

Cabinet Portfolio Briefings - Community and Culture

1. Synergies between Community and Culture services and Health and Wellbeing

Leisure centres

The link between physical activity and health can be summarised as follows

People who are physically active have

- half the risk of heart disease than those with a sedentary lifestyle,
- 33–50% lower risks of type 2 diabetes and obesity (independent risk factors for heart disease)
- lower risk for stroke
- lower risk of colon cancer by up to 40–50% (with moderate activity – about 3–4 hours walking per week)
- lower risk of breast cancer by up to 30% (with 30 minutes walking a day reduces risk by 20%)
- increased life expectancy and healthy life expectancy

Physical activity can

- provide effective treatment of peripheral vascular disease
- improve several risk factors including raised blood pressure, adverse blood lipid profiles, and insulin resistance.
- decrease (by around 30%) the risks of prostate, uterine and lung cancers.
- Provide benefits for mental health
- Provide benefits for musculoskeletal health for older people, improved mobility and fewer falls (up to 25%) and fractures.¹²

Housing

Housing quality is an important determinant of health and a marker for poverty. The condition of housing stock is a major influence on the borough's capacity to reduce inequality. Factors that create risks to health include

- the presence of lead, asbestos, and radon,
- house dust mites, cockroaches and other infestations;
- extreme low or high temperatures and inadequate ventilation,
- inferior air quality, dampness/mould,
- cramped conditions and multiple family occupancy,

Health outcomes that may result from these conditions include asthma and TB for physical health and mental health conditions, such as stress.

Licensing

With Public Health now part of local government there are opportunities to use the levers under local government control that influence health. Licensing is an example of one of these levers that is particularly important for controlling alcohol harm in the borough.

2. Public Health Achievements and current activities

¹ Indications of Public Health in the English Regions. 3: Lifestyle and its impact on health. 2005. Association of Public Health Observatories.

² At Least five a week Evidence on the impact of physical health and its relationship to health. 2004.

A few examples of the achievements made in relation to this portfolio to date:

- A new integrated behaviour change, stop smoking and weight management service which is currently being commissioned.
- A Responsible Authorities Group established by Public Health to develop strategic responses and to identify common areas of interest, including
 - responding regularly to licensing and planning applications using relevant public health data
 - working with the Licensing Committee and officers to refresh the statement of licensing policy
 - working with local and national planning colleagues to develop a 'best practice' guide setting out key points in the planning process where Public Health can add value, and identification of potential to work across planning and licensing functions.
- Merton Adult Education delivering English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses based on health messages
- Libraries staff and volunteers have been trained as Health Champions to provide frontline brief advice and signposting to lifestyle services
- Work with Sports and Leisure through additional green gyms; a scheme to train physical activity champions is being designed
- Launch of Merton on the Move – an initiative to increase physical activity levels in the borough through encouraging, supporting and raising awareness of active travel (walking, running and cycling) and its role in improving mental and physical health.
- Agreement to work with litter enforcement officers to offer cancellation of litter fines for smokers who attend Stop Smoking services and quit smoking
- Work with Sustainable Communities and Transport through the work agenda and the Sustainable Merton partnership through DigMerton support to Healthy Schools
- Development of a Health Impact Assessment on the cost to the NHS and wider society of private sector housing hazards in Merton.

3. Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-18

This portfolio specifically links to three themes of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

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| Theme 2 | Good Health – focus on prevention, early detection of long-term conditions and access to good quality health and social care. |
| Theme 3 | Life skills, lifelong learning and good work |
| Theme 5 | A good natural and built environment |

A summary page of all five themes with key outcomes is included in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that can be found at <http://www.merton.gov.uk/health-social-care/publichealth.htm>.