

Knowsley Public Health Annual Report 2023-24

Update on Recommendations from 2022/23 report

The table below gives an update on the recommendations listed within the 2022/23 Public Health Annual Report – Why the cost of living crisis is a public health issue.

Recommendation from 2022/23 report	Update
1. To fund a winter wellness grants programme for 2023/24.	The 2023/24 grants programme enabled 41 community groups and voluntary organisations to access a total of £240,000, with each grant totalling a maximum of £6,000. A grants programme for 2024/25 has also been established.
2. To continue to provide warm hubs for residents within the borough's libraries not only during the winter months but year-round.	<p>The borough's libraries continue to provide a safe and inviting space for residents year-round. During the winter months, free hot drinks are available, whilst during the warmer summer months free chilled, filtered water is available.</p> <p>Funding was also secured to extend library opening times until April 2025. This may be extended further going forward.</p>
3. To roll out Environmental Health damp and mould training to staff beyond the Local Authority such as in health services.	Knowsley's Environmental health team delivered training to frontline and community workers to enable them to identify potential damp and mould issues in residents' homes. The training included guidance on how to support residents to address the issues and/or liaise with their landlord.
4. To continue with engagement and promotion plans to increase the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers for eligible families in the borough.	The campaign to increase uptake of Healthy Start vouchers continues to be promoted across the borough. A wide variety of partners for example; social housing, leisure centres,

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	<p>libraries, parks and green spaces and smaller local retailers are engaged and continue to share information to eligible families.</p> <p>Early Years practitioners continue to highlight the offer to families who are eligible through one-to-ones and group sessions.</p> <p>Healthy Start vitamins continue to be distributed via Children's Centres across the borough and uptake is monitored by the Early Years Service.</p> <p>Funding will be required to ensure ongoing targeted promotion to increase visibility and promotion of the offer.</p>
<p>5. To develop a food security plan for the borough to reduce emergency use of food banks and sustain a community model.</p>	<p>The Government's Household Support Fund was extended and the Council continued to use this to support community food provision across the borough. Twenty community groups contribute to the programme alongside the Knowsley Foodbank.</p> <p>Initial conversations have been held with other boroughs who support a food alliance in their areas. A food alliance supports best practice, provides links to national agencies with this remit and can assist groups in accessing funding. Recommendations are planned to be forthcoming in 2025.</p> <p>A focus group has been held to understand the need for funding support from the Council with a view to our twenty community groups becoming more sustainable moving forward</p>

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	beyond the Household Support Fund. The learning from this is under review.
6. To continue to monitor the data and impacts relating to financial insecurity on health and wellbeing.	<p>A Child and Family poverty report for Cheshire and Merseyside was published in September 2024. A local response is in development to address actions going forward.</p> <p>Citizens Advice Knowsley produce regular insight and impact reports on the issues faced by Knowsley residents as a result of the Cost-of-Living Crisis. These include the effects of restricted energy usage, poor housing conditions and food insecurity. Resulting reports have highlighted the impact on particularly vulnerable client groups, including those of pensionable age, on a low income and in insecure employment.</p>
7. To strengthen the promotion of income maximisation opportunities to residents.	Residents in contact with Council services are signposted to appropriate partner agencies who are able to support them to ensure income maximisation. For example, benefit entitlements.
<p>8. To continue to work with partners to actively call upon the Government to allocate additional and sustainable funding to address the ongoing impacts of the cost of living crisis. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for the Government to develop an improved and fairer approach to local government funding; and 	<p>The current and previous Government's have made late decisions to continue with the Household Support Fund which makes it difficult to make medium term decisions despite the Council's decision to invest £5m of its own resources into a local Hardship programme.</p> <p>The Council has lobbied the Government to continue with the provision of this resource which provides support to those most in need in the Borough.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The allocation of this funding must be underpinned by a needs-based formula which sufficiently recognises levels of need and deprivation within local areas. 	<p>Council Notice of Motion October 2024 'ending Local Government Austerity and Investing in Local Public Services' resolved to engage MPs to seek their support to actively champion local government and the need for fair and effective funding.</p>