

## **Appendix A: Progress Report**

Maidstone Borough Council works in partnership with Kent Public Health and Maidstone's Health and Wellbeing Board to plan services and programmes to deliver a localised prevention and wellbeing service for the Maidstone Borough addressing: healthy weight; mental health; wellbeing and community cohesion and; younger people wellbeing and mental health.

The Health Inequalities Action Plan provides a framework and methodology to identify, analyse and evaluate actions that can contribute to reducing health inequalities in the Borough. The Council recognises health inequalities cannot be reduced by one or two organisations alone and needs the support of a wide range of local partners. The plan encourages residents to take responsibility for their own health and supports them in building resilient communities through improved social connections within the community.

In 2014, £158,200 funding was allocated to Maidstone Borough Council from Kent Public Health to support the delivery of core Healthy Weight and Mental Health and Wellbeing Programmes and Workplace Health initiatives. Additional funding is sought through partner agencies to contribute to elements of the plan's delivery as there are no core council budgets allocated to the work of the Health Inequalities Action Plan.

### **Priority 1: Give every child the best start in life**

The younger people well being and mental health programmes have worked closely with Children's Centres with the particular aim of targeting families and children living in poverty. A number of preventive programmes have been commissioned for children, young people and their families to increase health and wellbeing and signpost to additional services as appropriate.

**Little Stirrers:** Introducing children and parents to the wonder of cooking in a fun and enjoyable environment. Sessions are run in Maidstone Children Centres and within a number of Primary Schools to allow children to prepare a range of dishes that they can take home to share with the family. The sessions are based on the Change for Life Top Tips for Kids around: Me Size Meals; 5 A Day; Sugar Swaps; Snack Check, Cut Back Fat; Meal Time. 20 x 6 week programmes. Between April and September, 51 children have engaged and completed the programme run. Little Stirrers are targeted for 100 children to complete the programme by 31 March 2015, which we are positive they will achieve.

**Go For It:** A free family healthy lifestyle programme run by Zeroth Active Zone. It is designed to support parents in helping their children to be healthier, build up their confidence and self-esteem and help them reach their potential. Advice is given on diet, nutrition, portion control, exercise and behavioural modifications. The programme is designed as a whole family approach to health and wellbeing. The programme has a target of working with 50 families from April 2014 – March 2015.

**Breastfeeding:** Working with PSB Breastfeeding to promote Maidstone as a breastfeeding friendly town. Maidstone Borough Council are supporting a

breastfeeding friendly café at the Salvation Army with the view of expanding to other local businesses within the town centre.

**Teenage Parents:** Excellent links have been formed with the Family Nurse Partnership and Teenage Parents within Maidstone. A focus group has been formed to identify the services used by teenage parents and the current gap in provision.

Further work is currently being undertaken to develop an emotional resilience programme in partnership with Kent County Council to help young women resist the destructive messages that permeate society. We want to help young women to be able to deal effectively with pressures particularly around body image and sexual health to halt the increase in teenage pregnancies within the Maidstone borough.

**Reading Champions:** The Reading Champions is due to be launched into the Maidstone community to engage with families, particularly those with pre-school aged children and babies. They will use their skills set, following the detailed induction and training from Beanstalk, to empower the families to see the benefits to engaging in regular reading with their children '*from bump and beyond.*' Part of the approach will be to build the parents/grandparents/extended families confidence to engage in reading and sharing this quality time with their children whilst building on essential life skills. We will also have other tiers of champion, including celebrity, high profile corporate leaders and peer support champions. This project is in partnership with Beanstalk, Golding Homes and other key local partners.

**Maidstone Families Matter:** Maidstone Families Matter is the local project name for the government's Troubled Families Programme. Across the country, this programme aims to turn round the lives of 120,000 families with multiple problems including: a family member out of work; poor school attendance or exclusion; and anti-social behaviour among the under 18's. Kent has been tasked with working with 2560 families by March 2015, with 189 families identified in the Maidstone Borough. There are now 275 families who have been accepted on to the programme in Maidstone. This is above the target for Maidstone, which is positive as it should enable more families to be supported through the work with parents. These families were nominated by a range of partners including schools, the Community Safety Team, Community Wardens and Social Services. Of these families, 52 are currently working with a Family Intervention Project (FIP) worker who offers intensive support to the family for up to approximately 12 months, helping them identify barriers that prevent change and learn new methods of coping with issues that arise. As of October 2014, 149 families' lives have been turned around due to the project interventions.

