

PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Video Transcript

Julie Webster, Director of Public Health

Looking back over the past two years, it's fair to say that everybody stepped up to really help each other during the pandemic. It's been a really tough time for the whole community and for individuals, and I want to say thank you for all the hard work and effort you've all done to help to keep us safe.

What the pandemic has done has shone a spotlight on the deep-seated health inequalities that we have within our borough, which unfortunately have been with us for far too long.

For this year, the Public Health Annual Report is focusing on the role of the Community, Voluntary and Faith sector who really stepped up to the mark and helped us to ensure that we had a really good, robust response to the pandemic.

And I want to thank all our Community, Voluntary and Faith sectors, colleagues and friends for the work that they did during the pandemic.

We need to be where people are at, not where we think they should be. We need to walk alongside them and for everybody's health to be important to everybody as it was right at the beginning of the pandemic. Therefore, we need good citizen engagement in all the work that we do.

Amy Butterworth, 'Make it Happen'

My name is Amy Butterworth, I am the CEO of make it happen. So, make it happen was born in 2019 and it started off as community shop on Market Street, and the whole essence was about giving back to the community and providing a space for people to buy clothes on a pay as you feel model and food as a social supermarket where people can pay a percentage amount less than what they do in supermarkets.

We started that off on a journey, then it grew, and we had a couple of customers open five days a week, we went to six days a week and that was over 2019. So, in COVID 19 pandemic we continued the operation six days a week. We didn't stop, not even for Christmas. What we realised very quickly, our diversity of the customers was changing day by day and we were finding a lot of the BAME community were joining us and that meant we had to diversify the food that we were providing. We provide a lot more international foods, Halal foods. We also were going out, picking up donations, we were bringing them here, we were quarantining them and we went through over 13,000 bags of donations over the period of COVID.

We intercepted over 134 tonnes of food throughout that period and 107 tonnes of food got gifted or sold to the local community to make sure everyone was getting what they needed, and 27 of them went to other providers. So, nursing homes that were struggling because we weren't having a full occupancy, we were supporting local hostels, we were supporting local businesses, who could open for a certain period of time and after lockdown again, we were

supporting individual families and also our volunteers who were self-isolating for various reasons.

So that was a very proud moment for the community. What we are doing now we continue to run our Pay as you Feel shop. We have our social supermarket that provides varied food for the community to purchase. We provide work placements for Wirral Met College and the four local universities for social care students and student nurses to get an insight into community engagement.

We also have our place of contribution whereby a number of grant funded projects run that includes Adult Inclusion Project, a volunteers development project and a Community Engagement project both inside place of contribution and in the wider community. We work locally with local businesses up and down Market Street in the local area.

A number of organisations all come together on a bi-monthly basis called the Community of Practice and that's a space where anyone and everyone gets to talk about their organisation. So, we work with organisations far and wide.

Ibrahim Syed, Wirral Deen Centre

My name is Ibrahim Syed. I am the lead trustee of the Wirral Deen Centre. The Wirral Deen Centre is a mosque and community centre open to everyone. So, a good way to remember what we stand for. WDC is a place of worship, W for Worship, D for Deen which means guidance for life and C is for Centre and Community.

So, the vision for the Wirral Deen Centre is to be a community hub where all people come together and be in a place of worship, but also a centre for the whole community and not exclusively any particular group.

So, the pandemic was quite difficult for everyone. It has impacted the BAME community, the Muslim community in particular and there's been quite a lot of bereavement. So, we've been at the heart of bereavement support providing funeral services. So, across Merseyside Liverpool city region we were the only mosque operating washing facilities. So, we worked with the NHS Trust as well providing people with helplines and things like that.

We also helped isolated people with shopping, food supplies and so on and so forth. But what we felt is that we wanted to serve the whole community.

So many of our congregations and our members of the community are in restaurant businesses so we teamed up with them, teamed up with Tranmere Rovers and we did a number of feed in the wider community initiatives where we took food to places like Beechwood and Woodchurch, Birkenhead North YMCA, Rock Ferry and so on and so forth. So, we did a number of those initiatives.

We also set up a test centre in the Pakistan Association and that culminated in a testing centre that was put up in the Hamilton Building.

We've worked with public health, Tranmere Rovers, Wirral Change and other community organisations to get lots of messages out around vaccinations through our social media to our networks and then post pandemic we've tried to really kind of reinvigorate the community.

So recently we've been successful with a community and voluntary sector bid that was awarded by Wirral Council and through that we've put in for a project which has already started that focus on education, community engagement.

So we've got a couple of team members that we've recruited through that and we're working with schools, we're working with community members to kind of offer any sort of support and advice that we can.

