

# **AMERSHAM COMMUNITY BOARD**

## **PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS**



**Public Health Team – Buckinghamshire Council**  
**Your Contact: Stephanie Moffat**  
**[stephanie.moffat@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.moffat@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)**

## Amersham Community Board Public Health Recommendations

Improving and levelling up the health and wellbeing of all our residents is a priority for the Council. Buckinghamshire is one of the least deprived local authority areas in England and consequently has better health overall than the England average. However, in Buckinghamshire the health of residents varies within, and between, community board areas. For example, people living in more deprived areas are more likely to live in poor health and die earlier than people living in less deprived areas. They are also more likely to develop multiple long-term conditions earlier, such as diabetes and heart disease. Different ethnic groups also have different risks of developing some long term conditions.

These differences existed before the pandemic and COVID-19 has worsened them. For example, people living in more deprived areas have a higher risk of being infected and experiencing complications of COVID-19.

One impact of the pandemic has been an increase in the unhealthy behaviours that increase our risk of long-term conditions. Many people have been less active, eaten less healthily and drunk more alcohol. People have also experienced poorer mental health and greater social isolation. COVID-19 has also impacted some people's income, employment, and children's education - all factors that can affect their health and wellbeing.

Supporting and improving residents' physical and mental health is vital and initiatives to do so will have wider impacts on economic recovery, workforce productivity and environmental sustainability. Our County-wide "levelling-up" health priority is Cardiovascular Disease (which includes conditions such as heart attacks and stroke) because this is a significant cause of early death, is more common in deprived and some ethnic minority communities, and contributes to worse Covid-19 outcomes.

### Community Board Profile Commentary

Amersham is one of the least deprived community boards in Buckinghamshire and residents here live longer, on average, than in Buckinghamshire as a whole. During their lives, however, many Amersham residents experience poor physical and mental health.

A quarter of children (25.4%) aged ten to eleven years old who are measured are overweight or obese. Obesity increases the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, stroke, dementia and many cancers, as does smoking. As less than half of those eligible have received their NHS Health Check, there may be more people in Amersham at higher risk of heart disease than is currently known. Before the pandemic, a higher proportion of residents in Amersham were diagnosed with cancer compared with the Buckinghamshire average. Whilst this may be related to more older people living in this area compared to Buckinghamshire as a whole, supporting residents to engage in healthy behaviours such as exercise, eating well and not smoking can help to reduce the development of long-term conditions. Data is currently being updated for the post COVID period.

Amersham has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate of emergency admissions for mental health in the county. Developing community activities and promoting resources can help to improve residents' mental wellbeing.

Limited access to publicly available green spaces and food poverty (of which 1 in 8 residents are estimated to be at higher risk) also play a role in the overall health of this community. Greater public access to green spaces can improve community health by facilitating exercise, social interaction and reducing exposure to pollution. Initiatives to support those at risk of food poverty can improve physical and mental wellbeing and support sustainability by promoting healthy eating using locally grown produce and fostering connection between residents.

## Recommendations

There are many opportunities for the Amersham Community Board to work with Public Health and other partners to support residents to have healthier, happier lives. We propose that you focus on the following areas:

- Preventing diabetes, heart disease and stroke
- Supporting residents to stop smoking
- Improving mental health, tackling social isolation and reducing stigma

In each of these areas, proposed actions that your Board can take are categorised into different levels of input:

1. DEVELOP/FUND  
Introduce, expand, or develop initiatives supported by Public Health and/or other partners.
2. PROMOTE, SIGNPOST, REFER or TRAIN  
Communicate information about local activities and services to residents, or develop new skills.
3. PARTICIPATE  
Represent your community in shaping public health policy and actions across Buckinghamshire.

Six selected DEVELOP/FUND proposals are:

- Fund an Active Communities programme across a group of settings in Amersham
- Fund one or more community gardens as part of the Grow it, Cook it, Eat it scheme
- Make your parks and playgrounds smoke free
- Organise Making Every Contact Count Training
- Enhance Healthy Ageing projects with community board funds
- Support schools to organise wellbeing service days

Further details on these actions and more can be found in the following pages.

