

Place Plan Outcomes Report

January 2024

Progress Against Priority We Will Statements

Within the 2022 Place Plan are a number of We Will Statements that set out ambitious goals for Place partners and communities to action to improve the health and wellbeing of residents living in our borough.

As part of the 2024 updated Place Plan, this report summarises the achievements of the priority We Will Statements for each domain. The information has been collated from services across various Place partners and evidences how successful Cheshire West Place has been in delivering against these goals. The key outcomes that have had the most impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents are outlined in a summary table.

Key Outcomes

| Domain | Priority We Will Statements | Key Outcomes |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Tackling the Climate Emergency | Page 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing decarbonisation in Cheshire West including provision of support for businesses to decarbonise • A Cheshire-wide scheme to reduce the largest cause of medicines related Carbon Emissions, Salbutamol Inhaler, has led to Cheshire being one of the lowest prescribers in the Country. This scheme has saved an equivalent of a car driving 100,000 miles per month • Consultation on an Electric Vehicle strategy • Development of plan to plant 68.53 hectares of new woodland in Cheshire West in 2024 |
| Health Inequalities | Page 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-producing The Fairer Future Strategy with Community Inspirers to tackle poverty • The creation of over 50 welcoming spaces to provide a free, warm place for residents to visit • Support for refugees and asylum seekers to help them integrate into Cheshire West life • Partnership working to create the Food Equality Tool to help plan food provision locations where most needed |
| The Places and Communities We Live In | Page 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of the nine Community Partnerships and introduction of numerous schemes to benefit their local population based on needs • Development of the Local Voices Framework, a set of principles that all Community Partnerships partners are committed to, ensuring the voice of people with Lived Experience are able to co-produce local plans • Implemented "How we live" training, a video co-designed by young people, illustrating how young people face poverty - been rolled-out to over 650 staff and partners |
| Best Start in Life | Page 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in breastfeeding rates • Embedding Our New Ways of Working practice model and approach through all Early Help and Prevention work to ensure that families feel listened to, heard and valued • The Corporate Parenting Strategy ensures that looked after children and care leavers receive the best care, support and permanence planning to reach their full potential as children and adults • Collaborative working between Parent First and Koala with childcare and childminder providers to support families in deprived areas |
| Education and Learning | Page 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of high quality careers advice in schools so students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training • The new 'Inclusion Matters' strategy that supports our mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and develop the communication around inclusion with parent carers and partner agencies • The Multiply programme that uses innovative ways to expand our adult learning reach, particularly to residents in disadvantaged wards |

| Domain | Priority We Will Statements | Key Outcomes |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Healthy Homes | Page 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building 368 affordable homes of which 252 are for affordable/social rent, and 116 are for low cost ownership • A new supported housing facility in Ellesmere Port to provide temporary accommodation and support for those experiencing homelessness • Improvement in the number of private rented properties with serious damp and mould issues |
| A Healthy Place to Work | Page 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant investment and focus has been given to ensuring local people and families have access to welfare support and advice to ensure they are financially resilient • All Place partners supporting the development of apprenticeships, with the Council increasing the number of apprenticeships internally and holding employment fairs with local schools and colleges |
| Creating an Age-friendly Place | Page 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaunch of the Age-friendly Cheshire West Partnership • Development of Age-friendly Communication Guidelines that shows how information and communication can be more accessible and inclusive for older people • International Day of Older Persons celebrated by a number of events at libraries during October 2023 • Commissioning projects to improve older people's access to nutritious and healthy food |
| Preventing Social Isolation & Loneliness | Page 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling Poverty funding was used to support various community projects that residents identified as bringing the community together, such as the Tattenhall Repair Café • Training to increase awareness of suicide prevention and a number of projects to support people at risk • Social prescribers offering bespoke support on a variety of non-medical issues to patients rather than seeing a GP |
| Our Health Behaviours & Lifestyles | Page 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 553 people supported to quit smoking in 2022/23 through Brio's Stop Smoking Service • The Combatting Drugs Partnership has helped 520 adults successfully completing treatment in 2022/23 • The Natural Health Service Health Walks supported men with suicide ideation and improved their wellbeing scores • Brio's Active Communities Programme has supported over 200 people through targeted health & wellbeing activities and services in the most deprived wards across the borough • Development of the Cheshire West Place All-Age Mental Health Commissioning Strategy 2023-2028 |
| An Integrated Health & Care System | Page 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working between health and care to develop Home First, a new Community Response Hub to get people back in their own home quickly following an admission to hospital or deterioration • Work to join together hospital and community Social Care Teams, to implement Community Connectors and e-brokerage solutions that enable people to receive the best placement available within the care home market |
| The Health & Care Workforce | Page 25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a Place People's Workstream to focus on integrating the workforce between Health and Care, as well as increasing opportunities and diversity to support better staff retention • Support to create a workforce that is enabled and fit for future needs, e.g. for Home First and Reablement • Working collaboratively with Cheshire University to develop a Health and Care Academy • Working with the wider system in Cheshire and Merseyside to ensure the workforce is diverse and reflective of needs. |

Tackling the Climate Emergency

The five priority We Will statements within this domain have been agreed as follows:

1. Make the borough, including the NHS, carbon neutral as soon as possible before 2045, including:
 - Prioritise climate change by including it in each organisation's strategic objectives, staff induction, personal objectives, and all business reports
 - Cheshire West and Chester Council to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.
 - For emissions controlled directly by the NHS (the NHS Carbon Footprint), achieve 80% reduction by 2028 to 2032 and reach net zero by 2040
 - For emissions that the NHS can influence (the NHS Carbon Footprint Plus), achieve 80% reduction by 2036 to 2039 and reach net zero by 2045
2. Implement integrated and sustainable transport options including access to NHS services, including:
 - Promote active travel and the use of public transport rather than cars
 - Develop an Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure strategy, alongside delivering EV infrastructure within the borough
 - Maximise 'modern workforce' principles and reduce travel for staff
3. Work with housing associations to retrofit homes, including private homes to reduce fuel, poverty and greenhouse gas emissions
4. Enforce existing smokeless fuel standards
5. Maximise green social prescribing schemes, including:
 - Lead the community forest tree planting programme – Trees for Climate
 - Support the award-winning Natural Health Service

Summary

Work within this domain has continued at pace, taking a collaborative approach and focussing on the wider health and wellbeing aspects that could be adversely impacted. Although all We Will statements have been progressed, a particular focus has occurred within the above top five priorities, with just a small selection of some of the key successes being as follows:

- Progressing the delivery of £2.4m of Public Sector Decarbonisation bid, which will support increased energy efficiency in ten local schools. Decarbonisation has become a real theme for Cheshire West and has been achieved in a number of ways, including:
 - retrofitting 125 Social Housing Homes in Blacon to bring these up to modern standard
 - introducing a Strategy to support people who are suffering fuel poverty
 - working within Ellesmere Port to aspire to be the first net zero industrial zone
 - implementing support for businesses to decarbonise through the Shared Prosperity fund, via the Race to Zero advisory service, delivered by Groundwork.

