

# **Fair and Inclusive Stockport Annual Report**

## **April 2022-March 23**

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# **1. Executive Summary**

Stockport is the eighth most polarised Borough in England, with deprived areas having lower than average education, health and employment outcomes, leading to significant inequalities which damage the life opportunities of our residents. There is a gap of almost 11 years in life expectancy between those living in the most deprived and least deprived wards in Stockport.

Our borough has inequalities that reach beyond economic disadvantage, covering the protected characteristics of age, gender, pregnancy and maternity, disability, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, as well as other characteristics such as the experience of care, socio-economic disadvantage and past or current military service. These factors interact with each other, deepening the impact of disadvantage.

As a Borough we are committed to driving ambitious change and tackling inequalities, and this has become a cornerstone of the One Stockport Borough Plan.

Our vision is for Stockport to be a Borough for everyone where diversity and inclusion are celebrated and where everyone has equity of opportunity. We know that experiences of poverty, where people live, and other factors can intersect to impact on wellbeing and quality of life.

This annual report will describe the contribution Stockport Council has made to deliver the Fair and Inclusive strand of the Borough Plan during 2022-23. The work has been supported by a cross-party working group which shows the commitment of all political parties to this agenda.

This past year we have faced many challenges, including a cost-of-living crisis that has deepened existing inequalities. Despite this, we have made progress towards fulfilling our ambitions, with projects delivered in partnership across the Borough.

Some key achievements this year have been:

- Achieving Real Living Wage accreditation by the Living Wage Foundation and a member of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter
- Developing Equity networks to improve the way we engage with, and support communities of identity in Stockport.
- Ensuring local people benefit from our regeneration programmes and that new jobs and opportunities are created
- Focusing the attention of schools on the outcomes of our disadvantaged children and those with Special Educational Needs for example through the delivery of the Poverty Proofing programme
- Delivery of a strong Vaccination Uptake campaign which was designed to reach out to all our communities and achieved high levels of uptake across all groups of residents
- Stockport Support Hub successfully established as a new model of delivery for prevention services with equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart

- A Warm Spaces programme over the winter months run in over 125 community venues which offered hot drinks, food and activities to people who were struggling to heat their homes
- Developing colleague networks and using our data to focus work to become a more inclusive employer

We know there is much more to do and we look forward to working with partners and residents to create a fair and inclusive Stockport.

**These quotes will be designed in across the Executive Summary in separate boxes**

*'When I couldn't talk, my keyworker would be my voice. She helped me keep on top of things - my disability causes me to forget things. I felt straight away that she really wanted to help me, that she really cared.'* – Annie, service user of Your Support

*'I am a Brinnington resident who found herself captured in a relationship which was unhealthy...I reached out to a volunteer who signposted me on to a service to seek support. I left, I survived, and am happy. Thank you Orange Umbrella.'*

*'I really appreciate you giving warmth and at these kind of times people really need it'* - Warm Spaces visitor

*'The session was very, very good and obviously the workplace changes all the time, which is great for my age group with lots of 'life skills'... It gave me the inspiration and motivation to crack on and find the job I'm after.'* - Tracey, an attendee of Stockport Jobs Match Training for Over 50s

## 2. Introduction

Our vision is for Stockport to be a Borough for everyone where diversity and inclusion are celebrated and where everyone has equity of opportunity. We know that experiences of poverty, where people live, and other factors can intersect to impact on wellbeing and quality of life.

The drivers of inequality are multi-faceted, and inequalities interact with one another, systematically disadvantaging people. Inequalities are also driven by economic trends and policy decisions that stretch beyond Stockport and Greater Manchester. In the face of this challenge, we know that all of us, council services, partners, businesses, voluntary and community organisations, and faith groups will have to work together to create the kind of fair and inclusive place we want to live in.

As a Borough we are committed to driving ambitious change and tackling inequalities, and this has become a cornerstone of the One Stockport Borough Plan: the ten-year plan that sets out our partnership ambitions for Stockport, which we developed, together with key partners and through engagement with Stockport residents. The Plan sets a vision of a fair and inclusive Stockport where everyone, regardless of background, feels like they belong and that they can achieve.



In building a fair and inclusive Stockport we want to ensure that the needs of all our residents are considered in how services are designed and delivered, and that where particular groups face additional barriers, these will be addressed.

A fair and inclusive approach underpins all the ambitions of the One Stockport Borough Plan and we know that for this vision to be delivered the approach needs to be a golden thread embedded across Stockport.

The Stockport Council Plan for 2023-24 commits us to treating Fair and Inclusive Stockport, along with Climate Action Now, as cross-cutting themes that will impact on and shape everything we do, including the provision and delivery of key services, as shown in the diagram below.



A cross-party working group has been in place to support delivery against this agenda. This has demonstrated commitment by all political parties to tackling inequalities and supporting inclusion.

This report outlines the contribution Stockport Council has made to deliver the Fair and Inclusive strand of the Borough Plan during 2022-23 across all of the Council. The report is structured around the priorities within the council plan:

- Efficient and Effective Services
- Investment, Regeneration and Creating Jobs
- Education, Work and Skills
- Wellbeing in Neighbourhoods
- Delivering for those who need it most
- Enabling Programmes

### **3. Efficient and Effective Services**

We know that experiences of poverty, where people live, and other factors can intersect to impact on wellbeing and quality of life. In building a fair and inclusive Stockport we want to deliver efficient and effective services that take into account the needs of all our residents and that barriers faced by particular groups are addressed.

We will ensure everyone has equal access to services and opportunities, and is represented in decisions that affect them. Our services deal with a wide range of functions and statutory duties. Equality Impact Assessments are used as an equality monitoring tool when developing policies and strategies and when making changes to services. Each service directorate in the Council has its own set of unique objectives to tackle issues surrounding Fairness and Inclusivity. Moving forward, we will continue to analyse our data in order to improve our services.