## Next Steps

Your Public Health lead, Stephanie Moffat ([stephanie.moffat@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.moffat@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)), will be pleased to provide more information and support discussions as you explore which actions to work on this year, advise what support is available, and how these might fit in with your other priorities.

For more information and support on any of the actions suggested, get in touch with Stephanie Moffat at [stephanie.moffat@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.moffat@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

## Further Considerations

Based on your local insight and knowledge there may be other health and wellbeing priorities you wish to consider for support and action and/or you may already have ideas to address needs identified by the community. The recommendations included in this document are not all encompassing and are intended to start a conversation on where and how the Community Board can get involved to improve local health and well-being.

Further opportunities for supporting a variety of health and wellbeing topics in your area can also be found in the Buckinghamshire Online Directory.

**Please see the following pages for the full list and details of proposed actions.**

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## Opportunities for Action – what you can do for residents’ health and wellbeing

### 1. Prevent diabetes, heart disease and stroke by promoting healthier behaviours and knowing your risks

Preventing Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) is our Buckinghamshire-wide priority to “level-up” health. Heart disease, stroke and diabetes are very common, affecting hundreds of residents a year, more commonly in deprived and some ethnic minority communities. Heart disease and stroke account for 20-30% of the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in Buckinghamshire.

The good news is a significant proportion of new cases can be prevented by things we can do as individuals and community boards. We can reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and stroke by

- supporting residents to have healthier behaviours
- helping residents know their individual risk and getting advice to reduce this by for example increasing uptake of NHS health checks

The most important behaviours that reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dementia, and many cancers are 1. Not smoking 2. Being physically active 3. Eating a healthy diet and being a healthy weight and 4. Not drinking too much alcohol. Adopting these 4 healthy behaviours could prevent 75% of new cases of heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 diabetes; 40% of cancer cases; and reduce the risk of people suffering serious consequences of COVID-19 and flu. In particular, efforts to reduce and stop smoking in your area can make a huge difference – smoking reduction actions are discussed in further detail separately, under key area two. Healthy behaviours also bring other benefits, at all ages, from boosting school achievement to improving mental health and boosting the economy through increased workforce productivity and reduced sickness absence.

**How the Amersham Community Board can act to support this key area:**

**CONTACT [STEPHANIE.MOFFAT@BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.GOV.UK](mailto:STEPHANIE.MOFFAT@BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.GOV.UK) FOR MORE DETAILS ON ANY OF THESE ACTIONS**

#### **Develop / Fund**

##### **Active Communities:**

This is an innovative project that takes a whole community approach to reduce sedentary behaviour by helping residents add extra movement to their daily routines.

The Community Board can fund Active Communities projects across a group of settings (e.g. local care homes, schools, community centres – including the new Chiltern Lifestyle Centre) in your local area. Estimated costs start from £15K and will depend on the size of the community involved and number of settings chosen.

##### **Grow it, Cook it, Eat it:**

This programme brings communities together through a common interest to grow their own food, gives them access to fresh fruit and vegetables, and offers a way to engage in low impact exercise.

The Board can fund one or more community gardens to benefit the health and wellbeing of the local community (this project has a wide range of benefits including reducing risk of heart disease and alleviating social isolation through promoting community spirit), as well as environmental and green priorities.

##### **Grow to give:**

This initiative supports communities to donate surplus fresh produce from allotments and back gardens to local food banks and community fridges. This encourages healthy eating, promotes sustainability, and fosters community connection.

The Board can expand the local Grow to Give scheme to support the South Bucks and Chiltern Food Bank.

