



# Director of Public Health Annual Report

## 2026

# Contents

April 2025.....	4
May 2025.....	7
June 2025.....	10
July 2025.....	13
August 2025.....	16
September 2025.....	20
October 2025.....	23
November 2025.....	24
December 2025.....	25
January 2026.....	27
February 2026.....	29
March 2026.....	31

## Sharing success, inspiring change

Here in Worcestershire, we see public health first and foremost as a conversation with our residents.

A conversation rooted in trust, understanding and respect. Positive communication is not an add on to our work; it is the way change begins. When we listen carefully to our communities, understanding their lives, their challenges and their aspirations, we are better placed to support ideas that make health improvement feel achievable, relevant and real.

Over the past year, we have worked alongside communities, not to tell them what to do, but to create the conditions where healthier choices feel possible. Behaviour change does not happen because of a single message or campaign. It happens when people feel seen, supported and inspired to try something new.

Yet one of the most powerful elements of positive communication is often overlooked: sharing success.

When individuals, families and communities see their own efforts recognised and hear the stories of others who have made changes

it creates momentum. Good news travels. It reassures people that progress is possible and that small steps can lead to meaningful outcomes. As the saying goes, **“When people see change working, they believe more change is possible.”**

This annual report reflects a year of listening, learning and celebrating success. It tells the story of what can be achieved when we communicate positively, amplify local strengths and share what works.

I am proud of what we have accomplished together, and I invite you to read on not just to reflect on the year behind us, but to be inspired by what lies ahead...

**Dr Lisa McNally**  
Director of Public Health



Dr Lisa McNally and Cllr Satinder Bell with Healthy Worcestershire participants

### Cabinet member foreword

As I approach the end of my first year as Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, I've enjoyed reading this report. It provides a great reflection on our efforts to put communities at the heart of health improvement. The featured examples show what can be achieved when we invest trust, as well as resources, into the ideas that our local residents have. Positive outcomes, such as a reduction in preventable mortality and significantly lower smoking rates, show that community action is high impact action. I'm excited to see what more we can achieve together in the coming year.

**Councillor Satinder Bell**  
Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Wellbeing

# April 2025

## Getting Active!

Worcester News



**Free park yoga sessions coming to KGV Hub in Worcester**

Park Yoga launched its Sunday morning weekly sessions at the KGV Hub Community Centre in Brickfields, Worcester. The free sessions were open to people of all abilities with no booking required and were followed by a popup café.

Delivered by Onside, the programme was supported by Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Team and Active Herefordshire and Worcestershire, aiming to boost physical activity, wellbeing and community connection through outdoor yoga.

Click to find out more



### Physical activity is a powerful way to support residents' mental wellbeing while strengthening community connections.

Community based activity helps improve mood, confidence and motivation, particularly for people who may feel isolated. Group sessions offer more than exercise; they create welcoming spaces where people can meet others, build relationships and feel a sense of belonging.

Local, accessible activities remove barriers to participation and encourage people to stay engaged. By embedding physical activity into everyday community life, these initiatives reduce loneliness, support positive mental wellbeing and help communities become healthier, more connected and more resilient.

Public Health Team in Worcestershire helps people move more by bringing activity into everyday community life. From programmes like Healthy Worcestershire in the heart of communities, to small grants for local groups, the focus is on making being active easy, enjoyable and social, helping residents feel better, meet others and build healthy habits that last.

### Kicking off new women's football pathways

This season marks the launch of a brand-new women's football team at Nunnerly Wood Football Club, with a clear goal: to create a full pathway from childhood to adulthood.

With support from a Public Health Community Wellbeing Grant, the Worcester club has been able to open an under-18 team, helping bridge the gap between youth and adult football and encouraging girls to stay in the sport beyond the age where many typically drop out.



Click the clip to watch on YouTube!

BROMSGROVE Standard

The 2025 Hollywood and Wythall Fun Run proved a major success, returning bigger and better than ever. **A total of 750 runners took part**, an increase of 150 across the 5k and 10k events, alongside a popular Family Relay.

The day offered far more than racing, with activities for families and opportunities to try sports such as tennis, bowls, archery and inclusive adapted sessions.

With ambassadors including Steve Cram attending, strong sponsorship support, and enthusiastic crowds lining the route, the atmosphere was vibrant. Excellent organisation and community spirit made the event memorable and highly praised by local residents.



**750 runners take on the 2025 Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run**





## New outdoor gym opens

A new, free outdoor gym has opened outside the Sergeants' Mess Community Hub in Norton and is already making a difference. Funded by Norton-juxta-Parish Council, Severn Waste, Tesco and a Public Health Community Wellbeing grant, it offers accessible fitness for those anxious about indoor gyms.

One local resident shared: "It's a regular part of my routine now to come down and enjoy the outdoor gym twice a week. It's a great thing to have in the community."



Children's physical activity has increased across most Worcestershire districts, with Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Wychavon and Wyre Forest all recording growth and rates at or above national averages.

