
Partner update – Public Health

The paper provides an update on ongoing wellbeing and prevention activity overseen and delivered by the HSCP Public Health Team in Argyll and Bute.

Director of Public Health Report 2022 – Prevention

Prevention is better than cure and this valuable report provides an evidence based rationale for moving upstream to a preventative approach where instead of rescuing people from river downstream, we prevent them falling into the river in the first place. Prevention is about looking upstream and taking the actions that are needed to stop people from becoming ill, or reducing the severity of their illness.

The report provides examples of where preventative action can and does improve health and prevent the need for more intensive and costly treatment. The report highlights the importance of prevention as a vital and integral part of healthcare and of wider community activities and makes a compelling case for investing in systemic preventive action.

The report provides a number of evidence based examples of projects which deliver prevention and early intervention and result in improved health outcomes and is cost effective.

Key Messages

- Investment in preventative measures which promote, protect and improve health and wellbeing is essential to ensure the future sustainability of the health and care system.
- There are many examples of preventative actions that have already helped achieve major improvements in health, for example, improved social conditions, vaccination against communicable diseases and national screening programmes.
- The effects of prevention work have contributed to a decline in cancer and cardiovascular disease mortality rates. Priority should continue to be given to preventing cardiovascular and smoking related conditions and there must be continued efforts to improve early diagnosis for effective treatment.
- There are thousands of avoidable deaths and preventable health conditions every year in NHS Highland. Estimates of health loss and avoidable mortality should be used to help inform priorities for health and care service planning and redesign, and for disease prevention.

- Actions to address modifiable risk factors, such as high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol and drug use, healthy weight and physical activity, presents a sizeable opportunity to improve health, add years to life and to reduce existing inequalities in these measures.
- A life course approach to prevention should be used to identify potential areas of action relating to both the individual and the community.
- The characteristics of effective prevention work should be considered when planning programmes of work and training to ensure existing health inequalities are not reinforced.
- The ‘best buys’ in prevention should meet one or more of these objectives: cost-effective; likely to reduce health inequalities; likely to reduce avoidable health and social care problems.
- The NHS has an important role to play in prevention as an employer, researcher, collaborative partner and commissioner of services. Ensuring prevention is seen as part of everyone’s role, and that time and resources are allocated to it may be key to supporting the fundamental shift towards prevention that is required for the future sustainability of health and care systems.
- There are many examples and evidence of preventative interventions that provide a return on investment and have the potential to deliver savings to the NHS in the short and longer term. These should be used to inform priorities for action.

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2022 Prevention – Moving Upstream: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/45cbb2d9-8f8d-44dd-a040-efe28296701c>

Living Well Networks

Following a pilot a new model of delivery has been implemented for our Living Well Networks. There are Co-ordinators in place in each locality and a new administrator role to deliver the valuable engagement and capacity building work of the networks. The networks contribute to improving the health of the people in Argyll and Bute by working in partnership with a range of stakeholders and community members and joining structures such as the Locality Planning Groups. The funding for the networks has been secured for two years. Further information and contact details for the networks can be found here: <https://www.ablivingwell.org/living-well-networks>

Adult Health and Wellbeing Profiles

Public health partnership profile reports have been published for the four localities in Argyll and Bute local authority. These partnership areas are the focus of action to improve the health of the people and communities in the area covered by NHS Highland Health Board. The profile reports present information across a range of

health and wellbeing topics. They are designed to support staff and partners to make decisions and plans to improve population health and reduce inequalities. They bring together in one valuable resource, data on a wide range of topics and are themed into two profiles with further profiles for child health and wellbeing, and health inequalities being released in the coming months:

- [Demography and deprivation](#)
- [Adult health and wellbeing](#)

We encourage partners to take a look at this valuable resource which can be found at: [Public health profiles | NHS Highland \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://scot.nhs.uk/public-health-profiles)

Children and Young People

The Health Improvement Team and the Education Department have been working closely with schools, statutory and third sector partners to deliver the Smoke Free Programme and S3 Health Drama Programme in March 2023.

The Smoke Free Programme consists of five interactive lessons plans covering the effects of tobacco on health, the slave trade, black lives matters, the environment and financial cost. Aimed at P6/P7 pupils and offered to all primary schools, the programme is completed with a drama tour which has proven to be a impactful but also fun and memorable element to the programme which allows the pupils to sing the songs they have learnt and demonstrate their knowledge.

The S3 Health Programme “You Are Not Alone” is an impactful and meaningful part of the curriculum. Three lesson plans are delivered in PSE classes to compliment the messages in the drama production which contains three vignettes based on real life stories covering smoking, vaping, mental health, bullying, sending nude photos and alcohol. Each pupil receives a localised booklet for them to complete, takes part in discussions, and Q&As with service providers. The overall message of this programme is to access help, the evaluation of this year’s programme is still being collated but in previous years the programme has been successful in raising awareness of the help available for young people and results in young people accessing much needed support.

With thanks to Raenbow Productions who delivered 16 productions during March the tour reached the length and breadth of Argyll and Bute including the Island of Islay and Island of Bute, with IT support offered to Tiree and Mull. The success of this programme is also due to the partnership working within school, statutory and third partners.

Cool2Talk

We are pleased to share that this valuable service has secured funding from Children and Families, the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership and Public Health for a further year. Cool2Talk is a website aimed at young people 12-24 years old where they can post a question and receive a bespoke response within 24 hours. The answers are evidence based and provide young people with accurate and safe health information and link to local and national services for support. There are also information resources on the site. The site can be accessed at: <https://cool2talk.org>

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