



**Start
Strong
Live
Well**

Delivering services and
supporting our community

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Foreword – Dr Ifeoma Onyia, Director of Public Health

I welcome you to read our 2022/23 Public Health Annual Report. 'A fresh start' means a new opportunity with no mistakes or bad things in it yet. That's what we all want when we get up every day and it's what we all want our children to have from the moment they are born.

Evidence tells us that giving every child the very best opportunities when they are young is the most certain way to achieving a long healthy life.

By no coincidence, Fresh Start is also the name of our new weight loss app that you will read more about in this year's report.

Our Halton community experiences a range of disadvantage and supporting health for all requires a strong focus on improving prevention services such as immunisation and screening, improving access to primary care and dental care and the early identifications of cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and respiratory illness. Further it's important that those already in primary care settings have boosted care that includes clinical as well as lifestyle interventions.

The focus of this year's Public Health Annual Report is the Halton Health Improvement Team and the work that they do regularly to support the young people in our community to **start strong**. It is important that every child is given the right preparation in life to fulfil their ambition.

We want our children to ultimately have a great childhood; we know that in 2023 there are many factors that threaten that. Many services are still recovering from COVID-19 and that's running almost parallel with a prolonged cost of living crisis that has seen access to safe, affordable housing and healthy nutritious food become so much harder.

It's one of the central tenets of public health that people should **live well**; enjoying life as much as possible. People living and working in Halton should be able to take advantage of the many free opportunities available to them to improve their health, such as health checks, immunisation and screening.

Health screening detects health problems at an early stage where often simple solutions can be put in place to solve these problems. Again, our Health Improvement Team offers a wide range of services that can support people to maintain a healthy weight, take up a new physical activity or make new friends. That's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to what is available. Our team supports people's physical health and there is support for mental health and wellbeing too. As you read through the document you will learn about some of what's offered by the Health Improvement Team. Don't just take my word for the diversity of the offer available, at the back of the report you will find some offers which I encourage you to use to try out one or more of the free local services available.



Dr Ifeoma Onyia
Director of Public Health

Welcome to the Public Health Annual Report for 2022-23
Councillor Marie Wright, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing

We all know the old saying ‘prevention is better than cure’, but it can be really hard in practice to do this, especially in relation to our health.

With busy lives and things that can get in the way, our health can often be put off for another day and then, sooner or later, our body needs some help.



Our needs change as we go through the various stages of our lives, but it is our hope and plan that everyone who lives in Halton can get expert, free, local advice and support to help them achieve their health goals, no matter how big or small.

Together with our local health partners and community organisations, we invest a significant proportion of local money in supporting health services and this includes a wide range of health improvement offers. If it's been a while since you had a look at what's available, why not have a look at the back of this report for just a few of the schemes that are available for local people.

Hundreds of people have taken part and many have experienced a real turnaround in their health and happiness – read some of the brilliant case studies further on in our report.

We have also been successful in receiving Government funding from the Help for Households scheme and this has enabled us to offer financial support to people on lower incomes to ensure that cost of living pressures don't mean a choice between eating, heating or health.

The biggest message I would like to share is that whatever your struggle might be, and whatever your starting point, there will be a friendly face and supportive service there for you and it's just a case of finding the right one for you.

Our Health Improvement Team is a great place to start so why not find out more by having a look at their information on our website – halton.gov.uk/hit or by giving the team a call on **0300 029 0029**.

Best wishes

Cllr Marie Wright

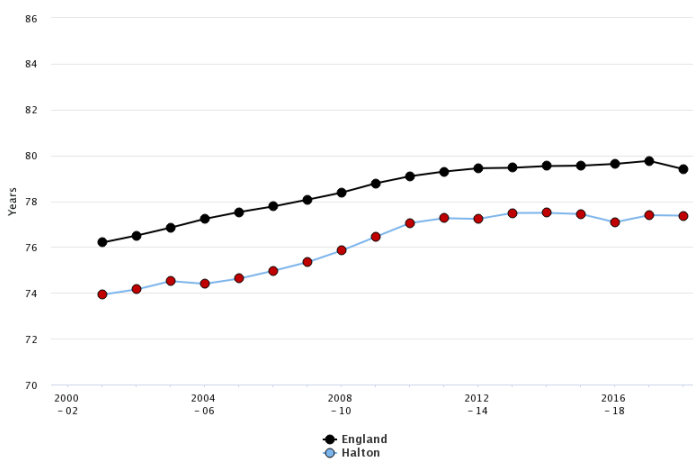
Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing



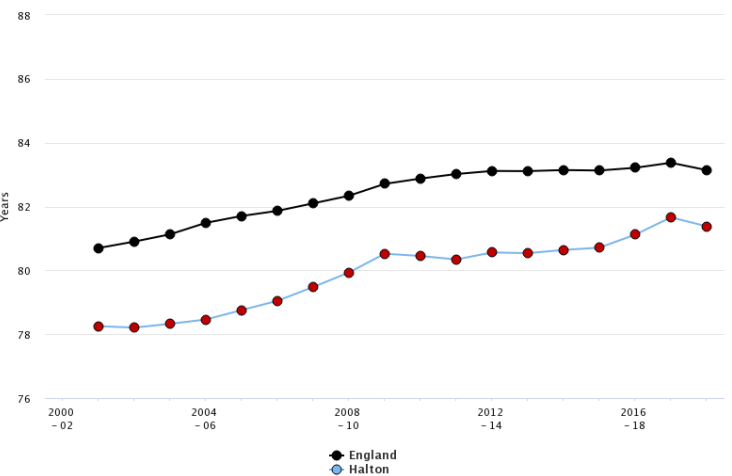
Our health in Halton

There are many ways in which we can measure health in a single place. One of the main methods is by using life expectancy. Life expectancy is based on an estimate of the average age that people living in a particular area will be when they die. In Halton we have seen great progress in this measure for both men and women, especially in the last ten years. In the charts below the Halton trend is shown in red and it tracks below the line for England.

