
Public Health Policy

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1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 West Berkshire Council is the enforcing authority for a wide range of public health primary legislation functions.
- 1.2 In addition to these long standing functions the government has set out a process which involves transferring public health functions currently delivered by Primary Care Trusts or PCT's to the local authority. This document provides an initial framework for new challenges which may present themselves when this process is concluded.
- 1.3 West Berkshire Council carries out this duty by employing suitable, qualified and trained staff, who are authorised in writing to enforce the requirements of the various pieces of legislation.
- 1.4 West Berkshire Council recognises the value of having a documented policy which sets out how public health, within its area, will be protected and improved.

2.0 Policy Statement

- 2.1 West Berkshire Council will make effective arrangements to promote public health and where appropriate enforce primary legislation to achieve this. This includes all associated regulations and codes of practice with the aim of ensuring that, within its area, individuals and communities public health is both protected and enhanced .

3.0 Approach

- 3.1 Promoting public health is a key feature of EH&L aims and objectives. There will be ongoing pro-active work carried out to prevent incidents of public health concern.
- 3.2 Public health legislation is designed to be a safety net for people and communities who may fall below a standard which is considered reasonable, based on the local conditions at any given time. Officers use their professional judgement to balance the needs of the person/community with the underlying health implications.
- 3.3 It is often as part of a wider group of professionals that EH&L undertake their public health responsibilities, therefore consultation is a key element of any decision making. Before any formal action is undertaken, an authorised officer will always aim to have the best available information about an individual/community. Confidentiality will always be respected and information will be handled in accordance with the West Berkshire Council security policy.
- 3.4 There is also the wider environmental impact on public health which is addressed through separate policy documents in Air Quality, Contaminated Land, Health and Safety, Food Safety and Food Sampling.

3.5 West Berkshire Council will:

- a) Respond to all notifications of poor standards of living conditions suffered by people of West Berkshire.
- b) Participate in any multi-disciplinary meetings where the public health of any individual or community is at risk and there are legislative powers to assist.
- c) Contribute to the public health agenda of the local healthcare organisations such as Berkshire West PCT through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- d) Make consistent enforcement decisions in accordance with its own enforcement Policy.
- e) Refer to recognised guidance issued by Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies.
- f) Liaise with the Berkshire Environmental Health Managers group.
- g) Ensure the continued development of its officers (both Environmental Health Officers and Technical Officers) and encourage officers to keep up to date on public health issues.
- h) Consult with partners in related fields such as sustainability, community care, trading standards, countryside and any other West Berkshire Council department who has an interest in promoting public health.

4.0 Practical Working Arrangements

- 4.1 Proactive work will be addressed through annual service planning based on identified need/risk and will be project based.
- 4.2 Reactive intervention will be carried out following the receipt of a service request.
- 4.3 Unless in exceptional circumstances, all enforcement will involve a graduated approach.
- 4.4 To ensure an effective, transparent and consistent approach to enforcement of public health legislation, authorised officers will follow the Council enforcement Policy.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 Responsibility for implementation of the policy rests with the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager (EHLM).
- 5.2 The Principal EHO for Public Health is responsible for the planning, organisation and subsequent monitoring of all aspects of the policy as well as other Standards or Policy concerned with Council undertakings.

6.0 Quality Of The Service

- 6.1 West Berkshire Council is committed to ensuring that the highest practicable standard of service is achieved and that good customer care practice is integrated into all aspects of service delivery.
- 6.2 In meeting its duties under public health legislation West Berkshire Council will strive for excellence in the quality of service provided. All staff will adopt a professional approach and performance monitoring will be carried out to the standard identified within the adopted Internal Monitoring Standards to ensure compliance with agreed targets.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of West Berkshire Council to ensure that all officers are suitably qualified, experienced and authorised to carry out enforcement under the Act and any legislation made under the Act.
- 6.4 West Berkshire Council will ensure that all authorised officers have access to appropriate professional training and other resources required in order to maintain a high level of professionalism and competence.

7.0 Monitoring the Service

- 7.1 Having set the standards that West Berkshire Council wishes the service to achieve, it is essential that the detailed arrangements in the policy are put into practice and that the outcome is regularly monitored and reviewed.
- 7.2 The EHLM will therefore make arrangements to monitor the following:
 - a) Compliance with agreed targets for Service Requests.
 - b) The number of Service Requests received year to year.
 - c) Any other agreed monitoring arrangements concerned with the Public Health Team Plan, the overall Environmental Health and Licensing Plan, and broader Council objectives relevant to the Public Health Team's activities.

8.0 Policy Review

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed annually by the EHLM.
- 8.2 This Policy will be publically available.