Overall activity is at a record high. Worcester City activity levels remained stable whereas, Redditch has seen a decline, prompting further targeted investment from Public Health into the coming year through community led projects. (Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People Survey results for 2024-2025)



Public Health Community Wellbeing Grants enabling physical activity-related initiatives and projects surged by **↑ 123%**. (From Financial Year 2023/24 to 2024/25)



## School games back for another year!

School Wellbeing Grants have helped children move more and be active in ways that directly support their wellbeing. Funded projects include balance bikes, outdoor OPAL play programmes, daily mile schemes and new afterschool sports clubs.

Held by the local School Games Organisers and supported by a Worcestershire County Council Public Health grant, in partnership with West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, the events across the county brought together schools for a day of physical activity, inspiration, and personal development.

Click the clip to watch on YouTube!

# May 2025

## Reducing Health Inequalities



## Working with the community to improve healthy life expectancy

Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Team celebrated a major achievement after the We Are Westlands project won its category at a prestigious local government awards.

Worcestershire's entry, the groundbreaking We Are Westlands project, has been delivered in Droitwich Spa alongside the community, where residents and professionals worked together to focus on preventing health problems, providing better access to services and support, and helping people stay well.

The project uses a blend of grants and locally-driven activities, giving people living on the estate the chance to help design and take a lead in choosing the changes that make the biggest difference to their lives.

In presenting the award, the judges described the project as a "standout winner which serves as an example of community development with tangible public health benefits."

Local resident, and Chairman of the Residents Association, Tony Libetta added: "The impression people have of Westlands isn't always the reality. Loneliness and isolation are big issues here, a lot of people feel very cut off. The most important thing this project has done is listen to us."

The Public Health Award recognised the councils which are making the most of their role in public health to protect and improve the health of their local communities.



Art produced by Westlands students, 2025.

# The Priority Neighbourhood

## Development Programme

Where we live is a major influence on our health.

Poor living conditions, together with the **'inverse care law'** in service provision, leaves us with an **average gap of 19 years** in healthy life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas.

Worcestershire's Priority Neighbourhood Development (PND) programme is a targeted, place-based initiative designed to address these health inequalities and unmet needs in the county's most disadvantaged communities.

### From data to action

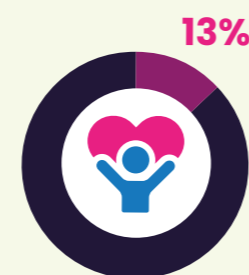
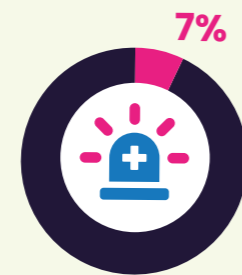
The PND Programme then sets out to tackle these inequalities by focusing resources, partnership working, and community engagement in the areas where need is greatest. This is being done in a way that avoids stigma, harnessing and maximising local people's pride in their communities.

Working groups are formed by local residents, schools and voluntary sector organisations. The work is supported by the local Public Health Team in collaboration with other local authority colleagues and NHS partners. However, it's local people who are in control.

These working groups are entrusted with a sizeable, shared budget and the decision-making power to co-design and deliver projects that matter most to their community. As such, it's not just money that is invested, but also trust and the power to make things happen.

### What did it achieve?

The PND certainly creates a positive buzz in neighbourhoods. Local resident-led projects, such as nature trails, youth engagement schemes, parent support groups and school initiatives have fostered pride and participation.



But that's not all. The first PND initiative in the Westlands Housing Estate led to a 7 percent reduction in emergency hospital admissions (against a 5 percent rise across the county) and a 13 percent decrease in Children in Need social care referrals. There were also measurable improvements in mental health and social isolation.

**Healthcare Management**  
SUPPORTING INTEGRATED HEALTH

### Time to go beyond social prescribing?

Social prescribing is now common in GP services, helping people connect with community support rather than medical treatment. While it makes sense, evidence shows it rarely improves health on its own. Research has found little impact on wellbeing or value for money. Bigger gains come from place based approaches, where communities help shape solutions. In Worcestershire, this has reduced hospital admissions and social care needs by building local capacity and shared action.

Click to find out more

8

### A brighter future

The PND programme has secured ongoing investment from housing providers, health partners, and local businesses.

It is now a core element of Worcestershire's Neighbourhood Health Strategy, with similar work expanding to **other Priority Neighbourhoods** across the county.

Work is already well underway in Redditch, which has more Priority Neighbourhoods than

any other district in Worcestershire. Significant funding has already been agreed, with local residents and community groups drawing up plans to make it work.

Their key priorities include young people's wellbeing and **family support**. This will be boosted by Pride in Place funding over the next few years.

Other areas are also coming on board,

producing a **constant stream of innovative work**. From cycling and boxing clubs to parent support groups and community hubs, it's all being delivered by the community for the community.

All we need to do is invest the funds, as well as some trust, and get out of their way while they make the magic happen.



### Community led wellbeing at Woodrow

The Woodrow Community Wellbeing Hub is a VCSE-led, community-driven initiative developed in direct response to deep-rooted health, wellbeing and access inequalities in one of Redditch's priority neighbourhoods.

