

Ageing Well Task Group

Update for HWB Steering Group (September 2025)

Membership

- Public Health & Wellbeing
- Adult Social Care
- West Berkshire Library Service
- VCWB
- Sovereign Housing (Extra Care Scheme)
- Community United
- Eight Bells for Mental Health
- Corn Exchange
- BHFT Memory Clinic, Falls Service, Community Nursing
- Falkland Grange Care Home
- Winchcombe Place Care Home
- Age UK Berkshire – Dementia Friendly West Berkshire, Carers Partnership, Older Persons Services
- Get Berkshire Active
- SCAS
- RBFBS
- West Berkshire PCN Social Prescribers
- West Berkshire Methodist Churches

Current Activity

Our August meeting was cancelled due to poor attendance because of it being the summer holidays.

- Via attended the last meeting in June and did a presentation on alcohol consumption in the over 55's. This has led to discussions on how the group can work with other partners and council departments to educate this targeted generation. Dementia Friendly West Berkshire are also keen to do some joint up working on this looking at unpaid carers alcohol consumption.
- Scams awareness – PPP do a lot of work around this so the group is looking to do some joined up working with them to establish what resources they already have in place and to potentially create some information packs specifically targeting our ageing residents who may not have access to social media where PPP share the majority of their comms around scams.

Future Actions

- Changing the perception of ageing – the group to think about how we can connect with people in their 40s and 50s to start changing the perception/stigma of ageing and start getting people doing more activities. Possible piece of work around 'looking after yourself and healthy ageing starts now'.

Building Communities Together Partnership

Update for HWB Steering Group

Membership:

West Berkshire Council
Thames Valley Police
BOB ICB
Probation
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue
Health Watch
DWP
Sovereign Network Group
Volunteer Centre West Berkshire
Office Police and Crime Commissioner

Current Activity:

Building Communities Together Partnership:

Next meeting for 28 October 2025 is to be rescheduled due to half term and annual leave. Following a decision at the last meeting of the Partnership the Terms of Reference are being updated to reflect a name change to West Berkshire Community Safety Partnership.

Request for data for the strategic needs assessment which will inform both the Partnership Plan, and the Serious Violence Action Plan has been circulated.

Anti-Social Behaviour:

Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is now in place at Pangbourne Meadows for three years.

Future of the Public Spaces Protection Order in Thatcham town centre is currently out for consultation. The current Order will expire in November 2025. The consultation is seeking views on whether the Order should be extended for a further three years or be discharged.

Channel:

1 case has recently been adopted into Channel.

Domestic Abuse:

MHCLG return in process (accountability for DA Grant spend) – submitted.

Prevent:

Prevent Training is to become mandatory for all WBC staff and Members will be encouraged to undertake the 30–40-minute session has been rolled out and featured in the September edition of Reporter; this is in response to the 2024/25 WBC benchmarking assessment by the Home Office.

A Venue Hire Policy is currently being worked through with Property and Health and Safety following Risk Management Group in July; this is in response to the 2024/25 benchmarking assessment by the Home Office.

Serious Violence:

Having commissioned training and delivery of a series of Virtual Reality programmes to enhance work with young people, these are now being used in West Berks to tackle issues such as knife crime, exploitation, substance misuse, decision making, influence and healthy relationships. Final training delivery is in early July.

The current focus is the development of Prevention Partnerships and Prevention Panels in line with the anticipated updated stat duty guidance and working with the OPCC to try to identify a way to deliver Diversion Panels which would have the ability to become the Prevention Panels that will be required through the duty. There are currently some challenges with the OPCC proposals that all areas are working to try to overcome.

Future Actions:

The Senior BCT Programme Officer with lead responsibility for Prevent, Channel, Domestic Abuse and Exploitation has recently resigned. Given the lack of capacity within the BCT Team, until the post is filled, only specific priority areas of this workstream will be undertaken.

Domestic Abuse:

Delivery Plan priorities – Ongoing

Develop timeline for recommissioning of DA Core Service (from March 2027).

Modern Slavery:

Modern Slavery Statement 2025/26 to be completed.

