

# JOINT LOCAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY UPDATE:

A Community-led Approach



In September 2022, Worcestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board launched its Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Strategy sets out a vision and key priorities for partnership work to improve the health and wellbeing of our population and work to reduce inequalities in Worcestershire.

In this year's update we want to demonstrate how we are delivering our priority of good mental health and wellbeing for all, by working with our communities.



Within this report you will find stories and insights showing the fantastic work delivered by our Worcestershire County Council Public Health Team and our wider Health and Wellbeing Board partners including; our district council colleagues, our health colleagues, voluntary and community organisations and of course, our communities.

### **Celebrating Community Stories**

WCC Public Health worked with communities and organisations across the county to celebrate what it means to be a Healthy Worcestershire. The Community Stories project brought together over 40 stories from across the county that showed us the many wonderful ways people stay healthy, active and creative (from dance groups to nature walks, cricket and sea shanty choirs!).

In May 2024 the Celebrating Community Stories Showcase was held at Worcestershire County Cricket Club with over 90 people attending. The event included a showcase of videos, podcasts, posters, artwork, and there was also a fantastic live performance from Jigsaw dance group.

Community Stories from the project are used throughout this report, you can view them and a range of other health and wellbeing stories on our Insights website:

insights.worcestershire.gov.uk



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# Healthy living at all ages

### Children, Young People and Families

The earliest years of a child's life have a significant impact on their long-term development and their life chances. The best start in life is key, for every child.

Recognising this, a Best Start in Life Partnership was formed in Autumn 2023. The group focuses on ensuring easily accessible services and support for children's health and wellbeing across Worcestershire.

This includes supporting healthy pregnancies, helping families to thrive, increasing mental wellbeing, ensuring support for vulnerable families and those with complex needs, and preventing negative childhood experiences.

Having the new Riverside Hub has been a success so far for local families from in and around Evesham.

Community Health Connector, Starting Well Partnership South Worcestershire

### New wellbeing hub welcomes families in Evesham

Family Hubs are being shaped across the county, to provide support services early, when families need them, in one accessible location or through a connected network.

Located in the Riverside Shopping Centre, a new space has opened as part of the Riverside Health and Wellbeing Hub.

The hub is run by Onside Advocacy and acts as a one-stop shop where community members can access health and wellbeing services, signposting, information and support. Building work has been undertaken to develop the space further for families, including a friendly drop-in space to feed or change a baby. A 'Stay, play and weigh' and Health Visitor clinics have started already too.





# Blooming Healthy! New maternal healthy weight pilot launches

A new maternal healthy weight pilot is supporting those with a BMI over 30 and in early pregnancy to make healthy lifestyle choices.

The Blooming Healthy service is a partnership between Worcestershire County Council Public Health and local maternity services and provides one to one support from a Public Health Midwife throughout the pregnancy.

Studies have shown how excess weight surrounding pregnancy and following birth is strongly linked to obesity in later life, for both mother and child. Making small changes towards a healthy lifestyle at this point could have lifelong positive impacts.



Between May and November 2023, **338 referrals** were received and around **50%** of those accepted an appointment. Early data shows improved physical activity and dietary scores.

Better food planning has meant we have reduced our takeaways from 3 times a week to 1 every other week and saved us money!

Blooming Healthy
Service User

This programme has helped me focus on changes I knew I needed to make.

Blooming Healthy
Service User

### YourSpace Mental Health & Wellbeing Hubs

Onside Advocacy secured funding from the Department of Health and Social Care to deliver mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people aged 11-25 across Worcestershire.

YourSpace Hubs help children and young people facing a range of issues including stress and anxiety, difficulties in school, online safety and more.

YourSpace Hubs are currently available in Worcester, Wychavon, Redditch and Malvern and provide a single point of access to both one to one and group support without the need for a referral.

To find out more about YourSpace, visit: onside-advocacy.org.uk/yourspace



#### **Schools & Youth Grants**

Last year, we launched a new Education and Youth Grant scheme for local schools and youth settings alongside West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner with a focus on prevention and mental wellbeing.

To date, just over 100 grant awards have enabled everything from improved outdoor play areas to the development of sensory and wellbeing spaces, gardening projects, running and walking initiatives and wellbeing through arts participation. We now have a collection of case studies on how the grants have improved young people's lives.

These regularly make the news, such as the recent Platinum Award for Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) given to one of the school grant projects.



Schools & Youth Grants: youtu.be/wGhlwopBoOs

### Partnership event inspires young people to stay safe and get active

More than 250 young people from secondary schools across the county were given the opportunity to take part and find a passion for sport and physical activity, as part of the recently established Safer Worcestershire project, a collaboration between West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner and Worcestershire County Council Public Health.

Increasing opportunities for young people to engage in physical activities not only improves their mental wellbeing but can also prevent crime by supporting young

people with emotional resilience. The events included Judo, 5-a-side Football, BMX biking, and a boot camp.

Sessions were also attended by local officers from West Mercia Police. School Games Organisers worked with local community groups to organise the events and continue to encourage these young people to find their passion and stay active.