#### **Case Study**

Our services to Place support those with mobility issues. To make sure residents' waste and recycling collection services are fully available and accessible there is an assistance scheme for those households where mobility issues make the weekly chore of placing bins out for collection too challenging. There are over 2,000 homes in Stockport where the collection crew enter gardens to retrieve and return bins for those with mobility issues. This added assistance removes the requirement for the resident to place their bins out for collection.

## **4. Investment, Regeneration and Creating Jobs**

Our ambition is to grow Stockport's economy to create and support strong, resilient and productive businesses that generate sustainable, accessible and well-paid jobs.

The Stockport Economic Plan sets out plans for the future, including how we will meet the targets outlined in the Fair and Inclusive Pillar. The plan can be found [here](#).

At the centre of our work in Development and Regeneration is an understanding of the nature of inequality and the barriers that people belonging to protected characteristic groups face in accessing and creating economic opportunities. Our plans hinge around creating a Borough where there are good jobs, a thriving culture and economy, and affordable housing so everyone can live and succeed in a community they can be proud of.

### **4.1 Goals**

- **To embed inclusive design principles into our approach to the built environment** through our regeneration of the borough and management of the civic estate
- From schools to museums, new homes to transport hubs, to **invest in new and existing facilities** that meet the needs of our diverse communities
- **To ensure that local people benefit from regeneration investment at all stages**, from supporting priority groups to access job opportunities in the construction industry to the creation of state-of-the-art community amenities
- To work with the Stockport Economic Alliance and wider partners **to shape and lead economic strategy**, creating and supporting successful businesses which generate quality jobs for the benefit of all our residents.
- To **work with local employers and skills providers to ensure** a more inclusive approach to recruitment and selection.
- To work to **ensure that we have a cultural offer in the borough which is attractive to all our communities**.

### **4.2 What we did**

#### **4.2.1 Inclusive built environment and accessibility**

To ensure that new build and repurposed buildings are accessible to all, we have employed specialist accessibility consultants to review and refine designs. For example, we redesigned the access arrangements of Stockroom, our new learning and discovery centre. Further work will be carried out in 2023/24 to review and refine the fit out and specification of the space.

**Case study:** Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) Putting People at the Heart of Regeneration

Stockport MDC is creating an exemplar urban neighbourhood in Town Centre West and aspires to provide a choice of homes across all types and tenures, including homes that are genuinely affordable to those on low incomes, and exemplary social infrastructure to support new and existing communities to thrive. We are using data to ensure that the needs and aspirations of people of all backgrounds are considered as we create a thriving Town Centre West that serves the whole community. This includes putting accessibility, inclusion and quality at the centre of the design of our schemes, with a range of accessible amenities, and a high-quality environment which promotes biodiversity and sustainability.

#### **4.2.2 Local people benefit from regeneration at all stages**

Enabling local people to access skills and employment opportunities created through investment in development is a key priority, particularly those residents most disadvantaged in the labour market.

We use Employment and Skills Agreements in council commissioned contracts to secure social value for our residents. For example, we have these agreements in place with the lead construction contractors for three major developments: the Transport Interchange, Stockport Exchange Phase 4 and Weir Mill. We receive quarterly updates to review progress with them. Contractors are specifically encouraged to create opportunities for target groups e.g. people with learning disabilities, care experienced young people, and young people not in employment, education or training.

**Case Study:**

We are working in partnership with construction contractors to maximise the Social Value gained from regeneration and development projects. For example, in the last year, in Stockport, Willmott Dixon provided five new jobs; two brickwork apprenticeships for young people; and supported veterans charity Project Recce with work experience and expert advice on apprenticeships and funding as part of their Building Lives Academy. This followed a similar academy programme with Groundwork for Care Experienced Young People. The next one planned is for young disabled people in collaboration with Pure College.

#### **4.2.3 The Real Living Wage and Good Employment Charter**



In August 2022, we were awarded membership of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter: a voluntary membership and assessment scheme which aims to raise employment standards across Greater Manchester.

Membership of the Charter means that we have shown our commitment to the essential pillars of good employment practice.

We have also been accredited as a Real Living Wage (RLW) Employer by the Living Wage Foundation in March 2023. We have been paying direct employees the RLW since 2014. RLW accreditation means that both direct and contractor staff employed in delivering services on our behalf for more than 2 hours a week for 8 or more consecutive weeks in a year will be paid the RLW. This includes ensuring the fees we pay our social care providers enable them to pay the Real Living Wage to their employees. All Adult Social Care contracts have been fully RLW compliant since September 2022.

We have agreed a milestone plan with the RLW Foundation to ensure that all staff working for a contractor on an SMBC contract will be uplifted to pay the RLW within the next three years.

Through 2023, we will work across the borough to support and encourage local businesses, partners and organisations to become accredited.

#### **4.2.4 Housing**

In our approach to housing our goals were to address inequalities in neighbourhoods; to embed the principles of Fairness & Inclusivity in the planning of projects around housing disrepair work in vulnerable tenant's properties; and to develop a new housing strategy that is informed by fairness and inclusivity.

Every three years, the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) provides the latest available evidence to help to shape the future planning and housing strategies and relevant policies for the Borough. The study informs the production of our Local Plan and Housing Strategy. The assessment provides an up-to-date analysis of the social, economic, housing, and demographic situation across the area, with analysis considering the needs of people belonging to protected characteristic groups and those facing socioeconomic disadvantage. In the year 2021/2022 68 affordable houses were built and around 200 affordable houses will be built 2022/23. Stockport Homes Group have 2311 Adapted properties and 157 fully wheelchair accessible, including 1 flat and 7 bungalow new builds.

