

Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Report from the Director of Public Health

16 May 2023 – Public Health & Communities Update

Confirmation of the Public Health grant

On March 14th, we received confirmation from the Government of the public health annual grant allocation for 23/24. The ring fenced grant funds the vast majority of our programme areas.

Gloucestershire will receive £26,075,974 in 23/24. This represents a 3.2% uplift on our 22/23 allocation. The government have also confirmed our indicative allocation for 24/25 of 26,430,556. This represents a 1.3% uplift on the 23/24 allocation; however, the 24/25 allocation will not be confirmed until at least the end of this calendar year.

The nationally set formula for calculating the public health grant allocation for each Local Authority was set a number of years ago and takes into account estimated relative need for public health services. The grant allocations per head across the country range from £197.60 per head in the City of London to £33.10 per head in Wokingham. The per head allocation in Gloucestershire in 23/24 is £39.50 meaning that Gloucestershire is toward the lower end of the range.

The uplift is obviously below current inflationary levels. In addition to cost pressures in its non-NHS provided contracts, in common with other public health teams across the country, Gloucestershire also has to meet the costs of salary uplifts in the contracts of NHS staff working on public health commissioned services, specifically Public Health Nursing and Sexual Health specialist services. We are currently working with finance colleagues to understand the implications of our grant allocation to support our forward financial planning.

Approval of additional investment for Domestic Abuse services

As scrutiny members will be aware, the Council has a statutory duty (under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021) to support victims of domestic abuse residing in safe accommodation. The Council receives a grant from the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support this work.

Two decisions (an [officer decision in February](#) and a [Cabinet decision in March](#)) have recently been approved to invest a further tranche of the grant funding in local support services. Taken together, the decisions will see significant investment in developing the support available for victims of domestic abuse, including the provision of:

- additional specialist domestic abuse and housing support in up to 24 new Places of Safety across the county (adding to the current 12 Places of Safety). Places of Safety are self-contained properties available for victims fleeing domestic abuse.
- personalisation funding to help meet the needs of victims residing in safe accommodation who may have fled without their possessions or had their access to them restricted by their perpetrator.
- set-up costs to ensure the Places of Safety provide a warm and welcoming environment which meets the immediate physiological and safety needs of victims.
- a Flexible Funding Pot to be administered by Stroud Beresford Refuge to enable refuge support workers to make payments or issue vouchers towards housing related costs to support women to move on from refuge accommodation.
- the location of additional specialist domestic abuse workers in the Registered Housing Provider sector.
- the commissioning of new trauma informed recovery/counselling support for adult victims of domestic abuse residing in safe accommodation.

Officers are now working with partner organisations, including the Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership, to take forward the above decisions.

New Serious Violence Duty

Serious violence can have a severe impact on victims and their families, and local communities.

Following public consultation, the Government have introduced a new Serious Violence Duty. The Duty requires specified authorities in a local government area to work together to develop a joint strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence (including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, and the causes of that violence).

The Duty applies to Local Authorities (at the County and District level), the police, criminal justice agencies (the Probation Service and Youth Offending Teams), health agencies (the local Integrated Care Board), and fire and rescue services. Educational authorities must also be consulted in the preparation of the strategy.

The Duty commenced on the 31st of January 2023. Locally, implementation of the duty is being co-ordinated by a new post based in the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner. The postholder will be working with the specified authorities, including representatives from the County Council to carry out a Strategic Needs Assessment to better understand the local picture with respect to serious violence, agree our local definition of serious violence, and put in place multi-agency partnership arrangements to enable joint working on a local violence prevention and reduction strategy.

In developing the local strategy, there is scope to build on various aspects of the Council's existing work, including safeguarding and youth support, and the Public Health team's responsibilities for domestic abuse, and drug and alcohol harm reduction. The government are encouraging local areas to adopt a public health approach to delivering the duty with a focus on evidence-based interventions, and using data and intelligence to inform action, as well as listening to the lived experience of local communities.

Pupil Wellbeing Survey 2022 County Report

The Gloucestershire Pupil Wellbeing Survey has taken place every two years since 2006. The latest survey was conducted in the spring term of 2022. Over 24,000 pupils and students' voices were captured across 268 schools and colleges.