- The Council has also continued to look at “green schemes” to support the local area, including:
 - supporting HyNet North West in its development of low carbon industrial infrastructure in the region, for both blue and green hydrogen production
 - engaging with the development of the 150MW Frodsham Solar proposal
 - the Council’s consultation on its EV Strategy
 - continuing to act as the accountable body for the Trees for Climate national programme, ensuring the effective management of this nationwide programme.

Trees for Climate is the largest tree planter in England. This is a huge achievement that the Council is proud to be involved in. 68.53 hectares of new woodland are in scope in Cheshire West and Chester this year, contributing to the largest planting programme in England.

- The benefits of this work are clear, and has resulted in:
 - A clear and demonstrable reduction in Carbon Emissions with a further decrease by 1.8 tonnes. This is a 1.86% reduction year on year.
 - Also with 2.6 tonnes of Carbon offset by schemes such as those detailed above. The NHS and other Place partners have also made a significant contribution to the priorities above, with the implementation of the following:
 - A Cheshire-wide scheme to reduce the largest cause of medicines related Carbon Emissions, Salbutamol Inhaler, has led to Cheshire being one of the lowest prescribers in the Country. This scheme has saved an equivalent of a car driving 100,000 miles per month
 - In addition, the GP Practices across Cheshire are currently looking to implement a new scheme to bulk sign prescriptions, meaning that there will be significantly less medicines wastage either arriving at land-fill or being incinerated
 - The NHS are working collaboratively with partners to promote public transport, make every contact count and make best use of premises to increase efficiencies,
 - Whilst the GP Practices in four Primary Care Networks in Cheshire are the only Primary Care units in the country to be a part of the “Step-Up a Gear Project”, enabling ways for patients and staff to get to the Practice via Active Travel methods as an alternative to Car usage.

All of these local NHS Schemes are in addition to the wider schemes that are being implemented across the entirety of Cheshire and Merseyside. Highlights include:

- Increasing digital care, and care closer to home, to reduce the need for patients to travel,
- Ensuring any new NHS estates or other improvements, are supporting the Green Agenda, including a new eco-friendly incinerator at the Countess of Chester Hospital and as part of the Mid Cheshire Hospitals New Build programme at the Leighton Site,
- In addition, all new lighting is now being fitted as LED to reduce climate impact.

Health Inequalities

The 5 priority We Will statements within this domain have been agreed as follows:

1. Increase community engagement to build trust, understand needs and incorporate lived experience into appropriate planning and service delivery, brokered by the Community Sector and Poverty Truth Advisory Board, with a focus on

underrepresented groups including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Boating communities. This includes better representation in our nine Community Partnerships

2. Address food poverty via increased access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food – shifting from food banks/emergency provision to social supermarkets integrated with welfare advice and service signposting, rooted in dignity and fairness
3. Integrate wider determinants of health in all policies and in all work commissioned. All Council and local NHS strategies and decisions to be assessed for wider determinants of health impacts
4. Ensure our local poverty and other strategies includes commitment to reducing digital exclusion
5. Work in partnership with local communities to assess digital exclusion priorities

Summary

Work to challenge the social inequality, that is the variation across the population in income, employment, education, and access to health care within Cheshire West has been fast tracked since the Council declared a poverty emergency in 2020. The work has focussed on ensuring that residents' voices are heard and listened to when developing strategies, policies and actions that affect them. Work has been progressed against many of the We Will statements with much of the focus on the above top five priorities, of which the information below provides a highlight of some of the key successes:

- The Fairer Future Strategy 2022-32 is a 10-year plan setting out how the Council, local businesses, partners and local communities can work together to tackle poverty and reduce the number of people in the borough experiencing poverty and financial hardship.

It was co-produced with Community Inspirers - people with lived experience of poverty, and is focused on 3 pillars of voice, alleviation and root cause.

As part of our commitment to amplifying the voice of lived experience our network of Community Inspirers has been expanded to reflect a more diverse range of experiences.

- In response to the recent cost of living crisis, a multi-agency Cost of Living Response group was mobilised, including the Council, Health, and Community & Voluntary sector. The Cost of Living Response Group engaged with Community Inspirers, elected Members & the Health and Wellbeing Board to develop a Cost of Living Response Plan. This Plan has eight areas of focus including:
 - Addressing fuel poverty
 - Providing financial assistance and maximising household incomes
 - Reducing food insecurity
 - Mental wellbeing in relation to cost of living
 - Supporting businesses and the wider economy
 - Improving access to support and awareness (including communications)
 - Sharing best practice and influencing national policy
 - Monitoring impact

Examples of where our integrated approach has improved our response to the Cost of Living crisis include:

- A network of over 50 warm welcoming spaces was created in libraries, leisure centres, museums and community venues during Autumn and Winter 2022/23, which were visited by over 15,000 visitors during this time
 - Both health and care frontline staff distributed bespoke winter warm essentials, information and signposting to support residents to stay warm and well at home
 - Health partners and Cheshire Fire & Rescue incorporated fuel poverty within safe and well checks for residents with cold home related health risks
 - Investment in mental health and wellbeing was made within Council and partner workforces, and enabled volunteers to support, refer and signpost to services
- The Council's Equality & Diversity team work closely with third sector partners including Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race and Equality Centre with a specific focus on challenges such as cost of living, housing, food hygiene, and the inclusion of minority communities including Afghan women. They also support the Cheshire West Interfaith Forum to help them better support their communities. Ongoing partnership work with CHAWREC for refugee and asylum seekers has provided much needed support for this groups, including the provision of ESOL classes to improve language skills to improve integration. The team have also worked with Hong Kong arrivals to help them settle and integrate into Cheshire West.
 - The Food Equality Tool provides an overview of access to healthy affordable food in Cheshire West and will be used to plan locations of new food providers for residents where there are currently gaps. The tool available on the Council website. A new model of social supermarkets 'That Bread and Butter Thing', have been introduced and are now operating from four hubs, with the Food Equality Tool being used to help identify their locations and ensure that food was reaching people in need. They now provide food for between 60 and 80 individuals families per week. Blacon Beacon social supermarket provides welfare advice and service signposting, and it is the ambition of others to offer this.

Cheshire West Voluntary Action (CWVA) have been supporting community providers to provide food larders, pantries and social supermarkets across the borough. CWVA also coordinate the supply of surplus food so that all providers have sufficient stock.

Food poverty is also addressed through collaboration with the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme to provide meals to children during school holidays and supporting families to access the support they are entitled to eg healthy start and free school meals. The HAF Programme continues to support providers to ensure that the food and drink they provide to children and families as part of the programme is high quality and nutritious.

The Welcome Network provided vouchers for a meal at Ellesmere Port Market and Winsford Lifestyle centre for young people from local secondary schools and their families during the February, Easter and May School Holidays (2023) ensuring they had access to a nutritious meal.

Work continues to increase the number of eligible families to take up the Free School Meal and Healthy Start offer. The Healthy Start working group was reformed in February 2023 and has been delivering an action plan which has resulted in an increase in eligible families taking up the healthy start offer (from 63.5% in January to 75% in November 2023).

