

South Lakeland District Council
Council
23 March 2021
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 Partnership 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 aimed to focus on the wider determinants of health. As part of the Council's policy framework, South Lakeland District Council adopted the strategy with the aims of improving health outcomes, however this has most recently been affected by Covid-19.

The Council worked with partners to influence the implementation of the strategy. The five strategic priorities were confirmed as:-

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

Due to Coronavirus many residents have been working from home, home-schooling children or have been feeling worried or anxious. To support communities, 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 included helpful tips and advice to help residents take care of their mental wellbeing. The Council promoted support platforms and materials through South Lakeland News, Newspaper and Social Media.

Throughout the first lockdown in 2020 the Council funded the distribution of 16,000 self-help guides produced by Every Life Matters to households and organisations across 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. Council Locality Officers also distributed posters to key services areas regarding male suicide and the support available. The Council has continued to distribute wellbeing messages throughout the pandemic as well as direct communities to appropriate support networks.

In order to continue to protect the Health of our residents and visitors the Council has continued to reinforce safety messages within communities and across communication platforms reminding people of the importance of wearing a face mask, encouraging social distancing and the stay at home message during each lockdown period. In light of recent Government announcements, the Council will be working closely with other organisations to strongly reinforce the appropriate messages.

The Council's Environmental Health Officers are continuing to work on the Government's Track and Trace scheme to help keep residents safe and reduce the spread of Coronavirus. There is now an 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 has been made 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 number of community groups across the district to improve local play areas such as Abbot Hall, Maryfell, Rayrigg Meadow and Millerground. These improvements have

encouraged 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.

During the Covid-19 pandemic 99 volunteer groups were established across Cumbria. SLDC has been part of the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum establishing 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 coordinated the supply of essential food, medicines and supplies. The Community Resilience group is continuing to work closely with community volunteer groups to match requests with local support networks.

As a result of the pandemic Cumbria has seen widespread community and voluntary sector support 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 have been 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 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 are:

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

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

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.

Following Cabinet approval the Council has adopted a 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 constituting our actions to ensure there is no slavery of human trafficking in the Councils business or supply chains.

An online training programme was 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.

During 2019/20 there were 5618 crimes in total – an increase on the previous year at 1084. The annual total of recorded Domestic abuse incidents during 2019/20 was 983 similar to the previous year, however increases in the total number of crimes over recent years are explained by Police training on the recording of crimes.

Health and Safety

The Council has a duty to inspect 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. Inspections have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic however during the periods of time that restrictions were lifted the Council was 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.](#)

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.

The group also 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 the Council distributed 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 pandemic.

The Department of Work and Pensions 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.

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 reported an increase in reports of anxiety and loneliness during the pandemic however they are managing these report through offering helpful support networks and launched the #ok2ask campaign which the Council supported.

During the first lockdown on average Food Bank across the District were collating 180 parcels per week. The Community Resilience Group have been continuing to closely monitor 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 half term holiday weeks.