Since September 2025, a place-based partnership of more than 40 stakeholders, including local residents, has been shaping the vision and priorities for the area, with co-production at its core.

Through this partnership approach, a free lease and discounted rates were secured on a district council-owned unit, creating a visible and accessible hub at the heart of the community.

The Hub complements and strengthens existing local assets – including the library, charity shop, hairdresser and housing providers – building local networks and capacity rather than duplicating provision.



The Public Health Team has awarded over 50 grants in its Priority Neighbourhood Development areas with approximately **£336,500** directed to those with the greatest need. (Worcestershire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2024/2025)

9

# June 2025

## Bright Minds

Supporting children's health and wellbeing in schools is key to helping pupils feel calm, connected and ready to learn. At St Peter's Droitwich CofE Academy, staff recognised that some children were becoming anxious or dysregulated during the school day and needed additional support to stay engaged in lessons.

To meet this need, the school adopted two rescue guinea pigs, Munchy and Crunchy, and made them part of everyday school life. Since arriving in January, the animals have helped create calmer classrooms and a stronger sense of shared responsibility, with pupils taking turns to care for them.



Animal therapy guinea pigs help Droitwich school children feel calm

### Council grants for Worcestershire schools and community groups

Lisa McNally, director of public health, said the grant scheme is about **"making residents' ideas a reality"** and urged groups to get in touch: **"If you have an idea, if you know a group that you think could use a public health grant, try us, I bet we say yes."**

Click the clip to watch on YouTube!

### Peaceful space promotes pupil wellbeing



Bellbroughton Primary School in Bromsgrove has opened a new sensory room to support pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing.



Schools sit at the heart of local life, each with its own culture, strengths and challenges. The Public Health School Wellbeing Grant Programme celebrates this diversity by empowering schools to lead on improving health and wellbeing in ways that work for their communities.

The programme enables headteachers and staff to turn creative ideas into practical, impactful projects that make a real difference for children and young people.

Schools, nurseries and colleges can apply for grants of up to £3,000 to deliver initiatives that promote physical activity and positive mental health. Impact is captured through surveys and short, creative films made by the settings themselves, helping to share learning and inspire others.

Over the past 12 months, more than 200 grants have been awarded across Worcestershire – an 82% increase on the previous year, demonstrating exceptional engagement. This year in particular, schools have placed a strong emphasis on activities that support the emotional wellbeing of children with Special Educational Needs, responding to growing need with creativity and care.

Funded projects focus on physical activity and emotional wellbeing outside the curriculum, including yoga clubs, sensory rooms, Lego mood busters, wellbeing gardens, choirs, art groups and inclusive play spaces. The programme has gained strong local and national recognition, including BBC TV News coverage, and is widely praised by schools for its flexibility, inclusivity and positive impact.



### Pupils slide into wellbeing!

In an innovative approach to pupil wellbeing, St Joseph's Primary School in Malvern has transformed an unused outdoor mound into an all year sledding slope and picnic area.

Supported by a Public Health Community Grant, the project encourages physical activity, confidence, teamwork and resilience.



### Young people transform Outside with new mural

Young people at Outside Youth Centre in Evesham created a vibrant mural with local artists, supported by a Worcestershire County Council Public Health Grant.



Public health delivers a significant amount of work aimed at keeping children and young people safe from threats to their health and development. This includes the provision of youth services, substance misuse support, counter-radicalisation initiatives, and the disruption of the supply of illegal vapes and tobacco.

Supporting young people outside of education is vital, particularly for those who may be disengaged or at risk of poorer outcomes.

Youth settings offer safe, trusted spaces where positive relationships can grow, confidence can be built and young people feel seen and valued. Well designed activities, especially physical activity, help improve mental wellbeing, provide structure and reduce loneliness, while also offering positive alternatives to antisocial behaviour.

These settings are often the first place young people reconnect, develop life skills and make healthier choices. Investing in accessible, local youth provision helps prevent problems escalating and supports young people to thrive in their communities.



Youth teams from Worcester Community Trust have supported young people across Worcester to explore masculinity, identity and healthy relationships in safe, engaging spaces. Sessions reflect the online realities shaping young people's views, enabling open discussion, critical thinking and healthy debate.

Young people are developing a clearer understanding of consent, respect, emotional intelligence and safety, helping them recognise both healthy and harmful behaviours. Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Team funded this work through a youth grant, supporting staff development and resources so youth teams could deliver the programme with confidence and care.



### Empowering Youth Through Healthy Relationships



The Public Health Team's work has achieved a number of improvements, including the maintenance of a significantly lower average rate of first-time entrants into the Youth Justice system and reductions in hospital admissions among children.

(Source: OHID, based on Ministry of Justice and Office for National Statistics data)



## Strength and Support

### Worcestershire charities partner to create domestic abuse service

A new community based domestic abuse service was launched, with delivery supported by local Worcestershire charities.

West Mercia Women's Aid (WMWA) are the lead provider of the new community service, with Worcester Community Trust (WCT) delivering the service across South Worcestershire and WMWAM in the north of the county.