I'm very much committed to not being just a BAME organisation, so we're here for the whole community and that's a really important part of our message that we're here to serve the whole community and the community engagement café - Cafe Dower is a really exciting part of our vision and it's a kind of a natural way of people to come together and relax.

Jo Simpson, Seacombe Children's Centre

My name is Jo Simpson. My job role is within Wirral Borough Council. I'm one of the early childhood locality managers, which is part of Wirral's Early Childhood Services and Children's Centres.

Seacombe Children's Centre is a hub for families with children under five. So, there's lots of different services running here. We have health services, such as Midwifery, the 0-19 team, health visiting services. We also have appointments with physiotherapy and speech and language teams. So really trying to support all family's needs in the one place.

We also have support such as the food bank, CAB services and general universal groups that run for families such as baby massage, baby yoga, baby babble so really focusing on the primary as a learning for children.

We also have more specialist support with our family support teams who can offer one to one support in the home.

Throughout COVID Children's Centres had to change the way we delivered services. We were used to large groups coming into the children's centre and we had to change our delivery to providing more outreach, virtual support and providing parcels to the community.

The centre did remain open, and this enabled vital health appointments, domestic abuse support and allowed families to walk in if they were in crisis.

We use social media on our My Child Can Facebook account and we provided lots of different activities and videos that families could do in the home. These focused around the

really important things for child development such as physical development, communication and language, bonding, and attachment.

As well as this within the children's centres, we had immunization clinics, so this was for older children and for our COVID vaccinations throughout the summer. This enabled people to access those vaccines within their community and was more accessible than going elsewhere for appointments.

Another initiative we have been working towards is the critical 1001 days with our partners in Koala Northwest and Foundation Trust and public health services. We have been able to build up a partnership to enable families to access a seamless support service for families with children under 5.

Post Pandemic Children's Centres have returned back to normal delivery – we're back to providing drop-in sessions and drop-in activities for families to access as and when they need to.

Suzanne Rippon, Quirky Café

Hi, I'm Suzanne, I am the owner of the Quirky Café.

It's like the hub of the community. We do lots of groups and workshops. We have a community shop.

I bought the café 3 years ago in the August and 6 months in the lockdown hit. I suffer really bad myself with mental health and anxiety and I didn't want anyone else to feel the way I did so I didn't want to leave the shutters down and just give up. I put the shutters up and started doing take away coffees, meals for people and it started snowballing from there.

We were talking to people, so they knew there was always someone here to speak to.

So, the life tree came from the lockdowns because so many people were suffering – and coming out of the lockdowns we looked at how do people connect again, so we started doing some workshops and things outside – as it was still quite nice – but socially distanced, and little events inside people were donating stuff to us.

People were losing their jobs and didn't want to cook for themselves, so we started a little shop, and its snowballed now to the point that we are going to get bigger premises. Its gone bigger and bigger like the life tree... Basically the life tree is the community.

For example, I have set up a walking group because one of my customers said they wanted to get walking as their mental health was really suffering. We also do mums and tops which is a lady who used to come in the shop – and we step her up in a little group.

As you can see through the lockdown this has all grown into something quite big and quite powerful really.

We are empowering people to find who they are again, and we will be the people who stand behind them and give them guidance.

The council were quite good to be fair. I was very new opening, but they offered us grants that kept us going and I used that to buy some stock to be able to provide the meals for people who kept it going through paying the bills – and keeping the doors open for what we wanted to achieve.

The community kept me going – they kept me from a really dark place because they just rallied round so much – it's been fantastic what they have done.

I'm really proud of the team, and what we have achieved through the pandemic and after for the community – and how the community have come together and helped us – and they keep on helping – we are stronger than ever.

Julie Webster, Director of Public Health

Communities have shown us that when times have been tough, they are there for each other and for the local people.

Many of our Community, Voluntary and Faith partners offered a response 24/7 throughout the pandemic.

We need to make sure that they are able to maintain that response and are able to work closely with us – and to have their voice and the voice of local people in all that we do so that the borough is that thriving, exciting place that we all want it to be.

Strong grassroots community organisations are the bedrock of Wirral, and this was shown no more clearly than during the response to the pandemic.

It's so important that Community, Voluntary and Faith sector organisations are seen as those key partners in the response to local health inequalities that I've certainly talked about in previous Public Health annual reports.

We need to build on the relationships that we built during the pandemic – and actually for many years before that – to continue to take the work forward that's needed to tackle health inequalities and to make sure that the voice of local people, and local organisations, are helping us to shape the future of the borough.

My role as Director of Public Health is to promote and protect the health of residents. However, I can only do that with the help and support of local residents and our local communities, and particularly the Community, Voluntary and Faith sector.