Various partners including the Cheshire West Voluntary Action, the Council and the West Cheshire Food Partnership contributed to a Food Summit in July 2023. This event was to share the vision of the Food for All plan and have conversations on food in relation to poverty, health and sustainability. Following this event, the Age-friendly Cheshire West Partnership hosted a 'Food and Ageing Well' workshop in November 2023 where numerous stakeholders were invited to focus on access and barriers to nutritious food for older people. Attendees were encouraged to collaborate and bid for funding to address these issues, with 2 bids successful to date. These are Blacon Beacon's 'Happier and Healthier' and Snow Angels' 'Hospital Discharge Nutrition and Hydration Guidance', and are due to commence in April 2024.

- The Council's Equality Analysis approach was updated to embed Marmot principles in April 2023. They are therefore an intrinsic part of the work around inclusion and all staff are required to ensure they are given due consideration when introducing any change, policy, procedure, strategy or plan.
- Digital inclusion is embedded within the Fairer Future Strategy 2022-32, within the Inclusive Economy Strategy and as a recommendation of the Cheshire and Warrington Sustainable Inclusive Growth Commission. The impact of digital inclusion on communities is also a key aspect of the Council's Digital Programme.

The Council has expanded access to public access computers at resident assistance points to help customers get online, and digital buddies have been piloted at key sites with the intention of widening the offer in the future.

Residents are able to borrow an iPad from local libraries, enabling better access to digital services and much more, including eBooks, eAudiobooks, links to resources and support with job searching, accessing Council services, and getting in touch with family and friends.

50 iPads with mobile data are available for loan, meaning residents can access the internet even if they don't have wifi.

Full-fibre high speed broadband is part of the Council's commitment to expanding digital inclusion, ensuring access to the internet for all through enhancing digital connectivity and infrastructure, with over 25,000 homes and businesses in and around Northwich and Ellesmere Port already able to connect to the full-fibre network with further communities being able to join in the near future.

The Council and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside local partners have mapped digital inclusion activity within the Cheshire and Merseyside Digital Inclusion Mapping tool which allows residents to find their nearest digital skills provider, and also by professionals to signpost people to where they can access digital skills, devices and data.

Workshops have been undertaken with local communities in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership to identify barriers to digital inclusion. As a result of this a multi-agency group has now been established in Cheshire and Warrington which will start to look at the barriers and how they can be overcome.

The Places and Communities We Live In

Working collaboratively at a local level to listen to local communities and react to the needs of the individuals and groups within is a key priority for Cheshire West. There are a number of ways we are delivering against all of the We Will statements within this domain, and therefore, these have been themed into four top priorities as follows:

- Working in partnership to target our efforts towards communities of greatest need, and where health inequalities means that our work will have the greatest impact.
- Ensuring our social prescribers and other additional roles support our system by focussing on the wider determinants of health.
- Working with our communities to engage and respond to local feedback, co-producing and designing plans to meet local need.
- Implementing plans to support a healthier lifestyle for local people, whilst reducing the impact of Climate Change.

Collaborative achievement against these themes within Place has been prioritised as one of the top five focus areas for 2023/24 and 2024/25, and successes to date can be seen as follows:

- The Community Partnerships Programme (formerly Care Communities) has seen the ongoing and continued development of a collaborative approach to developing priorities and initiatives at a local level. There are now nine Partnerships in place across Cheshire West, with the NHS, Local Authority, the third sector and local volunteers / groups working together to progress local priorities. These have led to the instigation of a number of schemes that have benefitted local issues, including:
 - Lunch clubs and groups for those who are lonely, carers or bereaved
 - Mental Health and other support / clubs for Children and Young People
 - Gardening, Active and Natural Programmes to support physical and mental health, and tackle climate change at a local level
 - And programmes to support art, creativity and mental health.

This Programme has been essential at linking to our Social Prescribers, funded via schemes within Primary Care and focussing on those locally identified priorities. These programmes are continuing to take priority, with Cheshire West Voluntary Action being asked to lead the co-ordination and benefits realisation of this work going forward, as well as the giving the local community even more control over what matters to them. In addition, CWVA has worked collaboratively to implement the Local Voices Framework, a set of principles that all partners are being asked to sign-up to, to ensure the voice of people with Lived Experience are able to co-produce local plans.

- The Local Authority has also been working with partners to implement a number of initiatives that will have a real impact for local communities. Examples include:
 - Following on from two Poverty Truth Commissions, the establishment of a cross-party Poverty Truth Advisory Board with representation from Community Inspirers, to tackle the Borough-wide poverty emergency and overseeing the Fairer Future Strategy
 - The Fairer Future Strategy has been implemented with a 10 year action plan agreed to reduce poverty and financial hardship focusing on hearing people's voices, alleviating the immediate consequences of poverty and tackling the root cause
 - Implemented "How we live" training, a video co-designed by young people, illustrating how young people face poverty - been rolled-out to over 650 staff and partners

- The Cost of Living Response Group has been mobilised and is co-ordinating short-term response across Health, Care and wider Place partners, and raising awareness - has included utilising data to identify families eligible for free school meals and pension credits, working collaboratively with the third sector to distribute the Government's Household Support Fund via the Citizens Advice Heating Bank with over 3,000 people supported to date
- Mobilising That Bread and Butter Thing Social Supermarket model, with five hubs being launched across the Borough, hub one in Ellesmere Port going live end of January 2023 with 80 customers per week receiving food from the hub
- Place Partners and Cheshire West Community Action has been working in partnership with other organisations within the borough to launch Warm Welcoming Spaces and to roll-out Winter Warmer packs, with grants awarded to expand and develop this network - in partnership with health to ensure offers of relevant health checks and vaccinations are made
- The No Wrong Front Door programme has been implemented to improve access to services with key telephone lines to support people in financial hardship, which have been made free to access
- The Tackling Poverty Spicehive Fund was created to incentivise a number of grass-roots community projects
- The Inclusive Economy Strategy published in 2022 to support local people to develop new skills into work - also touching on the need to support the climate crisis, support wellbeing and the vibrancy of the borough. In addition, the development of a Fair Employment Charter with Place partners across the Borough has been driving improvements.

Best Start in Life

Work is ongoing to deliver all of the We Will statements within this domain, with many of the statements inter-connected. The statements have therefore been themed into four top priorities as follows:

- Working collaboratively to increase breast feeding rates and the number of children who are a healthy weight
- Ensuring Our New Ways of Working practice model underpins all our priorities for children and young people: reducing child poverty, ensuring interventions prevent escalation of issues, the provision of parental support and of targeted support for early years settings
- Supporting families to provide the best care and support they can to their children
- Being the best corporate parent we can possible be

Summary

Successes to date from collaborative working towards these priorities can be seen as follows:

- Breastfeeding rates in Cheshire West are increasing, with an over 5% increase of babies who are breastfed at 6-8 weeks, from 40.81% in 2018/19 to 46.05% in 2022/23. Contributory factors to this increase include the focus from the Starting Well 0-19 Service and the Koala programme, and on achieving accreditation to UNICEF's

baby friendly initiative which has involved significant staff training and a consistent high standard of skills across the workforce. Specialist staff within the service provide bespoke support to women who need additional help and breastfeeding support groups continue to run from children's centres.

