the Youth Offending Service, in addition to the 'core offer' provided for all other secondary pupils. The lead providers are Wirral School Nursing Service and Response, Wirral Council's specialist youth service. This joint approach is proving very successful; attendance is high and it is understood that pupils trust the service and school staff value it.

School drop-in clinics are provided once a week, usually at lunch-time, and pupils can access a range of information, health promotion materials, general health advice (Body Mass

Index, height, weight and vision check) as well as consult with the school nurse or youth worker one-to-one.

Key concerns among pupils are friendship and family problems, mental health issues, including low self esteem and anxiety, body image and relationships. Risk-taking behaviours identified through the service include self-harm, smoking, binge drinking and unplanned sexual activity, and the service is providing valuable early identification and support for pupils and assessment for referral.

Case study

A Year 9 student asked his school nurse for support to quit smoking. The student's home life was unstable and he was also struggling at school. One of the Response youth workers (who is trained to provide brief stop smoking interventions) engaged one-to-one with the student over a number of weeks. Although the initial focus of the sessions had been stopping smoking, a good relationship developed and the student felt able to address a number of other issues affecting him.

At the time of writing, the young man has reduced his smoking from around 10 cigarettes a day to one or two at weekends. He has also developed a number of interests and has announced plans to begin training as a mechanic when he leaves school. The school nurse has noticed how much happier he appears to be.

Additional services have been commissioned to provide more capacity for targeted early intervention. These include smoking cessation, mental health and wellbeing /improving self-esteem, and contraception provision.

Birkenhead Sixth Form College students also benefit from a similar initiative, although it is commissioned in a different way. Cloughton Medical Centre, which is located opposite the college, provides a service to the college students one day a week through its practice nurse, with GP back-up. The nurse offers health advice and information on a range of topics and is also able to provide enhanced sexual health advice. Students can text, drop-in or make an appointment with her. The nurse also liaises with student tutor group leaders and is becoming a familiar face at the college. Uptake of this service is rising steadily.

The health of looked after children

In March 2011, an independent report praised Wirral's safeguarding of children and its services for children in care (looked after children). The Ofsted report described the leadership, management and partnership working as 'outstanding' and concurred that services for children and young people in both areas were 'good' with a 'good' capacity to improve further. As part of the report, a Care Quality Commission inspector also looked at health services for looked after children, which were also rated outstanding.

A large number of local professionals caring for children and young people (foster and residential carers) have accessed sexual health training. Similarly, many young people (notably those who are most vulnerable to teenage pregnancy) have used the free and confidential Brook Outreach Programme.

Using a framework adopted from the Healthy Schools Programme, NHS Wirral developed

a 'Healthier Homes' standard for residential settings to ensure that all looked after children have access to healthy lifestyles, including healthy food, opportunities for physical activity and other wider wellbeing issues. The standard was developed following broad consultation with stakeholders and consists of 29 elements of 'Useful Practice'.

All Wirral residential settings have signed up to achieving this award and are using the framework to secure, evidence and celebrate current best practice. As part of the verification process feedback from the young people who reside at the home is included in the evidence presented. The initiative received a significant boost when the Local Authority incorporated it within all new providers' contracts.

The Healthier Homes standard is being adapted for foster carers to engage with, in conjunction with the Fostering Service team, Fostering Partnership and Fostering Task Force and has been linked to the Local Authority's 'Healthy Homes' programme (to include home safety issues) in a highly effective partnership approach.



Substance misuse

“Across the UK, around 1 in 3 young adults drink to the point of drunkenness, the highest rates among any age group. Accidents due to alcohol (including drink-driving accidents) are the leading cause of death among 16-24 year olds.”

'Healthy Lives, Healthy People'

Trading Standards North West conducted the Young Persons Alcohol and Tobacco Survey 2011 with more than 13,000 young people aged 14-17 years. Results from the survey showed that:

- 29% of 14-17 year olds claim to drink alcohol once a week or more (a 9% fall compared with 2009 results);
- The proportion who claimed they never drink increased by 2% to 20%;
- The majority of respondents (39%) claim to drink in groups. Drinking in groups of six or more has risen by 9% (79% compared with 70% in 2009).

Trading Standards has a statutory duty to enforce the law on illegal sale of alcohol to under-18s. This is done by conducting intelligence-led covert operations targeting premises suspected of selling to underage children. Those who flout the law are subject to appropriate legal action by Trading Standards, which may include a caution or prosecution following a criminal investigation. In addition, Trading Standards makes effective use of Licence Reviews where appropriate, ensuring that licensed premises implement systems to detect underage sales and prevent their staff from breaking the law. Where applicable, revocation of a licence is requested by Trading Standards, which has resulted in two premises being stripped of their licence to sell alcohol.

As well as enforcement activity, Trading Standards also provides training to licensed premises on responsible alcohol retailing and the prevention of underage sales. Feedback provided by course delegates is positive with 100% of delegates strongly agreeing that the course gave them a better understanding of the anti-social and health problems associated with underage sales.

Trading Standards has detected an increase in the supply of illicit (duty-diverted) alcohol across Wirral from licensed premises. Through joint work with Merseyside Police Licensing Unit and Wirral Council's Licensing Department, more than 1,000 litres of illegal alcohol has been seized from a number of premises.

By reducing the supply of alcohol to under-18s and removing illicit alcohol from off licences across Wirral it is hoped that residents are less likely to be exposed to illegal alcohol and Wirral's young people are less likely to obtain alcohol in the first place.

The Adult and Young People's Alcohol Treatment Programme, which incorporates education, prevention and treatment services for adults and children, has reported a continued reduction in hospital admissions of under-18s for alcohol related harm (2011/12 Refresh Plan). The programme plans to step up measures to protect young people. Examples include improved links to the local Accident and Emergency Department and the rolling out of a social marketing campaign using peer mentors.

Prevention remains a key feature of activity to address alcohol and substance misuse in Wirral. Engagement with schools through Health Services in Schools ensures that appropriate interventions are provided to young people at the early stages of their alcohol use. The Young Person's Alcohol Intervention Project also provides innovative interventions to address alcohol-related anti social behaviour. This is delivered through Response, Wirral Council's advice and counselling service for young people.

Last year NHS Wirral supported families in tackling alcohol misuse among vulnerable young people through measures such as educational alcohol awareness programmes - working with large groups of pupils in schools - and jointly funding the award-winning Town Centre Outreach project, which supports homeless people with alcohol problems into treatment, rehabilitation and accommodation.

As young people make the transition to adulthood, the aim is to strengthen their ability to take control of their lives, within clear boundaries, and help reduce their susceptibility to harmful influences, in areas such as sexual health, teenage pregnancy, drugs and alcohol. They should have easy access to health services they trust, says the new public health strategy.

Response (referred to earlier) provides specialist services for young people, including support around substance and alcohol misuse. One relatively new targeted intervention has been to deploy two of their team to Arrowe Park Hospital's Children's Emergency Department (CED) on Friday and Saturday nights - two of the busiest times for admittances - to offer information, advice and support to young people who are there because of alcohol misuse. With parental permission, the Response Alcohol Workers develop a rapport with the young person, encouraging them to accept follow-up support from the service to try to reduce the risk of a repeat visit to A & E.

Evaluation has confirmed that the presence of the Response workers makes a big difference to the number of young people accepting the follow-up advice and support (95% of referrals between April 2010 and March 2011 were as a result of having Response Workers in CED). Workshops in schools have also been invaluable in raising awareness among young people about hospital admittance through alcohol misuse.

