

Council – 12 November 2018

Portfolio Holder Children's and Health and Wellbeing

Children's Services

I look back on my first 6 months as Portfolio Holder for Children's (Early Help, Social Care & Safeguarding) with a **sense of purpose, pride and achievement**. That **sense of purpose** is derived from my work with the Executive Director, her senior leaders and a talented and committed staff team, resetting our vision for Children's Services; setting the direction for our 'Walsall Right for Children' transformation journey and agreeing the simple but critical underlying principles to guide the right behaviours to achieve better outcomes. It is also attributable to children young people and families themselves – hearing first hand their stories, their challenges, their journeys, ambitions and aspirations.

A sense of pride galvanised by events like our recently held **Excellent Night Out** celebrating the achievements of our young people in our care and our **Children's Services Staff Conference** in October, attended by some 400 passionate and committed staff and our chief executive, which I felt privileged to be a part of and contribute to. We really do have some good practice and some great people making a real difference to the lives of our most vulnerable children, young people and families. Our selection to partner the '**What Works Centre for Children's Social Care**', a new initiative funded by the DfE to improve outcomes for children and families through evidence informed practice was another proud portfolio holder moment. The timing of this partnering arrangement with 'What Works ' could not be better, and will, I am confident, accelerate our transformation journey.

And a sense of achievement built from many of the small things we do well and the impact we make on a daily basis but most notably felt recently when we received some positive feedback from **Ofsted after their inspection of Walsall's arrangements for care leavers** in September 2018. Ofsted's letter commended the Authority for *'...making good progress in all areas... good awareness of key strengths and areas for service improvement... a growing sense of Corporate Responsibility for care leavers... and its energy and vision resulting in improving outcomes for care leavers'*. It was particularly reassuring that the Authority's strengthened corporate parenting arrangements that I now chair, as lead member, were seen by Ofsted to be *'providing greater scrutiny challenge and pace'.....'as well as greater focus on the experiences and outcomes for children in care and care leavers'*.

My '**look forward**' is **resolute, determined and ambitious** for Walsall's most vulnerable children, young people and families. The improvements we have made across Early Help, Social Care and Safeguarding and continue to make, have been 'hard fought' and are, so easily lost, so there is no room for complacency. Keeping our children safe well remains one of the most important roles that our council performs and a key priority for my portfolio and the council's refreshed Corporate Plan. The context of more and more children and families finding themselves in situations where they are seeking support from the council remains a familiar one and undoubtedly means a challenging agenda for all and lots more to do.

Before moving on to set out the **achievements, challenges and priorities** for my portfolio, I would like to express my gratitude for the collective commitment shown by **officers, members and partners** to improving the lives of vulnerable children and families. I am heartened by the shared determination to ensure children, young people and families get the best shot at living safe and happy lives as possible. This is something we should all feel proud of.

I would like to formally recognise the work undertaken by **Councillor Nawaz, the former Portfolio Holder for Children's Services** and the recently appointed **Children's Champion** for the work she has done revitalising the Council4Kids , Respect group and New Belongings group (Walsall 's children in care council , children in care leavers groups). This work really is giving our children and young people a voice and the impact it is having was recognised recently at a national event where the project ideas around isolation and loneliness took first place.

I would also like to thank **the many children, young people, parents, carers and advocates** themselves that I have spoken to, met and received e-mails from. Their stories of personal achievement, success, personal challenge and sadly sometimes trauma, together with their feedback on how we can improve services where we do not get things right are really valuable and insightful. Only by listening to, working with and helping children and young people to have their say in shaping services there to support them, can we make the biggest difference.

Finally my thanks to our **Children's Services workforce, the wider Council workforce and partners** for the continued contribution and commitment to collaborative working. Our partnership work goes from strength to strength; it is crucial to the way we work, to keeping children safe and is the only way we can make real sustainable change for children and young people in Walsall.

This report details the **achievements** within Early Help, Social Care and Safeguarding we are most proud of, the **challenges we face** and the **areas we are focussing attention on** to improve going forward.