- Ending childhood obesity is one of the most complex health challenges facing the international community. Deprivation has a significant role to play, with children living in the most deprived households twice as likely to be living with obesity at both reception and year 6 as those from the least deprived. Work in Cheshire West undertaken to combat childhood obesity includes working with Edsential (catering company for most Cheshire West schools), Youth Service and the Holiday Activity and Food Programme to ensure that the food offered to children is nutritious. Schools are provided with guidance and policy tools to improve the school environment, to improve the food and drink offer and to increase opportunities for pupils to be physically active. The Council continues to offer HENRY, a programme delivered by trained facilitators and delivered to families to support healthy behaviours and home environments. By increasing parental confidence and their ability to provide a healthy start and healthy childhood for their child. Parents and children supported by HENRY become a healthier weight and make statistically significant lifestyle changes which independent clinical trials show are sustained at follow-up.
- Embedding Our New Ways of Working practice model and approach is a golden thread that runs through all Early Help and Prevention priorities and actions. The EHWP Partnership embeds this model through the action plan Trauma Informed Practice and our way of working across universal support through to the targeted Workforce Development approach. In Childrens Social Care, the focused Our Way of Working operational group identified system, practice and language changes to support embedding the model and improved outcomes. The impact of this work is that families feel listened to, heard and valued.
- The use of Multi Agency Group Supervision and Learning Conversations are becoming recognised to help support reflection, learning and joint multi-agency decision-making. Pathways have been developed to embed Frameworks, Learning Conversations & Multi Agency Group Supervisions. Evidence of changes in language in recording and conversation is seen across the partnership, and this has been evidenced through both the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection (2022) and the Focused Visit (2021). As a result of the increased emphasis on the use of trauma informed strategies and tools, the partnership is growing in strength as it responds consistently to the experience of trauma for children, families and adults. As these approaches are embedding with children's services, we are beginning to see the shoots of improved outcomes for children.
- Support to families in deprived areas is provided by both Parent First and Koala. Both schemes liaise with Childcare and Childminder providers to ensure they work collaboratively to support families.
An Integrated Review Pathway has been developed collaboratively between the Starting Well Service and the Early Years Team that clearly defines the expectations from professionals and providers to ensure early identification of any issues and the development of partnership working when completing child assessments between ages 2 and 3. Priority monitoring is undertaken with providers who have 10+2 yr funded /EYPP /SEND children to ensure they are meeting and identifying any early support required, and that they are linking with appropriate professionals to implement further support for families.

Early Years Team are in regular contact with and are supporting providers who currently have refugees accessing a place at their setting, including providing guidance, training, and modelling best practice.

The Early Years Team School Readiness leaflet 'DfE Early Years Foundation Stage' What to Expect When, and DfE Two Years Progress Check guidance is promoted regularly so that providers are supported in having difficult conversations with parents where there are concerns about development.

Training on the role of school Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) includes how to engage parents as partners, so that they feel listened to and heard, and that their contributions are valued.

- The Corporate Parenting Strategy was launched in March 2023 which ensures that looked after children and care leavers receive the best care, support and permanence planning to reach their full potential as children and adults. It has brought clarity of shared responsibilities across Place partners. All partners now have defined 'Champions' who are accountable for the care provided to our children. Children in care, and care leavers' voices have been central to shaping and developing the partnership approach.

Education and Learning

Work is ongoing to deliver all of the We Will statements within this domain, with many of the statements inter-connected. The statements have therefore been themed into four top priorities as follows:

- Working collaboratively to improve educational attainment and learning for all our children and adults, and build children and young people's aspirations
- Work with employers to promote workplace learning and apprenticeships
- Be model employers ourselves
- Improve opportunities for young people through the accessibility of youth services, career advice and ensuring that the appropriate training and academic courses are available and needed according to young people

Summary

- Associate School Improvement Advisors support and challenge our maintained schools to ensure that attainment and progress data, and progress of disadvantaged and SEND pupils is discussed and monitored. A scrutiny group was established in Autumn 2023 focussing on disadvantaged pupils, and their attendance has been identified as a key area of focus going forward.

We have worked with the Aspirer Research School to provide training for our schools through Metacognition to deliver improvement on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils through the provision of the Education Endowment Fund guidance documents and tool kits to schools.

Pupils receive high quality careers advice and older pupils have praised the support that they receive to write their curriculum vitae and applications to local colleges and apprenticeships. Local employers also provide insights into the world of work and help pupils hone their interview skills. Pupils have reported to school inspectors that they receive age-appropriate careers education, information, advice and guidance, and have opportunities to receive independent careers advice. As a result of this

input, pupils and students in the sixth form are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Students are supported into further and higher education, employment, and training with Year 11 Children in Care who are assessed as needing additional transition support being offered help from the Virtual School person centred therapist. The Virtual School also supports the education of UAS and try to secure an appropriate education setting to support transition. This reduces the likelihood of the need for a change of setting, which would be disruptive for the UAS.

Our schools and colleges are supported to be inclusive of our children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) with an Outreach Service from 10 of our Special Schools supporting and maintaining placements in mainstream schools. This has been complemented by the launch of the 'Inclusion Matters' strategy that supports our mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with SEND and develop the communication around inclusion with parent carers and partner agencies. Health providers and education are also working together to develop further resources within mainstream colleges to meet the needs of pupils with SEND.

To support and promote the importance of lifelong learning, 57% of our Adult Education Contract is used to fund community learning activity that supports the health and wellbeing of individuals rather than leading to a progression into a job. This is particularly popular with our older residents.

The importance of supporting brain development, leading to cognitive function and lifelong learning is embedded in all training delivered to early years providers and schools. The Skills and Employment team are enhancing the traditional family learning offer to develop family learning hubs, providing a broad range of training opportunities to parents and extended family members.

- The Skills and Employment (S&E) team are constantly looking at innovative ways to expand our adult learning reach, particularly to residents in disadvantaged wards, using for example the flexible Multiply programme. The team also ensure that the employment support offer is available to residents within communities utilising space within DWP offices, community centres and school hubs, and work closely with partners including DWP to ensure they reach those in most need. When offering learning programmes, the team ensures that every learner undergoes an initial assessment which also records softer outcomes including confidence and wellbeing.

The Council, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce has worked with employers to identify training opportunities for their staff, allocating a small grant towards cost to increase the provision of workplace learning. This has also led to a joint project to identify maths skills initially in scale up and start up employers as part of the developing Multiply programme.

Ongoing work to develop the Local Skills and Improvement Plan for Cheshire and Warrington will identify skills needs of employers and help colleges, the University of Chester and other providers to develop provision to respond to any gaps.

The Council have supported the Pledge to promote the importance of apprenticeships to both young people and school/college staff and also employers and hold apprenticeship fairs to facilitate employers looking to recruit.

The Council together with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Cheshire East and Warrington local authorities are working to produce a Fair Employment Charter to be published in 2024. This will include a commitment to offering apprenticeship opportunities to young people.

During 2022/23 HR attended 24 Career events highlighting entry employment opportunities into the council and apprenticeships. These events focused on our underrepresented groups, young people, those with special educational needs

requiring additional support, NEETs (not in education, employment or training), care leavers and those who are unemployed.