Life expectancy at birth (Male, 3 year range) for Halton



Life expectancy at birth (Female, 3 year range) for Halton



Two years of the pandemic and the added harsh economic environment are likely to have impacted on this progress, so it's even more important that we deliver on the actions and activities that have contributed to the improvement so far.

This is as true for our own health, as it is for that of the whole community. The good news is that the health improvement team have never wavered in their delivery of services, maintaining the offer throughout the pandemic. Sometimes this meant that we had to move to do this differently, such as using telephones or online sessions. We know from feedback that while not everyone can use their phone or computer to access services, many others liked the new flexibilities that's this has given them.

The teamwork with others across the council and our local health system that includes the NHS, GPs, community organisations and voluntary groups, all of which are doing valuable work to provide help where and when it is needed to support everyone in Halton to have as healthy lives as possible.

Health facts for Halton



The number of people aged 65 and over is rising more quickly than any other population group. This number is expected to increase by 40% in the next 10 years.

Most people in Halton say their health is good or very good. Only 2% say their health is very bad.

Life expectancy varies across Halton depending on where you live. We call this the health gap, and it is widening - with men in the most deprived areas living on average 11.7 years less than men in the least deprived. For women, the gap is 9.6 years

These health inequality figures are slightly better than the average for the North West but slightly worse than the average for England. The recent trend is for the gap to widen, and this is likely due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic and increased cost of living pressures.



Cost of living crisis

The 'cost of living crisis' refers to the fall in 'real' incomes (that is, adjusted for inflation and after taxes and benefits) that the UK has experienced since late 2021. It is being caused predominantly by high inflation outstripping wage and benefit increases and has been further exacerbated by recent tax increases.



By looking into the health conditions that contribute to these gaps in health, we can see what actions we need to prioritise when developing health improvement programmes.

Top 4 diseases in Halton (excluding COVID-19 data)	Range of factors that can affect our health and heavily influence top 4 diseases
• Circulatory Disease • Cancers • Respiratory disease • Digestive including Liver Disease	• Smoking • Unhealthy diet • Not enough Physical Activity • Being Overweight/obese • Drinking too much alcohol • Poverty • Educational Attainment • Employment status and type of Job • Housing Conditions

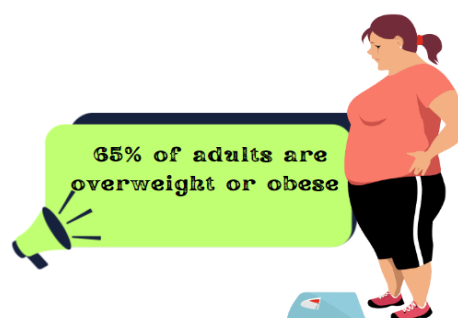


Over the last 10 years, use of local foodbanks has steadily increased, with a further 40% increase in usage in the last year. This means more people are struggling with the social determinants of health including housing, work, social support, finances, food and heating their homes.

Many people face food insecurity. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated an already critical situation, leading to further diet-related health inequalities.

Being able to make healthy food choices is a challenge for many people who live in the borough, and 65% of adults in Halton are overweight or obese.

Obesity levels are significantly higher among those from poorer areas. People in the most deprived areas are also more than twice as likely to be admitted to hospital for obesity-related health problems.

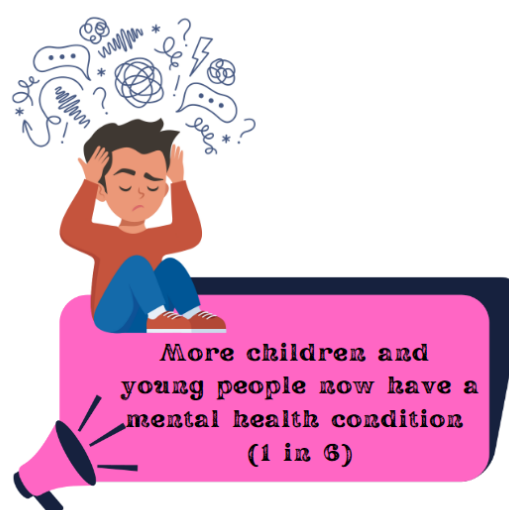


Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a leading cause of ill health, premature death and health inequalities across Cheshire and Merseyside. Rates of premature death from CVD are significantly higher in Halton than the England average.

The NHS Health Check is a preventative screening service and is offered to all 40–74-year-olds. Uptake of this offer is lower in certain groups including those who live in deprived areas, those with low socio-economic status, unemployed people and some ethnic minority groups.

