

## **Health and Wellbeing Board**

**17 April 2019**

### **West Midlands Fire Service Overview of Prevention Activities in Walsall**

#### **Purpose**

This report gives an overview of how the Prevention agenda within West Midlands Fire Service's Strategic Plan, is ensuring that Health and Wellbeing is at the forefront of its vision of making 'West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier'.

#### **Recommendations**

That the Health & Wellbeing Board note the activity that West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) is actively engaging in, to support the Board's priorities around Health and Wellbeing.

#### **Report detail**

#### **Back Home Safe and Well**

Pilot for Provision of Back Home Safe & Well Service from Hospital. At this moment in time we are not in a position to progress this piece of work.

#### **Complex Needs**

Walsall Fire Station is currently supporting/leading a wider piece of work within the West Midlands Combined Authorities - Public Sector Reform strategy. Specifically including, defining and supporting systemic change for people with Multiple, Complex Needs (Homelessness, Substance Misuse, Mental Health and Offending).

People with multiple complex needs often suffer from health problems, unemployment and family breakdown. Current services are not adequately supporting these people, leading to unfulfilled lives and high service and social costs.

Key issues to address include:

- Defining what Multiple Complex needs are, based on such issues as offending, homelessness or substance misuse
- Updating research suggesting high common occurrences of prevalent behaviour in the West Midlands
- Addressing the higher public service costs associated with people with multiple complex needs.

There are many other factors influencing whether someone develops multiple complex needs. Issues to explore include:

- Resilience (including mental and emotional wellbeing)
- Attachment (and neglect)
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Trauma (e.g. domestic violence)
- Relationships and social networks (especially loss of key family members)
- Behaviours (including individual, community, professional and parenting behaviour)
- Protective factors
- Effective support (e.g. mentoring)
- Community impact (on localities and interest groups)
- The importance of structure and a sense of purpose in everyday living.

To date WMFS have worked with organisations from across the West Midlands including many in Walsall as well as the service users themselves to gain an understanding of the issues faced by both and where there needs to be change within the system that will ultimately increase life chances for all and in doing so also reduce the expenditure of services by reducing demand. Further report attached.

### **Our People**

Our Vulnerable Persons Officers (VPOs) have completed 59 VPO cases in the last 12 months in the Walsall area. WMFS have also now upskilled our VPO's. They are now known as Complex needs officers (CNO). In Walsall, WMFS have five CNO's are receiving higher level of development in areas such as Hoarding, Mental Health, substance misuse, dealing with Safe guarding support for crews and all hold enhanced DBS. They are all now using the apprenticeship program and fully involved in taking on higher level cases as well as supporting crews on scene from remote locations. CNO's work tirelessly to achieve the greatest protection and service for those most at risk. Their specialist training ensures that they are fully aware of Mental Health Challenges, Safeguarding, hoarding as well as substance/alcohol misuse and dependency procedures working closely with our relevant partners to intervene and secure the best outcome. WMFS understands the importance of creating a safer environment to support independent living, allowing our vulnerable people to remain in their homes where this is appropriate. These officers are at the forefront of this service. All BCN Fire fighters hold a current standard DBS check.

Staff at Walsall Fire Station have been recently recognised by the Mayor of Walsall and Michael Hurt of NHS Walsall CCG for their efforts in spreading awareness in the Organisation around dementia to make their services more dementia friendly. This has been hugely beneficial as an added value to both staff and residents of Walsall through interaction and intervention with our Safe and Well visits (SAW) and other community based activities. . Champions are clearly identified wearing the Champion Insignia on their lapels.

A new 'Smoke Free Homes' initiative -During safe & Well visits, Bloxwich Fire Station crews are actively promoting the smoke free homes initiative. If this is shown to be successful following evaluation, this will be rolled out across the Walsall area. This is in partnership with Walsall's Public Health team.

### **Upskilling our teams**

All watches in Walsall stations have completed and are receiving updated Prevent training to ensure crews understand and know what to look for, know the signs and feel confident enough to raise the concern and ask the relevant questions. Sessions are delivered by WM Police as part of the Prevent agenda and a WMFS own internal approved trainer.

Modern day slavery and Child exploitation personnel development is being rolled out through on line packages internally and partnered with ongoing CNO support. The Walsall conurbation are seeing shared intelligence with partners including Border force and WM Police, several joint operations within the Black Country North (BCN) area has seen joint VPO and Fire safety attendance.