"I wasn't scared to come to Response because I met the worker at A&E. I felt more safe (sic) to meet them again."
A 13-year old service user.



Reducing smoking among children and young people

The percentage of Wirral children who have tried smoking is higher than the UK average. Data from the Young Persons Alcohol and Tobacco Survey 2011, conducted by Trading Standards North West, found that 18% of 14-17 year olds smoke, with 19% of females and 16% of males smoking. Support to stop smoking is offered as part of the Wirral Health Services in Schools Programme.

Trading Standards actively enforces the law surrounding the sale of cigarettes and tobacco products to under-18s and anyone flouting this law is subject to appropriate legal action, which may include a caution or prosecution following a criminal investigation. Training is provided by Trading Standards to retailers and licensed premises on responsible retailing and the prevention of underage sales.

Illicit tobacco is another major concern. Despite being seen as a victimless crime by some, the trade in illegal tobacco concerns everyone. Illegal tobacco is considered to be responsible for four times as many deaths as drugs and 4,000 fewer people would die each year from smoking-related illnesses in the UK if tobacco smuggling was wiped out.

Since illegal cigarettes are far cheaper - up to half the price of legal ones - they make it easier for children to take up the habit, encourage people to smoke more and make it harder for smokers to quit.

Example of good practice

Eighty per cent of smokers begin when they are teenagers, so removing the temptation of cheap, illicit tobacco is a priority for parents and professionals. In June 2010, a campaign entitled 'Get Some Answers', was launched by The North of England Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health Programme. This was carried out in partnership with Smokefree North West and Trading Standards in Wirral. The campaign specifically targeted mums and other concerned residents with adverts, billboards and posters encouraging people to report any illegal tobacco activity in their area.

Trading Standards has reacted to intelligence received as a result of the campaign, resulting in a number of seizures of illicit tobacco. The latest seizure resulted in more than 53,000 cigarettes and almost 18.5kg of hand rolling tobacco being removed from the streets.



Sexual health

“Teenagers and young people are among the biggest lifestyle risk-takers. Rates of STIs such as chlamydia are increasing, with 15-24 year olds the most affected group. Teenage conceptions are at a 20-year low but are still high compared with Western Europe.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

Free and confidential chlamydia testing for 15-24 year olds is available across community health sites, schools and colleges in Wirral and although the number of people in this age group seeking or undergoing tests for chlamydia fell last year, Wirral maintained its very high diagnostic rate (10.4% of those tested for the infection), making it one of the highest achieving primary care trusts in the country.

Operating alongside this is a free and easily accessible condom distribution network for young people. Tiered training is available to non-health professionals working with young people to support access to condoms and safe and correct usage.



Example of good practice

Brook Wirral is the first local service provider to have met the Government’s ‘You’re Welcome’ quality criteria. Commissioned by Public Health, Brook Wirral provides a core clinical service as well as an outreach and education service, and is a double national award winner. Examples of the agency’s work include the ‘All Different, All Beautiful’ personal development programme, which has provided young people who lack any qualifications with their first accredited learning programme, and ‘Work It Out,’ which supports young people to explore issues of sexual identity.

Teenage pregnancy champions

Ground-breaking interventions, including the use of Teenage Pregnancy Champions, led to Wirral becoming one of the most improved areas in the North West for reduced teenage pregnancy rates (2008 data).

Most recent data from the Office of National Statistics indicates that Wirral experienced an under 18 conception rate of 44.0 (per 1,000 15-17 year olds) in 2009. This is an increase on the 2008 data (40.0 per 1,000 15-17 year olds), but demonstrates a 13.1% reduction in the overall rate since the 1998 baseline.

A gradual downward trend has been maintained since the start of the National Strategy and the overall improvement reflects the continued commitment of all organisations working with young people across Wirral to reduce the teenage conception rate and prevent unplanned teenage pregnancy. Wirral’s Teenage Pregnancy Steering Group continues to oversee progress made around this agenda.

Wirral contributed best practice case studies to the North West Compendium for Teenage Pregnancy, produced by the Government Office North West. These included a Wirral-wide approach to sex education through the use of Teenage Pregnancy Champions and work with head teachers and school governors to assist in delivering consistent messages around sex and relationships.

Although the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy has come to an end, work around the prevention of teenage pregnancy continues at a local level. Recommendations from the national Sexual Health and Teenage Pregnancy paper, due to be published in 2011, will help to inform a refreshed local action plan and the setting of local targets.



Wirral has secured funding for key programmes to 2013 via the NHS Wirral Strategic Commissioning Plan to continue commissioning a number of initiatives around sexual health and teenage pregnancy, including the Health Services in Schools Programme, the Outreach education programmes delivered by Brook Wirral, and ‘You’re Welcome’, which is the Department of Health’s criteria for making health services young people friendly.

Protecting against cervical cancer

Thousands of young women in Wirral have been protected against the twelfth most common women's cancer in the UK. During 2010/11, 88% of 12-13 year old girls in Wirral completed the three-dose course of human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine, which will help protect them against developing cervical cancer later in life. This figure exceeds the North West uptake (of 84%) for that age group. Catch up programmes were successfully implemented in Wirral schools and GP practices.

The HPV vaccine protects young women against two strains of the virus which cause 70% of all cervical cancer. The success of the programme has been attributed to the combined efforts of the PCT, Wirral Council and Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, working through a dedicated immunisation team.

Emotional health

“Teenage years are a crucial time for health and wellbeing in later life. Half of lifetime mental illness (excluding dementia) starts by the age of 14.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

For young people struggling with emotional issues, and not wanting to confide in those closest to them, the internet is an ideal medium. Kooth.com, the free, safe and confidential on-line counselling and advice service for 11-25 year olds, saw a 73% increase in the number of young people registering with the service in 2010. Young people access the site for a variety of reasons, but some of the most frequent requests are for help with family relationships, bullying, depression and loneliness.

For parents, there is the reassurance that the chat rooms and message boards are constantly monitored to keep their child safe. Kooth is not a substitute for face-to-face support but it can reach young people earlier - including the more vulnerable, harder to reach young people - and then refer them into the appropriate services, such as Bullybusters, Brook Wirral and Response.

A more recent website development is Teen Wirral (for 13-19 year olds), developed by Wirral Council in partnership with young people themselves in 2010. A one-stop shop, it offers advice on a range of health and lifestyle issues. The site also caters for parents, youth workers and others who take care of young people.

As part of the above strategy, NHS Wirral commissions Speakeasy, a two-hour course run over eight weeks which helps parents and carers approach the subject of sex and relationships more confidently with their children. The course covers such topics as staying safe, contraception and sexually transmitted infections (STI's). Wirral has also delivered ‘Train the Trainer’ courses for more than 30 professionals and parents. The next step will be to expand parenting interventions in obesity programmes so that parents/carers have a better understanding of their children's dietary and exercise needs.