Our Ofsted '*requires improvement*' judgement in September 2017 recognised our progress and commitment to embedding improvements across Children's Social Care & Safeguarding, confirming our direction of travel, our steadily improving services and demonstrated solid practice in a challenging context.

We have much to be proud of **achieving** since then such as:

- Increasing the number of permanent staff and reducing the number of agency staff to stabilise the workforce
- Launching our Walsall Right for Children (#WR4C) transformation programme
- Strengthening our Early Help locality partnerships
- Reducing social worker caseloads so they have more time to purposefully work with and engage children & families
- Stabilising our management and strengthened supervision practice
- Strengthening arrangements for identifying and supporting children at risk of sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation or those who go missing and /or are trafficked

- Recruiting a dedicated Principal Exploitation officer and reviewed processes and practice relating to child sexual exploitation
- Enabling children in care and care leavers to participate in the recruitment and training of senior leaders and managers
- Implementing the Mocking Bird programme to develop and provide networks of support for foster carers
- Supporting more care leavers to be in education , employment and training and supporting them to attend university
- Constituting our Corporate Parenting Board as a council committee and developing pledges for children in care and care leavers

We recognise that we face significant challenges in delivering services for children and their families that keep them safe, well and achieving. Officers are working harder and smarter to minimise the impact of increasing demand. They are evolving more innovative ways to meet these needs now and in the future. We know we need to keep vulnerable families out of crisis, as well as children and young people out of care, unless of course, care is the right place.

Foremost amongst our **key challenges** over the coming months are:

- Working with partners to develop better understanding and application of thresholds so that children and young people get the right help at the right time
- Supporting social workers to improve the way they work with children young people and their families to enable them to be cared for safely without needing to come into care
- Continuing to recruit and retain our social workers so that Walsall is the place to work
- Continuing to recruit and retain our foster carers and adopters to ensure our children who are looked after can be cared for in a family environment here in Walsall.

There are also areas we need to **focus our attention on** and these include:

- Reconfiguring our social work teams as part of our Walsall Right for Children transformation programme to work on a locality basis, rooting social work within the community
- Developing an integrated model between Early Help and Education Support Services in partnership with schools to respond to difficult behaviour
- Introducing a specialist team to support permanency work to make decisions more timely and prevent drift and delay
- Developing a bespoke offer for adolescents who are on the edge of care
- Improving work with schools so there is a coordinated response to reduce the number of children excluded from schools
- Developing specialist services to provide direct support to high risk children vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation
- Working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to implement a regional adoption agency
- Working with CAFCASS to facilitate helpful and effective working with the family court

- Working in partnership with neighbouring local authorities and the Family Court to develop a Family Drugs and Alcohol Court.

This report has set out the **achievements** we are proud of, the **challenges** faced by my Portfolio and the areas **attention** is being focussed on. However, improving the lives of our children, young people is not just within the gift of my Portfolio. Children's lives are complex and the barriers to the outcomes we want to achieve are too challenging for any single portfolio.

Everyone of us have a role to play, whether that be as a champion for children, or as a corporate parent to our most vulnerable children in the care of the Authority. It is only by working together in pursuit of a common goal that we will secure the **present and future outcomes** we want for our children, young people and their families. We are making good progress and there is much to be proud of but undoubtedly, the circumstances in which we are operating will continue to be challenging and we do have much more to do.

However, there is absolute determination across Children's Services and this Administration to improve outcomes for all children and young people and to make a difference to the lives of those who need it most.

Public Health

Looking back over the past 6 months, I am proud of the dedication shown by public health staff to consolidate and build on partnership working and in seeking different ways in which the Public Health team can help external partners, other service areas and colleagues to continue the work across the health and social care economy to improve the health of its' residents.

We have worked with partners and providers to review our services, identifying priorities and opportunities and to seek resolutions to the health challenges in Walsall. This report aims to profile the problems faced in Walsall and some of the services we provide to address these issues.

Health Profile for Walsall

Walsall remains one of the 20% most deprived areas in England. Despite this, the latest figures show the percentage of children living in low income families has decreased from 29.9% (16,980) in 2014 to 25.1 % (14,455) in 2015.