The survey covered a number of key aspects of young people's health and wellbeing, from their lifestyle choices and engagement with school, through to their emotional wellbeing and aspirations for the future. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on health and wellbeing were also included.

A range of positive findings were identified in the 2022 survey, these included:

- Around 95% of secondary pupils reported that they had never smoked or had only tried it once or twice,
- 81.4% of pupils stated that the food at home enables them to eat healthily most of the time.
- About 70.9% of pupils are doing at least four hours a week of physical activity.
- In 2022, 82% of young people had never tried alcohol, or only tried it once or twice, compared to 68% of pupils in 2012.

The Pupil Wellbeing Survey County Report for 2022 will shortly be published on Inform Gloucestershire, alongside detailed 'deep dive' reports on specific subject areas - [Pupil Wellbeing Survey \(formerly Online Pupil Survey\) - Inform \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.informgloucestershire.gov.uk/pupil-wellbeing-survey-formerly-online-pupil-survey). The report includes information on what we're doing in response to any issues identified.

Preparations will soon begin for the Pupil Wellbeing Survey 2024, which will open to schools and FE (Further Education) colleges from January 2024.

Accommodation Based Support Services for Young People Aged 16 and Over

Following the unexpected withdrawal of one of our Providers of Accommodation Based Support (ABS) Services for young people aged 16 and over (16+ABS), we sought an urgent Cabinet Member decision in February this year to run a mini competition process under Lot 5i of the Gloucestershire Community and Accommodation Based Support Pseudo Framework Agreement for the supply of replacement 16+ ABS in Gloucester and the Forest of Dean.

The 16+ Accommodation Based Support services form an important part of our offer to vulnerable young people who are transitioning from children's social care or who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

The competition opened at the end of February and following due process, we awarded the contract on the 20th of April to the only bidder, Caring for Communities and People (CCP), who are a current supplier of 16+ ABS services in Cheltenham. Their submission offered high quality and value for money for the Council, and they are looking to mobilise the new service in mid-June 2023. The current Provider, Rooftop Housing, are willing to work within this timeframe to enable a smooth handover and minimal disruption to service users.

Active Gloucestershire: 'Active Environments 2023' impact report

Active Gloucestershire (Gloucestershire's Physical Activity and Sports Partnership) is working with Gloucestershire County Council and partner organisations to deliver 'we can move', a social movement of people committed to getting Gloucestershire physically active. The common goals are to remove the barriers to being physically active where possible, tackle inequalities and encourage more people to enjoy and benefit from an active lifestyle. Active Gloucestershire acts as a 'backbone organisation' connecting and enabling systems partners to realise the benefits of physical activity in new and impactful ways.

The physical environment in the spaces where we live, visit, study and work, has a fundamental impact on our physical activity levels. Influencing these environments is a key priority for 'we can move'. Active Gloucestershire's recent impact report, 'Active Environments 2023', highlights some of the diverse ways in which the programme is supporting the development of active environments, both within our local communities and across the wider physical activity system. A selection of this work is outlined below, and the full report can be found [here](#).

Blackbridge Sports and Community Hub

A key ambition of this work is supporting the provision of new spaces and places for physical activity, particularly in areas of most need. While the neighbourhood of Podsmead in the south of Gloucester has a vibrant community and has a wealth of green space, it is one of the most socio-economically deprived in the county according to the national Index of Multiple Deprivation¹. To support residents' health and wellbeing, plans for developing community sport and leisure facilities in the area have evolved and plans for the Blackbridge Sports & Community Hub are advancing.

The Hub will feature a full sized, floodlit Artificial Grass Pitch and natural grass pitches for football, rugby and cricket, as well as a pavilion building with changing rooms, a dance/exercise studio, health and fitness gym, and social and meeting spaces. In addition to numerous sport and physical activity opportunities for the community the Hub will offer new universal and targeted activity and advice offers for local young people.

The project has been led by people from local sports clubs, and community development workers, as well as key organisations including Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucester City Council and NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB).

The project is currently awaiting planning consent and finalisation of funding, before a start on site in late summer 2023, and opening in summer 2025.

Active Travel

Active travel has a number of benefits such as improving our health and wellbeing, reducing congestion, reducing carbon emissions and supporting our aim as a county of becoming net zero.