The challenges for Developing Well

There is a growing misconception that being overweight or obese is ‘normal’. The Children's Services workforce must have the skills to recognise childhood obesity and be able to talk to parents and carers about their children's weight. **It is recommended that the NHS Wirral Obesity Programme and relevant employers prioritise workforce development to ensure that all of the children's workforce are capable of addressing this issue.**

Chlamydia screening needs to be seen as a normal part of being young, sexually active and responsible. **It is recommended that the NHS Wirral Sexual Health Programme is able to meet the increasing demands for testing and monitors progress; and that work takes place so that the behaviours and attitudes of young men in particular are understood.**

Wirral's success in reducing teenage pregnancies has been the result of a joined up approach to this complex issue and this must continue. **It is recommended that the service currently in place to prevent unintended conceptions be maintained and to ensure simple and straightforward access to the full range of contraceptive and termination services.**

The HPV vaccination programme in Wirral has been extremely successful. However, the challenge will be to ensure that as many girls (aged 12-13 years) as possible continue to receive all three doses. **It is recommended that the Wirral Immunisation Steering Group works closely with the School Nursing Service, Wirral Schools and GPs to maximise uptake of the vaccination.**

Wirral is working in partnership to review and follow the recommendations made within the national Healthy Child Programme to ensure that a coherent service is provided and that those children who need more help receive it. **It is recommended that the findings of the review should be reported to, and implemented across, the Children's Trust Partnership.**



Living Well

“Many premature deaths and illnesses could be avoided by improving lifestyles. It is estimated that a substantial proportion of cancers and over 30% of deaths from circulatory disease could be avoided, mainly through a combination of stopping smoking, improving diet and increasing physical activity.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

People living in the most affluent areas of Wirral live on average more than 10 years longer than those in the most deprived areas (15 years for men), and the gap in mortality rates between the latter and the rest of Wirral continues to grow.

To tackle these inequalities, NHS Wirral commissioned a Health Action Area Team to work within the 20% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (areas with the poorest health). Health Trainers work within these communities to provide one-to-one support to help people develop individual action plans to improve lifestyles, and to refer people into the Community Programme. Many of the trainers reside within the neighbourhoods in which they work.

The activities on offer to support behaviour change (including health walks, Tai Chi and gardening to promote positive mental wellbeing) are based on what local residents, health practitioners and voluntary organisations said they wanted. This can be anything from ‘healthy eating on a budget’ and stop smoking courses to Salsa dance classes and chair based exercise...for the young at heart. The emphasis is on providing services at the heart of communities, inspired by the very people for whom they are intended.

Last year, the Community Programme recorded more than 18,000 attendances, with an increase in uptake by residents from some of the most deprived areas of Wirral. Among those who signed up to the scheme were families who wanted to get more active and achieve a healthy weight; men aged over 40 (particularly those over 55) and people with anxiety and/or depression or long term conditions.

One of the off-shoots of this initiative was the introduction of Community Health Champions (CHCs). These are volunteers who undergo accredited training before supporting members of their local community to improve their health and wellbeing, signposting them to a Health Trainer for a basic health check and personalised lifestyle action plan or signposting to other local services/activities.

The range of activities within the Community Programme has been extended and now includes initiatives provided by neighbourhood groups and third sector organisations. Wirral Council’s District Team, which is based within the Environmental Health Division, has been involved in the training of Health Champions, covering areas such as obesity, smoking, alcohol and depression to support their efforts within the Community Programme.

Supporting smokers to quit

Smoking is the single biggest preventable cause of early death and illness, so helping people to stop smoking is a public health priority in Wirral. At the time of writing, Wirral Stop Smoking Services has achieved over 2,300 quitters (for 2010/11), and the figure is still rising. This highly effective smoking cessation service is provided alongside a number of complementary services to encourage people to quit. The aim is to get 5,000 people to quit smoking this year.



Health Champion **Community Health Champions** **Are you an active member of your community?**

★ Do you have an interest in Health & Well being?
★ Do you want to support people to make a lifestyle change?
★ Do you have a few hours a week to spare?

Becoming a volunteer Health Champion with NHS Wirral is for you!

By completing a 2-day course through NHS Wirral, will not only supply you with the knowledge and information to help your community but also gain a Level 2 accreditation from the Royal Society of Public Health in Understanding Health Improvement.

We will supply you with a NHS T-shirt and name badge as well as a resource bag for you to pass on information and resources to people in your community.

For more information on how you can become a Community Health Champion please contact **Matthew Shannon on 0151 630 8383** or e-mail matthew.shannon@wirral.nhs.uk

Case study

A resident of Leasowe was encouraged by his practice nurse to stop smoking after several failed attempts. He said: “The help and support given to me by the Leasowe team (Health Action Area) helped me feel that this was the first time I have tried, and I forgot about the failure. I have not smoked for weeks and I look forward to not smoking in the future.”

Smoking prevalence in Wirral is 18%, but in areas of deprivation this rises to 35%. A survey carried out in November 2010 showed that nearly 60% of Wirral smokers accessing stop smoking services live in deprived areas and this figure is set to increase to 70% following new targets set for the social marketing campaign 'Quit Stop Wirral' and Wirral Stop Smoking Services.

'Quit Stop Wirral' (previously, 'Your Reason, Your Way') was launched last year to reach out to smokers who want to stop on their own rather than through established stop smoking services. The service uses the social networking site Facebook and text messaging and deploys mobile trailers to town centres, enabling smokers to walk in off the street and collect vouchers or a prescription for nicotine patches. Successful quitters are entered into a prize draw for supermarket vouchers. In its first four months of operation, 1,666 smokers registered with the campaign and 93% of these set a quit date. From 1 April 2011, the Quit Stop campaign is led by Wirral Stop Smoking Services.

The number of professionals who underwent training in smoking cessation continues to grow. Last year 31 pharmacy staff trained as Level 2 Intermediate Stop Smoking Advisors following specialist training from the NHS Stop Smoking Service. Training was also delivered to practice nurses and school nurses to enable them to provide support to adults and young people within their own areas, and new pharmacotherapy guidelines ensured that smokers had access to all stop smoking products as a first line choice.

More than 300 tobacco users from BME communities quit with Wirral Change, a voluntary organisation which offers information, advice and guidance on health and wellbeing, jobs, education, training and self-employment as well as signposting to other services for BME residents.

A new voluntary smoking cessation programme is being developed to train 16 community-based providers to deliver smoking cessation; each organisation will be supported and monitored. This latest development moves away from a health professional-driven service by making

full use of existing networks in the community. It will send out the message that tobacco control is everyone's concern.

Wirral also launched the awareness-raising 'Take 7 Steps' campaign, highlighting the risk to health of secondhand smoke and the benefits to loved ones if people were to take just seven steps away from the home when they light up. Partners supporting this initiative include the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Wirral Stop Smoking Service, the Health Action Area Teams and Wirral Healthy Schools.

Wirral is a member of the sub-regional network, Cheshire and Merseyside Tobacco Alliance (CMTA), which has been in operation since 2000. It comprises eight Primary Care Trusts and corresponding Local Authorities, covering a population of around 2.6 million people. The Alliance provides a strategic overview for tobacco control within Cheshire and Merseyside and supports the development of tobacco policy and management of

initiatives at a local partnership level

Wirral also works closely with the cardiovascular health charity Heart of Mersey on specific tobacco control projects, such as the Mersey Charter and training around tackling illicit tobacco and underage sales. The Mersey Charter was introduced four years ago to support organisations with developing policies and practices to protect staff in the community from exposure to secondhand smoke. It was awarded to NHS Wirral in 2009.

Smokefree enforcement

Measures to protect people from secondhand smoke, following the introduction of smokefree legislation in 2007, include carrying out inspections on business premises. During the last 12 months, Environmental Health enforcement officers carried out more than 2,000 of these inspections. Fixed penalties were issued to five taxis for non-compliance with the law.

Example of good practice

In May 2010, NHS Wirral recruited a new Health Trainer to provide Wirral's black and minority ethnic (BME) communities with the help and support they need to lead healthier lifestyles. Twenty-two year old Seham Hariz (pictured) carries out free lifestyle assessments, focusing on improving the health and wellbeing of residents in BME communities, and establishing how the activity classes offered through the Community Programme can be adapted to suit their cultural needs.



