

South Lakeland District Council
Council
Tuesday, 15 December 2020
Health, Wellbeing and Financial Resilience

Portfolio: Cllr Suzie Pye

To work with other tiers of government, community groups and other relevant partners to enhance the health and wellbeing of residents.

Alleviate the harmful effects of poverty in the District, looking at issues to address those who are disadvantaged.

Working with key partners with regards to welfare reforms.

Nominated representative on the Health and Wellbeing forum as appropriate.

The relationship of the Council with its citizens; civic participation and the Council plan objectives around leisure, health and wellbeing and working with communities.

Working with key partners with regards to public health and community safety.

Policies, plans and strategies

- Community Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy
- Community Safety Plan

Key Areas

- Public Health
- Community Development
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Voluntary Sector in relation to Public Health and Wellbeing Sector
- Health and Safety
- Poverty alleviation
- Young People/ projects

Public Health

Cumbria County Council created the Cumbria Public Health Strategy to encourage collaborative working themes to improve resident's health across Cumbria. The document aims focuses on the wider determinants of health.

As part of our policy framework, South Lakeland District Council has adopted this strategy with the aims of improving health outcomes.

Throughout 2019/20 the Council has been continuing to work with partners to influence the implementation of the strategy. The five strategic priorities have been confirmed as:-

- Social Prescribing
- Planning
- Transport and connectivity (eg. active transport, rurality and access to services)
- Food and the healthy weight agenda
- Poverty

As a result of Coronavirus many residents are working from home, home-schooling children or have been feeling worried or anxious. SLDC backed the 'Every Mind Matters' national campaign which encouraged residents to look after their mental and physical health to prevent issues becoming more serious. The campaign includes helpful tips and advice to help residents take care of their mental wellbeing. The Council is continuing to promote support platforms and materials through South Lakeland News, Newspaper and Social Media.

During the first lockdown the Council funded the distribution of 16,000 self-help guides produced by Every Life Matters to households and organisations within South Lakeland. The 'Wellbeing and Mental Health during Covid-19' guide included useful advice on how to look after your mental health during the pandemic. Locality Officers had also distributed posters to key services areas regarding male suicide and the support available.

In order to protect the Health of our residents and visitors the Council has reinforced safety messages within communities and across communication platforms reminding people of the importance of wearing a face mask and social distancing to help slow the spread of Coronavirus.

The Council's Environmental Health Officers have been closely working on the Governments Track and Trace scheme to help keep residents safe and reduce the spread of Coronavirus. The Council has since set up online application form for the Test and Trace Support Scheme where those on low incomes who are required to self-isolate could be eligible to receive a £500 payment. The Test and Trace Support Payment is available to those receiving Universal Credit; Working Tax Credit; Income-Based Employment and Support Allowance; Income-Based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; and/or Pension Credit

Community Development and Voluntary Sector in relation to Public Health and Wellbeing Sector

In partnership with the Customer, Commercial Services and People portfolio the Council has worked with a variety of community groups across the district to improve local play areas. The improvement of parks such as Abbot Hall, Maryfell, Rayrigg Meadow and Millerground are encouraging young families to utilise the facilities available which in turn supports their health and wellbeing.

The Council granted £3,000 towards securing a vital role at Springfield Domestic Abuse Support in South Lakeland. The grant enabled the charity to access match funding, safeguarding the role for another 12 months and increasing it to 24 hours per week. With the cases of domestic abuse rising across the UK the charity has played a vital role in supporting individuals,

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, SLDC has been part of the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum to establish support through the emergency support helpline for people at high risk and those who do not have support available from family or friends. The helpline has coordinated the supply of essential food, medicines and supplies. The Community Resilience group is working closely with community volunteer groups to match requests with local support networks. A total of 99 volunteer groups were established across Cumbria.

Cumbria has seen widespread community and voluntary sector support for the response to COVID-19 and informal support, including neighbourhood WhatsApp groups and community Facebook groups, alongside a commitment from existing community emergency planning groups, local churches and faith groups and formal voluntary sector organisations who are working with the county council and partners including District Councils and NHS.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and Young People/ Projects

The South Cumbria Community Partnership (CSP) plan 2019/20 has utilised effective collaboration between South Lakeland District Council, Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria Constabulary and partner agencies including Safer Cumbria. The CSP had a total of £20,000 for supporting projects which have been aiming to prevent crime falling under one of the priorities below.

The five priorities for 2019/20 were:

- Protecting vulnerable adults
- Domestic abuse
- Substance abuse and drug supply
- Violent crime
- Anti-social behaviour

As Health, Wellbeing and Financial Resilience Portfolio Holder, I was appointed as the CSP Chair in January 2020, with the Vice Chair Superintendent Sarah Jackson.

The CSP has been working with partners to tackle the above priorities whilst also recognising the pressures arising from Covid-19.