## **Priority 2: Enable all children, young people and adult to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives**

**SAFE:** the focus of the project is to support young people within schools to raise awareness of mental health issues and to deliver outreach support and activities. This youth-led project aims to make sure that young people are more aware of the danger signs of youth suicide and that they recognise the signs of mental health difficulties in themselves and their friends. It aims to break down stigma,

encouraging young people to talk about their feelings and to seek timely help. SAFE are commissioned to provide assemblies in all 11 secondary schools; working with 5 secondary schools (New Line Learning; St Augustine's Academy; Valley Park; Cornwallis; Maplesden Noakes) in Maidstone; and expand the SAFE spaces within the community currently at Switch Youth Café.

Case study: "I started going to the community safe space at switch café and everyone was really friendly, it was pretty fun. Volunteering for SAFE has made me more aware of my own mental health and it has made it a lot more apparent in others for me. It's really eye opening and it's important to break down the stigma surrounding mental health".

**Freedom:** Choices (formerly North West Kent Women's Aid) provide help to those experience domestic abuse. A confidential helpline service is available Monday-Friday during office hours; a Maidstone Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop delivered at Maidstone Gateway; and delivery of the FREEDOM programme to gain an insight into the causes of abusive behaviour, acknowledge the effect and implement support strategies to keep the family safe.

**ASPIRE:** Maidstone Borough Council on behalf of the Maidstone Youth Action Partnership has been successful in being awarded £54,000 by Sport England's Community Sport Activation Fund with match funding from Golding Homes, Kent Sport and Kent Police Crime Commissioner Fund. ASPIRE is a three year programme to deliver Football; Basketball; Angling and Boxing in areas of deprivation and low levels of physical activity. The programme is aimed at the 14-25 age group but also has participation targets for male, female, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. The sports take place in community locations with clear pathways to local clubs and organisation activities to create a sporting habit for life.

Football is operating within Park Wood, Shepway, Tovil and Headcorn and has seen 900 attend the programme since 1 April 2014 with 460 young people engaged with the community Boxing located within Park Wood, Shepway and Headcorn.

Basketball is currently under development with Angling due to commence Spring 2015.

**Health Hub:** Switch Youth Café will be expanding its provision to deliver a weekly service for young people on a Monday evening to provide sexual health advice; drug and alcohol awareness and stop smoking interventions. This bridges the gaps in provision in regards to the void in services available on a Monday to the young people of Maidstone. Additional advice and signposting will be made available through the In the Stone website, developed by young people, for young people.

**Reduction in Smoking:** Quit to be Fit Pilot was held at Maidstone Leisure Centre from September 2013-June 2014 to support individuals to give up smoking. In total, 47 people initially booked on to attend the course. Of these 47, 29 people actually attended the course and 18 were successful in their attempt to quit smoking. Although the numbers across the 6 courses were low, figures demonstrates a high rate of successful with 62% quit rate.

**Falls Prevention:** Brighter Futures Group is a partnership project led by Voluntary Action Maidstone and Age Concern to support elderly residents to lead

more active and independent lives. At present, they target 40 people per month age 65+ to access classes to promote increased physical activity, improve stability and stamina. Evaluation includes increased fitness and stamina and falls prevention. Outcomes demonstrate not only increased physical activity, stability and stamina, but also a considerable benefit increasing mental health and wellbeing. Isolated older residents build friendship and support networks as a result of attending sessions. Quarter 1 evaluation of the project has seen 585 spaces offered at Maidstone Community Support Centre and Coxheath, with 420 spaces taken up from 53 different participants.

**High Risk Drinkers:** Options are currently being explored to develop a joint campaign to address high risk drinking in the adult population. These are initial ideas and have yet to be presented to partners for comment:

- Reduce the Strength Campaign: reduce alcohol related crime and disorder in the town centre. The campaign would ask off licenses premises to voluntarily remove cheap super strength alcohol (6.5%+) from their shelves.
- Designate a super strength alcohol free zone: multi-agency pilot in Brenchley Gardens to tackle street drinking, giving the power to restrict super strength alcohol consumption in certain public areas making it an offence to drink alcohol in an area.
- Alcohol and Older People Project: data collection piece of work to understand the steady increase in the amount of alcohol consumed by older age people aged 60+.

### **Priority 3: Create fair employment and good work for all**

**ENGAGE:** Maidstone Borough Council is working in partnership with Tomorrow's People to deliver Engage Maidstone, a 1-1 support programme tailored to assist people aged between 16-24 into employment, education or training. Engage provides each young person with the opportunity to gain employment, training or a route back into education and it is coordinated around the users needs. A specialist youth employment advisor will work with each young person to develop a personal support package. Currently 25 individuals are engaged on the programme are receiving support around:

- Soft skills training, progression pathways, personal development training and work experience, CV and job searching assistance.
- Action plan tailored to the individual's needs and aspirations.
- Links into other programmes that may be beneficial to the individual.