In 2024, the National Police Chiefs' Council formally recognised Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) as a national emergency. This designation reflects the scale, persistence, and profound impact of VAWG. The harm inflicted on victims, families, and wider society is incalculable.



Women experience domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is a serious and largely hidden public health issue that is highly gendered. National estimates suggest up to 80% of incidents are perpetrated by men, with two in every three victims being female. In the year ending March 2025, 91 percent of women experienced domestic abuse, and 797,530 related offences were recorded by police. Underreporting remains a significant challenge, with fewer than half of victims reporting to police and many experiencing repeated abuse before receiving help.

In Worcestershire, support is provided through the Domestic Abuse Advice and Support Service delivered by West Mercia Women's Aid, alongside dedicated provision for male victims through Worcester Community Trust.



### Female police officers running in Worcester to catch catcallers

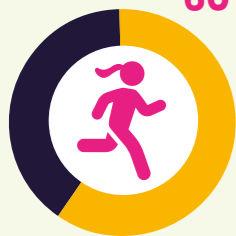
**Jog On** is a local initiative designed to tackle street harassment that can prevent women from feeling safe while running or being active outdoors.

The campaign responds to widespread experiences of catcalling, intimidation and assault. These are not just unwanted behaviours, they are often crimes.

**Jog On** combines community engagement with targeted enforcement, working through running clubs, events and local campaigns to raise awareness, encourage reporting and promote active bystander behaviour.

The Public Health Team has supported the initiative by funding branding, merchandise and communication materials, helping ensure consistent messaging and visibility across communities.

The programme aims to shift responsibility onto perpetrators and **reinforce that harassment is unacceptable.**



60% of female runners experience harassment

A national survey by **Runner's World magazine** found that **60%** of female runners experience some form of harassment, particularly from men in cars, but we know that these offences and incidents are significantly under reported.



The Public Health Community Wellbeing Grant Programme supports women affected by violence by funding community-led organisations that build safety, resilience, and connection.

Grants enable trauma informed support, safe spaces, and peer networks for recovery from abuse. Youth wellbeing grants further reduce risk of violence through early intervention, tackling isolation and inequality, promoting healthy relationships, empowering girls, and creating safer, more resilient communities.

### Winyates community hub is an anchor

Winyates Community Hub is growing its role as a trusted anchor in the community. Nestled in the heart of the Winyates Housing Estate in Redditch, the Hub is a welcoming space where people come to feel seen, heard, and valued.

The Hub offers a wide range of services including wellbeing activities, peer-led support groups, a baby bank, food bank, and crisis café. It also provides vital 1-to-1 support for mental health and domestic abuse, helping individuals and families navigate some of life's most difficult moments with compassion and care.



Click the clip to watch on YouTube!

### Empowering Women Through Music

Females About Music CIC is a Black, female-led organisation, for women, run by women, led by co-founders and directors, Javina Greene, Precious Waite, and Beyoncé Gowe.

This initiative based in the north of Worcestershire, designed to empower women and girls who have experienced challenges, including sexual and racial injustice, substance misuse, socioeconomic disadvantage, and limited access to opportunities within the music industry.

Participants said:

**“For the first time in years, I had a sense of purpose. The warmth in those sessions, from women of all different backgrounds, completely blew my mind.”**



# August 2025



## WorcesterObserver

### County Council launches new lifestyle programme to help adults in Worcestershire get fitter

A **FREE** lifestyle programme launched as part of Worcestershire County Council's Healthy Worcestershire offer, to help adults lose weight and develop healthier habits.

Healthy Worcestershire is offering free 12-week programmes for looking to lose weight, feel more energetic, and live a healthier lifestyle. Led by a qualified nutritionist, each weekly session is packed with expert advice and practical tips.



**The Healthy Worcestershire Programme was introduced in 2024** as a countywide, integrated health improvement programme commissioned by Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Team in response to demographic change, rising health inequalities, and increasing pressure on health and social care services.

The programme was developed following evidence from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and national guidance on healthy ageing, including the Chief Medical Officer's Health in an Ageing Society report.

Healthy Worcestershire was designed to shift the focus from treatment to prevention, early intervention, and community-based support, helping residents to remain active, independent, and socially connected for longer. It provides a practical, deliverable response to Worcestershire's ageing population and the widening gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy across the county.



Worcestershire faces particularly pronounced demographic change. The most recent JSNA shows that the population aged 85 and over is projected to rise by more than 50 percent, while the number of residents aged 65 and over is expected to increase by more than 15 percent.

These changes will place greater demand on health and social care services, alongside increased risks of frailty, falls, long-term conditions, and social isolation. Healthy Worcestershire is positioned to respond to these challenges. Its emphasis on strength, balance, and flexibility directly addresses the risks associated with ageing, supporting older residents to maintain independence and reduce the likelihood of falls.

By combining physical activity with social connection and lifestyle support, the programme tackles both the clinical and wider determinants of health that contribute to declining wellbeing in later life.