The Entry Level Apprenticeship Council Programme has developed a conducive new Job Role Profile which focuses on not only attracting underrepresented individuals at entry level, but also has recruitment and selection methods that are now more conducive to this cohort. This inclusive application process means that a recruiting manager will still obtain the information they need to make an informed decision to invite to interview stage, even if an individual may not have a CV or have the full experience to be able to complete an application form.

- Following extensive consultation and implementation of the Youth Strategy 2021 - 2024 (which is also on the website) centre-based provision continues to be delivered in each of our localities including a SEND provision. The centre-based provisions are in a range of locations near to town centres and transport links. All youth work officers have corporate Instagram accounts which they use to promote and share services and relevant information for young people. We also have an active Youth Senate.

Collaborative working between the council, the LEP Pledge project (including the Careers Enterprise Company), employers and the Young Chamber has resulted in a series of events where employers have delivered sessions with young people to raise the awareness of their sector and the opportunities and routes available to them. This in turn has led to more work experience opportunities.

We have a vibrant Children in Care Council that provides views on a range of council priorities, and we use this to help us to hear the lived experiences of children in our care. Three care leavers attended the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2023 to share their experiences of mental health services. A Children in Care survey is undertaken annually which gives young people an opportunity to share their concerns and anxieties. There is also an active Youth Senate that is used as a sounding board for a range of issues and shaping of ideas. There are also consultation opportunities that we promote through our schools and through youth services, to ensure that young people's voices are heard and taken into account when developing policies and projects.

Healthy Homes

The 5 priority We Will statements within this domain have been agreed as follows:

1. Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership, council planners and wider partners such as Housing Associations to ensure there is a range of good quality, affordable housing available that matches demand and meets our residents' needs
2. Work to provide affordable housing and social housing to offset deficiencies in universal credit payments not meeting private sector rents, with a focus on one-bedroom properties for single people
3. Work across the borough to prevent, reduce and address homelessness
4. Work with landlords, both social and private, to do more to prevent people from losing their home
5. Review private rented sector regulation actions in the Levelling Up white paper: Levelling Up the United Kingdom - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Summary

The Council is working with partners to deliver the Housing Delivery Programme to ensure there is a range of good quality affordable housing available. From April to November 2023, the Council and Registered Provider Partners have built 368 affordable homes, of which 252 are for affordable or social rent, and 116 are for low-cost home ownership. A further 63 Council homes for affordable rent are currently under construction.

Work is also being undertaken to provide affordable housing and social housing to offset deficiencies in universal credit payments not meeting private sector rents, with a focus on one-bedroom properties for single people. From April to November 2023, the Council and Registered Provider Partners have built 252 homes for affordable or social rent, with rental values below market rents, with the majority being at or below Local Housing Allowance rates. These include 66 One Bedroom flats, with a further 24 One Bedroom flats currently under construction.

A Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is in place to reduce homelessness, together with a Homelessness Reduction Board and a Multi-agency Rough Sleeping (MARS) Partnership that tackles rough sleeping. A Housing Options Service review has been completed, with a number of recommendations being made in relation to homelessness prevention including the need to develop new prevention tools and training for the team. These are now being progressed and have been implemented from December 2023. Additional government Rough Sleeping Initiative funding has also been secured to develop new initiatives to reduce rough sleeping.

Despite all efforts to reduce homelessness, the increase in households requiring temporary accommodation remains high due to the impact of the cost of living crisis. We continue to make offers of accommodation to anyone sleeping rough. The Mulberry Centre (off the street accommodation) has been closed since July for repairs and refurbishment following a flood which has impacted the number of rough sleepers on the street. It previously supplied 27 units of accommodation. However, a new supported housing facility at Sutton Beeches, in Ellesmere Port opened in January 2024. Managed by forfutures, one of our strategic partners, to provide temporary accommodation and support for those experiencing homelessness. The property is staffed 24 hours a day and offers a stepping-stone for some of our most vulnerable residents, while we work to help them secure permanent housing options, and, ultimately, end rough sleeping in our borough.

Data also indicates that the percentage of temporary accommodation which is on a B&B basis for 2022/23 was 81% against a target of 68% (low is good).

The review of the private rented sector regulation actions in the Levelling Up white paper has involved the Strategic Housing and Regulatory Services working together to tackle damp and mould in the private sector rental market, prioritising damp & mould complaints where children under 14 years reside. This has resulted in an increase in the percentage of private rented properties with serious damp and mould issues being improved within six months due to Council involvement between April and November 2023.

A healthy place to work

The five priority We Will statements within this domain have been agreed as follows:

1. Strengthen the use of social value within local procurement, capital investments and planning to maximise local training, employment, and contracting opportunities

2. Grow employability through increased training, work placement and apprenticeship opportunities and provision of welfare support via the Skills and Work Teams, Princes Trust, Citizen's Advice and Cheshire West Voluntary Action to improve skills, confidence, mental wellbeing and employment of local people
3. Promote a local living wage and support progress to higher paid work
4. Support people to become more financially resilient
5. Support employers to be age-, carer- and disability-friendly including gaining the Department for Work and Pensions Disability Confident accreditation.

Summary

The work within this domain is essential to support the wider health outcomes detailed within the Place Plan, as it is widely known that access to employment and financial stability can drive improvements in a person's physical and mental health. Therefore, significant focus has been given on this domain by Place Partners, with some of the key achievements being detailed as follows:

- All Place Partners have put forward key representatives to establish a new focussed workstream on supporting workforce and increasing access to work. As part of this, each partners commitment to improving Social Value is clear, with key officers being tasked to include key Social Value's principles in all procurement and commissioning. This has included ensuring all contracts enable employees of providers to be given a Real Living Wage.
- Cheshire West Voluntary Action has been working across the board to understand how all the decisions we make, eg around increasing work for local people, takes account of those with Lived Experience. The Local Voices Framework is a new methodology for this approach which will be launched across all Place Partners in 2024.
- Opening access to employment for young people is key to this domain, which includes all Place partners, where possible, supporting the development of apprenticeships. The Council has increased their access to work for apprenticeships internally, and also held employment fairs with local schools and colleges in order to increase the uptake of apprenticeships for education leavers.
- Small grants have been made available to local employers to increase uptake and opportunities for education and training for those within employment.
- As well as supporting local people in accessing work opportunities, significant investment and focus has been given to ensuring local people and families have access to welfare support and advice to ensure they are financially resilient.
- Making sure these offers are equally open to all has been a key focus, with work taking place to ensure, where possible, employers are supported to be accessible for those who have accessibility or other requirements to access the work place.

Creating an Age-friendly Place

There are 2 We Will statements within this domain:

1. Develop an Age-friendly action plan for the period 2022-25 that will align with and support the Place Plan. Cheshire West's Age-friendly Steering Group will lead this piece of work
2. Develop a monitoring and evaluation plan to measure the impact and outcomes of the actions implemented (some of which will be reflected in the Place Plan outcomes)

Summary

Age-friendly Cheshire West is a partnership between the University of Chester, Cheshire West and Chester Council, the NHS, the voluntary sector (Age UK), the private business sector and people with lived experience. The partnership is responding to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing. It is committed to making Cheshire West and Chester a great place in which to live and grow older.