**Work Experience Coffee Mornings:** Maidstone Borough Council's Economic Development Team support the development of Work Experience Coffee Mornings which are open for young people identified through Job Centre Plus to gain experience of working within a local authority. Since April 2014, 23 opportunities have been take up with 7 young people going on to full time employment.

The Council is committed to promoting a coaching culture throughout the organisation. To support this, and help staff and managers understand what this means in practice, a policy has been developed. Coaching and mentoring is

available to all staff no matter what your role. At MBC we work closely with our partners across Kent to provide fully qualified coaching and mentoring support to our staff. To find a coach from the network, follow the link below and the instructions given to register:

We have recently trained a number of workplace mentors, and our apprentices now benefit from having a confidential mentor throughout their one year apprenticeship with the council. Mentoring is also available for any member of staff, and is particularly helpful for those who are new to the council, or at an early stage in their career.

**Kent Healthy Business Awards:** Fit, healthy, motivated employees are the key to the success in any well-run business. Poor health in the workplace cannot only affect an individual's ability to do their job, but also affects business productivity and effectiveness. The Kent Healthy Business Awards are self-assessment standards that help improve the health of your workforce; they are also a great way to:

- Showcase your people, services and skills
- Build you reputation for commitment to best practice in health, safety and wellbeing
- Support your business development and tendering activity
- Get support in developing policies and procedures
- Show your compliance with laws and regulations

Themes covered by the scheme include attendance management, mental health and wellbeing, physical activity and environment.

Maidstone Borough Council has teamed up with Tunbridge Wells and Swale Borough Council to deliver the healthy business awards across the Mid Kent Partnership. Ten businesses in Maidstone have currently agreed to complete the awards.

**Health Checks:** Wellbeing People and NHS Health Trainers have teamed up to deliver a Health MOT Roadshow within the Maidstone Borough from October 2014 – September 2015. The programme aims to help prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of dementia. Everyone between the ages of 40 and 74, who have not already been diagnosed with one of these conditions are eligible and will be given support and advice to help them reduce or manage risk. If you are not eligible for a full NHS Health Check, you can have a Health MOT on an interactive health kiosk. It allows individuals to self-test key indicators of their general health: weight, body mass index, body fat content, heart rate and blood pressure.

This is a mobile resource available to all communities in Maidstone. The roadshow has recently visited Maidstone Gateway, The Mall Shopping Centre and Shepway Youth and Community Centre.

## **Priority 4: Ensure a healthy standard of living for all**

**Financial Inclusion Partnership:** Due to a number of factors, including welfare reform and the general economic climate, more people are finding it harder to cope financially. Maidstone Borough Council alongside partners are working together to increase financial inclusion and capability of its residents. There are a number of services available to residents to but these are disparate,

and there was no central resource to show what is available. It was therefore agreed that the best way forward was a borough wide forum made up of public, private and voluntary and community sector partners. The forum has met quarterly and has proved a popular move with over 30 organisations having joined, including national organisations such as StepChange, Barclays, Lloyds and Cabot Financial as well as utilities companies including South East and Southern Water.

As well as the partnership, which is designed to be strategic, working groups have been established to carry out projects. For example in July 2014 a seminar for frontline workers was arranged to find out about the wide variety of financial assistance that is available to their customers and how they can go about accessing it, 100 people signed up to attend. The feedback was excellent, and another seminar has been arranged for January 2015.

Work is being undertaken to make residents aware of financial scams and loan sharks. Kent County Council Community Wardens delivered scam training to Barclays Staff in July 2014 and followed up with an information stand in the Mall shopping centre in the lead up to Christmas. The stall raised awareness of scams and loan sharks, information on how to report them and included advice on how to lend safely from Credit Unions. A Money Advice for Practitioners Seminar is organised for January where a presentation will be delivered on 'Silence of the Scams'.

**Food Banks:** Work is being undertaken to create and develop a partnership between the existing food banks within the borough so that food can be shared if demand is high or surplus food is not required to enable residents to receive the right help when it is required. The council is also arranging training sessions for the providers on topics such as benefits and welfare reform.

**Energy Efficiency:** Energy Efficient is the goal to reduce the amount of energy required to provide products and services. Maidstone Borough Council is supporting three initiatives to assist residents and businesses to save money on their energy bills as well as covering other areas of household expenditure, eating on a budget, digital inclusion and food banks.