Weight management

“2 out of 3 adults are overweight or obese. The estimated cost to the NHS of obesity-related conditions is £4.2 billion each year, and diabetes is rising sharply. Around 7 in 10 people consume more salt than is recommended (leading to an estimated 1 in 3 people with high blood pressure); only 3 in 10 adults eat the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day; and only 3 or 4 in 10 adults say they do the recommended levels of physical activity every week.”



‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

One in every three Wirral adults is overweight and one in every four is obese. In 2008/09, nearly 35,000 people over the age of 16 were on GP obesity registers. This is equivalent to 10.5% of the population. Estimated obesity prevalence across Wirral is 21.7%.

The Lifestyle and Weight Management Service works closely with individuals to help change lifestyle behaviours. This is achieved through realistic weight loss targets and advice around healthy eating and physical activity during a 12-week programme. There are follow-up sessions to maintain motivation and plenty of practical help, including lessons in how to cook healthily on a budget.

In September 2010, the team launched a newly revised and evaluated Children and Family Weight Management programme for 5-16 years with a Body Mass Index falling above the heaviest group (98th centile), and their families. The programme provides weekly support and guidance to help the whole family make gradual changes to shopping and cooking habits and physical activity levels, underpinned by an eight-month follow up period to help sustain improvements. A key component of the sessions is to make physical activity fun for children. Parents, meanwhile, are introduced to healthy menu planning, food labelling, portion sizes and other practical ways of sustaining the changes they have made to their lifestyles.

NHS Wirral also works with Slimming World and local pharmacies to offer a wide range of options likely to appeal to adults seeking to lose weight in a variety of settings.

Tackling alcohol misuse

“In 2009/10 nearly half of all violent crime was alcohol-related and communities are fighting a constant and expensive battle against alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

Alcohol is implicated in a wide range of diseases, but aside from the physical and mental health problems it causes, alcohol misuse is also linked to issues such as anti-social behaviour, violence, domestic violence and homelessness.

Locally, a significant amount of work has been developed through the Wirral Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy to both educate and steer people, particularly vulnerable groups like young people, away from alcohol misuse.

The strategy reflects all of the positive work that has already been undertaken, but also sets out a clear way forward which embraces new opportunities to work with a range of organisations and partnerships to integrate plans, actions and resources effectively. Wirral Drugs and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and its partners are implementing Wirral's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy via three strategic priorities. Each of the strategic priorities has been designed to address specific identified needs within the community, inclusive of Young People; Crime, Disorder and Communities and Treatment. To progress the treatment element of the strategy, NHS Wirral is funding and managing the Adult and Young People's Alcohol Treatment Programme.



The Adult and Young People's Alcohol Treatment Programme was set up in Wirral to address alcohol related harm/misuse, increase access to alcohol treatment services and reduce alcohol related admissions. During the last 12 months it has achieved considerable success, including a reduction in alcohol-related hospital admissions and re-admissions (for all ages), surpassing many of its targets in these and other areas, such as screening and brief intervention.

A key element of the Adult and Young People's Alcohol Treatment Programme is to enable primary care professionals to use the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT). The tool, which is in the form of a questionnaire, was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a simple method of screening for excessive drinking and to assist in brief assessment. During the year (2010/11), more than 17,000 people living in Wirral have been screened using this and other appropriate methods.

The latest findings on the impact of alcohol on communities have shown that Wirral has once again fared well in reducing the level of alcohol-related crime in the borough. In September 2010 the North West Public Health Observatory (NWPHO) published Local Alcohol Profiles for England. This measures 23 indicators of alcohol harm. Wirral, compared with other authorities in England, performed significantly better than national and regional averages in reducing alcohol-attributable recorded crimes, alcohol-attributable violent crimes and alcohol-attributable sexual offences.

Other achievements during the year included:

Increasing the capacity of community based detoxification services for people requiring specialist treatment;

Jointly funding the award- winning Town Centre Outreach project, which supports homeless people with alcohol problems into treatment, rehabilitation and accommodation;

The delivery of an extensive communication and advice programme to the Wirral population, including the WHAT? campaign, a website and a freephone service offering information, advice and signposting to local services.



Mental health

“People with mental ill health are much more likely to smoke and die younger, and a large number of people with mental health problems also have alcohol or drug problems. Over 1 in 3 people with a mental disorder smoke.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

In 2009, 18,500 residents across the North West participated in the North West Mental Wellbeing Survey - the largest and most detailed investigation of the region's mental health and wellbeing ever. The findings showed that those with good mental wellbeing had a higher satisfaction with life and were much more likely to be in employment, educated and healthy and have closer relationships with others.

Although the results confirmed that there were no differences in levels of mental wellbeing between men and women, they did identify that relatively low levels of mental wellbeing were more likely to be found among people living in the most deprived areas, among 40-54 year olds and white adults.

The findings revealed a clear link between general health and mental wellbeing. Those with relatively high mental wellbeing were three-and-a-half times more likely than those with relatively low mental wellbeing to say they were in very good health. Those with low mental wellbeing were nearly five times more likely to say that their health was very bad or bad than those with high mental wellbeing.

Five steps to wellbeing

There has been a concerted effort in Wirral to promote the 'Keep Learning' message through local library services. Keep Learning is one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing (see below) advocated by the New Economics Foundation Centre for Wellbeing. It supports the approach that simple activities such as going for a walk or becoming a volunteer can protect mental health and help people to lead more fulfilled and productive lives.

To promote the versatility of Wirral libraries a campaign entitled 'More than Books' was launched in 2010 to show people that their local library is not just a place to borrow books – it also offers a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Zone. Services and activities on offer include weight control and exercise classes, NHS drop-in sessions and the Home Reader Service, which provides books and audio books to people of all ages who are unable to use a local library because of illness, disability or frailty.



Five Ways to Wellbeing:

1. **Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours, at home, work, school or in your local community;**
.....
2. **Be active by going for a walk or run. Step outside, cycle, play a game, garden or dance, because exercising makes you feel good;**
.....
3. **Take notice of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you;**
.....
4. **Keep learning by trying something new or discovering an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do;**
.....
5. **Give by doing something nice for a friend or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.**
.....

Example of good practice

Wirral Pathfinders is a self-help support group for people with mental health problems and their carers. Led by service users, it offers support, hope and friendship to people isolated by their problems.

Four people - each with their own mental health issues - set up the initiative after they were discharged from hospital only to find that there was no 'non-medical' support for them in the community. Their experiences were not unique. Subsequent feedback repeatedly highlighted feelings of isolation and frequent relapses following discharge from hospital. Many people felt that they needed something more tangible than prescribed medication to keep them focused (in addition to, not instead of medical intervention).

In 2008, a series of reviews was carried out across a range of mental health services in Wirral. A frequent comment from service users and carers showed that the care and support provided by Pathfinders was a key factor in their recovery.

One service user said: "I don't feel alone any more. This group has helped me tremendously over the last twelve months – and kept me away from the doctor's surgery. It is helping me to manage my life and to be in control. By sharing our problems and listening to others, you learn that you are not on your own. I have got my life back."

Swift and easy access to this service is essential, even for those who feel they have recovered. The group's open door policy provides a much-valued safety net.

Physical activity

“Active travel and physical activity need to become the norm in communities. The Department of Health will support local areas by providing good evidence on how to make regular physical activity and healthy food choices easier for their populations.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

A recent review of physical activity intervention programmes, published by the Liverpool Public Health Observatory, featured Wirral’s Lifestyle and Weight Management Programme as one of its case studies.