Prevent:

Local Risk Assessment to be completed.

Serious Violence:

Strategic Needs Assessment to be conducted for 2024/25 which will inform the Serious Violence Action Plan.

Children's Early Help & Prevention Partnership

Update for HWB Steering Group (September 2025)

Membership

Rebecca Wilshire – Service Director, Children and Family Service
 Heather Codling – Lead Member, Children's Services
 Melissa Fry – Primary Head Teacher
 Alex O'Connor – Building Communities Together Manager
 Beth Kelly – Service Manager Early Years and Family Hubs
 Nerys Probert – Children's Lead for Public Health
 Grace Green – CEO Home Start West Berkshire
 Sarah Emery – CEO Berkshire Youth
 Dave Wraight – YJST and Early Help
 Jody Gordon – Emotional Health Academy
 Georgie Hicks – Early Response Hub

Current Activity

The subgroup has not met since the last update, next meeting is on the 8th September

Early Help Data

- Updated early help data, now aligned with South East (SE) benchmarks and reported monthly instead of quarterly in datazone.
- The data includes early help contacts and outcomes, with a suggestion to include total contact numbers for better context.
- The new format aims to improve comparability with other local authorities.

Update on reforms - Family Help and next steps

- The Department for Education (DfE) has introduced significant reforms to family help and child protection services through the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme
- Key Aims of the Reforms: Transform family support by creating a more seamless, multi-agency system that intervenes earlier and more effectively.
- Keep families together where safe and possible, reducing the need for children to enter care.
- Family Help: A new, integrated model combining Targeted Early Help and Child in Need services.
- Introduction of Family Help Lead Practitioners and multi-disciplinary teams.
- Emphasis on early identification of needs and coordinated support plans.
- Establishment of Multi-agency Child Protection Teams
- Family Group Decision Making Embedded across the system to empower families in planning and decision-making.

West Berkshire response to far to the reforms (specific to EH)

- Targeted EH and Children in Need will be become Family Help, the plan is to change our assessment teams to Assessment and Family Help, combine current Assessment Team, CIN Pilot and ERH together to provide Family Help
- Continue to ensure multi agency working and partner engagement in this area

- Family Hubs will be developed to provide a 0-19 service, still focusing on early years but with a range of support to all children and their families – development of this area is in progress and being lead by Dave Wraight
- Develop further the Lead Professional Role in Social Care (Family Help Workers)

Early Help Survey Feedback

A co-production piece of work is taking place at the moment gathering feedback and information from partners in the Early Help space. The initial feedback was shared:

Strengths

- Multi-agency collaboration is widely praised, especially where managers/staff are approachable and responsive.
- Family Hubs are seen as welcoming, flexible, and trusted by families.
- Positive relationships between Early Help staff and schools, with good communication and responsiveness.

Areas for Improvement

- My Family Plans (MFPs) are often seen as duplicative, inflexible, and burdensome for schools and families.
- Gaps in parenting support, especially for early years and neurodivergent children.
- Inconsistent service access, particularly in rural areas and for families not meeting statutory thresholds.

Ideas and Suggestions

- Introduce family-led planning models and reduce reliance on school-led MFPs.
- Develop satellite Family Hubs in rural areas and co-locate professionals (e.g., health visitors, youth workers).
- Expand digital access (e.g., apps, online directories) and improve information sharing.

Emerging Themes

- Mental health needs are rising, especially among primary-aged children and those with trauma or SEN.
- Service fragmentation and threshold confusion are leading to missed opportunities for early intervention.
- Digital exclusion and venue constraints are limiting access to support.

Workshops took place in June to deepen understanding and plan the next steps. They generated a number of further actions and developments that are being progressed alongside the many changes that are taking place in other areas including

Future of the meeting given changes around Reforms

- Concerns raised about overlap with other meetings and questioned the necessity and effectiveness of this meeting.
- Noted that the Health and Wellbeing Board is reviewing the structure and purpose of subgroup meetings.