**The Big Switch:** We are working with iChoosr to run a group switching scheme. The scheme is designed to try and help you save money on your electricity and gas bills, either by switching supplier or by changing to a better tariff. When the scheme ran in 2013, 231 people registered and 85% of those could save money with an average saving of £161 per annum. The scheme is open to everyone, whether you own or rent your home and pay your bills by Direct Debit, cash or pre-paid meter. You don't have to switch if you don't want to. It's just an easier way to find out whether you could save money on your bills.

**Green Deal:** The Green Deal is a government scheme to help you make energy saving improvements to your home or business without having to pay all the costs up front. There are 45 measures of energy saving improvements available under the Green Deal covering:

- Insulation, including cavity wall, solid wall and loft insulation
- Heating and hot water
- Generating your own renewable or low carbon energy
- Double glazing

This opportunity is being widely promoted to residents and businesses.

**Energy Best Deal:** Awareness training sessions are available for Maidstone Borough Council staff and councillors as well as Service Personnel at Maidstone Invicta Army Barracks on the savings that can be made by switching fuel providers or negotiating with existing providers. Attendees are taught where to look for the best deals and how to go about switch providers.

**Operation Civic:** Operation Civic is a focused multi-agency approach led by Maidstone Borough Council and Kent Police. The aim of the operation is: engage with and provide reassurance to members of the public; promote partnership working between Maidstone Borough Council and Kent Police; improve community cohesion; and advertise the services of the council and key partner agencies.

For October 2014, the agreed focus areas selected were Headcorn and Staplehurst. We had an excellent turn out from partners to support the event, this created an excellent opportunity to network with people we may not ordinarily get the opportunity to do so with. However it also created an issue for people approaching the trailer as there were so many people there keen to engage! The types of interventions are very varied, but having the health focus at the event really seemed to provide excellent opportunities for the providers to raise awareness and for the residents to gain access to the wide range of Healthy Living Programmes running in the borough. Also having the waste management team at the trailer allowed people to ask questions about any confusion with the recent changes to recycling in the borough and have visual aids there to support them gaining an answer to their queries. It was also wonderful to have the Kent Fire and Rescue service present on all the days to offer advice on Fire Safety at home and hand out some freebies for the children attending.

We did receive a number of general statements/enquiries linked to the Gypsy and Traveller Community, concerns about fly tipping, links to crime activity in the area, and fear of being in the area after dark etc. This was a consistent theme across the week vocalised by a number of residents.

## **Priority 5: Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities**

**Temporary Accommodation:** The number of homelessness decisions made by the council has increased significantly. The number of cases that are accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need have also seen an increase. The proportion of cases that are found not to be homeless has dropped, from a high of 85% in 2009/10 to 32% in 2012/13. In the main, this is due to a change in how applications for assistance have been dealt with.

Maidstone Borough Council carries out homelessness prevention activities, carried out by the Housing Options Team. These preventions can range from giving debt advice, to sort out housing benefit problems, to resolving problems with rent arrears. Homelessness prevention work can be carried out for any households that approach the authority for advice, regardless of whether they are statutorily homeless or not.

The suggested timescale to make homelessness decision is 33 days with the majority of cases falling within the timescale.

**Walking for Health:** Maidstone has some great parks, countryside and river walks to enjoy. There is no better way to socialise, meet new people and get fit. Maidstone Health Walks are led by trained volunteers in the local community and supported by Maidstone Borough Council. They provide free short walks which people can do at their own pace and are open to all ages and abilities, provided in a safe and friendly environment. There are 3 walks currently operating weekly within Maidstone:

- Tuesdays – Mote Park, 10.30am
- Wednesday – Cherry Orchard, 12.30pm
- Thursdays – Maidstone Town Centre, 11.00am

Data shows (as of 07.07.14) that 662 walk hours have taken place since January 2014 with 57 registered walkers. Of those registered walkers 70.2% are female and 29.8% are men with the large proportion of walkers 45.6% aged 65 – 74 years old and only 3.5% aged 25-34.

**Sustainable Transport:** Maidstone Borough Council plan to tackle problems on the road through a number of schemes, which will be funded with the £15.4 million it was awarded from the Government's Local Growth Fund in July 2014. The grant was secured through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, and includes nearly £5 million to create two northbound lanes along the A229, enabling northbound traffic heading towards Chatham to bypass the existing gyratory system, reducing journey times and congestion. It also includes £2m to create cycle paths from residential development sites on the outskirts of Maidstone into the town. This dedicated cycle and pedestrian route will encourage a modal shift to walking and cycling, reducing vehicle trips along main access route into Maidstone.

This will reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability.

A series of junction, public transport and highways improvements across the town have also been put forward in the integrated transport strategy costing just under £9 million.