The review, part of a series, noted that public health is increasingly being asked for cost-effectiveness evidence as justification for funding or continued funding of particular initiatives. The authors said that the intensive 12-week lifestyle programme, as well as saving lives and adding quality of life, made net cost health savings of more than £179,000 in 2007-08.

The LPHO concluded that there is *“clear evidence for the effectiveness of brief interventions in increasing levels of physical activity. Evidence, including that provided by NICE, is also very strong on the importance of the environment on increasing levels of physical activity, particularly the benefits of active travel such as walking and cycling.”*

Physical Activity is a key element of the government’s Change4Life programme. NHS Wirral leads by example through an established lunchtime walks programme and pedometer challenges. Its dedicated resource centre also runs a ‘Get Active’ campaign in February each year, providing professionals with a range of resources and materials.

A detailed piece of insight work to increase the uptake of physical activity among specific target groups was completed recently and the findings will inform future commissioning.

Wirral also supports ‘Bike It’ in Merseyside through the Healthy Schools Programme, which teaches children the skills they need to cycle safely and responsibly and raises awareness of the health benefits of cycling. Another popular programme is the Wirral Health Walks, which was set up jointly by Wirral Council’s Ranger Service and NHS Wirral and is affiliated to the government backed initiative, Walking for Health.

In September 2010, Wirral residents celebrated national Walk4Life day with a programme of half hour walks in Birkenhead Park. Local resident Pauline Beecham, who was featured on regional television taking the weekly health walk in Birkenhead Park, led the Walk4Life walks alongside Wirral NHS health trainers and Birkenhead Park rangers and volunteers.

Sexual health

“We will work towards an integrated model of service delivery to allow easy access to confidential, non-judgemental sexual health services (including for sexually transmitted infections, contraception, abortion, health promotion and prevention).”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

Wirral’s three main sexual health priorities are teenage pregnancy, chlamydia screening and HIV diagnosis (refer to Developing Well section for progress on the first two).

Wirral has historically high levels of late HIV diagnosis compared with other areas and GPs should be encouraged to test more at risk patients if this is to change. Increasing access to HIV testing in the community - particularly in settings where there is a raised risk of HIV is also essential. Terrence Higgins Trust has been commissioned to provide an HIV Prevention Service from 2011 to 2014. One element of this will be a community point of care testing for HIV, focusing on men who have sex with men, and people of Black African origin. This service will be piloted from October 2011. Funding options are being explored to pilot HIV testing programmes in other settings, as recommended nationally.

A number of proactive campaigns were undertaken last year, with NHS Wirral Resource Centre supporting the delivery of the Condom Distribution Scheme, an annual Sexual Health Week campaign (September) and Worlds AIDS Day Awareness (December). The centre specialises in providing professionals with the very latest resources and materials for their respective events.



Protecting health

“The NHS continues to have a crucial role. Preventing ill health, screening for disease, supporting people with long-term conditions, improving access to care for the whole population and tackling health emergencies are all key functions that the NHS provides. GPs, community nurses, allied health professionals, dentists and pharmacists in the community, and hospital-based consultants and nurses all play a vital part.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

Cancer and cancer screening

In Wirral high rates of late presentation of cancers is a major concern, therefore raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of lung and bowel cancer is paramount.

In March 2011, a previously piloted campaign entitled ‘Don’t be a cancer chancer,’ which focused on lung cancer symptoms, was rolled out across target areas of Wirral. The core message was simple: catching cancer early could save your life. This is particularly relevant to people who ignore symptoms through fear or lack of motivation, and for those who do not know the potential cancer symptoms, such as a persistent cough. The initiative was developed in partnership with NHS Sefton and will be externally evaluated before any decision is taken about future campaigns.

Cancer awareness training was also undertaken after Wirral adapted an e-learning tool developed by the Lancashire and South Cumbria Cancer Network. The

model is due to be piloted by staff in GP receptions and pharmacies, social services frontline staff and health trainers to increase knowledge and understanding of the signs and symptoms of cancer.

In line with the recommendations set out by the National Screening Committee, Wirral currently operates ten screening programmes (six of which are antenatal and newborn programmes). Three of the national programmes are dedicated to detecting cancer or pre-cancerous changes at an early stage. These are the bowel, breast and cervical screening programmes.

Bowel cancer screening

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer, affecting 1 in 20 women and 1 in 18 men. Eighty per cent of people with bowel cancer are over the age of 60.

Bowel cancer screening aims to detect bowel cancer at an early stage (in people with no symptoms), which is when treatment is more likely to be effective. The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme offers screening every two years to all men and women aged 60 to 69 (this age range is currently being extended to 74). The latest figures available (2009/10) show that over 9,000 people in Wirral were screened for bowel cancer.

Increasing awareness of the symptoms and promoting the importance of bowel screening is a priority in Wirral. A consultation exercise involving a number of Wirral men over the age of 55 started recently to explore views and responses to the existing bowel screening invitation process to find a way to improve uptake.



Cervical screening

During 2008 nearly 1,000 women in the UK who died of cervical cancer could have survived if they had undergone a smear test and been treated in time. Research has shown that many women have never been for a smear because they are not sure what the process involves. Women aged 25 - 49 are routinely invited for a test every three years (and every five years if aged between 50 - 64 years). In 2010/11 more than 59,000 women aged between 20 and 64 took up the offer of cervical screening.

As part of Cervical Screening Awareness Week in June 2010, women in Wirral were urged to attend their cervical smear appointments after data revealed that more than 5,000 young women across Wirral had never been tested.

Immunisation

Across the board, vaccination and immunisation rates in Wirral are improving. For 2010/11, NHS Wirral achieved a 76% uptake for seasonal flu vaccination in people aged 65 and over, which slightly exceeded the World Health Organisation (WHO) uptake target for this group. The uptake for the clinical 'at risk' group, which includes people with asthma for example, was 56% (which was below target) and 51% for pregnant women.

In addition to the WHO target for the older population, the EU has adopted a Council Recommendation (for the 2011/12 seasonal flu immunisation programme) to achieve a vaccination uptake of at least 75% in people under the age of 65 with clinical conditions which put them more at risk from the effects of flu, and pregnant women.

The health of carers

“Carers play a vital role in supporting people to stay at home. The Department of Health carers’ strategy sets out how we will support carers to recognise the value of their contribution, involve them in how care is delivered, support their mental and physical health and enable them to have a work, family and community life. As part of this, the Government is making an additional £400 million available through the NHS over the next four years to support carers’ breaks.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

Six million carers save the economy an incredible £87 billion every year - the same cost as running the NHS. Carers provide unpaid care for someone who is ill, frail or disabled. Some carers are children and young people.

There are more than 37,500 carers in Wirral, according to the 2001 census, but that figure is expected to be higher when the results of the 2011 survey are published. Issues vary from not being able to cope looking after a loved one - from a practical or emotional view - to financial worries.

Callers to the Carers Helpline at WIRED are encouraged to talk through their issues before being directed to the appropriate support, including signposting to services that may be available to them through the Local Authority. They can also join the Wirral Carers Register, which keeps them updated through a regular newsletter (funded by NHS Wirral); participate in awareness events such as National Carers’ Week and get involved in local Carers’ Forums.

Example of good practice

In June 2010, Wirral Council and the Carers Agencies Network marked national Carers Week (June 14-20) with a series of events. The theme, ‘A life of my own’, acknowledged that Wirral’s estimated 37,000 carers have very little time to themselves. Events included free pampering sessions, the launch of a new Wirral Carers website and a picnic in Birkenhead Park.