Active Gloucestershire are advocates for Active Travel and work with the Think Travel team to encourage more people to take up active travel opportunities through campaigns such as Love to Ride.

With new cycle-ways and improved pedestrian access across the county, Gloucestershire is developing the infrastructure for safe active travel. With the right infrastructure and campaigns such as Love to Ride, we aim to encourage more people to actively travel to reach our shared goals of improving residents' health and wellbeing and reducing carbon emissions.

¹ [English indices of deprivation 2019 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Active Businesses Gloucestershire

Hosted by Active Gloucestershire and launched in January 2022, 'Active Businesses Gloucestershire' is an employer-led network with a shared ambition to enable more people to use sustainable transport and be more active as they travel around Gloucestershire.

The network aims to raise awareness of the positive impact of making sustainable travel choices, to increase the number of sustainable travel options for employees and to help them undertake journeys by active travel or public transport.

Over the next 12 months, the network aims to increase the number of participating businesses, and to continue working with Council and ICB colleagues, using behavioural science techniques to support and maximise the uptake of our major cycling and walking infrastructure projects (such as the A435 Cheltenham to Bishops Cleeve & Gloucester City Centre Cycle Spine). The network will also work to strengthen links with the Gloucestershire Health Workplace Award scheme.

Gloucester City Council Sport and Leisure Strategy

Active Gloucestershire were commissioned by Gloucester City Council to develop their Sport and Leisure Strategy.

This involved one-to-one conversations with senior stakeholders from the City Council, healthcare, education, and community development sectors, before widening the consultation to the city's sports clubs, schools, and community groups. The project considered the demographic characteristics of the city, the wider context of sport and physical activity in relation to the Council's other leading strategic plans and priorities, and finally the City Council's role in helping to develop and deliver opportunities to get active.

Developing the strategy has offered a unique opportunity to support and strengthen the broader community wellbeing objectives of a key 'we can move' partner, and also enabled Active Gloucestershire to 'join the dots' between the Council and the wider activity system. This has raised awareness of how a whole-systems approach to wellbeing can more naturally lead to residents feeling comfortable and confident in making physical activity a part of their daily lives.

Government Announcement on Vaping and Incentives for Pregnant Smokers

On April 11th, Public Health Minister Neil O'Brien, delivered a speech on Achieving Smokefree 2030: Cutting Smoking and Stopping Kids Vaping [Minister Neil O'Brien speech on achieving a smokefree 2030: cutting smoking and stopping kids vaping - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/minister-neil-obrien-speech-on-achieving-a-smokefree-2030-cutting-smoking-and-stopping-kids-vaping).

In the speech, the Minister announced several measures to support people to quit smoking. These included:

- A call for evidence to help combat rising levels of youth vaping. The call for evidence aims to identify opportunities to reduce the number of children accessing and using vapes, exploring issues such as regulatory compliance, the marketing and promotion of vape products and the environmental impact of disposable vapes.
- A 'swap to stop' scheme, for adult smokers, which will provide one million smokers with a free vaping kit. The scheme will run over two years initially and will be targeted at the most at-risk communities first - focusing on settings such as job centres, homeless centres, and social housing providers.
- A scheme which will offer a financial incentive to all pregnant women who smoke by the end of 2024. This will involve offering vouchers of up to £400 alongside behavioural support.

At this time no further details have been announced regarding how these schemes will operate or be rolled out. However, the Minister did state that they will be funded by central government, not from the Public Health Grant. Once further details have been released the countywide Tobacco Control Steering Group will consider any implications for the county and how these could be actioned.

Oral Health

The findings of the [Oral health survey of 5 year old children 2022](#) have been published by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). These show:

- disparities at both regional and local level for both prevalence and severity of dentinal decay
- overall 23.7% of 5 year old children in England had experience of obvious dentinal decay. This was similar to the finding of the previous survey of 5 year olds in 2019, where 23.4% of the surveyed children had experience of dentinal decay.

To improve oral health and reduce inequalities locally, we are focusing on health-promoting action to support children's oral health and improve children's access to personalised preventive dental care and advice, particularly those experiencing significant deprivation. This includes plans to roll out First Dental Steps and a supervised tooth brushing programme across Gloucestershire.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a detailed report on oral health promotion and recent developments in NHS Dentistry at its meeting in December 2022. These papers are available on the [County Council website](#).