During 2022, we have continued to work in partnership with private land holders and developers, and registered provider partners, to deliver new market and affordable homes in the Covent Garden and Hopes Carr areas of the Town Centre under the Covent Garden Urban Village Master Plan. The latest phase has seen an additional 14 new affordable homes delivered for Stockport Homes Group in Hopes Carr after we secured £800,000 of Housing Infrastructure Funding grant from Homes England to mitigate this complex site so it could be brought forward for housing.

#### 4.2.5 Culture

Stockport's cultural strategy can be found [here](#). It aims to provide new local opportunities for people to benefit from culture and creativity.

We have secured government investment of £2.6m to deliver training over the next three years to upskill the local workforce, and a programme of digital arts activities open to all. There will be a specific focus on how we engage with people experiencing disadvantage to maximise benefit from the programme.

Our newly developed Museums Forward Plan places a high priority on connecting with new audiences and we aim to specifically target:

- Local residents who have not visited us before. We know from our previous postcode analysis that people from our most disadvantaged communities are less likely to visit our sites. Our museums provide low cost leisure and wellbeing activities within easy reach of these communities and we are prioritising raising awareness and improving access.
- We believe that our sites have a real role to play for young disabled people and their families, who often struggle to access affordable leisure and cultural opportunities and are proactively reaching out to these families.

## **5. Education, Work and Skills**

Our ambition is to support our residents to have access to the best education, skills and qualifications at all stages of their lives, as well as ensuring we support those who most need it to access the work and skills to succeed.

### **5.1 Educational Outcomes**

Improving educational outcomes for all children is a key tenet of the work in education. By this we mean that our core business is to help all children reach their academic potential. Of particular concern are the outcomes for children who may belong to groups that we know nationally often have poorer outcomes, including children who have been entitled to Free School Meals at some point in the last 6 years, those from ethnic minorities and those who have Special Educational Needs. Our role is to make schools and other key partners aware of the differences in attainment, and enable the system to consider the provision that is available and promote ideas and projects that will enable providers to refine their practice to reduce these differences.

To achieve this we have 3 key areas of focus:

- Outcomes
- Provision
- Governance

### **5.2 Outcomes and qualitative data**

As a Local Authority we have an overview of all the academic outcomes for children across Primary and Secondary education. This information is collected into an overall LA data pack, plus an individual pack for all schools.

This data enables us to see where outcomes are strongest and where there are areas for improvement, both in terms of the whole system, individual schools and in terms of particular groups of children. We always consider differences for different genders, SEND groups, children who belong to different ethnic groups, children who are in care, children who have English as an additional language and those who are in receipt of Free School Meals.

This year, as in several years in the recent past we have focussed the attention of schools on the outcomes of our disadvantaged children and those with Special Educational Needs, particularly for younger children in our primary schools and for boys in respect of English GCSE outcomes.

In Stockport we have a One Voice conversation with senior leaders in schools around outcomes from the previous year and plans for the coming year, to enable the discussion to focus on how to improve outcomes as each school.

### **5.3 Provision**

Part of our work is also to encourage schools to make the most inclusive offer that they can to children. To that end, we provide many Continuing Professional Development opportunities that schools can purchase or are available from centrally funded council services. For example, access to our Personal, Social, Health

Education network which supports schools in curriculum development around developing healthy relationships, managing the world of e-safety, mental health and well-being, diversity, exploitation, radicalisation.

We also provide a substantial amount of training about working with children with SEND, which currently has a focus on supporting children with autism, Social Emotional and Mental Health needs and communication and language needs. In addition, we have developed our own approaches by working with subject experts, such as Drama, Engagement and Active Learning which promotes a range of strategies to schools to engage all children in their learning. We know that learning from peers is often the most effective form of professional development.

Developing an inclusive curriculum offer is something that all schools consider. Education services (School Improvement, The Inclusion Service, Sensory Support, Virtual School, Educational Psychology etc) within Stockport Family are working to encourage this both from a whole school perspective and from the perspective of the lived experience of individual children. For example we are working with The Proud Trust to strengthen the LGBTQ+ offer for our children and young people.

We are working with Children North East and the University of Manchester on our programme of Poverty Proofing. This enables schools to consider how their whole school offer impacts on the lived experience of children and families who are living in poverty. This is particularly pertinent in the current climate and by the end of this academic year 27 schools will have been involved. The process involves hearing the voice of children, families, staff and governors across 15 key themes. The analysis of this leads to some powerful feedback and the school develops an action plan to address key themes, supported by the School Improvement Service.

#### **5.4 Governance**

We continually support our governors through a comprehensive training programme including briefing them regularly on issues around inclusion and ensuring this appears on board agendas. The theme of the governor conference due to be held in March 2023, is poverty and the current financial climate.

## Case Study

The following shows the impact of the work that one primary school has undertaken over the last 4 years to respond to the needs of children and young people who experience inequality:

School X was a school that Required Improvement and used inclusivity as a key vehicle for change. The headteacher took part in the Poverty Proofing project at the first opportunity and responded very positively to the feedback that she received. She has considered many evidence-based interventions in her school (eg; Read, Write, Inc, which she made accessible to all during the pandemic) and sought support from national initiatives such as Show Racism the Red Card. In July 2023 the impact of some of this work could be seen through the schools' attainment data. For example, the differences between the outcomes of those children who are known statistically to be living in poverty and those who are not have been reduced and in some areas the Free School Meals learners were performing better than their peers. Outcomes for SEND learners were also better than the national average for these groups in many of the statutory measures. Very recently the school was revisited by Ofsted and was deemed to be good. Ofsted specifically commented on the inclusive nature of the school and referenced strong governance, the impact of specific projects, such as an inclusive musical programme that has been delivered in conjunction with the LA and the positive impact upon SEND learners was commented upon throughout the report. Specifically, they wrote that 'leaders provide a calm and nurturing environment where pupils thrive. Pupils feel safe and cared for. The personal development of pupils, including those with SEND is a priority for all. Pupils find out about difference, for example when they learn about the protected characteristics. Leaders ensure there is high ambition for all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged'.