You can read the poem by Healthy Worcestershire participant, Christine Daly:

### Sit to Stand

I go to movement class, it's every Wednesday,  
We meet at the village hall, making friends  
along the way,  
We all sit on sturdy chairs and do our pelvic  
floor,  
Told to stop and finish and then do some more,  
Find a wall and spread our palms,  
Do the plank and bend those arms,  
We're told to breathe, in and out,  
As we do, we forget to count,  
Lose our thoughts, get in the zone,  
Is it nearly time for home?  
We sit to stand, or stand to sit?  
It doesn't matter, it'll make us fit,  
We thank you, coach, for all you do,  
And, I know, one day we will all be fit like you!

A key part of the Healthy Worcestershire programme is the opportunity to socialise over a hot drink, helping to reduce loneliness and build lasting connections.



## What are people saying about Healthy Worcestershire?



The focus is on getting participants to improve their health while having fun and expanding social connections.

Click the clip to watch on YouTube!



Following a visit, England's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, said Worcestershire's approach showed **"how local communities can take ownership of health improvement, combining traditional interventions with innovative, community driven solutions"**.

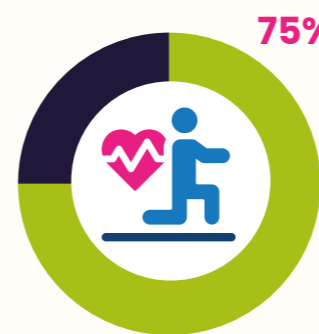


**Healthy Worcestershire programme to get funding boost**

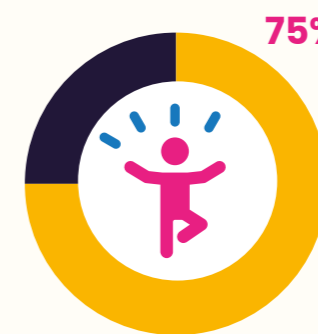
Click to find out more

The Healthy Worcestershire programme will continue for at least for another three years with extra investment approved by councillors.

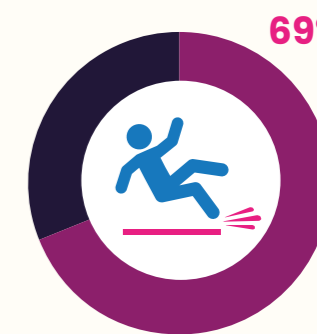
This takes the annual funding for Healthy Worcestershire to £680,000, starting in April 2026. It's one of the county's most successful and nationally acclaimed public health initiatives. Over 1,000 residents are currently taking part, and results show significant improvements in their health including more than 500 successful smoking quit attempts.



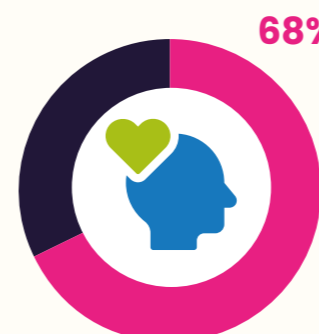
75% of participants improved general physical activity levels



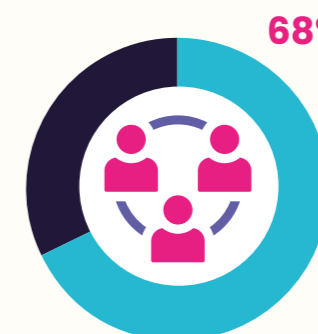
75% of participants improved strength, balance and flexibility



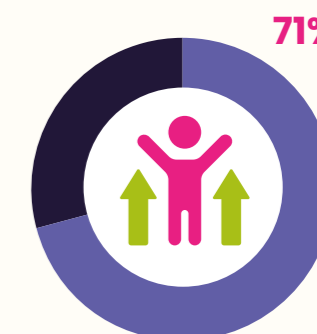
69% of participants had a reduced fear of falling



68% of participants had improved mental wellbeing



68% of participants had increased social contact



71% of participants reported having a healthier lifestyle

The programme works closely with district councils, Primary Care Networks, GP practices and social prescribers, adult social care, VCSE organisations, emergency services, and faith and community groups to create seamless pathways into wider support.



Find your nearest local Healthy Worcestershire session here:  
[Home – Healthy Worcestershire's Services](#)

# September 2025



## FAMILY HUBS

### Bromsgrove Advertiser



### Worcestershire Family Hubs to benefit from council investment

Family Hubs in Worcestershire are benefiting from increased investment, strengthening the capacity and reach of the local Family Hub offer.

This additional funding will improve access to support for families who need it most, enabling services to be delivered across more locations, expanding hub sites, and further developing a strong and responsive outreach offer. Worcestershire County Council is also investing in health visitor services and in a grants programme to support pupils' mental wellbeing in schools.

**There are nine Family Hubs across the county, praised by parents for their friendly atmosphere and the opportunity to meet others.**

Amy Hodgkinson, Family Hub team manager at Barnardo's, described the hubs as a "one-stop-shop" offering antenatal classes, stay and play sessions, speech and language therapy, breastfeeding support and health visitor clinics, while also connecting families to other services. Organisations such as West Mercia Women's Aid and the Nigel Prosser Foundation run sessions at hubs, including SEN support in Kidderminster.