- West Berks Council will be developing a Children and Young People's Board from September, which will have subgroups one of which will be linked to the Family First Partnership Reforms – it is suggested this meeting is absorbed into that subgroup

The group agreed in the last meeting to revisit the terms of reference after clarifying the meeting's future role.

Future Actions

Consider the future of this meeting given the changes around Early Help

Mental Health Action Group

Update for HWB Steering Group (September 2025)

[N.B. abbreviations used in this update listed at the end]

Membership

Membership currently includes the following organisations:

- West Berkshire Council – Public Health and Wellbeing
- West Berkshire Council – Adult Social Care
- West Berkshire Council - Members
- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Eight Bells for Mental Health
- Recovery in Mind
- Healthwatch
- Community United

Current Activity

In the light of the LGA review of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the subsequent establishment of a working group to take this forward, the MHAG has not embarked on any new work. In addition, the continued lack of attendance by BHFT (and other partners) makes any substantive progress difficult.

- **Mental Health Forum:** The recently established, and co-produced Mental Health Forum continues to meet and provide valuable feedback. Amongst recent discussions were:
 - Presentation by BHFT's Service User Network (SUN) with agreement to provide mutual support between our two groups
 - Discussion on services for people in mental health crisis, the limitations of current arrangements and potential improvements
 - Experiences at Prospect Park Hospital. One earlier comment had been about the quality of the food and it had been later discovered that in the latest PLACE assessment, ward food at the hospital was 376th out of 391 mental health trusts who had such a score. This has since been taken up with BHFT.
 - Mapping of the range of mental health services in the public and voluntary sectors with a view to making people more aware of the pathways of care available.
- **Bereavement:** Following earlier work, contact has been with partner organisations to consider how best to take this work forward. Short term outputs being considered include
 - Provision of information to make people more aware of the potential impact of bereavement and the many sources of help available
 - Training or support for front-line staff who may deal with people who are bereaved
 - Initiatives to enhance or strengthen buddying and peer support
- A report was prepared for the Health and Wellbeing Board exploring the modus operandi of the Mental Health Action Group, how it can fulfil its objectives, as a partnership committee,

in the context of the HWB's primary goal of developing and implementing a health and wellbeing strategy. This has not been taken forward, in the light of the continuing review of the HWB.

- Although not directly under the auspices of the MHAG, West Berkshire Council's Public Health team has produced a mental health needs assessment, which should be published soon. This will be very helpful in underpinning strategic direction on mental health.

Future Actions

As noted above, in the light of the current review, the MHAG has paused its development of a future work programme. However, previous discussions had considered the following as possible areas in which to be involved:

- Further work on bereavement
- Feeding in to reviews and developments in supporting people in mental health crisis (already in various plans including the ICB's Joint Forward Plan and work of the BOB Mental Health Provider Collaborative).
- Aligning and working with other HWB sub-groups on overlapping issues such as loneliness, dementia etc.
- Whole-person care and the further development of neighbourhood services.
- Further promotion of the Mental Health Forum to increase membership
- Extension of the Let's Get Mindful Fund

Abbreviations

BHFT – Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (community and mental health provider)

HWB - Health and Wellbeing Board

BOB – Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (the area currently covered by the ICB)

ICB – Integrated Care Board

LGA – Local Government Association

MHAG – Mental Health Action Group

PLACE – Patient Led Assessment of the Care Environment (a national scheme of patient assessments)

SUN – Service User Network (co-produced peer support meetings for people with mental health problems under the aegis of BHFT).

Skills and Enterprise Partnership

Update for HWB Steering Group (September 2025)

Membership

EBP, West Berkshire Council, Groundwork, The Advocacy People, DWP, Healthwatch West Berks, Parkway Shopping, Newbury Weekly News, NHS, AWE

Current Activity

The Connect to Work initiative is aimed at targeting the hidden economically inactive community, which is a DWP initiative, linked to the Get Britain Working White paper. This is at the planning stage and will be driven by Wokingham. It was agreed we need to wait for more details on this scheme before we can decide how/if the SEP can best fit into this.