More children and young people now have a mental health condition (1 in 6). This figure has increased in recent years (2017-2021) and it is likely that this is due to increased awareness of seeking help for mental health, social isolation and financial insecurity.

Poor mental health can have long term consequences for physical health and future life chances.



Health Improvement in Halton

Our Health Improvement Team offers a wide range of local, tailored services and initiatives designed to improve the health and wellbeing of local people in Widnes and Runcorn.

We work with individuals and the community as a whole to understand what services are needed and how best to deliver them – be it in a community venue or through one-to-one visits.

We also work with local businesses and organisations to provide education and training services to help local people make healthy choices.

As well as the services featured in this report, we also provide:

- Infant feeding
- Early Years – guiding and supporting Early Years providers such as children’s nurseries
- Holiday Activity Fund – supporting children with leisure and food during school holidays
- Early detection of cancer
- Fit 4 Life
- Triple P Positive Parenting Programme
- Partners in Prevention
- Mental Health and Wellbeing including Mental Health InfoPoint



You can find out more here haltonhealthimprovement.co.uk or call 0300 029 0029.

You can find a range of free, local offers for Halton residents at the end of this report.



The start to our lives is a powerful influence on our health throughout our lives. We want children like Josef* to have the very best chance of fulfilling their potential and are investing and supporting services that directly improve lives and outcomes for children and their families.

We know that prevention and early intervention approaches achieve the best outcomes in the long run and the sooner we can tackle issues and provide opportunities for good health, the easier and longer lasting changes and effects will be.

We do have challenges locally, and these have increased in recent years due to the COVID pandemic and the rising cost of living and it is a concern that many children are experiencing poor health at an early age, which is associated with the circumstances in which they are living.



Key challenges

- Poor mental health in children gives long term consequences for the individual as well as pressures on local statutory services – schools, health, Police, social care.
- School resources are stretched due to staff managing issues for children such as learning support, absences, funding.
- Increase in number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), needing more support from a range of other services.
- We are also seeing a higher number of children in care and more children needing free school meals.



Our approach

Supporting Schools to adopt a whole school approach to improving mental health and wellbeing

Through our Healthy Schools Programme, we are supporting schools to adopt a whole school approach to improving the mental health of staff and pupils.

There are a variety of ways we can help a school, including:

- support to complete evidence based self-assessment framework and action plan
- support to improve staff wellbeing
- training to increase knowledge and skills of staff
- campaign work with pupils
- connecting settings to further specialist support when needed.

We work collaboratively with a range of partner services including Mental Health Schools Teams, Educational Psychology and Nurture ensuring our offer complements other work taking place.



Impact

In 2022/23, 24 schools across Runcorn and Widnes were supported to adopt a whole school approach creating mentally healthy settings for both pupils and staff.



Working in practice – Brookvale Primary School - Runcorn

Brookvale Primary School started by completing the Mental Health and Resilience in schools (MHARS) self-assessment. This sets out the components of school practice and ethos that effectively develop resilience, promote positive mental health and support children at risk of, or experiencing, mental health problems.

'Completing the assessment really highlighted that as school we do lots to promote good mental health and emotional wellbeing.'

We identified how well staff embed positive mental health through key activity during the day.

Something that works really well is at the start of each day children do emotional check ins. It helped us identify areas for improvement and for staff it highlighted the need to prioritise staff wellbeing.

As a result, we now provide staff counselling session after school which has had a positive impact in managing staff stress levels.'

Classroom teacher, Brookvale Primary School

Brookvale also achieved the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' award which, requires schools to embed activities known to improve wellbeing within their school day as well as promoting the benefits of these activities.

As a result of achieving the award the school implemented more outdoor learning and mindfulness activities.

"When practising mindfulness, we have noticed the children are calmer and can concentrate more."



Finally, upon highlighting staff wellbeing as an area to be prioritised the school took part in a staff wellbeing workshop. The wellbeing session was very beneficial to all staff and gave lots of ideas on ways of looking after themselves, mentally and physically. The Head Teacher has implemented supervision for all members of staff as a result.



People often know what they should do to keep healthy, but with busy, stressful lives where a range of factors and pressures all play a part, many of us find it challenging to keep healthy physically and mentally healthy.

This has been true for Erica who has made Halton her home after studying nearby in Liverpool. Juggling lots of demands and not having close family nearby can be difficult so Erica needs services that are easy and quick to access - and ideally online.

Erica wanted some lifestyle advice but hadn't had chance to visit her GP to discuss so was really interested when her employer was offering workplace health checks which gave her good local information and advice – she now has a plan and is looking to make some healthy choices.



Key challenges

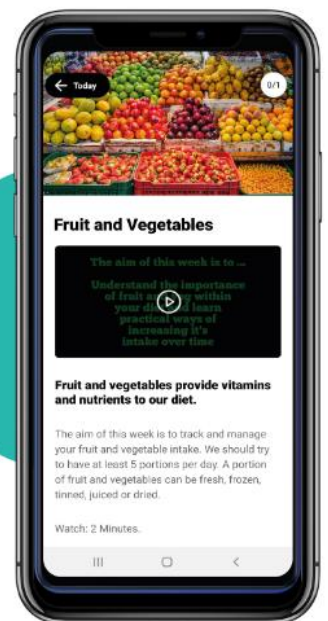
- 65% of adults in Halton are overweight or obese.
- Obesity is strongly linked with a number of types of cancer, as well as conditions such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, liver disease and strokes.
- People living with obesity are more likely to experience poor mental health.
- People with a health condition or disability may find it extra hard to lose weight.



