
Health and Wellbeing Board Conference 2023: Options for Consideration

Report being considered by: Health and Wellbeing Board

On: 29 September 2022

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Item for: Decision



1. Purpose of the Report

The Health and Wellbeing Board members are asked to review and agree the proposed options for the Health and Wellbeing Conference 2023 for West Berkshire.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Board is asked to:

- (1) **APPROVE** the option of a virtual conference, which is believed to encourage greater and more diverse participation;
- (2) **AGREE** that the theme of the Conference should be focused on the impacts of the increase in cost of living related to food poverty, mental health and substance misuse; and
- (3) **AGREE** that options be explored for a combined event with the District Parish Conference in January 2023 and for a joint event with wider partners in 2024.

3. Executive Summary

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to discuss and agree to the proposal for a half day virtual conference in January 2023 focused on the impact of the increase in living costs.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Steering Group was invited to propose themes for the next conference, which would take place in January 2023. In previous years this has been a half day conference.
- 4.2 A number of suggestions were made for the conference, themes, type of conference and suggested collaborations.

In person, hybrid or virtual conference

- 4.3 There was discussion about whether the event should be in-person, online or in a hybrid format.

- 4.4 The benefits of each option were discussed. Whilst there was a strong appetite for an in person meeting, it was noted that some people would not be able to attend a physical event and others missed the ability to network if events were virtual. Another suggestion was for a series of events over a week, which could be a combination of face-to-face and online events, including mindfulness sessions and exercise classes.
- 4.5 It was considered that a hybrid or in person conference may be an aspiration for January 2024.

Collaboration with Partners

- 4.6 Consideration and support was given for planning a collaborative conference with District Parish Councils.
- 4.7 A further proposal was to combine with the knowledge event that was being organised by the Volunteer Centre. A previous event had attracted around 100 different voluntary groups to an event at the Racecourse as well as representatives from statutory partners.
- 4.8 A collective conference opportunity involving the Integrated Care Board was also proposed as a means of bringing health together with health and wellbeing.
- 4.9 It was suggested that there could be stalls and classes (e.g. mindfulness and exercise) to support the prevention and wellness agenda.

Conference themes

- 4.10 The impact of the increase in 'cost of living' was recognised as a critical issue for people in West Berkshire. The impacts included:
- (1) Food poverty
 - (2) Deterioration in mental health
 - (3) Increase in alcohol dependency and other substance misuse
 - (4) Coping with financial pressures
- 4.11 Prevention and integration' was proposed as a potential theme – bringing together health, local government and community organisations to address people's problems in a holistic way and ensuring people's wellbeing during challenging times. The Community Mental Health Integrated Framework was cited as a good model.
- 4.12 The conference was seen as an opportunity to look at the impact on long-term health, and there could be a focus on how this could be managed at system, community, organisation and individual levels.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 Overall there was recognition that a virtual meeting may be the required choice for 2023, given that living with Covid still required precautions to minimise spread of infection and we would still be managing seasonal flu cases.
- 5.2 The main themes related to the impact of the increase in cost of living and were believed to be relevant for themes of workshops at the conference.

- 5.3 Of the suggested themes the options of food poverty would build on the Director of Public Health annual report for West Berkshire. Mental health focused theme could make use of the community mental health integrated framework. There was recognition that at times of high stress, even when financial challenges were faced, there can be an increase in substance misuse.

6. Proposal(s)

- 6.1 The proposal made is to hold a virtual conference for half a day in January 2023. To explore the opportunity to collaborate with district parish conference this year and with wider partnerships in 2024.
- 6.2 The themes to include the impact of the increase in cost of living related to food poverty, mental health and substance misuse.
- 6.3 Create a conference working group to implement the 2023 conference and start earlier planning for a collaborative partnership health and wellbeing conference to include parish councils, voluntary sector knowledge event and the integrated care partnerships in 2024.

7. Conclusion(s)

The key theme for the 2023 health and wellbeing conference is proposed as a half day virtual conference focused on the impact of the increase in cost of living.

8. Consultation and Engagement

The proposed option was raised at the health and wellbeing steering group membership.

9. Appendices

None

Background Papers:

No additional papers submitted.

Health and Wellbeing Priorities Supported:

The proposals will support the following Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- ☒ Reduce the differences in health between different groups of people
- ☒ Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives
- ☒ Help families and young children in early years
- ☒ Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people
- ☒ Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all adults

The proposals contained in this report will support the above Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities by providing the opportunity to collaborate as individuals, communities, organisations and across West Berkshire. In doing so it will help to identify actions needed to support people during the increase in cost of living and its impact on health and wellbeing.