<b>Promote, Signpost, Refer and Train</b>	
<p><b><u>Live Well Stay Well:</u></b> Buckinghamshire's Healthy Lifestyle Service provides effective and evidence-based support for people to stop smoking, lose weight and be active amongst other support and advice.</p>	<p>Promote the service through your own communication channels, encouraging stakeholders to refer and residents to self-refer.</p>
<p><b>Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training:</b> MECC upskills people to have effective and informal healthy conversations around making positive changes to physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Support MECC training within your local area by promoting its availability to your members and partners.</p> <p>You could also organise training sessions in partnership with Public Health.</p> <p>Please email <a href="mailto:MECC@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">MECC@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a> for further information.</p>
<p><b><u>NHS Health Checks:</u></b> This is the cardiovascular disease prevention programme for people aged 40-74. It helps spot the early warning signs of stroke, diabetes, or cardiovascular disease and offers individual advice on reducing risk.</p>	<p>Help residents find out about and tackle their risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes by promoting NHS Health Checks and encouraging residents to attend their appointment.</p>
<b>Participate</b>	
<p><b>Health Behaviour Campaigns:</b> These are communications and engagement activities to promote healthy behaviours.</p>	<p>Your Community Board can amplify health campaigns to your local community by promoting them through your own communication channels. Examples include:</p> <p>Stoptober (October)</p> <p>Healthy weight (Better You)</p> <p>Alcohol Awareness Week (15-21 Nov 2021)</p>
<p><b>Whole System Approach to Obesity:</b> Public Health have recently commenced a 'Whole Systems Approach to Obesity', a health in all policies approach which brings stakeholders from across the county together to create effective local approaches, engaging communities and local assets, to address obesity in Buckinghamshire. An action plan jointly owned by stakeholders will be developed creating a joined up approach to addressing obesity across Buckinghamshire.</p>	<p>Participate in the Whole Systems Approach to Obesity workshops (Sept and Nov '21) and stakeholder events to ensure action plans developed meet the needs of your local communities and fully utilise the assets available.</p>
<p><b>Physical Activity Strategy:</b> There is a steering group and an action plan for this strategy in Buckinghamshire.</p>	<p>Representatives of your community board can attend and contribute to quarterly meetings and inform the action plans.</p>

## 2. Support residents to stop smoking

Smoking is a major priority for the Council and warrants special focus by Community Boards as a key driver of deaths from heart disease, stroke, diabetes, dementia, and cancer. Most people who currently smoke report wishing that they could quit, or at least reduce their habit, but the addictive nature of nicotine makes this very difficult to achieve. In the absence of professional assistance and peer support, people who smoke in the Amersham Community Board area will be likely to continue smoking, damaging their health and that of those around them. Supporting people to quit, or reduce, their smoking habit, is one of the most effective ways to improve the health of your community.

**How the Amersham Community Board can act to support this key area:**

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<b>Develop / Fund</b>	
<p><b>Smoke Free Parks and Playgrounds:</b> This is a voluntary ban on smoking in community parks, where children and families are often present. This protects children and adults from second-hand smoke and means children are less likely to observe role models smoking which reduces their risk of taking up smoking.</p>	<p>Identify playgrounds and/or parks in your area to make smoke free and put up signage to show residents that this is a smoke free area. You can encourage community participation by, for example, having local schools enter a 'no smoking' sign competition and use the winning design in your chosen parks. The average cost for each playground is likely to cost around £600, depending on how many signs are needed and for how many parks in your area.</p>
<p><b>Making Every Contact Count Training:</b> MECC upskills people to have effective and informal healthy conversations around making positive changes to physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Support MECC training within your local area by promoting its availability to your members and partners.</p> <p>You could also organise training sessions in partnership with Public Health.</p>
<b>Promote, signpost refer and train</b>	
<p><b><u><a href="#">Live Well Stay Well (Smoking Cessation):</a></u></b> Buckinghamshire's Healthy Lifestyle Service, Live Well Stay Well, provides a smoking cessation service through which over 1200 residents have been supported to quit smoking.</p>	<p>Promote the service through your own communication channels, encouraging stakeholders to refer and residents to self-refer.</p>
<p><b>Smoke Free Side-lines:</b> From January 2022, local football clubs can pledge to a voluntary ban on smoking on their pitches and in their clubs.</p>	<p>Encourage football clubs in your area to sign up to the smoke free side lines pledge.</p>
<p><b>Tobacco Roadshows:</b> These are community events that highlight the impact of illicit tobacco.</p>	<p>Promote the roadshow events through your communication channels to encourage the public to attend.</p>
<b>Participate</b>	