Our approach

Diet and fitness - making the first step easier

- Providing easy access to services is vital both for people who want to attend in-person classes as well as those who prefer a digital offer for flexible 24/7 access.
- As part of our Tier 2 weight management programme, we offer a free 6-month weight management service that can either be accessed face to face (at group classes covering nutritional education and light physical activity classes) or through our new bespoke weight management app, Fresh Start.
- The app was developed partly in response to the pandemic and due to its success is now embedded in our service as standard practice.
- This digital offer increases access to the service for those individuals who would not ordinarily attend a group session and has also enabled increased access for under-represented population groups including men, younger adults, people in employment who could not attend due to work commitments.





Working in practice

Case study - Debbie

Debbie was struggling with pain and depression; eating has always been her go to comfort. She knew it was unhealthy, but she switched off like she didn't care and binged on comfort foods when feeling down. Debbie has lost weight on occasions, but it only lasted for a couple of weeks and she was considering buying slimming tablets. She couldn't exercise due to knee issues and a degenerative pain condition which wasn't resolving partly because the extra weight she was carrying. When starting the service she felt hopeless and stuck in a vicious cycle.

Debbie was referred by her GP and decided to join the digital offer of the weight management service. She scanned a QR code and was taken straight to the Fresh Start App to sign up. This worked well for Debbie as she wouldn't have felt able to attend a group or face to face service due to her mental health and social anxiety. This method enabled her to implement healthy changes and get support from her own coach in a way that suited her needs.

Through using the Fresh Start App, Debbie learned techniques to help keep herself motivated and accountable, and to overcome her triggers and barriers to losing weight. She received 1 to 1 support from a lifestyle advisor who coached her through her weight loss journey.

Overall, Debbie lost 26.4lb, 11.1% of her starting weight and her BMI reduced from 45.8 to 40.7.



Local Coach

1 -1 support from a local coach from the
Halton Health Improvement Team



Support

support from other users



Flexible

flexible plans to fit around work and family
commitments



Wearables

integration with wearable activity trackers
(FitBit, Garmin, Apple, etc.)



Advice

advice and information about health and
wellbeing



Keep Track

progress tracking and much more!

Improve access and uptake of NHS Health Checks for the whole community

The NHS health check is a preventative screening service and is offered to all 40–74-year-olds.

In response to some of the challenges facing local residents, we have completed insight work to look into how best to respond to some of the barriers for individuals or key population groups to accessing the service.

We know that those from low socio-economic backgrounds and/or ethnic minorities are less likely to attend for an [NHS Health Check](#) and are also disproportionately impacted by CVD. This insight work includes, review of current national data, a survey to residents and interviews with key population groups. It aims to inform service delivery moving forward to better support the needs of these population groups.

Initiatives include:

Prioritising telephone invitations

GP practices send eligible patients an NHS health check invitation by letter. Invitations to those living in more deprived areas, who are most likely to be at risk, were prioritised.

Priority was also given to ethnic minority patients who were contacted via telephone first.

Evening and weekend appointments

Access during the current service delivery time has been identified as a barrier for both ethnic minorities and those with low socio-economic status.

To address this issue evening and weekend appointments will be made available through a central booking system that all practices can feed into.

This will be delivered in partnership with local Primary Care Network (GPs) colleagues to implement through the GP Extra service. Success of this initiative will show appointment slots fully booked and an increase in uptake of targeted populations.

Translation

The NHS Health Check invitation letter and written resources will be translated into other languages. To address language barriers when booking appointments, a telephone invitation will be completed where the staff member will have prior knowledge of patient need to access an interpreter. Workshops will be made available for delivery staff to increase awareness of language barriers and associated health inequalities.



Workplace Health Checks

We have embedded NHS Health Checks (NHS HC) within our Workplace Health Program. Employers wishing to access health support need to complete the Workplace Health Needs Assessment and offer staff the NHS HC.

Based on the information available, a bespoke health offer will be provided to workplaces. Workplaces will be targeted to prioritise low-income occupations and those with higher ethnic minority workforces

In Halton we have embedded the NHS HC as part of the 'Work and Health' program ran by employment services. This will be a universal offer within the service and so will be offered to everyone who is eligible.



Community Venues

To make the NHS HC service more accessible across the community, a variety of venues will be used and rotated on an advertised schedule. Information on community venues will also be included on the health check invitation letters, giving patients greater choice of options. Success of this intervention will be based upon the level of booking via this method and increases in uptake for target population groups.



Asylum Seeker and Refugee housing

Targeted invitations in person will be completed at a local asylum seeker initial accommodation centre. This population are new arrivals within the country so on arrival when being registered with a GP practice, if eligible they will be invited to be seen at an on-site health clinic. The approach will look to create a systematic change to ensure patients are identified at the earliest opportunity and helping link them into the UK health system, including the NHS HC.





Helping people to cope with life's pressures has been really important recently, with universal and targeted help for everyone as we dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic and now a cost-of-living crisis. People who would never have normally asked for help have found themselves in very difficult financial circumstances which have impacted on health and wellbeing.