**"I have autistic children and have done every course they offer here. It's so nice and friendly."** – Parent using Family Hub



The influence of the Public Health Team on residents' health starts before they are born. Its services include maternity health, health visiting, school nursing, and family hubs, all designed to give every child the best start in life. It also promotes healthy school development and youth services, fostering wellbeing from early years through adolescence.

This work is being delivered against a challenging backdrop. The latest data (2024) for Worcestershire shows a significant increase in the proportion of children in low-income families (now up to 16.4 percent, the highest rate for over a decade).

Worcestershire Family Hubs provide a single, accessible point for families with children aged 0–19 (or up to 25 with SEND) to access integrated services. Hubs offer universal and targeted support, including maternity, health visiting, infant feeding, parenting groups and early help.



## FAMILY HUBS

To find your nearest Family Hub and for more information visit [worcestershire.gov.uk/familyhubs](http://worcestershire.gov.uk/familyhubs)

Development of new district Family Hub networks, has also enabled local services to work in partnership to identify and support the local needs of families within their districts.



### Redditch SEND support group is thriving in Family Hub

With support from a Worcestershire County Council Public Health Community Wellbeing Grant, SEND Support Redditch has since developed into a vital lifeline, offering weekly peer support sessions, monthly SEND stayandplay activities, family events and online support.

One parent described the group as **"the best for advice and signposting and for just not feeling alone,"** highlighting its significant impact on family wellbeing across the area.

## Why supporting dads matters in Worcestershire

Becoming a dad can be brilliant, but it can also be lonely. Many fathers struggle with stress, isolation and their mental wellbeing, especially in the early years, and are less likely to ask for help. When dads are supported, families are stronger and children do better.



This year, The Public Health Team has focused on making sure dads are not overlooked. Working with local community groups, the council has backed welcoming, practical support for fathers from peer-led groups to outdoor and activity based sessions that help dads connect with their children and each other. Alongside this, The Public Health Team has improved access to trusted advice and national support, helping dads across Worcestershire feel less alone and better equipped for family life.

BBC



### Redditch foster carer sets up walking group for fathers

Click to find out more

A foster carer has launched a new men's walking group to support male mental health in Worcestershire.

Paul Hall set up Sole Mates, a free group for men, including fathers and carers, from Redditch and Bromsgrove to meet monthly for a walk and conversation. He said the idea came from his own experience of isolation while managing caring responsibilities.

Supported by Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Community Grant programme, the group aims to be open and welcoming, offering a relaxed space for fresh air and friendly chat rather than formal discussions.

Walks take place on the first Sunday of each month at Sanders Park in Bromsgrove and Arrow Valley Park in Redditch. Councillor Satinder Bell praised the initiative for helping reduce isolation and strengthen community wellbeing.

# October 2025

## Community Stories

### Worcestershire County Council celebrates community stories

The Public Health Team worked with a filmmaker to capture community stories demonstrating the impact of its community wellbeing grants.

An event was held at Worcester City County Cricket Club to bring together community partners and residents featured in the stories alongside wider system partners to view the films and celebrate the brilliant grant funded community action that supports residents' health and wellbeing.



REDDITCH Standard

### Our Public Health Community Stories 2025

Click the clip to watch on YouTube!



### We're committed to helping local communities thrive.



Through our Community Grant Programme and Priority Neighbourhood Development work, we support brilliant ideas and neighbourhoods with unmet needs. This brings people together, improves access to resources and services, and creates opportunities for better health and wellbeing.

If you're working to boost health and wellbeing in Worcestershire, or want to strengthen your neighbourhood, we'd love to hear from you!

[Community Wellbeing Programme](#)

# November 2025

## Ready to respond



### Trauma kits placed in community spaces across Worcestershire

One hundred life-saving trauma kits have been put into community spaces across Worcestershire in the space of a year. The first aid kits, funded by the county council, are designed to allow anyone without training to help stabilise casualties in the event of an incident before professional help arrives.

**"This is about being prepared, not alarmed,"** said Satinder Bell, councillor with responsibility for health and wellbeing at Worcestershire County Council.

Funding is prioritised for areas where access to equipment is limited and where other funding routes have been exhausted, ensuring support goes where it will make the biggest difference.

To find out if you meet the eligibility criteria for a defibrillator please visit: [Access to CPR and defibrillators](#)

### Worcester News



### New emergency response car unveiled in Worcestershire

A new emergency response vehicle funded through a Public Health Community Grant has been officially unveiled at Bromsgrove Ambulance Hub. The vehicle will support the North East Worcestershire First Responders (NEWFR), a volunteer led charity whose trained responders attend 999 calls on behalf of West Midlands Ambulance Service.

### Life saving equipment installed at Community Centre



# December 2025

## Support to quit



### Large quantity of illegal vapes and tobacco seized in Evesham

West Mercia Police and Worcestershire Trading Standards seized around £30,000 worth of illegal tobacco and vapes during a two day crackdown in Evesham.

The joint operation took place in December, with inspections at shops on Port Street and High Street. Officers said the action forms part of ongoing work to tackle the sale of illicit tobacco and illegal vapes in the town.