Life expectancy of both men and women is lower than the England average but there is an improving trend for both genders, each with about a 2 year increase over the last 20 years. In the **most** deprived areas of Walsall the life expectancy is 11.3 years lower for men and 7.4 years lower for women.

Walsall's teenage pregnancy rate is 30.0% per 1000 young women aged 15-17 (2016). This is still high but is reducing year on year. The infant mortality rate in Walsall is 7.1 deaths per 1000 babies under 1 year old, which is significantly higher than the national rate for England of 3.9 per 1000.

The percentage of physically inactive adults in Walsall stands at 50.1%, which is worse than the West Midlands average. Work by the Healthy Environment transformation programme has resulted in infrastructural improvements and increased physical

activity opportunities and we are starting to notice a difference with users of outdoor spaces now equal to the national average and a 9% increase in the number of children walking/cycling to school.

Diabetes prevalence is estimated to be 8.7% of the registered population (aged 17 and over) and is the highest in the West Midlands region, as well as 2.3% higher than the national average. Around 90% of cases are type 2, which are considered preventable by exercise, weight loss and healthy eating.

Although the number of premature deaths (under 75 years) from cancer is gradually declining, both in Walsall and nationally, the rate in Walsall is significantly higher than the England average. Since cancer remains the leading cause of death in the under 75's, effective prevention programmes are essential to reducing the incidence locally.

Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) now includes provider organisations such as Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust and housing sector. The Board continues to review the priorities of *The Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2020* to ensure that they continue to tackle the most prevalent problems that the borough faces, identifying any gaps through an update of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and consolidating the work of all partners.

Partnerships across the Health and Social Care Economy in Walsall

We have worked closely with Walsall CCG to produce the Outcomes Framework for **Walsall Together**, including a range of wider determinants of health. The joint vision is: *“to address the changing needs of our population with integrated care solutions that maximise the potential of the individual person, the teams that support them and the wider health and care system”*. Part of their remit is to progress the priorities of the **Better Care Fund** whose focus is on Resilient Communities, Access to care, Intermediate Care, Integrated Health and Care Teams. Quarterly reports are submitted to the Health & Wellbeing Board on their progress.

The Black Country Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP)

The *STP Plan* sets out how services across the region work together over the next five years to improve our collective population's health and wellbeing, to improve service quality and to deliver financial stability with work streams developed to focus on hot topics. Walsall continues to lead the development of Healthy Pregnancy Services across the Black Country as part of the Black Country Local Maternity System.

Healthwatch Walsall has regular representation on the HWB Board and is working closely as a critical friend in monitoring the delivery of health and social care in every corner of Walsall.

Walsall continues its partnership with **West Midlands Combined Authority** (WMCA). In particular, Public Health has supported the development of the **On the Move** physical activity framework and has a representative on the steering group.

Programmes

Health Protection - Health Protection Forum reports go to the HWB Board on a regular basis. The most recent papers taken to the Board include the Healthcare Associated Infection 5 year Strategy and Antimicrobial Resistance 5 year strategy.

The Health Economy Healthcare Associated Infection Steering group oversees the implementation of the joint action plan.

Since April 2018, an Infection Prevention team has been part of Public Health at Walsall Council. A programme of infection prevention audits and link worker training days are in place. The team work closely with other professionals within the Council, CCG and CQC to oversee the quality of care provided by care homes and other local healthcare providers.

With a rise in the number of cases of *Clostridium difficile* infection, work is being undertaken between Public Health, the CCG and Walsall Healthcare Trust to understand this increase and to prevent further infections occurring. Our Outbreak, Pandemic flu and Seasonal flu plans have been reviewed and updated. The flu vaccine programme has started for this year's flu season. So far over 450 employees in the council have benefited from the in-house free service.

Tobacco Control 'Tough on Tobacco' - A new Tobacco Control Plan for Walsall 2016-2019 builds on the previous 2012-2015 plan. A co-ordinated approach to tobacco control is required to fully realise the improvements to the health and economy of Walsall and its residents. This includes a combination interventions including ensuring effective regulation and enforcement, cease promotion of tobacco, making tobacco less affordable, promoting smoke-free environments. We have also signed up to the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control a commitment by the Council to tobacco control activity.