<p><b>Tobacco Control Alliance and Action Plan:</b> Buckinghamshire has a tobacco control strategy (and accompanying action plan) that is overseen by the Tobacco Control Alliance. The strategy aims to save lives and improve the health of thousands of people in Buckinghamshire by minimising their exposure to tobacco and works towards the national ambition for a smoke free generation.</p>	<p>Representative(s) from your community board can be part of the Tobacco Control Alliance and participate in quarterly meetings to inform the Buckinghamshire strategy and action plan for tobacco control.</p>
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### 3. Co-ordinate community activities and promote resources to improve mental health, tackle social isolation and reduce stigma

The COVID-19 pandemic has had negative impacts on many people’s social support networks and mental health. People who experience poor mental health and/or social isolation can be at higher risk of experiencing physical ill health and wider challenges. Community-level efforts to improve social connectivity and mental health resilience, for example, group-based physical activity sessions or campaigns to reduce stigma, can bring wide-ranging benefits to both individual and community health and wellbeing.

**How the Amersham Community Board can act to support this key area:**

<p><b>CONTACT <a href="mailto:STEPHANIE.MOFFAT@BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.GOV.UK">STEPHANIE.MOFFAT@BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.GOV.UK</a> FOR MORE DETAILS ON ANY OF THESE ACTIONS</b></p>	
<p><b>Develop / Fund</b></p>	
<p><b>Healthy Ageing Collaborative:</b> This is a joint initiative between Public Health, Adult Social Care, and the voluntary/community sector. A series of projects to address the emotional and cognitive impacts of isolation and lack of social contact amongst older people will be developed and tested from September 2021.</p>	<p>The Community Board can enhance the test and learn projects by matching the current funding and/or funding additional projects.</p> <p>The Board can also play a key role by encouraging the local VCSE groups to engage with the programme.</p>
<p><b>School Wellbeing Service Days:</b> Secondary schools can host a wellbeing day for pupils and staff to learn about services that can support their mental health and wellbeing and reduce stigma for young people around discussing mental health.</p>	<p>Support schools in your area to develop and organise a wellbeing service day to promote local services to pupils and staff.</p> <p>Together, you can invite services to speak about what they offer, give out leaflets signposting to services and more.</p>
<p><b>Promote, signpost refer and train</b></p>	
<p><b><u><a href="#">Champion the Change – Buckinghamshire Mind:</a></u></b> Champion the Change Buckinghamshire is a partnership of local organisations and people who are committed to ending mental health stigma and discrimination and create hope for those affected by mental illness. Their activities include holding ‘Big Bucks Chat’ Awareness Days and welcoming people with experience of mental health to become champions.</p>	<p>Promote Champion the Change events, for example, Bucks Big Chat Awareness Days, through your communication channels.</p> <p>Encourage residents and board members to become champions. Champions can organise small community activities, share their stories, and/or create resources for schools, workplaces, and sports clubs.</p>

<p><b><a href="#">Moving Minds:</a></b>  Through this initiative, people with mild-moderate poor mental health are invited to take part in community physical activity sessions. The sessions are delivered by trained instructors and aim to build peoples resilience, self-esteem confidence and support mental health recovery. The sessions will act as a stepping stone for accessing other community based physical activity.</p>	Promote the Moving Minds sessions through your communication channels.
<p><b>First Aid Training:</b>  Mental Health First Aid (<a href="#">MHFA</a>) England provide a variety of online and face-to-face courses, including Youth and Adult Mental Heath First Aid training. Further training will also be available via <a href="#">Bucks MIND</a>.</p>	Board members can attend and promote training sessions covering Mental Health First Aid, Suicide First Aid, Psychological First Aid.
<b>Participate</b>	
<p><b>Annual Mental Health Communications:</b>  There are a range of communications campaigns throughout the year that promote ways to improve mental health, reduce stigma and/or promote places to get support.</p> <p>You can take part in awareness raising to reduce stigma and help signpost residents who want to get involved in supporting the mental health of their community or those who may benefit from information on services that are available for them to access.</p>	<p>Promote national campaigns through your own communication channels, such as World Suicide Prevention Day (September) and World Mental Health Day (October), using local Buckinghamshire council information, media, tweets and more.</p> <p>Share information on local services that are available for residents to improve their mental health.</p> <p>Have a themed community board meeting on Mental Health and invite local organisations to talk about their work/support that is available.</p>