The challenges for Living Well

Supporting people to stop smoking will continue to be a high priority for public health in Wirral and we must continue to strive to create environments that both discourage smoking and help bring about cultural change to make the habit less attractive to children, young people and adults. **It is recommended that resources are targeted to address the availability of illegal and illicit tobacco and increase the number of smokefree pledges made locally.**

Frontline Health and Social Care staff should be further supported to identify and address obesity issues with patients/clients. Referrals into the wide range of local weight management services must be increased and monitored. **It is recommended that public health, working with the wider NHS and Council, ensure support/training for staff and thereby increase referrals into the wide range of local weight management services.**

Common mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety are on the rise and the current economic climate will inevitably make this worse. Health and social care professionals will require support to identify mental health issues in the patients and clients with whom they work, and to provide an appropriate response (including referral to local support services). **It is recommended that training is given to health and social care professionals so that they can provide appropriate support or referral to local services.**

Carer support concerns everyone and addressing the needs of Wirral carers is one of the most difficult and complex challenges ahead. With an ageing population, the UK will need more care from families and friends in the future. **It is recommended that the local needs of carers are identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and that appropriate action plans and partnerships are developed to tackle the identified issues.**

Increasing uptake of the cervical, breast and bowel cancer screening programmes is a priority. The challenge here will be to address issues such as fear, embarrassment, lack of knowledge about the procedures as well as ensuring good accessibility to services. **It is recommended that the Wirral Cancer Steering group continue to monitor screening performance and ensure that the actions put in place to improve rates are delivered.**

Ensuring that people under the age of 65 with clinical conditions, which put them more at risk from the effects of flu, receive the seasonal flu vaccination is a key challenge. From this year, the vaccination uptake target to achieve for ‘at-risk’ groups is 75%. **It is recommended that the Wirral Immunisation Steering Group should ensure the effective implementation of the annual flu programme.**

Working Well

“The health and wellbeing of people of working age is critical to supporting the economy and society. Being in work is in general good for health, while being out of work can lead to poorer physical and mental health.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

While many Wirral residents enjoy an excellent quality of life – they have a job and good quality housing and living environment – there are still many people living in deprivation. Wirral is ranked 60th most deprived out of 326 Local Authorities, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 (see full explanation on page 49).

Delivering a strong, vibrant economy with high levels of employment is a key priority for Wirral Council and our partners. Wirral’s Investment Strategy focuses on ambitious aims for increasing economic growth and tackling ‘worklessness’ - defined as people claiming out-of-work benefits, including Job Seekers, Incapacity Benefit/Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), lone parents and other income related benefits - across the borough.

The Strategy aims to deliver a borough founded on a strong, vibrant economy, with high levels of employment and investment, where businesses flourish, and all Wirral residents have the skills and opportunities to work. Wirral’s approach is built on a number of drivers that we will use to develop the employment and entrepreneurial skills of Wirral people, and to make Wirral the most business friendly place to invest and locate. It is focused on three themes: People; Places and Business.

This approach has enabled Wirral to focus on addressing some of the fundamental problems associated with worklessness and to tackle barriers so that people move from benefits into employment. This has included funding a range of projects that have provided effective outreach and engagement activity in order to directly target those people and groups who may be ‘hard to reach’, who may not access mainstream services or who may have specific multiple barriers to accessing employment.



Economic Challenges

On 24 March 2011, Communities for Local Government released the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010. The IMD combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. All data used to calculate the IMD 2010 is from 2008.

Wirral is currently ranked 60th most deprived out of 326 Local Authorities, the same ranking as calculated in the previous IMD 2007. In the 2007 IMD Wirral was ranked 8th worst nationally for employment deprivation; this has since improved to 10th in the 2010 update.

There are currently 33,090 people claiming out-of-work benefits in Wirral (November 2010). This includes Job Seekers, Incapacity Benefit/ESA, lone parents and other income related benefits. This is approximately 17.3% of the working age population¹. Of the 33,090 benefit claimants 55% are male and 45% female, with 42% of people also claiming over five years. This is largely attributable to Incapacity Benefit/ESA claimants who account for 58% of all claimants.

Working Neighbourhoods Funding

In 2008, Wirral Council launched Working Wirral as part of a strategic approach to developing a strong local economy. Government funding for the initiative was available until March 2011 and provided an opportunity for organisations from all sectors to work together to tackle worklessness, improve skills, increase employment opportunities, boost enterprise and support business growth and competitiveness. The initiative supported a diverse range of projects and as a result of the Working Wirral programme some 1,900 people entered employment and over 3,000 people increased their skills.

¹

This figure is not based on NI 152 which uses a 4-quarter rolling average but a static in-quarter figure to allow for comparisons with other Local Authorities.

The Wirral Apprentice Programme

The Council has developed the Wirral Apprentice Programme, which supports businesses and ensures that young people leaving school can access a job or training.

There has been a particular focus on supporting NEET* and other vulnerable young people and the Wirral Apprentice Programme has been commended as a model of good practice nationally and regionally, and is increasingly being recognised as an exemplar of effective partnership working. Most recently, in May 2011, the Programme received a number of awards at the NW Regional finals of the National Apprenticeship Awards. These included one Wirral Apprentice employer winning the Small Business Award and another achieving a commendation. The Council itself won a Special Recognition Award for its innovative model.

* A government acronym for people currently Not in Education, Employment or Training.

Tackling worklessness through the European Social Fund

The current European Social Fund (ESF) Programme runs until December 2013 and provides opportunities to improve the employability and skills of unemployed people and to develop a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Wirral Council is maximising resources available through ESF by commissioning initiatives like the ReachOut Partnership, which developed the 'door-knocking' approach to engage with hard-to-reach clients in areas of deprivation across the borough. It is in these areas in particular that people often endure

barriers to employment, such as ill-health or debt. Another approach is through community drop-ins for work clubs, where residents can access a wide range of advice and support to help them back into work.

Members of the team signpost and refer individuals to a number of partner organisations that can provide support to help them overcome barriers to work. The activity primarily supports residents in receipt of Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance and some Job Seeker Allowance customers into employment.

The ReachOut Partnership is delivered through a consortium of organisations drawn largely from the voluntary sector and led by Involve North West. The latest funding is expected to engage 1,755 participants and deliver 702 job outcomes (of which 456 will be sustained at six months) by May 2012. Where appropriate, referrals will be made to Jobcentre Plus and other mainstream provision.

The project works with trusted bodies, such as the Fire Service and NHS Wirral, to offer practical help as well as advice and guidance to those who might consider themselves to be too removed from the labour market. People with a disability, those with drug and alcohol problems, BME clients and others who may be experiencing barriers to employment will be offered specialist support through partner agencies.

“Taking a preventive approach to mental health presents a significant opportunity for reducing absence from work: 9.8 million working days were lost in Britain in 2009/10 due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety alone.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

The number of people claiming incapacity benefit in Wirral is highest in Wards with greater levels of deprivation and the most common reason for claiming is mental illness. Wirral has a higher prevalence of severe mental illness than the North West and England average.

Mental health problems can affect anyone, although they are more common among people from ethnic minorities, those in poor living conditions, people with a disability, the homeless and offenders. People with high levels of mental wellbeing are more likely to be in paid full-time work, paid part-time work, self-employed or in full-time education than those with low mental wellbeing. This was borne out by the findings of the 2009 North West Mental Wellbeing Survey (covered extensively in the Living Well section).