Whilst we know there is more work to do, the positive impact stories evidence the willingness to embrace a fair and inclusive agenda. Our role is to keep the levels of optimism high as well as offering practical evidence-based guidance and support as we move towards a more inclusive education system in Stockport.

## 5.5 Skills and employment

Some of the work we have delivered this year is as follows:

- An Inclusive Jobs Fair was held in Brinnington, aimed at supporting residents who are furthest from the labour market to access a wider variety of job and training opportunities. 26 employers were in attendance offering a range of opportunities including part time, flexible and entry-level jobs. There were also organisations providing support with jobs search, CV writing, and access to training and volunteering opportunities. A total of 120 jobseekers attended. Outcomes: 4 people moved directly into employment, 3 were offered interviews, 41 moved onto training, 18 were supported with CV writing and interview

guidance, and 47 were registered for help with career guidance support. A further inclusive jobs fair is now being planned for 2023.

- The Supported Apprenticeship Scheme provided 14 places for young people who are experiencing disadvantage – care experienced/care leavers, young disabled people and young carers. The scheme pays the wages for young people to go into placements with host employers while they complete an apprenticeship qualification. Young people have progressed from this scheme into long term employment.
- The Steps to Work Programme supported 18 young people who are disabled or care experienced with getting a six-month work placement.
- Stockport Jobs Match provides an online resource to support people seeking work to find the right opportunities, and supports CV writing and interview practice. Jobs Match also deliver targeted face to face support for over 50s and residents living in our most disadvantaged communities. In 2022 Stockport Jobs Match received almost 5.5K new website visitors per month, accessing an average of 56,000+ vacancies based within 10 miles of Stockport and have introduced a system for monitoring their service users by age, geography and those facing barriers to employment.

### **Case Study: Stockport Jobs Match Training Workshop for Over 50s**

In October 2022, working in partnership with Stockport Homes Group and Job Centre Plus, we coordinated a bespoke Training Workshop for Stockport residents aged 50+. The half-day event included sessions to help older workers to understand the local jobs market, how to identify their transferable skills, search and apply for jobs online, as well as developing the confidence and resilience to succeed in job interviews.

The 17 jobseekers who attended on the day were predominantly long-term unemployed facing barriers to finding work including mental health, physical health and disability, caring responsibilities, or redundancy. Following completion of the course, all jobseekers were contacted to provide career coaching and referrals onto training courses, work placements or volunteering opportunities and so far 10 individuals have now secured employment.

“The session was very, very good and obviously the workplace changes all the time, which is great for my age group with lots of 'life skills'... It gave me the inspiration and motivation to crack on and find the job I'm after.” – Tracey

## **6. Wellbeing in Neighbourhoods**

Our ambition is that from Brinnington to Bramhall, every single neighbourhood and community across our Borough can access the services that they need to be resilient, healthy and vibrant. We believe that prevention is better than cure, whether we are talking about health, employment, housing or community safety. We want to create a Stockport where people live the best lives they can.

### **6.1 Health and Wellbeing**

Reducing health inequalities is a key focus of the work of the public health team. They lead and support work on this in four main ways:

1. Advocating for reducing health inequalities and their determinants
2. Providing data and intelligence, and identifying opportunities for effective action on health inequalities.
3. Ensuring areas of work strategically led by public health address inequalities by including a special focus on vulnerable groups and
4. Applying fair and inclusive principles to services commissioned or directly delivered by the team.

#### **6.1.1 Advocacy for reducing health inequalities and the determinants of health**

This year, we have created the One Stockport Health and Care Board, which aims to bring together everyone who works to promote and improve health across the NHS, Council, wider partners and the community and voluntary sector. This new board is united around one clear aim; to drive improvements in population health and tackle health inequalities by addressing social and economic factors which impact on health and wellbeing to help improve outcomes and quality of care, reduce health inequalities and maximise the value of public resources.

We have continued to shape our borough plans to reflect this priority; through the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Council Plan, which each have a crucial role in maintaining the commitment and energy we need to achieve change.

#### **6.1.2 Providing data and intelligence to enable others to address health inequalities and their determinants**

Joint Strategic Needs Assessments form a key way in which councils determine the current and future healthcare needs of local populations to ensure the necessary services are provided. Stockport continues to develop JSNA analysis to build our intelligence base and insight into health and inequalities:

- A JSNA into the needs of autistic people in Stockport was completed in November 2022, and provides part of the evidence base for Stockport's new All Age Autism Strategy. The report highlights the increase in the number of autistic people in Stockport, especially children, and also identifies that there are likely to be many adults who have undiagnosed autism.
- We have completed a JSNA into mental health and wellbeing, this forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Stockport Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy. This report highlights the impact of COVID-19 on wellbeing and levels of

anxiety and also describes the lower life expectancy experienced by people with serious mental illness.

### **6.1.3 Work led by public health to address inequalities**

The ONE Stockport Active Communities Strategy prioritises the most inactive residents in Stockport, whilst continuing to offer and facilitate universal services. In depth analysis, both in terms of data but also through community engagement, highlighted the close correlation between inactivity and inequality. The implementation plan is evolving not only to support the most inactive residents into a more active lifestyle but also to exemplify how physical activity can be used as a tool to reduce inequality by promoting health and wellbeing, individual development, social and economic inclusion, as well as addressing many of the access barriers.

#### **Case Study: Covid-19 Vaccine Programme**

Stockport is a highly polarised borough. We saw comparatively lower vaccine uptake in the most deprived areas and among Black and Asian ethnic groups. Bearing this lower uptake in mind, our vaccination uptake programme was guided by an understanding that we needed to proactively reach out to these groups.