Adult and Community Learning will be continuing in West Berks for this academic year and they are awaiting confirmation of funding for 2025/26.

In terms of a full action plan it was agreed we needed to wait for more guidance from the HWBB as to the future structure/ priorities before we could formulate a more detailed plan.

Future Actions

Destinations Expo 2025 has been confirmed as taking place on 9th Oct 2025 at Newbury College.

EBP continues to seek funding to expand the delivery of the DLS programme.

Groundwork are set to deliver 3 more projects in Reading over the coming 9 months and are also looking to potentially expand to Newbury.



Substance Behaviour Harm
Reduction Partnership

Substance Behaviour Harm Reduction Partnership

Update for HWB Steering Group

Membership

- West Berkshire Council - Public Health and Wellbeing (Chair)
- West Berkshire Council – Building Communities Together Team
- West Berkshire Council – Housing
- West Berkshire Council - Health in Schools Co-ordinator
- West Berkshire Council – Adult Social Care
- West Berkshire Council – Children’s Services
- Public Protection Partnership
- Thames Valley Police
- National Probation Service
- Education
- Combatting Drugs Partnership
- Berkshire West Tobacco Control Alliance
- BOB ICB
- Community Alcohol Partnership
- Solutions 4 Health
- Health Watch West Berkshire
- Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
- VIA
- Soup Kitchen
- Berkshire Women’s Aid
- Two Saints
- Sovereign Housing
- South Central Ambulance Service

Community Wellness Outreach

Current Activity

Due to unforeseen circumstances the SBHRP meeting due to take place on 14th July 2025 did not take place. The next meeting of the partnership is scheduled to take place on 22nd September 2025.

As per the previous recorded actions, the drug alert pathway has been further refined to ensure that there is an accurate distribution list with up-to-date contact details and contingency plans are in place in case of distributing officer absences.

Future Actions

- Relevant members of the partnership have been requested to update the Drug Diversion in School’s policy following the implementation of TVP’s Harm Reduction Units, which impacts on current processes.
- Update TOR and plan if confirmation received that the sub-group will be continuing.

Suicide Prevention Action Group

Update for HWB Steering Group

Membership

The Suicide Prevention Action Group is a subgroup of Volunteer Centre West Berkshire. It is independently and voluntarily chaired by Garry Poulson who established the group in May 2017. Since then, the group has focussed on the delivery of accredited First Aid Suicide Prevention Training and has trained over 800 people who live and or work in West Berkshire. The group is supported by West Berkshire Public Health Officers. In addition to the delivery of training the group has worked towards the ongoing funding of Amparo a charity established to support those bereaved by suicide.

The current members of the group are:-

VCWB, West Berkshire Education, West Berkshire Public Health, West Berkshire Highways, Thatcham Town Council, Newbury Samaritans, West Berkshire Action for Refugees, Gamcare, Racing Welfare, Injured Jockeys Fund, lay people

Current Activity

Providing accredited training, during the summer the group has continued to maintain a focus on fatalities at Thatcham Railway Station and has held site meetings there and continues discussions with the railway authorities.

The second area of focus is being maintained with the Lambourn Racing Industry. The Chairman has held meetings in Lambourn with a major trainer and staff from Racing Welfare. The chair is grateful for the support of Steven Bow and Catherine Greaves of West Berks Public Health. Further meetings are scheduled in September. An event to be held in Lambourn for the racing industry is now agreed and The Injured Jockeys fund have kindly offered a free venue to hold a conference with key speakers and experts.

As a result of listening to comments from Racing welfare officers and their reporting of harmful comments made in their local facebook group area the chairman considered that a letter could be sent to Facebook moderators and admins. Accordingly during August working with WBC coms the Chairman and Steven Bow created a communication that was sent to key Facebook Administrators seeking their support to ensure measured and sensitive responses to fatalities within communities. This document was sent and has been well received.

The Volunteer Centre has created a campaign flyer for Suicide Prevention Day.

Future Actions.

To bring about more suicide first aid training across West Berkshire, and to take part in the Suicide Prevention Week using campaign materials created by Volunteer Centre West Berkshire.