Worries about money impact on the whole of Paul's life as his income from work can be variable so supporting his son and coping with rising costs can be a challenge. Paul also helps his elderly parents who live nearby.

Making sure meals are nutritious and healthy can be a struggle with so much going on and Paul worries that he's setting himself up for health issues later in life.

Often people don't know what is available locally or who to ask for help. There is so much on offer in Halton that can help everyone, no matter what your circumstances are.



Key facts

1. Local foodbanks have seen a 40% increase in the number of people using them with many more working people finding that their wages aren't enough to meet the basics of life such as food and heating.
2. The amount of people coming to the Council for help including discretionary and emergency grants including food and heating vouchers has risen dramatically.



Key challenges

1. We are already seeing impact of recent crisis on health – rising obesity, hospital admissions, drug/alcohol, setting us up for increased pressure on local services in the future.
2. Planning and managing local services is challenging where demand is driven by external factors outside of our control or influence. Funding decisions with little or no advance notice make it difficult to stand up services quickly, to help people when they need it.
3. Younger eligible individuals are less likely to attend the NHS Health Check than older individuals. This makes prevention and early intervention measures more challenging.



Our approach

Collaborate and Co-ordinate

Working effectively with local partners is one of our key strategies for managing the various funding pressures, as well as making it easier for people to get the help that they need.

Feeding Halton

Feeding Halton brings together local authority departments, NHS staff, housing associations and community groups all working locally to address food poverty.

Collaborating and coordinating the efforts and resources of these groups and organisations enables:

- Better planning and targeting of services
- Share information, avoid duplication of effort and support each other
- Bid and attract more funding



Cost-of-Living Support

As we are all aware, the cost of living continues to increase due to a range of factors. This puts enormous pressure on people and families to afford basic essentials, with food price inflation the highest of any essential item. Helping people with the fundamentals of life has to be the first step towards helping them to achieve and maintain good health and prevent problems in the future.



The Public Health Team have co-ordinated and provided a wide range of support for people, accessing available funding streams from central Government as well as prioritising local resources to get help to where it is needed most.

Cost of living information and support

Many of us are concerned with the rising cost of living and the links below will guide you to support and services that are available in Halton to help you.

Food
Heating & Energy(Gas/Electricity)
Water
Housing
Crisis/emergency help
Help with money worries and mental health
Places of warmth (events, workshops, activities & more)
Traditional PrePayment Meters – Claim your Vouchers

www.halton.gov.uk/costofliving or call our

Public Health Team on 0151 511 5200 for more information



Working in practice

Queen's Pantry and Route Café – Widnes

The Queen's Pantry is in the heart of the Ditton community and offers a range of food and household items at reduced prices. Supported by a range of organisations including Halton Borough Council and with funding from the Government's Household Support Fund, Manager, Karen works with her team to buy in the best possible range that will meet people's needs and budgets.

Local retailers offer pallets of unsold stock at vastly reduced prices and donations are also made where businesses are able to. Fresh produce is sourced from Hough Green Day Services and Wonky Garden that have community gardens that grow food especially for the pantry.



Karen and Michelle who work at The Queen's Pantry

THANK
YOU

"I don't know how I
would have managed
without you!"

There are also lots of local volunteers offering time, handicrafts and seasonal items to help raise money which boosts the budget for buying in stock.

Many customers have openly thanked the team for the fresh food, a friendly face and someone to ask for advice.

Some people are going through very difficult times including escape from domestic abuse and often have little savings or help from family or friends nearby.

The pantry is a real community lifeline.



Route Café - Widnes

The Route Café in Widnes has grown into a thriving community café and food pantry, giving local residents a warm, friendly welcome as well as delicious food at affordable prices. The café also offers work placements for people with learning disabilities to help build their skills, confidence and independence.



“Now more than ever, there really is a need for a service like ours. The café and pantry complement each other, offering fresh food at affordable prices.” – Sarah, Manager of the Route Cafe



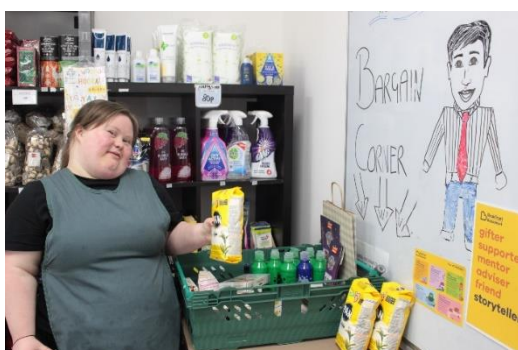
Karen, Sarah, Carol and Beth – staff and volunteers at the Route Café.

There is a steady stream of regulars coming in including Martin, who has been coming to the café for over six months.



“I have some health worries but coming here gives me a lift and I really look forward to it. - Martin

Martin had seen the Route Café on Facebook and thought he'd try it out. It has become a regular treat as well as an opportunity to get items from the pantry, including pet food for his dog.





We want to help keep people well as much as possible so older residents like Ann can enjoy life for as long as possible. The reality of growing old and an ageing population is that there are services that will be needed more often and the risks of ill-health and needing hospital treatment are higher.

We know there are some things that really make a difference to quality of life:

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Income level
- Transport
- Digital exclusion
- Social support
- Accessibility of their home





Key facts

- In Halton, the number of people over 65 years old is rising more quickly than any other population group and there will be a 40% increase in the next 10 years.
- Disability-free life expectancy in Halton is below the North West and England levels although for women, this has decreased recently.
- Life expectancy has been severely impacted by excess deaths from COVID-19.



