

Health Overview Scrutiny Committee – 8th September 2025

Engaging Neighbourhoods and Communities in Health Improvement

1. Purpose and Strategic Context

- Embedding community engagement into health improvement.
- Aligned with NHS Neighbourhood Health Guidelines, Local Government reforms, and Worcestershire Joint Local Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2022–2032).
- Public Health nationally recognised for pioneering work.

2. Priority Neighbourhood Development (PND)

- 14 deprived neighbourhoods targeted based on high emergency admissions.
- Residents and VCSE groups shape local solutions via grants.
- NHS integration through Primary Care Networks (PCNs).
- Case Study: Westlands Estate (Droitwich): youth bike repair, after-school club, wellbeing centre, outdoor reading spaces.
- Outcomes: 7% fall in emergency admissions, 13% reduction in child social care referrals, 95% users reporting better wellbeing.
- Expansion planned for Wyre Forest, Redditch, and children's services.

3. Empowering School Communities

- Schools, nurseries, and colleges can access £3,000 grants.
- 270+ projects funded (forest schools, therapy pets, sensory rooms, balance bikes).
- Feedback: improved focus, behaviour, resilience; staff valued resources.

4. Wider Community Development

- Projects in all districts promoting social connection, youth engagement, healthy lifestyles.
- Examples: youth hubs (Malvern), bereavement groups (Wychavon), men's groups (Redditch), wellbeing hubs (Wyre Forest).
- Grant mapping tool identifies underserved areas.

5. Harnessing Assets – Green Spaces, Libraries, Volunteering

- Country parks and reserves (1.5M+ visits annually) host Park Run, Nordic walking, and conservation volunteering.
- Health Walks provide free, accessible exercise.
- Libraries as health hubs host NHS checks, wellbeing sessions, and digital cafés.
- 350+ volunteers contribute 8,000–10,000 hours yearly.

6. Community Voice and Partnerships

- People and Communities Voices Report gathers insights from carers, rural residents, young people, seldom-heard groups.
- Worcestershire Engagement Network (WEN) shares learning across NHS, council, VCSE.
- Experts by Experience panels shape services (substance misuse, recovery, domestic abuse, patient forums).

7. Volunteering in Healthwatch & Hospitals

- Healthwatch Worcestershire volunteers gather patient voice (pharmacy access, digital inclusion).
- Hospital volunteers support discharge, patient feedback forums, and morale.
- Volunteering builds employment pathways and strengthens community ties.

8. Innovative Models of Integrated Care

- Wyre Forest Accelerator: frailty, dementia, and mental health services integrated in PCN (73,000 patients).
- Outcomes: 19.4% fall in emergency admissions.
- Challenges: digital exclusion, workforce gaps, partnerships.
- Adult Social Care: Moving Social Work supports disabled residents; Building Together Forum co-produces strategy.

9. Conclusion & Next Steps

- Worcestershire is a national leader in community health improvement.
- Key success factors: data-led targeting, resident co-design, strong partnerships, and asset use (schools, green spaces, volunteers).