

Dear Mr Adams,

Public Health at Worcestershire County Council thank Healthwatch Worcestershire for carrying out this independent report on Public Health Messaging in 2023. The feedback provided in this report has been valuable in helping us shape more inclusive and accessible public health campaigns and messaging.

Since the engagement activity carried out within this report, we have continued to share public health messaging with our residents in a variety of ways. We have been actively seeking a more diverse representation of residents within our communications and working with partners to ensure appropriate formats are created, including by running the 'Walk this May!' campaign for a second time in 2024 through co-production with wider partners.

In 2024 we have begun several news areas of public health work that have had a public campaign element, the Wythall & Hollywood Fun Run (taking place in June 2024) and a launch of our new Healthy Worcestershire programme to name two. Both initiatives have and will continue to provide much opportunity for us to consider the inclusivity and accessibility of ongoing public health campaign messages.

We welcome the valuable insight around financial status and health inequality. We continue to work with our communities, particularly those within areas of higher deprivation or belonging to traditionally underserved communities, to ensure public health messaging reaches them through community grants and targeted health engagement.

Please find responses to the recommendations laid out in your report, in the table below.  
Yours sincerely,



**Lisa McNally**  
**Director of Public Health**

<b>WOO and Healthy Walks Campaigns</b>	
<p>1. Consider the imaging used in these campaigns to ensure that they are inclusive, and appeal to people from wide range of ages and circumstances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walking month this year included a focus on many different communities through partnership campaign. We ensured wheeling (for those who felt previously excluded from the campaign) was included.</li> <li>- We are ensuring that our Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run event and communications promote inclusivity. We are working with the Healthy Worcestershire service provider to create accessible information about the new service.</li> <li>- In recognition that this needs improvement, we plan to carry out bespoke photography for Healthy Worcestershire that focuses on inclusivity and represents the community.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Consider the scope to widen the channels used to promote these campaigns, given people's willingness to pass on information to others who may need it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have widened the use of our social media channels (e.g. the 'How're You Doing Worcestershire?' Facebook group).</li> <li>- We have distributed physical leaflets and banners throughout the community for the Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run and continue to distribute messaging through the Health Champions newsletter, YHYW vans and directly to all Worcestershire residents through the WCC Your Worcestershire magazine.</li> <li>- We are planning to engage with Worcestershire residents through the WCC Summer Roadshows (in person) and online Viewpoint panel (online) on their communications preferences.</li> </ul>
<b>Online Public Health Messaging</b>	
<p>3. Consider using increased targeting of social media messaging, including at men and people living in areas of health inequalities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We have used social media targeting through a variety of campaigns, notably the Couch to 5K programmes and Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run to encourage participation and healthy lifestyle behaviours from those experiencing health inequalities.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Consider using Facebook groups for each campaign, where people can join to find more details and updates about events and ask questions about the topic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Though a new Facebook group for every campaign would be unachievable given capacity and resource we can use our existing channels (How're You Doing Worcestershire' group and WCC corporate page) to promote health messaging or events more effectively.</li> </ul>



<p>5. Consider how people can be better signposted to legitimate and reputable sources of advice through online and social media channels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We will suggest this to any public health funded activity partners too.</li> <li>- Everything we provide links to as Public Health will be from a reputable source (e.g. WCC, Public health or wider health and social care partners).</li> </ul>
<p>6. Ensure websites that provide public health information are accessible to people with sensory impairments, and provide translation facilities for people whose first language is not English.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WCC has several accessibility and inclusion work streams in place which are working towards website information being accessible. This includes trialling a new Digital Inclusion Tool and creating a bespoke page for BSL information, which will include health videos.</li> <li>- Through representation on the system d/Deaf working group, we are encouraging NHS partners to also provide accessible BSL translations (e.g. through uploading BSL health videos to their video library).</li> <li>- We are also working with community partners (specifically sensory impairment organisations) to create better access to health information and physical activity opportunities.</li> <li>- While we cannot provide all comms campaign information in multiple languages, we do have processes in place to provide translations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In-Person (non-digital options) Public Health Messaging</b></p>	
<p>7. Consider how GP surgeries and pharmacies can be optimised as a space for public health messaging, both through face-to-face conversations with practice staff and as a location for public information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Throughout this year we will be actively promoting new sign ups to Health Champions including primary care, community health and pharmacy colleagues.</li> <li>- Utilise the YHYW bus to promote public health messaging.</li> </ul>
<p>8. Explore the potential for expanding use of screens in GP surgeries, and other health settings, for public health messaging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We are working with primary care colleagues to better share information through the GPU (ICB Primary Care Team), work with the Federation comms team to share public health messages into general practice.</li> </ul>



<p>9. Consider designing printed materials that include QR codes for distribution to schools and colleges to display, as our conversations with young people suggest noticeboards at schools and colleges remain an important information source for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- While we do use QR codes on some of our campaign materials, direct feedback from education settings suggests young people are not encouraged to use mobile phones within school hours.</li><li>- We will continue to distribute PH campaigns aimed at young people through our school's bulletin, and where appropriate working directly with schools on initiatives such as vaping.</li></ul>
<p>11. Consider working with organisers of local food banks or 'warm spaces' so that their service users have access to Public Health posters and leaflets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- We will explore opportunities to engage with foodbanks and warm spaces through our WCC, district council and VCSE alliance.</li></ul>
<b>Accessible Information</b>	
<p>12. Review campaigns against accessible information standards and consider how the campaigns can be made accessible to those with sensory impairments, learning disabilities or other disabilities, including through producing them in alternative formats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- We are currently working with sensory impairment organisations to develop a programme of accessible physical activity opportunities. This will include reviewing and if necessary, creating new information on how and where to stay active.</li><li>- New Healthy Worcestershire resources are being developed with accessibility and alternative formats in mind.</li><li>- We share national campaign information which includes Easy Read and different languages.</li></ul>
<p>13. For Public Health messaging campaigns, consider creating "Easy Read" printed leaflets with clear messaging and related pictures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- We currently produce some documents in Easy Read and will consider how to incorporate this further into key campaigns e.g. an Easy Read version for the Healthy Worcestershire programme campaign.</li><li>- We share national campaign information which includes Easy Read formats through the Health Champions newsletter.</li></ul>
<p>14. Where specific events are mentioned, as much detail as possible should be included on printed materials. As well as a website link and QR code, consider providing a single point of contact and phone number, or creating a Facebook event where people can ask for more details.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Public Health deliver few public-facing events but are more likely promote partner events.</li><li>- Since this report, we have reviewed Health walks which now has a dedicated webpage, interactive map and Easy Read leaflet.</li></ul>



15. Leaflets should be distributed throughout the county, e.g. via support services and parent / carer groups, as well as being available on request from the Public Health team.

- We have distributed physical leaflets and banners throughout the community for the Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run and continue to distribute messaging throughout the libraries, at WCC Summer Roadshows, via the Health Champions newsletter, YHYW vans and directly to all Worcestershire residents through the WCC Your Worcestershire magazine.