Key challenges

- More people are needing social care, primary and secondary NHS care
- Quality of life is reducing for more people, negatively impacting on their health
- It is costing more for individuals, local councils and NHS services to look after people



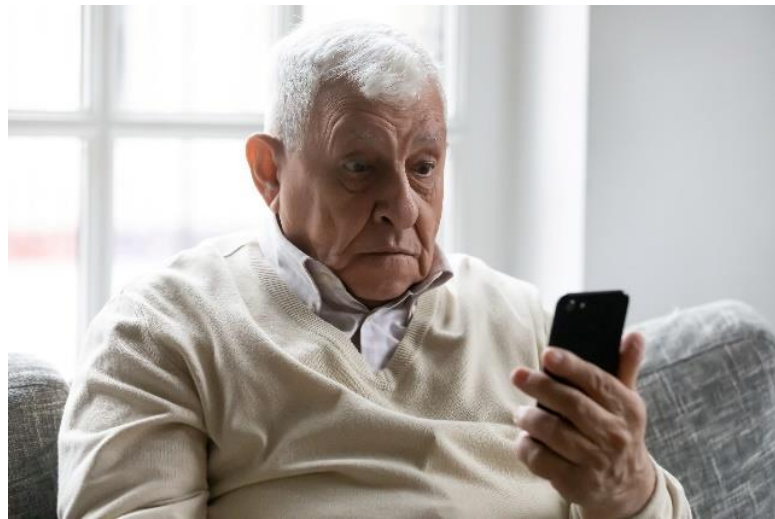
Our approach

Prevention and access to information

Prevention programmes that are relatively low in cost, give small and simple interventions can make big differences to the individual.

In Halton we have a well-developed prevention programme, “Sure Start to Later Life”. However, the main challenge is that older people often find it difficult to access information about such programmes and services.

The programme co-ordinates a range of local health, social and physical services which are easy to access for residents and professionals alike.



Key benefits include:

- Single point of access – shared and promoted throughout Halton, partners and public. People can use a variety of ways to contact including face to face at our one stop shops, telephone as well as digital methods such as website and social media.
- Helps people to maintain or regain their independence
- Giving the right support so people can stay for longer in their own home
- People make new friends and learn new skills
- Increase positive outlook with events, groups and trips to look forward to



For more information call the team on:

01928 569498

or visit www.haltonhealthimprovement.co.uk



@HaltonBC



Halton BC

sure start to
later life 



Update on priorities 2021-2022

Last year We said:	What we did:
Teams in Halton should continue to be prepared to respond to COVID-19 quickly if needed and continue the work to support residents to be vaccinated.	We continued to monitor COVID-19 data using information provided by the UK Health Security Agency, care homes, local hospitals and other partners to identify changes that would indicate an outbreak or signals of a new variant. This was limited when changes in how we used COVID-19 tests were introduced. Fewer people were testing so some COVID-19 was circulating unnoticed in the population. We kept the offer of COVID-19 vaccinations ongoing, and this meant that people who had only one, two or who had never had a vaccination before were still welcome to come forward. Our team worked with primary care and other partners to keep people aware of what was available and offering support including transport, if needed. Halton had one of the highest vaccination rates for older people in all of Cheshire and Merseyside and we are sure that this contributed to keeping people safe and protected. We have also been running a health inequalities programme for COVID-19 vaccinations through the Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Living Well Bus, which visits different locations in Halton weekly and outreach sessions to certain vulnerable groups.
Innovative collaboration and cross-sector working has helped keep safe through the pandemic. We should continue to build on and strengthen these relationships to improve population health and wellbeing in Halton and tackle the widening of health inequalities.	We recognised from talking to people through the pandemic that there was a range of needs that people in the community had that could not be addressed in the pandemic. The cost-of-living crisis followed the pandemic so quickly that many people who had struggled in the pandemic still needed a range of support. We have worked with community partners to find ways in which we can work together, and this report covers some of the offers that we have put in place to tackle the inequalities with the aim of improving health.
We should continue to invest in supporting the most vulnerable and those who cannot easily reach our services	We have set up some new programmes to focus on vulnerable groups and continue to work with partners as outlined in this report to reach people who can't come to us as easily. We have a range of offers to people in the community that can be face to face, on the phone, online, through apps or in their own homes.



Recommendations

1. Additional support and investment in Children's mental health from all partners
2. Every time a person has a health visit they should have their weight measured and be asked about smoking and how much alcohol they drink. If they need help with any of these they should be signpost to the Health Improvement Team.
3. The delivery of NHS Health Checks should increase to ensure that all eligible people in Halton get an offer
4. Raise the profile of sure start to later life so that more people are aware of the benefits of the program.
5. All policies should systematically and explicitly take into account health when decisions are made, specifically to close the inequality gap.



Free local offers for your health

Calm your mind – local help for men in Halton



GET BACK TO A BETTER PLACE.

Practical tips for men to manage your mental health and wellbeing.
Visit calmyourmind.co.uk or scan the QR code.



**CALM
YOUR
MIND**

Launched May 2023 and developed in partnership with local men and those with lived experience of mental health issues, calm your mind aims to raise awareness of practical ways men can improve their mental health as well as signpost to support available.