NHS Health Check – The rolling 5 year call/recall national programme, - NHS Health Check, is well established in Walsall, aiming to identify and reduce risk factors of CVD in people aged 40-74 by supporting them through lifestyle changes.

An increase in uptake year on year since 2013 shows that of an eligible population of approximately 57,000, to date 34,056 people have been invited for a NHS Health Check and 33,553 people have received a NHS Health Check (51.3%). Walsall is ranked 20th out of 152 Counties and Unitary Authorities. Locally, we have broadened the NHS Health Check programme by including awareness of the AAA screening, Bowel Cancer screening and wider lifestyle services eg park based activities.

Lifestyles Services - "One you Walsall" Walsall's lifestyle's service includes:

- Central access point
- Self-help provision - sign posting of users to a wide range of universal services including physical activity, stop smoking, emotional health and wellbeing, long term conditions and debt management.
- Targeted provision - twelve week targeted programme for those who meet a set eligibility criteria including men, people living in deprived wards and people from a Black & Ethnic Minority background
- Healthy Families programme called "Super wiggles" – working with parents whose children are overweight or very overweight and between the ages of 2-7 years.
- Healthy workplace programme

Walsall healthy workplace programme works with 20 local businesses on wellbeing interventions and workplace policies for the business and their employees. Partners in Walsall have recently formed the Health and Economy Sub-Group, with members

from the Walsall Economic Board (WEB) and Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB), in order to address priorities of common concern. A pilot is currently taking place in some local companies to understand the issues surrounding health and work and to further develop the local package of support for employers to draw upon.

Universal and Targeted Physical Activity – 3,145 adults have accessed a range of physical activity programmes in 2017/18 including led jogs and walks and specialist community based sessions (e.g. hydrotherapy, cardiac rehabilitation).

Diabetes - £750k of funding was the result of Public Health working jointly with the CCG and Walsall Healthcare Trust to support bids in diabetes care (through data collected about the high rate of diabetic amputations in Walsall and also by highlighting gaps in local service) for national funding from NHS England. The bids were: measuring Treatment Targets, developing a Diabetes Structured Education, strengthening both the Multidisciplinary Footcare Team and Diabetes in-patient Specialist Nurse Service. We are also developing an educational pack for schools to support education about diabetes.

Resilient Communities - The Making Connections Programme (MCW) social prescribing initiative continues its success with additional providers being awarded grants to meet the demands of tackling loneliness and isolation amongst the older and more vulnerable residents of Walsall. A total of 381 referrals to the service via the West Midlands Fire Service are received largely from GPs but also include referrals from partner organisations, individuals and self-referrals.

MCW (Active) is also being developed based on a similar concept to the above and therefore will provide further funding to local voluntary organisations. MCW (Active) will also reduce loneliness but will utilise physical activity and/ or weight management as vehicle for doing so.

Mental Health and Wellbeing is an area that is only just beginning to receive the focus it deserves (and is the focus of the 2016/17 DPH Annual Report). Mental ill-health affects more people than heart disease or cancer nationally and impacts on all aspects of the health and social care economy, as well as on the individual and their family. We have formulated some recommendations to understand the challenges, help address mental health inequalities, identify and mitigate the risk-factors and translate national policies into local action and practice.

Drugs and Alcohol Services – We commission Change Grow Live to deliver these services and, over the last 12 months, it has offered structured treatment to 999 opiate dependent residents and 422 alcohol dependent residents. The service works in close partnership with Children's Services to safeguard children and families and with criminal justice agencies to positively impact upon community safety.

Sexual Health Services - We commission Walsall Healthcare Trust to deliver Integrated Sexual Health services including; contraception, prevention, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. An easy open access service is key to early detection of sexually transmitted disease and focuses on groups with higher risk and prevalence rates. The key achievement of the last 12 months has been the improvement of the offer and uptake of HIV testing resulting in a reduction in late HIV diagnosis, which is the most important predictor of morbidity and short term mortality.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping - Public Health and Money Home Job are successfully collaborating to deliver The Walsall Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022. As a result of the success of the Winter Night Shelter 2017/18 the local Housing First pilot has successfully accommodated 25 rough sleepers and The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has funded us to offer an enhanced rough sleepers service during this winter.