Walsall area Fires stations have approached WM Police to be included within the Hate crime strategy, we work closely with many diverse groups and attend arson related incidents. This has been agreed with the Walsall safer partnership, WM police are forwarding those at risk from arson and WMFS are fitting Letter box protectors where appropriate including offering safety advice and evacuation plans.

Walsall Fire Station is trialling a New SAW pathway referral with Nash Dom and trying to access hard to reach groups from Eastern European backgrounds. Station watches are attending events to welcome and support new families in to the Walsall area and offering fire safety advice and SAW.

BCN Fire crews are also working with alcohol and drug rehabilitation groups such as the Beacon centre, Walsall Manor Women's project, rehab 4 addiction. This work is relevant when teams discussing the issues around what and when individuals involved in drugs/illegal highs and alcohol impacts on others. Referenced as a trusted public service who attend to deal with the aftermath with a different perspective to our partners, WMFS work closely to ensure support for these proactive centres from a public service point of view and educate the outcomes of what officers see. Our teams have completed Drug and legal high awareness training.

Through the Safe and Well visits WMFS has created an approach to Healthy lifestyles and Healthy eating as well as ensuring those identified are living safely and independently. Our safety service incorporates all lifestyle choices and offers support, referrals to partners such as the Falls response service and sensory teams as well as signposting to other services both Public and Volunteers. During the visit WMFS also monitor carbon monoxide levels to ensure that those most at risk are not being exposed to dangerous products from faulty gas or solid fuel heaters, cooker or boilers.

SANDS Charity group is now fully embedded in to Walsall Fire station, holding meetings once a month from our community facility, the service supports bereaved parents of new babies and children, and WMFS support with Safe and Well visits and referrals in the Walsall area.

Walsall Adult Social Care, health and home visits refer identified vulnerable persons for Safe and Well referrals including former Community Alarm users. The WMFS Tracs initiative number is 1951 allows us to track completion and it has referred 352 individuals in the last Quarter (period 4) across Willenhall, Aldridge, Bloxwich and Walsall.

WMP (West Midlands Police) are providing data and referrals to WMFS for their identified Vulnerable Persons such as victims of Arson, threat of arson, Burglary, domestic violence,

hate crimes and Harassment. Through Jamie Hobday and Tracey Bull this partnership is trialling over a month's worth of Police referrals to see the value and impact SAW will have with this target group. The current evaluation has seen 20 independent referrals completed.

Walsall NHS Trust maintains it's Safe and Well referral partnership for medical oxygen users across the Walsall authority area. WMFS are informed when each individual has medical oxygen installed in their home, prior to discharge and also when decommissioned through either health improvement, further hospitalisation or due to loss of life.

Making Connections Walsall Through this project WMFS are now delivering Safe and Well visits following referrals from a wide range of partners including the Voluntary sector, this partnership pathway is due for renewal and full evaluation. We have a view to continue and improve the service at every level.

WMFS Cadets A number of the Walsall Fire stations (Aldridge and Bloxwich) have WMFS cadets running 18-week programs for children ages between 12 -16, they engage in Fire Service activity as well as Health and well- being modules for the period of time, through mentoring and coaching they receive recognised qualification and can stay on to become Cadet instructors.

Health related projects New NHS data sharing protocol and agreement signed for early years referrals, six-week pilot with new mums and feeding clinics held at Walsall Fire Service premises. This pilot has now been completed and deemed successful and WMFS are now looking to extend further with a wide range of groups including youth intervention services.

#### [Future projects.](#)

Our Governance is due to transfer from the Fire & Rescue Authority to the Mayor of the WMCA. This is expected later this year, subject to the legal process. Following this, we will have an opportunity to more closely align our strategy with that of the Combined Authority. This will enable close collaboration on the clean air and road safety strategies.

Implications for Joint Working arrangements: The Health & Wellbeing Strategy is a partnership strategy and therefore West Midlands Fire Service will always seek to work collaboratively with partners to contribute to service delivery and improvement.

Health and Wellbeing Priorities: Following Assessment of need in Walsall through the current Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Economic Needs Assessment and the Strategic Assessment to inform the Community Safety Plan the two overarching priorities are:

- Improve healthy life expectancy
- Reduce Inequalities

Author Name – Juliet Malone Operations Commander West Midlands Fire Service

( 0121 380 7751 07973 810269 )

[Juliet.malone@wmfs.net](mailto:Juliet.malone@wmfs.net)