The Partnership was relaunched following the COVID-19 pandemic. Workshops were held in June 2022 to develop an age-friendly Action Plan from the priorities and issues identified in the Age-friendly 2020 Baseline Survey. A recruitment drive in Autumn 2022 resulted in over 50 volunteers attending a workshop in February 2023. From this event, over 30 volunteers have created three 'Delivery Groups' that have worked to progress the priorities of the Age-friendly Cheshire West Partnership. These groups represent 3 of the 8 age-friendly domains: Civic Participation & Employment (Business), Communication & Information, and Community Support & Health Services. The Delivery Groups have undertaken the following projects:

- [Age-friendly Communication Guidelines](#) have been developed to provide easy steps on how information and communication can be more accessible and inclusive for older people
- The accessibility of the Live Well Cheshire West website has been reviewed to ensure that it is accessible to older people
- A new logo has been developed with students from the University of Chester to signify the relaunched partnership: *add logo when approved*
- A new Age-friendly Hub has been created on Live Well Cheshire West, to provide information on the partnership, what it does and how people can get involved.
- Responding to public consultations eg the recent proposals to close a number of railway ticket offices, which have now been withdrawn
- Promoting and supporting employment events with the Department of Work & Pensions. The events brought together local employers and jobseekers aged 50+ to share the barriers and challenges of gaining employment
- Supporting the International Day of Older Persons – an annual event on the 1 October about the promoting the rights and wellbeing of older people. Borough landmarks were lit purple on 1 October to mark the day, followed by drop-in events at libraries during the following week.

The theme in 2023 was 'know our place'. Local historical societies, the Cheshire Archives & Heritage Team and libraries supported the events by providing photographs and maps of each local area through the years for residents to look at over tea, coffee and cake. The events were a way for residents to come together and chat about the past, present and future of our towns, villages and neighbourhoods. Residents shared memories, celebrated what makes our communities great right now, and shared views about the future.

Residents contributed on what could make the area better which formed part of the Borough Plan 2024-28 engagement.

The drop-in events took place at Neston Library, Frodsham Library, Blacon Library, the mobile library, Winsford Library, and Hope Farm Library.

Residents also learnt more about iPad hire and digital device training sessions offered by libraries. Brio Leisure provided information about classes and

memberships, and offered free seven-day passes to Brio Leisure Centres, to promote the benefits of exercise and socialising as we get older. Members of the Council's Welfare Team provided advice to residents on pension credit and other benefits available to older residents.

Various partners including the Cheshire West Voluntary Action, the Council and the West Cheshire Food Partnership contributed to a Food Summit in July 2023. This event was to share the vision of the Food for All plan and have conversations on food in relation to poverty, health and sustainability. Following this event, the Age-friendly Cheshire West Partnership launched a cross-cutting project, 'Food and Ageing Well'. The partnership hosted a 'Food and Ageing Well' workshop in November 2023 where numerous stakeholders were invited to focus on access and barriers to nutritious food for older people. Attendees were encouraged to collaborate and bid for funding to address these issues, with 2 bids successful to date. These are Blacon Beacon's 'Happier and Healthier' and Snow Angels' 'Hospital Discharge Nutrition and Hydration Guidance', and are due to commence in April 2024.

The Strategic Group receive regular progress reports from each of the Delivery Groups. Individual projects are evaluated and reported to the Strategic Group, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Place Leadership Team annually.

Preventing Social Isolation and Loneliness

The 5 priority We Will statements within this domain have been agreed as follows:

1. Use the assets available in our community, mobilising individuals, associations, and organisations to work together to improve health outcomes for all
2. Continue our programme of work to reduce the number of suicides in the borough
3. Implement a coordinated approach to social prescribing across the borough
4. Develop a common approach to measuring the impact of social prescribing on the individual
5. Train a number of people to become social prescribing link workers in primary care who will work with social prescribers in the community

Summary

Work is being progressed against all the We Will Statements in this domain, including the promotion of green social prescribing schemes and the use of Live Well Cheshire West to publicise a network of opportunities and support for residents of all ages to alleviate social isolation. Progress against the priority We Will Statements demonstrates how the work of our partners is providing more ways to connect people with each other as well as to services and support:

- Key developments include the Warm Welcoming Spaces network and Meeting Places which utilise existing assets to connect people, offer safe, welcoming spaces and support to stay well. Over 50 welcoming spaces were established within libraries, community venues, museums and leisure centres during Autumn and Winter 2022/23 as part of the cost of living response, most of which have continued throughout Autumn and Winter 2023/24. The estimated total weekly attendance across Cheshire West in all Warm Welcoming Spaces was 1,806. People attended these welcoming

spaces for various reasons, the most common of which was to socialise, meet and make friends (88% of respondents). Residents also visited these spaces to gain a sense of belonging and community, and to stay warm and access free tea, coffee or food.

- Tackling Poverty funding was used to support various community projects that residents identified as bringing the community together, such as the Tattenhall Repair Café and the Grozone in Northwich, which supports over 150 volunteering opportunities per year.
- The Community Partnerships are undertaking various projects utilising assets to improve health outcomes. These include:
 - Chester East/South/Central: Chester wide Café 71, a safe space for people struggling with emotional and psychological distress and considering themselves to be in a self-defined crisis. The facility is hosted by professionals, volunteers and peers, including people with lived experience. Cafe 71, run by the Spider Project, is an alternative to the traditional pathway for people who need help and support within a community setting.
 - Chester Central: appointed a Social Prescriber.
 - Ellesmere Port: commissioned physical activity/exercise classes, a Dementia Support Group & a Lunch Club.
 - Frodsham: developed an Allotment Project, Bee Friends scheme, and a Memory Cafe.
 - Neston & Willaston: developed an Older People's Lunch Club.
 - Rural Together: commissioned a Befriending Service and Community Transport scheme.
 - Winsford: supported their Men in Sheds scheme and developed Physical activity for Carers scheme.
 - Northwich: developed a Dementia Support scheme and a Social Isolation scheme.

- The programme of work to help reduce the number of suicides continues, despite the rate of suicides in the borough increasing over the past four years (ONS). In the past 2 years, over 360 people from a wide range of CW&C Council services, partner organisations community groups, local businesses, and the Voluntary Sector have attended Suicide Prevention training. This training has been arranged by the Council and delivered by Papyrus and will continue in 2024/25. This training considers attitudes and the stigma that surround suicide and provides the tools for people to have conversations about suicide.

In October 2023, 20 people attended a two-day Papyrus ASIST course in Ellesmere Port.

In November 2023, 15 people from a range of partner organisations and sectors qualified as Self-Harm Awareness trainers. These people will start rolling the training out across the borough in 2024 to increase people's knowledge around self-harm.

The Council also supported a number of suicide prevention projects including:

- SALT Men Confidential – a walking and photography/arts group for men in Marbury Park, Northwich
- Rugby League Cares, which delivered a 6 week course to build mental fitness for male CW&C staff in 2022 and 2023.
- Directions For Men delivered weekly men's fitness sessions in partnership with Brio staff at Northwich Memorial Court.
- Chapter delivered a programme of activities that help to reduce isolation & enhance wellbeing for people living with mental ill-health in West Cheshire – includes coffee mornings, wellbeing walks, gardening & art.