A growing number of men in Halton are at risk of suicide as they feel unable to talk about their mental health as a result of stigma and society pressures. Recent crisis including COVID-19 and cost-of-living pressures have made this worse.

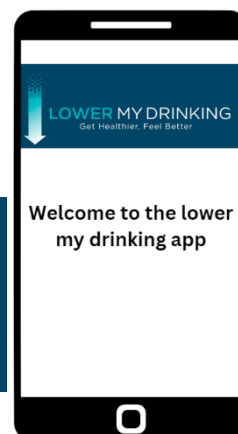
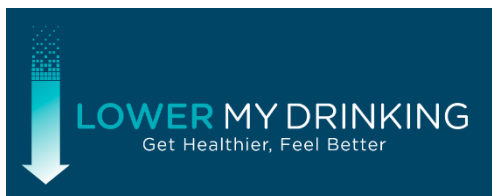
Evidence shows that poor mental health in men often presents as physical symptoms, such as tiredness, body aches, headaches, and as such is often overlooked, by men themselves as well as medical professionals.

www.calmyourmind.co.uk includes information and signposting to help and advice plus videos from our lived experience champions, sharing their stories and encouraging other men to recognise the symptoms and seek help.

Free lower my drinking app

Halton residents can access the free 'lower my drinking' app which helps to assess your alcohol intake, give information and advice to help you find ways of cutting down.

See www.lowermydrinking.com



Is drinking alcohol costing you more than you think?

Alcohol can cost you more than a sore head in the morning. It can put a strain on relationships, leave you out-of-pocket, and undermine your physical and mental health.

Find out more on the Alcohol Change UK website.



ALCOHOL
CHANGE^{UK}

alcoholchange.org.uk

#AlcoholAwarenessWeek

Alcohol Awareness Week

3 – 9 July

The theme for 2023 is the cost of alcohol – not just financial costs, but the cost to mental health, relationships, work and families.

Find out more at:

www.alcoholchange.org.uk



Alcohol harms.

Time for change. ➤



Free blood pressure checks – Know Your Numbers!

The only way to know if your blood pressure is OK is to get it checked. Thousands of people have high blood pressure but do not know it – many do not experience any symptoms.

Risks associated with high blood pressure include heart disease, strokes, kidney disease and vascular dementia. [See the NHS website for more information – nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk).

Look out for the NHS Living Well bus which regularly visits community locations around Halton and offers free blood pressure and other health checks. We share dates/times via our social media (Facebook and Twitter - @haltonbc) and you can find out more about the NHS Living Well service here - [The Living Well Service :: Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust \(cwp.nhs.uk\)](https://www.cwp.nhs.uk)



Top number (systolic) mmHg	Bottom number (diastolic) mmHg	Meaning
≤ 120	≤ 80	Normal
121 - 139	81-89	High-normal
≥ 140	≥ 90	High blood pressure

Every September, there is the annual 'Know Your Numbers' campaign and lots of local opportunities to get your blood pressure checked. Find out more at [Blood Pressure UK](https://www.bloodpressureuk.org)



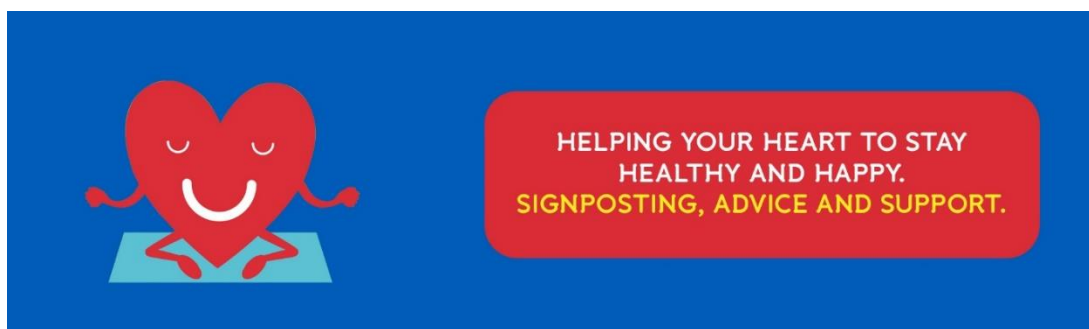
Blood Pressure UK
Helping you to lower your blood pressure



Cheshire and Merseyside – Happy Hearts

We also have a local 'happy heart' campaign to help reduce the risk of heart disease and strokes in our area. There is lots of great information, quizzes, videos, advice and tips to help you look after your heart. Find out more here - happy-hearts.co.uk

**Happy
Hearts**



Free help to stop smoking

There are lots of ways in Halton to get free information, advice and support to help you stop smoking. You don't have to do it on your own and we can help you find a way to break the habit.



Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

You can currently get free NRT on prescription, even if you would normally pay for your NHS prescriptions.

This scheme is funded by the Government's Help for Households and runs until March 2024.

So why not take advantage today and give yourself the best chance of giving up smoking for good.

For more information and to apply please visit www.haltonhealthimprovement.co.uk or call 0300 029 0029.



Our Health Improvement Team can support you every step of the way in your journey to quit smoking.

The team are experienced, friendly and there is no judgement, just support to help you break the habit.

Thousands of local people have used this service and had great results.