Example of good practice

Wirral Working 4 Health programme was set up in 2009 as a community based support service for people with a long-term health condition who wanted to get back into work, education or training.

Jointly funded by NHS Wirral and Wirral Council's Working Wirral fund, the programme formed a central element of NHS Wirral's strategy to address health inequalities within its Strategic Commissioning Plan 2008 – 2013. It offered one-to-one advice and practical support to help participants manage their condition more effectively, as well as support for employers to help them deal with sickness and absenteeism.



The majority of service users were experiencing a range of health issues and depression was particularly prevalent. After a slow start, referrals grew steadily, with numbers having tripled by the end of 2010. Evaluation of the scheme shows that 27 people returned to employment; 42 were taken on in a voluntary role, 54 moved onto education or training and 59 were retained in employment. Those identified as 'returned to employment' were people who had had not worked for many years.

The service achieved the New Heartlands, Strictly Regeneration, Excellence in Innovation award in August 2010. The award was given for innovation in working with employers and for setting up 'fit note' clinics located in GP surgeries.

The most successful elements of this programme have been taken forward into Wirral's Investment Strategy.

Condition Management Programme

Another support mechanism was the Condition Management Programme, a short voluntary programme aimed at helping people to better understand and manage their health condition or disability. The aim was to help participants improve their quality of life, regain control and realise their aspirations with a view to returning to work. It was open to anyone on Incapacity Benefit (IB).

NHS Wirral worked in partnership with Jobcentre Plus in hosting the programme on behalf of the Greater Merseyside PCTs. Although the programme finished on 31 May 2011, in future the new national Work Programme is intended to provide support for people moving from benefits into work. Lessons learned from previous local programmes will influence this development.

The healing power of literature

Other initiatives include Wirral's 'Read Yourself Well' scheme, run in partnership with the Library Service. The scheme is based around a collection of resources; self-help books, DVDs, advice and guidance to enable people to better manage their condition and find solutions for themselves. There is also 'Get into Reading' for people with mental health issues, carers, those living with a long term condition and people affected by substance misuse. Group members meet regularly to share the health benefits of poetry and literature.

Example of good practice

Evaluation by NHS Wirral has shown that young unemployed men are particularly drawn to exercise based health schemes which have a clear health benefit. In March 2011, a mental health and wellbeing programme for young men suffering from low self-esteem and depression was launched at Prenton Park, the home of Tranmere Rovers Football Club.

The project used the rules and language of football to engage with service users (known as team players) and helped them to share their experiences and set realistic personal goals. It ran for 11 weeks in partnership with the crime reduction charity Nacro, NHS Wirral and Tranmere Rovers Football Club.

"With more than 1.4 million staff, the NHS is the largest employer in the UK and can lead by example in looking after the health and wellbeing of its staff..."

'Healthy Lives, Healthy People'

It is important that staff feel valued and empowered. Both NHS Wirral and Wirral Council have signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter, which aims to increase awareness of mental health at work and provide support for businesses in recruiting and retaining staff.

The Charter's four main aims are to:

- Raise awareness of mental health issues;
- Promote good practice among its workforce;
- Make the workplace safe;
- Have in place supportive policies, structures and culture.

Also backing the charter are Wirral Partnership Homes, Advocacy in Wirral, Wirral MIND, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust and Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology.

NHS Wirral's efforts to encourage staff to use alternative transport are having an impact. The findings from the 2010 travel survey showed that staff travelling to work by single occupancy vehicle was down 6% on 2009 figures, with an increase in bus and train usage. The PCT continued to promote cycle training across all NHS Wirral sites and a 'bicycle to work' scheme, in which staff receive a percentage discount on the purchase price of a new bike.

More than 200 people attended a staff wellbeing event in March last year to mark the launch of NHS Wirral's Wellbeing Plan. They learned how to improve their wellbeing by taking part in various healthy workshops, from relaxation sessions to Tai Chi. There was also information about staff benefits, and representatives from TravelWise were on hand to discuss sustainable transport choices.

NHS Wirral has also signed up to the 10:10 Commitment, a nationwide campaign encouraging organisations and individuals to commit to reducing carbon emissions from energy consumption and travel by 10% during one 'action' year. To date we have achieved a 14.4% reduction in our carbon emissions, compared with the first half of 2009-10.

The challenges for Working Well

We need to continue to support people on long term health-related incapacity benefit or ESA to secure and maintain sustained employment. **It is recommended that the Wirral Economic Development and Skills partnership ensures that services being delivered under the Work Programme are tailored to local needs and benefit from good practice developed in recent years in Wirral.**

In order to secure high levels of workforce wellbeing for employees, especially during this period of economic challenge, **it is recommended that all employers in Wirral work to promote and deliver increased health and wellbeing within the workforce.**

2010
Year of Health & Wellbeing

NHS Wirral

Staff Wellbeing Event

2010 is the Year of Health and Wellbeing and NHS Wirral is using this opportunity to officially launch its staff wellbeing plan. The plan sets out the PCT's commitment to promoting and maintaining a culture of wellbeing for all its employees!

The Staff Wellbeing plan will be launched at a fun, interactive and informative drop-in event being held on **Wednesday 10 March, 9:30am - 4:30pm at Old Market House.**

Connect	Laughology Workshop*, Wirral Working for Health, TravelWise, NHS Constitution, Have Your Say team
Be Active	Smoking Cessation & Smoke Free pledges, Change4Life, The Wirral Alcohol Service are coming, Walking Groups including arranged walks on the day*, Ramblers, Health Action Planning, 1-zone, Cycle to work scheme
Take Notice	Relaxation Workshop*, Tai Chi
Keep Learning	Mini manicure & massage*, Citizens Advice Bureau, Employee Relations Health and Safety, Healthy Food Cookery Demonstration
Give	Pennies from Heaven, Mindful Employer, Fidelity (childcare vouchers), Costco, NHS Discounts, Medicash

* Further information in relation to the workshops including arrangements for booking a place can be found on the Intranet under The Staff Wellbeing Event Page

Make a Wellbeing Pledge
Put into writing your commitment to improving your wellbeing or the wellbeing of others and add it to the Pledge Wall when you arrive. Pledges can be anything from signing up for the Race for Life, the Great North Run or even as simple as using the stairs when available to a commitment to leaving your desk at lunchtimes! Those who keep to the pledges and demonstrate their commitment may win themselves a 'Wii' and other runner-up prizes are also on offer.

Ageing Well

Ageing well – in mind and body - is as important as starting life well, says 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People.'

The number of older people is set to increase considerably over the next two decades. By 2031 it is estimated that 26% of the Wirral population will be aged 65 or above. This will have a considerable impact on health and social care services, as the number of older people presenting with health related problems increases. This could also affect the number of family carers in Wirral

Falls amongst older people is a key concern and the risk of falling increases with age. It is estimated that the annual incidence of falls amongst older people in Wirral totals more than 18,000. With the projected rise in the older population and the greater risk of falling associated with increasing age, the number of falls in Wirral would be expected to rise concurrently if new interventions and prevention strategies are not adopted.



At the time of writing, The Royal College of Physicians has completed a National Audit of Falls and Bone Health in Older People, which has identified an unacceptable variation in the quality of NHS services for care and prevention of falls and fractures. It says that in many areas, there is a major gap between what NHS organisations state they provide, in terms of commissioning, protocols or structure, and what clinical audit reveals in terms of actual care provided. The audit shows that older patients with fractures do not routinely receive key aspects of care for falls prevention or bone health, needlessly exposing them to a greater risk of further falls and fractures. The local situation is currently being assessed.