This year the CSP has awarded funding to:

- CADAS to provide online drug/alcohol awareness training for Local Focus hub members and other professionals
- The Well to train behaviour change companions who will be initially allocated to work in Barrow and in Kendal supporting those in Housing first (Complex need, very early stages of change and/or stability generally considered high risk) and transitional recovery housing (starting to stabilise – risk of reoffending, chaotic substance misuse and not ready for abstinence based housing).

- Neighbourhood Watch to provide Video Doorbells for domestic abuse victims. The Video Doorbells record images of anyone approaching the Victims home and can be viewed on their mobile phones from anywhere around the world. Evidence can also be secured from footage that supports victims on occasions when it's their word against the aggressor.

In November 2020, Cabinet approved to adopt a new Safeguarding Children Policy to facilitate robust and effective procedures and training to help Officer and Members ensure young people are safeguarded and their needs understood and the Councils responsibilities for safeguarding are addressed effectively.

The Modern Slavery statement was also adopted by Cabinet in November 2020 constituting our actions to ensure there is no slavery of human trafficking in the Councils business or supply chain.

An online training programme will be delivered for employee and Councillors highlighting safeguarding best practise and raising awareness of the corporate parenting role and the role SLDC and Councillors can play.

Health and Safety

The Council has a duty to protect the health and safety of the residents and visitors within South Lakeland where possible. The Food and Safety officers within the council are responsible for health and safety in:

- Offices
- Shops
- Hotels
- Guest houses
- Catering services
- Care homes
- Warehouses

The Council has inspected workplaces to ensure they are obeying the law and help employers to understand the importance of health and safety and investigate any accidents or complaints reported.

The Council has been very successful in supporting the Health and Safety Executive through an enforcement role by conducting inspections to ensure that businesses are adhering to regulations to prevent the spread of Coronavirus as well offering guidance and advice.

Poverty alleviation

Since the Council formed the Building Financial Resilience (BFR) Group it has been working with partners to promote ways to make money go further and reduce financial hardship across communities. The group has been making excellent progress in addressing the actions identified within the action plan.

The action plan has been broken down into 5 different task group areas which focus on actions under different aims:-

- Increase partner collaboration and publicise support available to the public
- Build local wealth
- Increase access to skills and education
- Reduce fuel poverty
- Food waste and re-distribution

With the support from partners, SLDC have created a successful BFR webpage which includes support mechanisms for members of the public to access relating to money, food, housing, wellbeing and skills and information. [Click here to view the page.](#)

In January 2020 the BFR group donated 100 copies of the Tin Can Cook Book to financial hardship groups and foodbanks across the district. The cook book is designed to create cheap, easy meals using tinned goods.

In January 2020 the Council donated £1,500 from the Poverty Alleviation fund towards a project based in Staveley to help disadvantaged children take part in extracurricular activities that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience. This scheme allows children who normally would miss out on certain extracurricular activities due to lack of finances to at least experience some lessons or to set them up with a musical instrument or piece of kit to help start them off.

In February 2020 SLDC supported a pilot scheme throughout February Half Term to provide children eligible for Free School Meals with activity days and lunch clubs. The scheme was undertaken in partnership with People's Café and GLL (Kendal Leisure Centre) and included children from across 5 primary schools within Kendal.

During the first lockdown when the majority of schools were closed due to Coronavirus the Council eased the worry of period poverty for girls and young women across the district by distributing free sanitary products to 30 pick-up points across the District, which would have previously been available through at secondary schools. These products have remained available as various locations across the district throughout the year

The Department of Work and Pensions have reported an increase in the number of cases seeking benefit support as a result of Coronavirus, there has been increased number of people claiming benefit support across the United Kingdom. Citizens Advice has been offering debt advice and support.

In July 2020 the Council set up a hardship relief fund which those struggling to pay their Council tax could apply for. This scheme was designed to support those economically vulnerable residents, recognising the toll that financial troubles can take people's wellbeing. The scheme could offer spreading the cost of payments or seeking hardship relief to reduce bills in the short term.

Age UK have reported an increase in reports of anxiety and loneliness however they are managing these report through offering helpful support networks and launched a #ok2ask campaign.

Food Bank across the District have reported increased usage and on average were collating 180 parcels per week during the first lockdown. The Community Resilience Group is closely monitoring this should food donations decrease.

As part of the South Lakeland Community Resilience Group the Council supported local food initiatives to ensure that all pupils entitled to free school meals continued to receive them during the October half term holiday week.

On 6th October 2020 in South Lakeland's Full Council meeting a motion to declare a Poverty Emergency, signed by myself, was carried: "I move that our Council pass a motion declaring a Poverty Emergency, and explore the feasibility of setting up a Poverty Truth Commission, working closely with our Morecambe Bay partners. This will aid our aim of tackling the root causes of poverty and inequalities, which is critical to the success of our Council Plan."

We are now working on a strategy and action plan to step up our own efforts, and to further investigate scope for working with partners and those in poverty, to tackle financial hardship in South Lakeland.