



West Berkshire Annual Public Health Report 2024

Prof. Dr John R Ashton C.B.E. Interim Director of Public Health Reading and West Berkshire



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

Content

- ❑ Setting the scene
- ❑ Public Health comes home
- ❑ A Public Health vision for West Berkshire
- ❑ Health Protection; Health Improvement; Healthcare Public Health
 - Where are we now?
 - What have we achieved?
 - Priorities moving forward
- ❑ Conclusions and priorities

Setting the scene

- ❑ Public Health leadership transition within West Berkshire Council provides the opportunity to pause and reflect in order to plan the future direction of travel.
- ❑ Health in All Policies in particular provides the opportunity to continue to move upstream.
- ❑ Our role within the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System (BOB ICS) provides us with the opportunity to reorientate towards population-based health care.
- ❑ It is important to understand the history locally and of the Public Health system to inform our future direction of travel.
- ❑ Today Public Health broadly consists of three domains of action: Health Protection; Health Improvement; and the Healthcare Public Health.
- ❑ Prevention is key, but in enabling people to live who might previously have died, the burden of disease may actually increase and with it the costs of maintaining people's health over many years.
- ❑ The social goal is for all to 'die young as old as possible' while reducing inequality and the prevalence of long-term conditions whilst maintaining independent living.

Public Health comes home

Public Health intervention dates back to Victorian movements. Sanitary Act 1846 and Annual Public Health reports emerge providing a snapshot of population health at a moment in time

1900s comprehensive programme to address physical deterioration and concern over military fitness

Public Health definition in 1920 – the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting physical health

Progress in medical advances, vaccination and the emergence of the NHS In 1948 saw a shift in PH focus to hospital medicine

1988 and the creation of joint Control of Communicable Disease posts saw the start of the shift back to Local Government, completed in 2013.

A Public Health vision for West Berkshire

West Berkshire Council is committed to improving the health of everyone in West Berkshire. To support this Council vision, the Public Health team's commitment is summarised below:

- To develop and support population level interventions to protect and improve health that are based on high quality intelligence and evidence to inform best practice.
- To take a Place and Asset-based approach to working with local communities and develop a Community Orientated Health and Social Care System building on existing strengths to create a sustainable future.
- To maintain a relentless focus on reducing health inequalities.
- To work in partnership with all those who value the health and wellbeing of the people of West Berkshire.
- To commission and deliver evidence based, high quality, value for money, public health services.

Health protection – where are we now?

- ❑ High vaccine coverage
- ❑ Local variation and pockets of low uptake
- ❑ Poorer uptake of vaccination in older age
- ❑ Low levels of STI and HIV diagnosis – lower incidence, but possibly also poorer access and uptake
- ❑ Smoking and alcohol misuse rates in line with England but inequalities persist

Health improvement – where are we now?

❑ Child health

- Higher rate of 0-4 year olds attending A&E compared to England
- Higher rate of 0-5 year old admissions for tooth decay compared to England
- Nearly a third of year 6 children are overweight or obese
- High rate of alcohol related and self-harm hospital admissions for under 18s compared to England

❑ Adult health

- Well over half (61.3%) of adults are overweight or obese
- The three highest recorded long-term conditions locally were depression, hypertension and diabetes.
- Mortality rate from preventable cancer; cardiovascular disease and respiratory disease was lower than the national average but we still saw over 100 deaths that were preventable in West Berkshire in 2021

Public Health function – priorities moving forward

- Make the biggest impact by addressing the building blocks of health, these are the natural and built environment in which we live, work, move, and play; the quality of the work we do and the resources available to us either through income or access to facilities to live a full life.
- Tackle health inequalities and ensure we have equal opportunities for all.
- Embed a Health in all Policies approach within West Berkshire Council and work in partnership to promote health and wellbeing at every opportunity.
- Tackle preventable cardiovascular disease through delivery of a community wellness outreach service, taking lifestyle support and health checks to communities.
- Continue to deliver on the joint [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

Conclusion and priorities

- ❑ A balanced approach to improving public health in West Berkshire across three levels:
 - Interventions that impact the whole population;
 - Targeted intervention for groups at risk of ill health; and
 - Support for those with established disease to prevent further ill health and enable people to live well and independently with established medical conditions.
- ❑ Embedding the Public Health approach through partnership working to reach more people and address the wider determinants of health
- ❑ Advocate for evidence-based decisions and communications
- ❑ Continue to commission and deliver high quality Public Health Services

The West Berkshire Public Health Team welcomes the challenge of protecting and improving the health of our local people in the years ahead.

To quote Cicero “The Health of the People is the Highest Law”.