We set an objective in 2021 to reach 75% vaccine uptake in adults in every area in Stockport. We were guided by small area data on uptake and used hyperlocal approaches through pop-up vaccine clinics alongside engagement and building trust through community groups. The VCFSE sector, especially community leaders and champions, played a vital role in communicating with local communities, and our strategy included gathering insight, addressing concerns, promoting the benefits of vaccination, and providing very convenient vaccination centres and pop ups. We delivered targeted communications to groups with low vaccine uptake, learning from what messages had worked well in other areas.

Vaccinations were administered through a broad partnership – with primary care networks and community pharmacies taking leading roles. We recruited and trained unregistered vaccinators who worked alongside doctors, nurses and pharmacists and volunteers across education and community settings, and gave us the agility to respond quickly to changes in resident needs. We achieved 75% first dose uptake, and 70% second dose uptake in all areas. Compared to the Greater Manchester average, Stockport had higher levels of vaccine uptake across all ethnic groups, and a smaller gap between ethnic groups.

### **6.1.4 Applying fair and inclusive principles in service commissioning and provision**

In 2021 we went out to tender for a number of Public Health services, including sexual health, adult drugs and alcohol, smoking cessation and weight management. Each of these services focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of residents and reducing inequalities.



The services often work with people experiencing health inequalities and with complex needs, so it was a requirement for the new services to be respectful of these needs and work proactively to engage people in services. As part of the tender process, providers have to demonstrate how they would improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities for the most vulnerable groups.

Examples of how services are working to reduce inequalities include: outreach work undertaken by the sexual health service in Brinnington and at the Wellspring; the stop smoking service having targets around engaging residents in our priority areas; the weight management service having specific programmes for over 65s and men, and drug and alcohol services having an assertive outreach provision, supported by the skills of their lived experience workforce, and working across multiple services and agencies to support people to improve their overall life chances and lifestyles.

### 6.1.5 A focus on Early Help and Prevention

Adult Social Care services are committed to offering a range of early help and prevention services to all Stockport residents, with wide ranging needs, backgrounds and circumstances. On 1<sup>st</sup> April '22 a new model of delivery for our early help and prevention offer went live, which is called the 'Stockport Support Hub'.

The services that can be accessed through the Stockport Support Hub are

- **Your Support** - a support service to help people with a range of issues, for example, housing, finances, health and wellbeing, delivered by The Prevention Alliance
- **Community Support** - Connecting people to community activities, groups, peer support, learning and volunteering opportunities, delivered by Pure Innovations
- **Transport Support** – run by volunteer drivers, this service supports people who will struggle to use public transport to get to appointments and activities, delivered by Stockport Car Schemes
- **Home Support** – provides practical support, helping people to live safely and independently in their own home for as long as possible, delivered by Age UK Stockport and partners
- **Carers Support** – supporting unpaid carers who care for people who have an illness, disability, or addiction issues, delivered by Signpost Stockport and Stockport Mind
- **Domestic Abuse support** – supporting people who are affected by domestic abuse and those who are worried about their own behaviour, delivered by Talk, Listen, Change

All these services uphold equality, diversity and inclusion as a core element. The services work closely with people who may have needs linked to their age, disability and health and wellbeing. A dedicated service is also offered to people from the Deaf community, with a BSL interpreter present. All these services ensure that people who do not speak English as a first language have access to interpreters and translation. We accommodate any other specific communication needs.

The benefits of the new model of delivery are emerging and during the first 9 months of the service, 4,255 referrals have been made into the Stockport Support Hub.

## 6.2 Children and Young People

Our vision is for all children and young people to have the best start in life, be happy, safe, to be able to build and maintain healthy relationships, attend school and learn, be prepared for adulthood and able to achieve their goals. We want families to feel supported, confident, resilient and connected to their community.

Our ambition is for Stockport to be the best place for all children to grow up happily, healthily, with a good education, confidence, ambition and surrounded by love, care and kindness. We seek to support our children and families to thrive through working together to build nurturing and trusting relationships.

Inclusion is at the heart of our work with children and young people. Our practice is founded on the belief that every child and young person matters and matters equally. We nurture, sustain and further develop connections, relationships and mutual support between ourselves and within our communities in Stockport to build a better future, where all children and young people can thrive and no one is left behind.

To realise this vision we have developed an integrated model of delivery which brings services closer to where children live, learn and transition. This includes:

- An integrated operational team in each locality with common purpose.
- Co-production with people and communities to ensure the best public service offer for children and families One family plan – a single holistic plan
- All key partners being appropriately trained and informed to support improved outcomes for all children and young people in particular those with SEND.
- Clarified pathways to support families.
- All processes of assessment and sharing of information being conducive to supporting improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Strengthening our inclusion agenda for all vulnerable young people including those with SEND
- Effective earlier intervention for families preventing escalation to high needs placements.

This is underpinned by an ambition for a communities first approach which will be delivered through a number of developments

- Family Hubs to develop trust and relationships locally and reduce the stigma that can prevent families seeking help at the earliest point
- Youth voice which will be supported through the delivery of a voluntary sector led youth alliance
- Improved transitions between primary and secondary
- Partnership with local communities providers to bring a strong offer of activities and food for children and young people to bring stimulation and connection.
- Supporting confidence and awareness within schools of the impact of mental wellbeing on young people

### 6.2.1 Highways

Our Road Safety Around Schools (RSAS) scheme reviews collision data every year and prioritises schools along a matrix including levels of deprivation amongst pupils, and number of SEN pupils.

Using the data, the following schemes were identified for the 2022-23 capital programme:

St Paul's Primary	Brinnington & Central
Cheadle Heath Primary	Edgeley & Cheadle Heath
All Saints Primary, Heaton Norris	Reddish South
St Matthew's Primary (Academy)	Edgeley & Cheadle Heath
Ladybridge Primary	Cheadle Hulme North
North Cheshire Jewish School	Heald Green

#### Case Study

Public parks and playgrounds are essential environments for leisure activity, which all generations can enjoy at low or no financial cost. Evaluating the accessibility and usability of parks and playgrounds is crucial because their design, environment (natural and built), and safety could restrict the participation of disabled people.