The latest seizures follow earlier enforcement, including £20,000 worth of illegal products seized in September and dozens of vapes confiscated in July after the ban on disposable vapes.

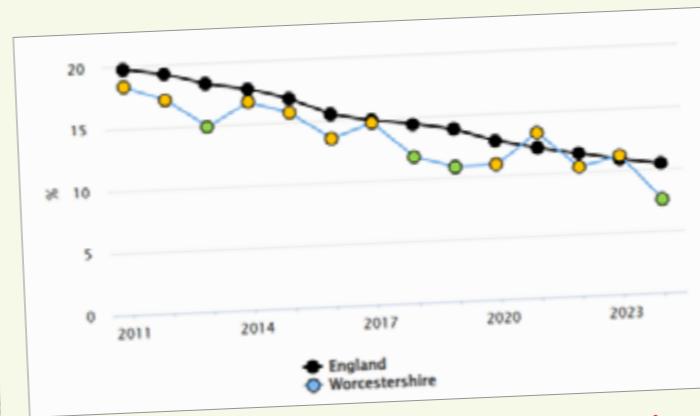
**Stop smoking services in Worcestershire are free, friendly and can boost your chances of quitting for good.**

To get your free support call: 0800 772 0307 or go to: [healthyworcestershire.org.uk/stop-smoking](https://healthyworcestershire.org.uk/stop-smoking)



### Worcester News

### Number of smokers in Worcestershire falls by a third



Statistics taken from: Smoking Profile - [Data | Fingertips](#)

THE number of smokers in Worcestershire fell by a third in just 12 months, figures show. Data from the Office for National Statistics shows that **7.5%** of adults were smoking in 2024, down from **11.2%** in 2023.

That's a drop of **33%** and equates to 19,092 people giving up smoking in the space of a year. Worcestershire's smoking rate is now **2.9%** below the average for England of **10.4%**.



**INTENT is a smoking and vaping prevention programme** offered to several Worcestershire secondary schools for young people aged 11–15, aligned with the county’s wider tobacco control ambition.

It targets young people from Y7 to Y10 supporting them to build confidence and practical refusal skills before risky behaviours begin.

This sits alongside Worcestershire’s whole system approach to smoking and vaping, which combines prevention in schools with comprehensive stop smoking support for adults and families, helping to reduce health inequalities and prevent long term harm.

“Worcestershire has fewer adult smokers than ever before, but public health is also trying to curb the rise in vaping among high school children”.

Click to find out more

## THE CONVERSATION

### UK Moves Toward Smokefree Generation

The UK’s Tobacco and Vapes Bill aims to create a smokefree generation by ending tobacco sales to anyone born after 1 January 2009, raising the legal age annually. Grounded in prevention, it faces industry opposition and enforcement challenges but has strong public support and could significantly reduce smoking-related harm.



### Worcester News

**Catch-up clinic in Stourport offers MMR and HPV vaccines**

Click to find out more



### Taking vaccination to communities: Reducing inequalities in Worcestershire

Worcestershire County Council’s Public Health Team delivered community-based Flu, MMR and HPV popup vaccination clinics to improve access for groups facing barriers to routine immunisation. Working with NHS providers, schools, voluntary and community organisations, and district councils, clinics were held in accessible venues including community centres, schools, libraries and faith settings, prioritising areas of higher deprivation using an intelligence led approach. By addressing barriers such as transport, appointment availability, language needs, mistrust and digital exclusion, the programme supported vaccination catch-up following national declines. Early insights show improved reach, strong community engagement and positive feedback, with many attendees citing convenience after missing previous appointments, helping protect communities from preventable disease and future cancer risk.

## Ugly Bugs, Cleaner Hands, Healthier Kids

This year The Public Health Team has been visiting schools, early years settings, community spaces and care homes to encourage good handwashing, with the Clean Hands, Safe Hands programme being shared in ways that feel fun, familiar and easy to remember.

Over 1,300 children have been engaged this year through handwashing demonstrations and classroom discussions that reinforce hygiene principles in an accessible way. Children were encouraged to take these messages home, helping to spread learning to parents and carers and extend the impact beyond the classroom.

Feedback from schools has been overwhelmingly positive, rating sessions as excellent and engaging. At Harvington Primary School, teachers praised the enthusiasm of session leaders, commenting that the children **"really warmed to them."** Fairfield First School described the session simply as **"Brilliant, thank you."**

The team have now started to visit care homes, already visiting 13 within 2026.

By working alongside communities and building on what already works, the campaign continues to support simple habits that help prevent infections and keep Worcestershire healthier together.



By Ella, age 7



By Isaac, age 9



**We asked school children from across Worcestershire to design an Ugly Bug for our handwashing campaign.**

More information is available on the clean hands safe hands webpage: [worcestershire.gov.uk/clean-hands-safe-hands](http://worcestershire.gov.uk/clean-hands-safe-hands)

## February 2026

### Substance Misuse

**Droitwich Standard**

Two Droitwich Spa shops have lost their alcohol licences after selling age restricted products to underage customers. Saver Express on Ombersley Street West and Lakhy News on Stalls Farm Road had licences revoked by Wychavon District Council following Trading Standards investigations.