- In 2023, Mentell, a mental health charity, were commissioned to increase awareness of their services across Cheshire West. The project directly led to more male CW&C residents accessing Mentell's services. The project also resulted in the launch of an in-person support group that now meets in Chester on a weekly basis. Mentell have recently been recommissioned to deliver a similar project in the Northwich area.

The Council ran a communications campaign during winter 2023/24 with the aim of highlighting the various mental health and crisis support services available in the borough. The campaign will also raise awareness of the Live Well website.

- Social Prescribing services have been available in Cheshire West since 2015 to improve patients' access to care as their needs were not being best addressed by attending a GP appointment. Instead, patients were offered an alternative, more appropriate and targeted set of interventions. This model also freed up GP time to focus on complex patients. Over 39 whole time equivalent social prescribers and 7.8 whole time equivalent Wellbeing Co-ordinators/Assistants are now funded across the Cheshire West Primary Care Networks.

Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs) have been recruited to meet the particular needs of the population of each Primary Care Network (PCN). Their expertise includes bereavement support, employment support, mental health for both children and adults as well as weight management. Wellbeing Co-ordinators are also available with the following roles: a Care Co-ordinator, a Bereavement Link Worker, a Long Covid Wellbeing Co-ordinator, a Rapid Response Wellbeing Co-ordinator and a Health and Wellbeing Coach.

The SPLWs and the Wellbeing Co-ordinators meet regularly within their own organisations to share information and service improvement opportunities, as well as meeting at wider networking events for organisations that provide social prescribing services in Cheshire West and across Cheshire. The SPLWs work closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau Link Workers and will refer to them for specialist advice regarding benefit claims etc. The Children & Young Person's SLPW also has close links to the schools and the Children & Young Person's Mental Health Practitioner.

The Social Prescribing Link Workers are members of the Care Community Steering Groups and are able to provide the link between the community and a range of services, particularly focussing on signposting to the 'warm hubs' co-ordinated by the local authority.

Three areas are using a social prescribing case management system, 'Joy', which integrates fully with the GP IT system which avoids duplication of record keeping and referrals can be made easily by the GP, thus saving GPs and practice staff time.

The Wellbeing Co-ordinators have reported that 64% of patients with whom they have engaged with have reported an increase in life satisfaction and happiness.

GPs have anecdotally reported that the social prescribing roles have had a huge impact on their workload and improved outcomes for their patients.

Our Health Behaviours and Lifestyles

The 5 priority We Will statements within this domain have been agreed as follows:

1. Promote healthy behaviours in children, young people, and adults to prevent them developing harmful habits.
2. Provide services (including debt management and substance misuse services) to those most at risk from these behaviours to help them move towards healthier lifestyles.
3. Help all people keep themselves well and independent in their homes for longer
4. Promote free or low-cost wellbeing opportunities in the borough, for example Brio Leisure, including the health services they provide, Mersey Forest, arts, leisure, and cultural events
5. Work on a structured strategy and action plan across the health and care system to improve mental health and wellbeing for all ages

Summary

- The healthy weight training package 'Why Weight to Talk: How to have positive conversations about weight' has been delivered to 205 practitioners in Cheshire West and Chester. The ambition is to train all Starting Well staff and the council's education team to be able to have these conversations with families.
- The HENRY (0-4 Healthy Families Right from the Start) programme has been delivered in both Ellesmere Port and Northwich to families to increase healthy behaviours and promote healthy home environments, along with a number of one-off online sessions that have helped families provide healthy food for fussy eaters and when cooking on a budget.
- Schools now have resources to enable them to deliver sessions on sugary drinks, smile 4 a mile and a template packed lunch policy. Children and young people are more informed on healthy eating as a result. They also receive information on reducing sugary drinks through the GULP (Give Up Loving Pop) sessions in schools. GULP was also targeted at schools by the 0-19 Starting Well team in schools with the highest prevalence of overweight and obesity from the National Child Measurement Programme.
- The Brio Stop Smoking Service is available to residents aged 12 and over and provides a 12-week programme of behavioural support and pharmacotherapy, such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to support people to quit smoking. It supported 553 people to successfully quit smoking in 2022/23. In addition to this, the Public Health team and the smoking cessation team at Brio have worked with hospital trusts on the maternity pathway of the NHS Long Term Plan (NHS LTP) to support pregnant women and partners to quit. The percentage quit rate is similar to the national quit rate for pregnant women, being 47% for CWAC compared to 46% for England.
- A Riskier Behaviours (smoking/vaping, drinking, drug taking, sexual health) school scoping exercise was undertaken that considered how Riskier Behaviours education is embedded into mainstream secondary PHSE provision. This identified areas of improvement around signposting to local support services and external providers.

- A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has recently been carried out into riskier behaviours in Children and Young People. This will inform strategic delivery and services moving forwards including that of the public health nursing team.
- HCRG Care group (our contracted sexual health service) provide outreach to schools and colleges to support their relationships and sex education. The services continues to provide open access to contraception and sexual health services and treatment which includes outreach services to vulnerable groups which raises awareness of good sexual health and on proactive prevention.
- The borough's prescribing rates for more reliable forms of contraception such as implants and coils is better than the England average.
- VIA (the commissioned drug and alcohol service for adults and young people) liaise directly with schools to deliver sessions on drugs and alcohol education, and to help school staff recognise the signs and symptoms of drug use.
- The Combatting Drugs Partnership has been established in Cheshire West and Chester to oversee the delivery of the 10-year drug strategy to combat substance misuse. The numbers of adults successfully completing treatment has increased with 520 adults successfully completed treatment in 2022/2023 compared to 460 in 2021/2022. The percentage of adults successfully completing treatment in Cheshire West and Chester is also improving, with 57% in 2022/2023 up from 50% in 2021/2022, and is better than the England average percentage of 46%. (Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) accessed on 21st December 2023)
- To help people to stay in their own homes for longer, the Council has successfully completed the transition of moving all of technology customers from analogue to digital. This is ahead of the digital switchover which will occur nationally in 2025. Any customers referred into the new service will be assessed based on a needs led approach as opposed to a kit led approach. This ensures that the technology installed focuses on outcomes and independence and where possible, moves people away from hands on care. The transition from analogue to digital has impacted over 1000 clients across the borough.
- There have been multiple training events offered to the front-line workforce during 2023 and there is a definite shift in operational engagement with regards to a 'technology first' approach. This work remains ongoing.
- The Council is looking to increase capacity in the Care at Home market, and there is also now a greater emphasis on hospital discharge support with this being the busiest referral pathway into technology.
- Mersey Forest offer numerous free activities, with around 1,400 participants taking part between 2020 and 2023. Examples include 2 projects in Northwich in summer 2023. The first targeted men with suicide ideation, who were supported for 12 weeks through a series of 'creative health walks' which included taking pictures and walking within nature whilst being able to talk about their mental health and what is important to their healing process. The second project focused on conservation work at Leftwich Meadows which regenerated the area for local residents to be able to easily access the space for their wellbeing moving forward. In total, 50 people engaged with both projects and experienced extremely positive wellbeing benefits from entering the service to exiting. The percentage of participants with a High score on the wellbeing scale increased from 12.5% to 56%, and whilst the percentage of participants with a Low score decreased from 13% to 0%. Participants from the Natural Health Service Health Walks in Northwich reported that:

“Joining the group is one of the best things I have ever done in my life. At a time when I was feeling despondent and on the scrap heap, it has truly given me a new lease of life. Thank you”.