At Stockport council, we work towards building inclusive environments for fair participation from all members of our communities across the borough. Throughout 2022/2023 we have improved the accessibility of parks and playgrounds located across the Stockport borough including by providing the following accessible features to playgrounds across Stockport: 5 mirage seats, 4 nest seats, 5 ground level trampoline, 3 accessible roundabouts, and two multi-play units.

To ensure that future parks and current improvements are designed to be inclusive, we consult closely with key stakeholders. This ensures that our parks meet the needs of local communities and all our residents.



A wheelchair-accessible roundabout currently installed at Shawheath play area & Half Moon Lane play area.

## **6.3 Working with Community and Voluntary Organisations**

Team Around the Place is the name for eight local networks of community organisations, who work closely with communities to address the issues and problems which matter most to them.

- Heatons identified that loneliness and social isolation are key issues for older people. As a result we mapped all groups and activities which are available locally, developed a multi-agency action plan and are planning an event to promote social inclusion to local people
- Victoria used health and wellbeing data and intelligence to identify low uptake of health checks by men who are also most likely to be affected by long term conditions. The local primary care network, a physical wellbeing charity and healthy communities workers came together to successfully bid for funding to develop a peer led approach to address this issue and encourage better men's health in the locality.

### **6.3.1 Digital Inclusion**

We use data to ensure our digital inclusion offer reaches those who need it most:

- We have mapped the availability of free Wi-Fi across Stockport, so that people who are digitally and financially excluded can get online for free
- We rolled out access to free data through the National Data Bank, 6 months ahead of our peers, because we knew which communities needed this help most
- Our digital inclusion partner, Starting Point offer sessions for older people in localities where we know many are both socially and digitally excluded
- We are developing a programme of digital support for residents in Brinnington, where 26% of people are not online, focussed on income maximisation
- As part of our Spend Well Live Well pop up events, we linked digital support with an ethnically diverse group at The Space for a Tech and Toast session.

### **6.3.2 Equity Networks**

In the summer of 2022, We embarked on a new programme of work, to improve the way we engage with, and support communities of identity in Stockport. This was in recognition that these communities often find it harder to be heard and that we can better meet people's needs if our strategies are co-designed. In partnership with Sector 3, we now support equity networks, which bring together local people to raise awareness of the issues they face and empower them to be heard when we develop strategies, plans and local services.

The networks are:

- Equity
- Stockport Women and Girls
- Stockport Race Equality Partnership
- LGBTQIA+ Respect
- Ability Rights
- Interfaith

- Youth Alliance
- Refugee and Asylum Seekers
- Armed Forces

Here are some of the networks' achievements this past year:

- The Women and Girls Network has grown from strength to strength. The group regularly sees between 50 and 60 attendees at meetings and events and has developed an action plan which is aligned to Stockport's Borough Plan priorities.
- The Disability Network have informed our services in relation to travel passes for autistic adults, and support the Autism Partnership Board
- We are working with the Stockport Race Equality Partnership to formalise qualitative data (case studies) to use with the Team Around the Place to inform how we are working to support ethnic minority groups holistically.
- Our EDI networks supported Stockport's Warm Spaces project and ensured communities were linked into this cost-of-living response and also distributed hundreds of Warm Packs to keep people warm and well. Our EDI network members were pivotal in helping to identify the most vulnerable residents and distribute the packs quickly.
- The Stockport Interfaith Network are collaborating with us to put together a round table event on the cost of living crisis and food poverty. This will take place in the summer of 2023

## 6.4 Libraries as community hubs

Our libraries network provides face-to-face access to council services across sixteen locations in Stockport, including areas of the borough with high deprivation, such as Brinnington, Bridgehall and Offerton.

Libraries respond to the needs of these communities, for example by providing books for residents to access written in different languages and titles chosen by a variety of communities.

The Home Library Service delivers books and offers wellbeing support for over 300 elderly and disabled residents who physically cannot reach libraries.

### **Case Study: Library Introduction tours**

Library Introduction tours took place with a group of refugees and asylum seekers living in a Stockport hotel. The tour started at the hotel and involved walking to the library. Those attending were encouraged to join the library and learnt about the benefits of membership and were introduced to the library space and given demonstrations of the online resources available within Stockport Libraries.

Introducing the library in this way meant that those attending did so with their peers, family or friends which helped to overcome any social or institutional barriers. The various groups and events were discussed, and we have since had other residents of the hotel join the knitting and craft group, and attend the library independently.

Our commitment to fairness and inclusion is supported by a range of events.

- We ran a Human Library, where the 'Books' were volunteers willing to have conversations about their lives with 'Readers'. Titles included Blind, Mental Health and Transgender. Feedback told us readers developed a greater understanding from the books.
- Black History Month events in libraries included:
  - A session on Adinkra printing – symbols and fabric patterns from modern day Ghana. 45 children were able to print their own patterns to take home.
  - Walthew House Steel Band hosted an event where 35 children were able to hear and play steel pans.
  - An African craft event where 20 children made their own Maasai necklaces, looked at African fabrics and made their own fabric print.
- Stockport Pride:
  - A stand at Stockport Pride with three librarians offering a range of books, interactive activities and prizes including an opportunity to add favourite titles to the PRIDE Reads display board.



## **7. Delivering for those who need it most**

This ambition focuses on improving outcomes for our most vulnerable residents, including the provision of effective and efficient support and personal care which meet needs arising from, for example, illness, disability, old age, homelessness, domestic abuse, mental health issues or family breakdown.

