

1. Key synergies between Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities and Health and Wellbeing

Community Safety

Crime rates affect people's sense of security and increase stress, which causes physical effects that can have damaging health consequences. Crime affects health in a number of ways - directly, indirectly and by influences on the health care system

- **Directly**, through violence, injury, rape and other offences against the person.
- **Indirectly**, through the psychological and physical consequences of injury, victimisation and isolation because of fear.
- As a **determinant** of illness, along with poverty and other inequalities, which increase the burden of ill-health on those communities least able to cope.
- By **preventable health burdens**, such as alcohol-related crime, motor vehicle incidents and drug dependency.

Residents who live in areas of high crime may not feel safe to go outside to benefit from the positive effect of green spaces or access to opportunities for physical activity.

Engagement

- Social cohesion helps to protect people and their health. A breakdown in social cohesion may reduce trust and increase violence, which in turn may increase health conditions such as heart disease and poor mental health.

Equalities

- The link between health and equalities/inequalities is represented through the effect of deprivation on life expectancy. The more deprived, the shorter life expectancy and the more affluent, the longer life expectancy. It is not only deprivation but the inequalities in access to resources that influence our health.
- Poverty and social inequality are two key factors in triggering violence, while social integration presents particular challenges for immigrants. Combined with feelings of being powerless to change their situation, these factors can all contribute to poor health outcomes by bringing about a stress response that raise heart rates and stress hormones.

2. Achievements and current activities

Public Health works closely with Merton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on a range of issues including early detection and management, mental health and older people. An important product is the mental health needs assessment, completed on behalf of both the CCG and the Council. This will be the basis of a discussion to prioritise the CCG mental health work programme going forward. Specific initiatives relevant to this portfolio include:

- Adult Mental Health Needs Assessment
- Ongoing work with adult social care involving review and development of best practice mental health peer support

- Befriending scheme through lead Age UK

Other initiatives include

- Merton Adult Education delivers 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
- MVSC supports our community Health Champion initiative- volunteers from community groups are trained to Royal Society of Public Health NVQ2 level to deliver brief advice and signposting to members of their groups. A My Health Guide was created to support Health Champions and to provide opportunities for people to make a pledge for a chosen lifestyle change.
- A pilot of the refreshed Health and Wellbeing Strategy – Merton the Place for a Good Life -- is being designed for Pollards Hill, in collaboration with Commonsides Community Development Trust, Phoenix residents association and residents. Starting with a Living Street Audit to identify assets and issues, efforts are now ongoing to seek support/interest from local residents to guide further development
- East Merton Health and Wellbeing Fund is led by Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC) and aims to support the delivery of evidence-based, innovative and sustainable activities focussed specifically on the east of Merton.
- Public Health has supported (re)development of a BAME umbrella group.
- Recognising the links between alcohol and community safety, 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

3. Planned work

- In 2015-16 we are working to develop seamless pathways from prevention through to treatment/rehabilitation for alcohol and substance misuse services, in partnership with MCCG, as well as for weight management.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-18

This portfolio specifically links to theme four of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Theme 4 Community participation and feeling safe

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>.

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