The new public health strategy advocates strong partnerships between communities, business and the voluntary sector to help address a range of health challenges such as depression and winter deaths. This approach is evident at a number of levels in Wirral, but perhaps one example which best illustrates the strength of partnership working is the 'Healthy Homes' initiative.

In October 2010, Wirral Council joined forces with NHS Wirral, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, Merseyside Police Partnership, Social Services and a number of community and voluntary organisations to launch 'Healthy Homes', a scheme designed to cut the number of deaths and accidents in the home.

The initiative offered free home assessments to identify potential problems, such as fire hazards or lack of insulation, advice on how to resolve them and signposting to relevant services if necessary.

Follow-up from the initial pilot projects showed that a large proportion of referrals were made to partner agencies, the highest being to the Fire Service. A number of properties were identified as a 'category 1 hazard' for excess cold and many more were deemed to be at risk. Although this initiative was not specifically targeted at them, many older people will have benefited from the scheme because circulatory and respiratory diseases are exacerbated by cold homes.

During the winter months NHS Wirral included the Home from Hospital Service in Wirral in its Winter Planning. Home from hospital services provide flexible short term support to elderly people who have been discharged home from hospital following surgery, ill health, or an accident. This included the production of an information booklet for patients and volunteers over the Christmas period. The booklet has since been extended to include emergency numbers and details of important contacts for people living alone or looking after a loved one.

“Maintaining social networks, being part of a community and staying active all benefit health and wellbeing in later life. By 2024, an estimated 50% of the population will be over the age of 50, due to a combination of increased life expectancy and low birth rates...”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

A number of organisations inspired by older people are flourishing in Wirral. A prime example is Wirral Older People’s Parliament (Wirral OPP), a voluntary organisation set up with the support of Wirral Council and Age Concern in 2007.

Wirral OPP works closely with statutory and voluntary agencies and has a say in policy making across the borough through representation on relevant committees within health, social care, community safety, safeguarding vulnerable adults and transport groups, to name but a few.

Such is the diversity of Wirral OPP that it even has a group representing the interests of grandparents who care fulltime for their grandchildren. Many older people in this situation have financial worries, endure overcrowding and ill-health. The group championing grandparents works tirelessly both locally and nationally to raise awareness of these and other issues and is supported in its efforts through partnership working with, for example, Wirral Children’s Services Department.

Several grandparents have, as a result, been supported to claim previously unclaimed tax credits and child benefit and others have successfully applied for Area Forum funding to work with schools in identifying households where grandparents are the full time carers.



In May 2011, Wirral OPP and Wirral Council staged a two-day event at The Floral Pavilion Conference Centre to show what Wirral has to offer its older population.

Also working to influence and shape local health and social care services is Wirral LINK, a volunteer led network made up of individuals, community groups and organisations. It has powers of ‘Enter and View’ and can use its powers to make recommendations for changes in service, influencing, for example, the Acute Care Model for Older People’s Mental Health. Other achievements have included encouraging participation in training events such as Dementia Awareness, Alcohol Awareness, Smoking Cessation and Dying Matters.

Voluntary and Community Action Wirral (VCAW) is an organisation which supports voluntary, community and faith sector groups by offering training, support and advice through its Third Sector Assembly (3SA). It has selected delegates who sit on the Local Strategic Partnership who can speak on behalf of the groups they represent (this applies to people of all ages and not just older people). VCAW can signpost individuals to the wide range of voluntary, community and faith sector groups through its new Wirral Well project, an information hub where groups can upload and maintain their information and can be rated by service users.

Wirral Council provides a host of activities to keep older people fit and active through its parks and countryside section and leisure and community centres. Its ‘Active Ageing’ programme is designed specifically for older people who want to stay fit and healthy, with activities ranging from water-based exercises to salsa aerobics. A scheme known as ‘Wirral Passport’ provides discounted membership opportunities.

Other initiatives keeping older people active - and helping to improve mobility - include popular chair-based exercise in which NHS Wirral instructors incorporate strength and balance exercises (crucial to preventing falls) into their sessions. These are delivered in a variety of settings, such as sheltered accommodation, rest homes and nursing homes as well as being available in local leisure and community centres.



Wirral Council’s Promoting Older People’s Independence Network (POPIN), which is available to people over the age of 65, gives advice on staying healthy and strives to help people stay independent within their own home.

Example of good practice

Getting active and staying active was the theme for an Active Age open day in Birkenhead in October 2010, coordinated by Age Concern Wirral. The event was held to mark UK Older People’s Day and coincided with the UN International Day of Older Persons. It highlighted the benefits of physical activity by showcasing a range of activities enjoyed by older people in the borough, from ballroom dancing to Tai Chi and yoga.

“Dementia affects around 750,000 people in the UK and numbers are expected to double by 2030. The annual cost of dementia in the UK amounts to £17 billion. Half of dementias have a vascular component; by improving diet and lifestyle in earlier life we can significantly reduce their impact.”

‘Healthy Lives, Healthy People’

In Wirral, it is estimated that there are more than 4,000 older people with dementia (POPPI, 2009). This is significantly higher than the number of people currently recorded on GP registers as having dementia, since it is likely that some patients will not have been diagnosed. In 2008/09 the number of emergency hospital admissions for dementia was nearly 54% higher than expected against the national average.

The challenges for Ageing Well

It is estimated that there are 11,269 older people living in fuel poverty in Wirral, which has a serious impact on health and wellbeing. In 2007/08 there were 184 excess winter deaths, which could be linked to inadequate heating and poor housing. **It is recommended that the Affordable Warmth Steering Group ensures that all of the key actions in the revised Affordable Warmth Strategy are implemented.**

With the projected rise in the older population, issues such as higher rates of nursing home admissions/the number of falls and dementia rates will also increase. It is essential therefore that we have appropriate targeted preventative interventions and adequate provision to meet the demand. **It is recommended that local needs be identified through the JSNA and appropriate action plans and partnerships are put in place to tackle the identified issues.**

We need to tackle the levels of social isolation in our communities which can result in poor mental and physical health, and increased vulnerability. **It is recommended that a strategic overview of current provision is carried out to improve links between appropriate initiatives to reduce social isolation whilst improving mental and physical wellbeing**

In Wirral, there are many excellent organisations working with or on behalf of local people - far too many, in fact, to list within this report. The examples highlighted merely give a flavour of the tremendous work carried out by the statutory, voluntary and community sectors in Wirral.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to making a positive difference to Public Health and to this report.

I hope you found this report both interesting and informative. For further information about health statistics in Wirral, visit www.wirral.nhs.uk and click on the link entitled ‘Joint Strategic Needs Assessment’.

For information about Wirral’s Community Programme (a range of free health and wellbeing activities designed to help local residents become more active and lead healthier lifestyles) visit www.wirral.nhs.uk/yourhealth/healthandwellbeing



If you would like a copy in another format, such as braille, large print, audio cassette or CD, or in another language, please telephone us on: 0800 085 1547 or email: haveyoursay@wirral.nhs.uk

الترجمة متوفرة عند الطلب.	(Arabic)
অনুরোধ জানালে অনুবাদ পাওয়া যাবে	(Bengali)
如有需要，我們可提供中文譯本。	(Chinese)
अनुरोध करने पर अनुवाद मिल सकता है।	(Hindi)
درخواست کرنے پر ترجمہ فراہم کیا جائے گا۔	(Urdu)
Baûn vaên phieân dòch luôn coù saün khi coù söi yeâu caàu.	(Vietnamese)