### **7.1 Supporting our most vulnerable residents**

Data from Greater Manchester Police found that Brinnington had the highest levels of reporting of domestic abuse but among the lowest levels of users of support services. In response to this data, as part of the Safer Stockport Partnership, we funded The Orange Umbrella Project to offer effective signposting and encourage conversations around domestic abuse and OWLS ([Ongoing Women's Local Support \(OWLS\) - Stockport Council](#)). Most of the users of The Orange Umbrella Project have been women, and the project is expanding across Stockport where local intelligence suggests a recent rise in instances of domestic abuse. The project has trained up a local men's community group to connect with male victims of domestic abuse.

*'I am a Brinnington resident who found herself captured in a relationship which was unhealthy. I presented to the GPs with all sorts of illness but the main illness was my partner. I took tablets to help with the presenting problems such as depression, anxiety and lack of confidence. Without the Orange Umbrella I would have still be impacting on front door services like my GP. I reached out to a volunteer who signposted me on to a service to seek support. I left, I survived, and am happy. Thank you Orange Umbrella.'*

#### **7.1.1 Supporting Refugees**

We support refugees, including the 132 adults and children who are housed in Bredbury Hall.

- All of the children were placed quickly in schools after arrival and are now well established and participating in school activities
- Everyone has been registered with a GP and supported to arrange hospital appointments. All immunisations, including Covid vaccinations and TB screening have taken place.
- All refugees are offered specially commissioned trauma support.
- The residents regularly attend community centres for various activities, including cooking sessions with a local charity.
- Our English for Speakers of Other Languages training is offered three days a week, including options for advanced learning at the Hardman Centre with two learners gaining awards in 2022.
- We work with a charity to deliver other integration support such as, living in the UK, how to access childcare support, values, reading circles, driving theory & computer classes.



- Refugees were invited to Old Trafford cricket ground as guests to watch both women and men's cricket.

### 7.1.2 Support Funds

Support Funds provide emergency financial assistance to Stockport residents who are in a crisis. They assisted Ukrainian refugees settling in Stockport, through financial support including cash vouchers to help them in the first weeks of their stay.

The team target resources to those who need emergency financial or household item (such as fridges and cookers) assistance. For example, a scheme, in partnership with the Stockport Credit Union, aimed at giving the most financially excluded residents access to safe credit, who otherwise would have no alternative but to use extremely high-interest credit.

## 7.2 Cost of Living and Financial Inclusion

Stockport's approach to financial inclusion is based on detailed analysis of local socio-economic data and intelligence, and this model of good practice is increasingly recognised by Greater Manchester partners:

- Money Max Roadshows focus on communities where we know the cost of living crisis has impacted people most and on the issues which affect people in those communities. For example, we spoke to 60+ parents in two primary schools in Heaton Norris where we were able to signpost advice related to benefits, energy and debt, as well as educational opportunities. Heaton Norris has a diverse community and local parents were able to find out about a range of schemes for ethnic minority residents including affordable ethnically appropriate food.
- Our Pension Credit uptake campaign uses local data to identify people who are eligible to claim pension credit but do not. We adopted a face to face approach in response to digital exclusion data, and as a result **1,678** pension-age residents have been actively engaged, many have gone on to claim Pension Credit themselves, and we have directly supported **82** applications with an estimated value of **£286,604** per annum.
- Holiday Activity and Food funding has been used to widen the provision for young disabled people across Stockport. For example, Life Leisure hosted two holiday camps for disabled children, as well as adapting existing activities to better meet the needs of disabled children. In August 2022, they set up a Parents' Forum with 10 parents of disabled children to use their lived experience to shape provision. This has already resulted in changes to staff training.
- Stockport's Warm Spaces funded 100+ local VCFSE organisations and libraries to offer hot drinks, food, activities, and essential household items to people who are struggling to heat their homes this winter. Warm Spaces are located in communities where they are needed and provide activities for all age groups, cultural backgrounds and household make up. Feedback from residents includes:

*"I really appreciate you giving warmth and at these kind of times people really need it"* – One Stockport Hub



*“It’s lovely for the area of Stockport and surrounding areas helping people at this sad time with energy bills, food prices all up in the air.” - One Stockport Hub*

### 7.2.1 Welfare Rights and Debt Advice

The welfare rights and debt advice team provides specialist debt advice, benefit appeals, and mental health welfare rights. They also work alongside the mental health wards at Stepping Hill to enable patients to leave hospital with the benefits that will assist them move back into the community.

**Since July 1<sup>st</sup> 2022**, the Welfare Rights and Debt Advice Team has **closed 633 cases** and of these we have:

- accrued cash gains for residents who have successfully appealed benefit decisions: **£49,185** (this figure is expected to significantly increase in the next 6-12 months as a result of ongoing appeals)
- successfully helped residents to make new claims for benefits worth **£328,531** each year, including: 21 pension-age residents were helped with claims for Attendance Allowance worth **£79,256** additional income per annum. A further 33 new claims are being processed worth **£87,862**.
- Our Debt Advice Team accrued cash gains in the form of discretionary payments, charitable grants and new claims for benefits worth **£90,417 per year**

#### **Case Study – Improving the health and wellbeing of a vulnerable, suicidal person in a severe mental health crisis**

Our welfare rights adviser helped a patient on the Arden ward at Stepping Hill. On first meeting him he voiced suicidal thoughts due to his mental health crisis, but also due to having no money, he saw himself as a hopeless case. The team helped him to successfully claim Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment. Now that he has all his correct benefits in place, he has secured long term social housing and is secure in the knowledge that financially he is stable which has significantly improved his mental health.

## 7.3 Adult Social Care

The borough of Stockport has a population of 295,243 residents, of whom 6,307 are known to Adult Social Care services. We support a wide range of people belonging to protected characteristic groups, the main ones being age and disability.

Stockport has a high proportion of people over 85 (2.9%) in comparison to neighbouring Greater Manchester authorities. During 22/23, many older people in Stockport approached Adult Social Care for assessments and to access a range of care and support services.

The 2021 census found that 33,571 households across Stockport include one person living with a disability, with 8,256 households including 2 or more people living with disabilities. We delivered assessments and support for many of these people.