“If anyone is feeling low and lonely, I would recommend coming along to the group and getting involved. It has been a positive and eye-opening experience for me at a different time with my health after the pandemic. I feel like this project in local nature could benefit anybody and I strongly recommend spending time in green spaces with other people”.

- Other wellbeing opportunities offered in the borough include Brio’s Active Communities Programme which used a range of existing community locations to deliver targeted health & wellbeing activities and services for new people in the most deprived wards across the borough. The programme has supported over 200 of our residents to become more active during 2023 and it is helping Brio become a more inclusive provider and reach and engage more people within communities who need our support the most. It includes Chair-based Exercise Classes delivered in partnership with Healthbox, This Girl Can class, and Love Well Dance delivered in partnership with Cheshire Dance.
- Additional social impact activities include linking with Nuffield Health and CW&C Youth Services to provide a free Personal Trainer for physical activity sessions once a month for Lache Youth Club attendees, and the launch of a ‘Sports clothing bank’ with Chester FC Community Trust in early 2024.
- There have been many free or low cost arts, leisure and cultural opportunities available in the borough, from partner arts organisations such as Theatre Porto, Cheshire Dance, Storyhouse and Cheshire Rural Touring Arts and Theatre in the Quarter.
- Cheshire Dance creates opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to access dance and to use the art form to live healthier and happier lives. They deliver a regular programme of dance activity, responding to local and community need, priorities and participant feedback.

Theatre Porto create high quality theatre with and for children and their families in Ellesmere Port. All weekly/regular provision has taken place as planned, with 259 children and young people benefitting from the activity.

Theatre in the Quarter (TIQ) creates original theatre, music and film for young people which tell the stories and aspirations of the communities involved. They also run ‘Patchwork’, a programme of workshops and performance for young people and adults with additional needs, in partnership with Live! Cheshire.

The Covid Reflections project has been developed as a way of marking the impact of the pandemic in Cheshire West and Chester through a series of arts projects created with communities alongside the planting of new areas of white flowers and shrubs in six green spaces and parks across the borough. Reflections has worked with theatre company Filament to record service users and staff at Vivo Care Choices, recording conversations about what happened to them during the pandemic. These recordings have toured the borough presented as a telephone exchange, giving people chance to plug in and listen. Another Reflections project explored the impact of the pandemic on people whose voices are seldom heard with three photographers working with Gypsy and Traveller families, Young Carers and rural communities to capture their experience.

- Partners from across the Council, NHS, VCSE Sector, and with insight from those with lived experience and their representatives, have worked collaboratively to develop the

Cheshire West Place All-Age Mental Health Commissioning Strategy 2023-2028. This Strategy sets out the commissioning ambition to drive forward further improvements across the life course. The outcomes of the strategy will include enabling individuals to maintain their emotional wellbeing and the knowledge of how to seek help early when needed. The ambition is to continue to reduce waiting times for access to mental health services and to support individuals as they transition from children's to adult services, particularly those in care/care leavers. It will also aim to ensure individuals with deteriorating mental health are supported to stay independent as long as possible, and that there is better support when transitioning home and during recovery.

An Integrated Health and Care System

Key to most of the work within the Place Plan will be implementing priorities seamlessly across health and care. It is in this vein that Place has adopted their five integration priorities as follows:

- Home First
- Community Partnerships (please see above)
- Mental Health
- Learning Disabilities
- Autism.

Since the agreement of these Cheshire West priorities, significant work has taken place to drive forward initiatives that will make a real difference to local people at times of need. Some of the key successes to date can be summarised as follows:

Home First:

- A new Community Response Hub, working collaboratively across Health and Care to get people back in their own home quickly following an admission to hospital or deterioration is now live in the Rural and Winsford localities, with plans to expand this into 2024
 - A recent patient example presented to Place Committee demonstrates the following:
 - Social worker allocations now take place within just 48 hours
 - People are moving back into their own home, with appropriate support within just 72 hours
 - With a Care Act assessment being completed within this time-frame
 - Generally, patients do not receive a charge for the Reablement Service and are able to be discharged within 6 weeks.
- Significant work has taken place to join together hospital and community Social Care Teams, to implement Community Connectors, and e-brokerage solutions have been put into place, allowing partners to work collaboratively to get people the best placement available within the care home market
- In addition, significant work has taken place to map out accommodation and housing for those within Cheshire West who have additional needs, and work to pilot technology to support further independent living is in progress.

Although this work is still forming and has really only started to achieve results within the last twelve months, the collaborative working achieved and the real impacts this has had on the lives of local residents give a positive outlook to the work of Cheshire West Place Partnership going forward.

The Health and Care Workforce

The 5 priority We Will statements within this domain have been agreed as follows:

1. support the transition of our health and care workforce to become a wellbeing workforce, enhancing their role in prevention
2. invest in the workforce, with more people, new ways of working and by strengthening the compassionate and inclusive culture needed to deliver outstanding care
3. grow and develop our local health and care workforce, regardless of which organisation they work for
4. align our health and care workforce strategies to support our approach to joined up care for individuals
5. attract, recruit, and retain people within Cheshire – keeping our Cheshire workforce in Cheshire.

Summary

Work in this domain is progressing at pace, under the steer of a newly set-up “People’s” workstream. This is a joint forum of health and care workforce and professionals who are tasked with understanding how jobs need to evolve to meet the changing needs of the population, and to ensure working in the Cheshire West health and care system is considered desirable. Particular achievements this year have included the following:

- In order to meet the changing needs and priorities of the population, the “People’s” group has focussed its attention on continuing the good relationships between health and care staff to enable a more seamless approach to meeting people’s needs as they transition from hospital into their home environment. This has supported the Home First integration priority as detailed above.
- In addition, this workstream has led to the development of joint roles across Place organisations to meet multiple workforce needs and to enable better job satisfaction and efficiencies for the individual and their organisation. For example, work is currently taking place to enable workplace rotation between Place partners.
- Work has progressed with the third and community sector, to enable opportunities to be available closer to communities. This has also supported plans for identifying additional volunteers for the third and community sector from within the health and care system.
- To increase opportunities for education leavers to work within Cheshire West Place organisations, joint workforce and recruitment fairs are being held across the Borough, with a commitment by all partners to increase apprentice opportunities (as detailed above) internally. A joint Talent Policy is being developed, working collaboratively with Chester University, with the potential to develop a Health and Care Academy to support the future workforce.

- All of this work has been completed whilst ensuring that Place organisations are accessible and equitable places to work for anyone. Some specific pieces of work that demonstrate this way of working can be detailed as follows:
 - Cheshire West Place has engaged heavily with the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board on their programme of work towards improving diversity within the health and care workforce, completing the Anti-Racism toolkit and identifying further local actions that could be taken to improve workforce diversity.
 - In addition, Cheshire West and Chester Council are leading the way with being a Confident and Accessible Leader and locally carrying out significant work to improve access for the workforce and wider. For example, this has included the creation of a local Disability Staff Network that has been broadened out to all areas of individual need including neurodiversity.