The projects could start as early as next year and be in place by 2017.

**Social Isolation and Loneliness:** There is evidence to suggest that men and women experience loneliness differently. Loneliness in men is more often associated with the quality of their relationship with a spouse or partner, whereas for women, the absence of wider social networks is particularly important. Different partners of loneliness are evident, so that for some older people it is a chronic condition, typical of their longstanding and difficult or limited relationships with family, friends and neighbours. For others, it is linked to the impact of particular life events, such as becoming a widow and may be more transient. Although older people living alone are most likely to experience social isolation, those living in residential care many experience loneliness, especially if they lack opportunities in the community outside the care home. Through the Kent Public Health Observatory we know the prevalence of social isolation in the under 65s; over 65s; and the wards who are at risk of loneliness. The four most deprived wards of High Street; Shepway North; Shepway South and Park Wood; as well as North; Bridge; Heath and Fant feature in the highest quintiles.



Currently we do not have any local 'on the ground' data available for the Maidstone borough, which we hope to, develop through a fact finding exercise to identify and describe the range of services that exist for older people.

### **Priority 6: Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention**

While the majority of the healthy weight programmes funded through the devolved locality budget are aimed at overweight adults and children in the population as a whole, the Weight For It outreach programme has targeted families and older people on lower incomes in the larger rural villages and estates in south and central Maidstone – directly tackling health inequalities. The adult mental health and well-being programmes have also targeted vulnerable adults, particularly those with learning difficulties or with mental health issues, as well as those in lower income groups.

The final Weight For It programme was held in April 2014 with 22 people attending with an average weight loss of 1.84kg. From May 2014, the programme changed over to Counterweight which is a structured lifestyle programme that aims for 5-10% weight loss by equipping customers with skills to change their behaviours around eating and activity using everyday foods. Pilot sessions took place between July – October, which saw 29 people attend with an average weight loss of 1.09kg. The design of Counterweight enables the individual to receive support for 12 months to assist with sustaining a healthy lifestyle and not just the 10 week programme initially offered through Weight For It.

Additional weight management programmes commissioned include:

Maidstone Leisure Centre Weight Management Programme: a 10 week group activity programme that includes advice on nutrition, healthy eating and exercise. 185 individuals have signed up to the programme between April and September 2014, with 25 individuals not completing the programme.

Exercise Referral: the programme is designed to help individuals become more active for life and improve confidence within a group setting or with support from an individual. The programme is run at various locations in the borough with a range of activities tailored toward the individual. The programme was commissioned in September 2014 with a target of 75 individuals to complete the programme. Currently 38% have signed up and are completing the programme.

Men's Health: Wellbeing People in partnership with Maidstone United have recently been awarded the commission to deliver a men's health programme increasing physical activity, weight loss and improving wellbeing. The programme is aimed at adult males aged 18 or over, resident in the Maidstone Borough, have a BMI equal to or more than 28. The programme is being designed with men and will commence January 2015.

At the half year review 236 people had participated on the weight loss programmes or 74% of the whole year target. Projections for the end of year are that 100% of the target of 320 participants will be achieved.

**Malignant Melanoma Campaign:** A borough wide sun awareness campaign to remind residents the important messaging about protecting yourself in the sun and how to self-check for signs of skin cancer took place over the summer

months. Attendance at a number of community days / events saw 540 interventions which involved free sun cream and information leaflets.

**Dementia Friendly Communities:** Maidstone Borough Council is working in partnership with Kent County Council to deliver training to organisations, businesses and volunteers to become Dementia Friendly Champions. The aim is to find out what dementia is; be able to recognise how a person with dementia might have to adjust their approach to day to day life; and learn ways that you can support customers with dementia to ensure they are treated with respect and dignity to improve inclusion and their quality of life. A training session was held in September 2014 which saw 20+ organisations attend. An additional session has been organised for 21 January 2015.

Maidstone Borough Council is committed to raising awareness of mental health services and how to improve wellbeing through the Six Ways to Wellbeing behaviours: Connect; Be Active; Give; Keep Learning; Take Notices; Grow your World.

### **Next Steps:**

- 1) Confirmation of commissioning intentions for 2015/16 following confirmation from Kent Public Health that current commissioning arrangements will continue until mobilisation of the new service, which is likely to be in February 2016.
- 2) Work with Kent County Council to shape their commissioning intentions and priorities to commence early 2016 to ensure our residents are not disadvantaged by any potential changes.
- 3) Identify further sources of funding to tackle health inequalities within the Maidstone Borough to support the development and success of the Maidstone Health Inequalities Action Plan.