The team can offer face to face or telephone support.

You can find out more here www.haltonhealthimprovement.co.uk or call 0300 029 0029.

HALTON HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Do you want to quit smoking?

LIVE WELL

We've helped thousands of local people to quit smoking for good.

We can offer you:

- ★ Access to free or reduced cost products.
- ★ Friendly advice and practical support to cope with cravings and stay stopped.

Contact us for free friendly advice and information.

Free Fresh Start Healthy Weight App – for Halton residents

Our Fresh Start App has been especially designed to help residents in Halton to lose weight with a free 12-week plan that is sensible, easy to follow and doesn't mean missing your favourite foods.

You can download the app for free in your app store and can use the code fs-jan22-sm to get access.

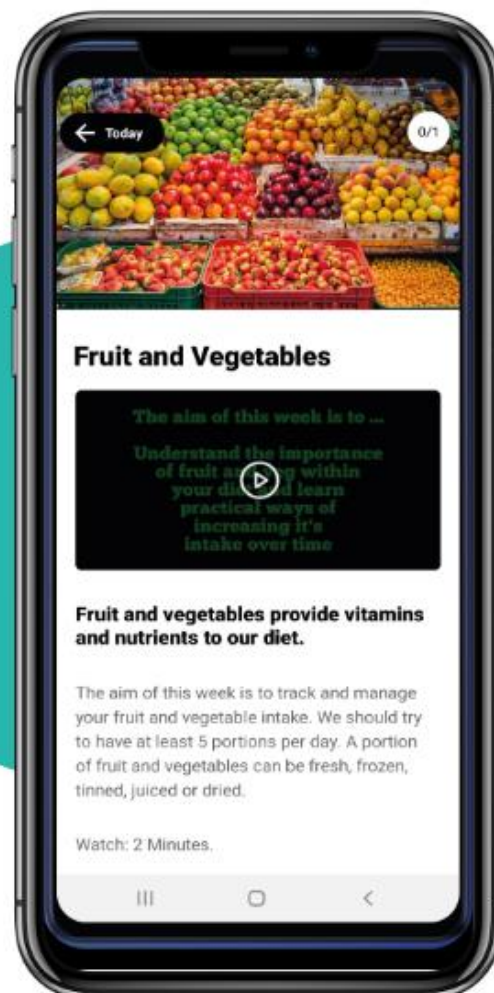
You can find out more here haltonhealthimprovement.co.uk or call 0300 029 0029.

FS
Fresh Start

Lose weight for good with Fresh Start



FS Fresh Start



Help for Households in Halton



Halton Borough Council now have a number of schemes that are available to help you, this is due to funding from the household support fund which has come to us via central government.

These schemes will run from **April 2023 until March 2024**. Please check below to see if you qualify.



Free Prescription Pre-payment Certificate

Do you pay for your prescriptions?

If so, and you:

- Live in Halton
- Earn less than £26,000 per year or receive benefits

Under our scheme you will be entitled to a free pre-payment certificate, please contact us using the details at the bottom of this leaflet.

Free Bus Pass

If you attend regular hospital or GP appointments, you may be entitled to a free bus pass.

To qualify you must:

- Live in Halton
- Earn less than £26,000 per year or receive benefits

The bus pass can also be used for other day to day travel purposes.





Do you regularly use essential electrical medical equipment at home?

We may be able to offer you some financial support. Requirements will vary depending on your circumstances, please contact us below.



How to apply – contact the Public Health Team, Halton Borough Council



- Call us on **0151 511 5200**. You may be asked to leave your name and phone number and we will contact you back as soon as possible.



- E-mail us at **public.health@halton.gov.uk** – please include your name, address and a contact phone number and which part of the scheme you are applying for.

**Help for
Households**

Infant feeding support in Halton

Did you know that in Widnes and Runcorn there is a specialist infant feeding team who can offer you free tailored advice and support on how to feed your baby?



They can help you with:

- Good positioning and attachment
- Recognising the signs your baby is hungry
- How to recognise if your baby is getting enough milk
- Using a hand or electric pump
- Increasing your milk supply
- Feeding out and about
- Support through difficulties such as thrush, mastitis and sore nipples
- Responsive feeding
- Introducing solid foods (from 6 months)



One of our team can come and visit you in your home and/or offer support over the phone during your time breastfeeding.

We can also offer free appointments with a Clinical Specialist in infant feeding for help with complex or unresolved feeding problems (with either breast or bottle). Please ask our infant feeding team, your Health Visitor or Midwife about a referral.

You can find out more here www.haltonhealthimprovement.co.uk or call 0300 029 0029.

You can also find out more from these organisations:

- National Breastfeeding Helpline 0300 100 0212 (lines open 9.30am – 9.30pm)
- www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.co.uk
- La Leche Breastfeeding Support Helpline 0345 120 2918 8am-11pm



Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our staff who work in the Health Improvement Team at Halton. It is often hard to say how much difference their work has made as the result would be the absence of disease or a problem later in life. They are the optimists in our service who help people now, so their future is healthier and happier.

The team are truly dedicated and work extremely hard to ensure that access to health is available to all in our community.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our local health partners, community and voluntary organisations who work tirelessly everyday on behalf of the residents of Halton.

THANK
YOU

This report was published by the Public Health Team, Halton Borough Council

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