Health Switch Scheme – 148 local takeaway premises have signed up to the award scheme offering healthier food options; 52 of these are within 400m of a school. The scheme offers bronze, silver and gold levels. Future plans include Piloting both a bespoke HSA resource pack for mobile traders and soft play centres with 14 new premises and a new approach to recruit 20 premises with a food hygiene score of 3 increase their score and improve their nutritional offer to residents.

Teenage Pregnancy Strategy - In April 2018 the refreshed teenage pregnancy reduction strategy was launched with increased partnership engagement to tackle this issue. The aspiration is that Walsall will follow best practice and evidence of what works eg the Teens and Toddlers youth development programme has proven to have an impact on vulnerable young people and was highlighted as good practice by Ofsted and CQC.

Increased investment for Infant Mortality Reduction Programmes – We have been instrumental in working with partners from the Black Country Healthy Pregnancy group, linked to the Local Maternity System (LMS) to successfully bid for £185,000 that will support 5 pilot programmes (see below) contributing to reducing infant mortality and creating a safer environment in the first year of a child's life. While these are led by different Public Health teams across the Black Country, work and learning is being shared in each of the four areas. The projects are:

- Preconception Pathway (Sandwell)
- Smoking Cessation in Pregnancy Peer Supporters in the Community and Smoking Cessation in Pregnancy Champions for Workplaces (Walsall)
- Smoking Cessation in Pregnancy and other key Public Health messages (eg Healthy Start vitamins; folic acid) (Walsall and Dudley)
- Ante Natal Parenting support resource (Walsall and Dudley)
- A teaching resource to be used in schools providing young potential parents to be with the information on how the life choices they make may impact on their pregnancies and babies (Wolverhampton)

Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing Behaviour Toolkit

We were proud to launch a toolkit for parents, schools and early years providers in September 2018 aimed at identifying what can be done to raise resilience in children and young people, what can be done when the need for support for emotional health or behaviour become evident and then who to refer to when outside help is needed.

Key Stage 2 Love Your feelings resource – We have worked with Creative Health CIC and key stage 2 children in 4 primary schools to co-create a resource aimed at helping children in Key Stage 2 recognise and express their emotions. Using drama, visual art and film, they developed the concept of creating 'beings', who children take on a journey of emotional discovery.

Food for Life works with early years and schools and demonstrates the work of schools to provide healthy meals and food education that has a positive impact on both pupils and the wider community. In the first year over 20 schools engaged. In June, Fullbrook Nursery achieved the Food for Life Early Years Award, the first to do so across Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country, followed by Abu Bakr Nursery in October 2018. The criteria for achieving the award includes: Food Quality; Food leadership and food culture; Food Education and Community, partnerships and parent engagement.

A new approach to supporting communities to tackle children and young people healthy weight - We have made funds available to local communities in Walsall to develop projects that will work in each locality around increasing healthy eating and reducing sedentary behaviour. We also employ local community navigators who can support the community in accessing the facilities that are available to them and working to develop new community initiatives.

Introduction To Solids Video - Working collaboratively with Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust's Infant Feeding Team and Professor Amy Brown from Swansea University we have created an animated graphic "Top Tips for introducing your baby to solid foods." The animation explains 10 tips to help new parents get to grips with the dos and don'ts of baby feeding.

Walsall Chest Infection and Oral Care Quality Improvement Project in Nursing Homes - Good oral health is an essential component of active ageing. Social participation, communication and dietary diversity are all impacted when oral health is impaired. An audit has been carried out to identify barriers to oral health care in nursing homes. There is ongoing engagement with the care homes on chest infections and oral care quality. These programmes are examples of a collaborative system wide approach to improvement in nursing and residential homes. We have also provided specialist oral health expertise as part of The Safer Provision and Caring Excellence (SPACE) Programme, developed by WM Patient Safety Collaborative (PSC). It is designed and delivered in collaboration with Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and aims to impact on avoidable harm and reduce hospital admissions for the older population.