Test purchases using teenage volunteers found staff sold alcohol and vapes without asking for ID. Illegal vapes and tobacco were also seized, prompting councillors to act to protect children from harm in the town centre.



**Two shops stripped of alcohol licenses in Droitwich after underage sales**



Stopping the illegal sale of alcohol and vapes to children is a vital public health intervention. Early access to nicotine and alcohol increases the risk of addiction, poorer mental health and long term illness. Robust enforcement protects young people from harm, supports parents and schools, and reinforces prevention messages across Worcestershire.

Taking firm action against businesses that break the law helps reduce health inequalities and prevents avoidable harm before it starts.



**Hope UK's successful Worcestershire drug education programme**

Teachers and youth workers across Worcestershire are enthusiastically putting their hands up to say they feel much better equipped with knowledge and skills to protect children and young people from drug-related harms.

The 'Drug and Alcohol Training for School Staff and Youth Workers' programme was commissioned and fully funded by Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Team in partnership with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's Office and delivered by national drug education charity Hope UK.

# CRANSTOUN

Empowering People, Empowering Change

**Cranstoun Worcestershire provides free, confidential alcohol and drug support for adults and young people across the county.**

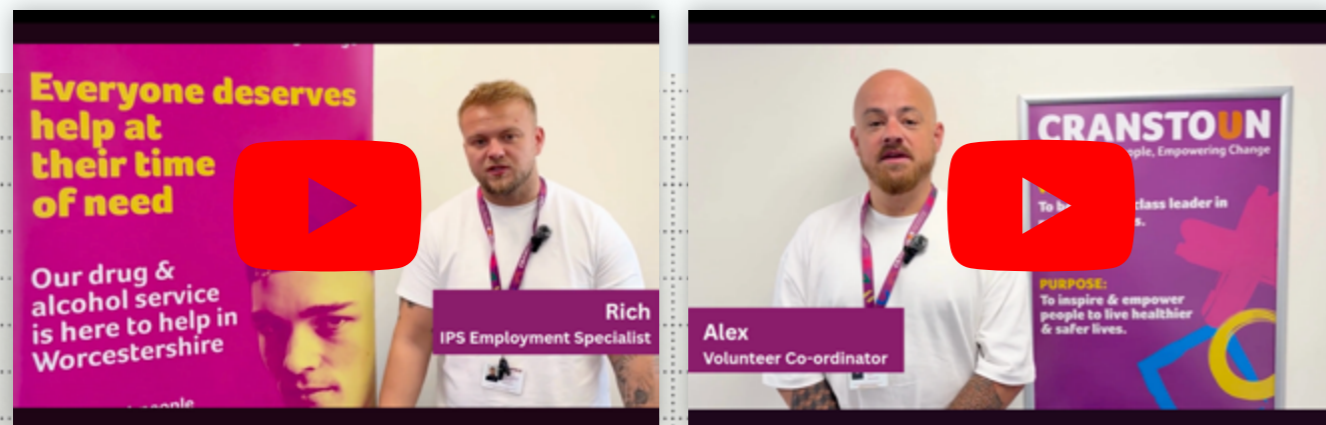
With a central Worcester hub and community outreach, it offers assessment, treatment, harm reduction and recovery support, alongside help for families and carers, delivering compassionate, evidence based local services.

Between April 2025 and February 2026, an employment programme has helped 38 people receiving alcohol and drug support into work. The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service supported motivated people in structured treatment to find employment that matches their skills and aspirations, with tailored help on CVs, applications and interview preparation, alongside close work with local employers.

Gavin Warrington, who is supported by Cranstoun's alcohol and drug service, said the IPS programme helped rebuild his confidence after nearly 20 years out of work: "I've had three interviews in six months and I'm really optimistic about the future. Cranstoun have been amazing, they never judge and meet you where you're at."

Rachel Bodwell, IPS Team Leader at Cranstoun Worcestershire, said: "This first year shows what's possible when people are supported to find meaningful work with dignity and purpose."

Cranstoun Worcestershire has also continued to strengthen its volunteering programme, with volunteers playing a vital role across clinical support, needle exchange, health screening and community outreach, helping people who may not otherwise access services.



Click the clips to watch them on YouTube!

# March 2026

## Preventable Mortality

### Reflection

Helping people stay healthy and avoid illness is at the heart of what our Public Health Team does.

As the rest of this report shows, we focus on practical work that makes it easier for people to live longer, healthier and happier lives.

One way we can see whether this work is making a real difference is by looking at deaths from illnesses that could have been prevented. These are conditions that can often be avoided through healthier lifestyles. Data on this is collected nationally by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities.

The latest figures published at the end of last year show very good news for Worcestershire. Deaths from preventable causes have fallen by more than 7% in just 12 months.

That's more than twice the improvement seen across the wider region and almost double the national average.

Overall, Worcestershire continues to perform much better than both regional and national levels, showing that our prevention work is having a real and positive impact on people's lives.

It's been quite a year for Public Health in Worcestershire, and this result was the perfect way to draw it to a close!