During 22/23 we engaged with people who access Adult Social Care in a number of ways, in order to improve the way we work with them.

### **7.3.1 Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT)**

The CLDT is an integrated health and care team consisting of social workers, support workers, Learning Disability nurses, physiotherapists, speech and language therapy and psychology. During 22/23, we approached 250 service users and carers who receive support from the CLDT team to get their feedback on the service. We also asked local organisations such as Stockport Advocacy Service, PACT, the Learning Disability Resource Centre, Seashell Trust, and Walthew House. 115 service users or carers got involved, many of whom attended focus groups, they were asked:

- What things are working well? What do you like about the service?
- How can we make the service better?

This feedback is being used to shape the service for the future and to improve how we support people with a learning disability.

### **7.3.2 Supporting people who have a Direct Payment**

During the Autumn of 2022, we carried out a consultation with people who receive a Direct Payment for their carers. Direct Payments are funding offered to people who do not want Adult Social Care to arrange care and support services for them. They give people more flexibility and control over the support they receive.

We wrote to 173 carers and 683 people who receive a Direct Payment to ask them for their views on our approach. In addition, 61 people attended our focus groups. As a result of this consultation, we have rewritten our policy, developed new training for staff and are setting up regular meetings with people who receive a Direct Payment to help us to improve things further.

### **7.3.3 Retendering supported living for people with a learning disability**

During 2022 we retendered 33 supported living schemes across Stockport, where 142 people with a learning disability live. Easy read information on the tender and invitations to get involved in the feedback, planning and tender process itself were sent out to all individuals and family members. A group of 25 family members were invited to get involved in writing the specification and tender questions. 4 family members were involved in interviewing the potential providers and 2 family members were involved in the scoring. There is ongoing work with the overarching group to look at how they can be involved in a meaningful way in contract monitoring. From this initial scoping we will explore how we can extend this approach with service users across all supported living schemes and plan to set up a similar forum for people who want to be involved.

### **Case study: Anne's Story**

Anne was referred to Your Support by a family friend. Anne has a disability which causes memory loss and paralysis. Anne was homeless and sofa surfing, and her health was deteriorating as a result.

When she met her keyworker for the first time, Anne said, *'I was nervous, I'd lost hope that anyone would be able to help but I immediately felt at ease'*.

Anne and her keyworker made a list of things she wanted to achieve. Her keyworker supported her to make a homeless presentation and to gather all the required information to maximise her points. Her keyworker also referred her to Adult Social Care for longer term support due to her disability.

Anne's health condition meant that sometimes, she was unable to communicate clearly, *'When I couldn't talk, my keyworker would be my voice. She helped me keep on top of things - my disability causes me to forget things. I felt straight away that she really wanted to help me, that she really cared'*.

Through working with Your Support, Anne was successful in getting her own tenancy. Her keyworker helped her to access Care Call so that she could live independently with support if needed and referred her to organisations who helped her furnish her new home. Anne said: *'If you had told me on that first meeting a few months later I would be in my own beautiful flat and attending groups, I just wouldn't have believed you – I had had so many knockbacks, I felt worthless. Your Support helped me believe that things could change'*.

### **7.3.4 Next steps**

We will carry out a piece of work in 2023 to look at the 2021 census data on the range of protected characteristics and will compare this with the data we hold on people who access Adult Social Care. This will help us to better understand which groups may not be accessing the service when they need it, and it will help us to target support and information to these people.

## **8. Enabling Programmes**

In working towards our ambitions, it is vital that we have the right support in place. This means having an engaged workforce, robust finances, dynamic approach to change, good use of data and digital technology and strong communications. It is also about working in partnership – with other public services, businesses, voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector and local people.

### **8.1 How we use equalities data**

Our service is led by our strategic priorities and informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Census data, alongside demand and outcomes data at a service level. We enhance this by utilising local intelligence and data (including protected characteristic data), from Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise Sector partners, who are close to our communities' changing priorities and needs. This use of both qualitative and quantitative information enables a more 3 dimensional and flexible approach.

### **8.2 Human Resources and Organisational Development**

As an organisation we are working to create an inclusive environment to work where everyone has the opportunity to be themselves and to achieve their personal work ambitions.

#### **8.2.1 Employee Networks and Support Groups**

We have Employee Networks and Support Groups which enable colleagues who belong to particular protected characteristic groups to share experiences and work with our leadership team to suggest changes which will further develop our inclusive working environment. Employee Networks are a key way in which Stockport Council shapes our approach to equalities and creates an inclusive and supportive environment for our workforce. Employee Support Groups provide space for staff to share their experiences and provide an open and welcoming environment for staff belonging to those groups. Groups are able to choose whether they would like to function as a network or a support group depending on the broader ambitions of the group.

The Employee Networks are as follows: Palettes of Colour; LGBTQ+ Network; Staff Dis-Ability Network. The Support Groups are as follows: The Carer's Network; Menopause Support Group; Neurodivergent Support Group.

Through attending our Corporate Equalities Steering Group, the chairs of these networks have been able to influence the development of best practice across the organisation.

#### **8.2.2 Using data to guide our EDI actions**

In response to data collected through our All-Colleague Survey and feedback from our Employee Network groups, we have included Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) actions within our People Plan, as part of our Belong Here pillar. The main EDI elements of this plan which are expected to be implemented over the lifetime of the People Plan are outlined below:

- Review recruitment and selection processes and training for line managers
- CLT Sponsorship of Employee Engagement Groups
- Improve data and insights around EDI issues
- Refresh EDI training to embed micro aggressions awareness and to encourage colleagues to call out negative behaviours
- Ensure EDI is at the core of our workforce communications and engagement activity
- Implement reverse mentoring
- Review coaching and mentoring for minority groups
- Implement a passport scheme to support reasonable adjustments across a variety of groups
- Develop policy for those transitioning, including training for line managers