Student Voice #My Well School - Involving students in decision-making can benefit their health and wellbeing making them feel part of their school and wider community, having some control over their lives. Working with Creative Health CIC and two primary and two secondary schools we developed 'My Well Being: #my well school'. These resources enable schools to carry out their own 'health check-up' to gain insight into the health and wellbeing of their students and most importantly identify any areas for improvement.

Transformation Programmes

Public Health continues to lead on two transformation programmes:

- 1) **Shaping a Sustainable Healthy Environment** - this cross-directorate project has ensures decisions are not made in isolation and considers health at all stages focusing on the different themes within the transformation vision to identify how they each can contribute to tackling health inequalities. We delivered on a number of milestones over the last 2 years highlighted below:

Taxi Licensing was identified as a key area focusing on reducing air pollution, smoking and vaping in vehicles, wheelchair and other vulnerability access and care issues. Subsequently, a full review of conditions is underway.

RAG Rating Data Toolkit - The Public Health, Licensing and Planning Task and Finish Group identified the value of developing a more systematic approach to support the consideration and determination of a response to licensing and planning applications. A RAG Rating Data Toolkit has been developed and phase one will initially look at alcohol related data taking in to consideration the 4 licensing objectives: The prevention of crime and disorder, Public Safety, The prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

Healthy Spaces - The Healthy Spaces Steering Group includes officers from Public Health, Clean and Green and Sports and Leisure with a view to pooling expertise. The vision focuses on Programme, People and Place similar to the Black Country Economic Plan and includes a broad strategic approach. An action plan has been developed to roll out a range of evidence-based infrastructural improvements/ interventions that will have a population impact on health, particularly those living in areas of greatest deprivation. It also details an approach to further develop healthy parks and green spaces alongside a longer term plan to revise existing service/ delivery model leading to increased efficiency and impact.

- 2) **INSIGHT** – Working across the whole organisation, this project team have jointly raised awareness and helped to develop an understanding of data and intelligence and the importance of analysing and sharing this information to ensure the right outcomes for our residents. Working collaboratively, they have developed an INSIGHT skill-set. Currently, their main focus is around proving that we can link data sets within the Council to allow us to build a better understanding of residents experiences, and experimenting with a range of software to help us undertake more sophisticated data analysis.

Cross Service Working - In addition to the above, we continue to work with other Council services to seek improvement to processes, embedding health in all policies and improving the wellbeing of its staff including:

- **Transport and Health Sub Group** - The aim of this group is to pool the expertise of officers from Transport West Midlands, WM Combined Authority and Walsall Council's Licensing and Public Health teams to develop programmes of work to ensure better use of Walsall's transport network, particularly in the promotion of healthy living.
- **A Licensing and Planning Group to:**
 - Improve licensing processes
 - Input into planning processes and applications
 - other application processes across the Council

We have seconded a member of the Public Health team to take on the role of Programme Manager for Wider Determinants (such as housing, transport, access to services, the built environment) to help consolidate the above work. As well as being involved at an early stage of planning applications to ensure the impacts of wider determinants are considered, we will also be

contributing to the town centre master plan that has huge potential to improve the health and wellbeing of those that use it.

Public Health is also proud of:

- Acceptance of 6 posters to the Faculty of Public Health conference
- Acceptance of a poster for the Public Health England Conference about the Night Shelter
- Presentation to a social prescribing conference around Making Connections Walsall
- Invite to the National Cardiovascular conference in Manchester of our Walsall travelling sofa and poster titled: *Sit, chat, take a photo, watch a film – ‘Something you can do’ Raising awareness of the NHS Health Check programme in Walsall*

We continue to face many challenges across the borough. The Public Health team have acknowledged these challenges and responded by widening their networking and partnership skills to address the problems, seek resolutions and explore other options as part of our duty to the health and wellbeing of Walsall residents.

Councillor Wilson

Portfolio Holder Children’s and Health and Wellbeing

November 2018