### **Working with Communities to Tackle Health Inequalities**

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health outcomes and experiences. We're working with our partners and communities to drive good mental health and wellbeing for those experiencing inequality.

## Autism support for women and girls at Aurum

Aurum provides specialist one to one and group support for autistic women and girls, and their families, in the Worcestershire area. Aurum aims to help individuals to improve their wellbeing, build confidence, develop coping skills and feel more connected with the wider community.

Aurum have been supported through a Worcestershire County Council Public Health Stay Connected Community Grant to deliver group-based activities including day trips, yoga, art, book club and more.

# Over **50,000** toothbrushing packs distributed across Worcestershire

Over 50,000 adult and junior toothbrushing packs have been distributed across the county to organisations, agencies, and charities to keep Worcestershire's teeth healthy. The packs included a toothbrush, toothpaste and a leaflet with tips on maintaining good oral health.

"What a fabulous idea - this has really helped so I can model to my children the importance of tooth brushing"

**Worcestershire Family Hub User** 



### Health checks for people experiencing homelessness

St Paul's Hostel is working with Worcester Primary Care to provide NHS Health Checks, including checking blood pressure and cholesterol level, to people who experience homelessness.

People who have or are experiencing homelessness are more likely to have poor physical and mental health, have substance misuse issues and are less likely to access health services than the general population.

"These health checks are needed because they remove the hurdles for residents who might otherwise not attend a GP surgery and therefore miss the warning signs of ill health. The NHS team were brilliant in the way they listened to residents, and I know the residents were pleased of the opportunity."

Service Manager at St Paul's Hostel

# NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire co-produced improved neurodivergent support

The NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire has undertaken a range of co-production exercises with parents, carers, young people and professionals to understand people's experiences of accessing support services for neurodivergent conditions.

Partner organisations have come together with Experts by Experience to set-up three groups working towards the following key aims:



- Improving information and communication on neurodivergent conditions for children, young people, parent, carers and professionals.
- Reducing waiting times for diagnostic assessments for Autism and ADHD and developing a new combined ADHD and Autism diagnostic assessment process.
- Improving support available across both counties for children, young people and parent and carers.

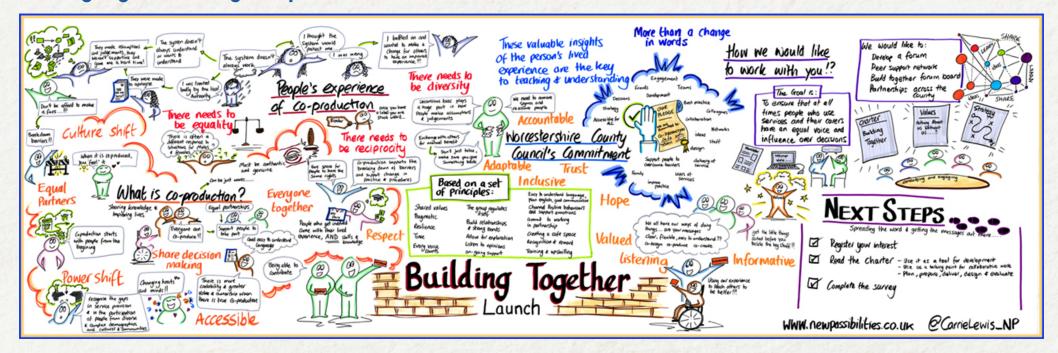


### Health Inequalities Ambassadors Network across the Integrated Care System

The Health Inequalities Ambassadors Network (HIAN) is working across the Integrated Care System programmes and boards to advocate for those experiencing the greatest health disparities.

Ambassadors focus on narrowing health inequalities to ensure equitable access, experience, and outcomes for all but particularly our underserved communities.

### **Building Together through co-production**



#### © Illustrated by Carrie Lewis, New Possibilities

Worcestershire County Council's Adult Social Care Building Together Forum is about sharing knowledge and shaping services together. It gives people who use adult social care and their carers an equal voice and influence over decisions about design, development and delivery of services.

Since 2023, a board has been established of people who use Adult Social Care and their carers; and a range of co-production projects have been undertaken. Among these, people with experience of Adult Social Care have been supported to create "I" statements for the Adult Social Care Strategy; carers have been participating in a re-design of carers assessment paperwork; people with learning disabilities have delivered a workshop to social workers; and people who use direct payments have been involved in reviewing how these can be improved.

For more information on Building Together visit: worcestershire.gov.uk/building-together

### **Keeping our Communities Active**

Staying physically active comes in many different shapes and sizes for our communities, be it a brand new 5k Fun Run, Bike Buses or Singing for Health ... we want to celebrate it all!

### New Park Yoga in Kidderminster



A new Park Yoga scheme held at Brinton Park in Kidderminster had over 70 people attending the first session more than 50 continue to attend.

Park Yoga welcomes all abilities, is completely free of charge and encourages people to get outdoors and active in their local community.

Park Yoga has been supported by a Healthy Worcestershire Grant.

It was a really beautiful practice, thank you!

Park Yoga Kidderminster Participant

# Healthy Worcestershire sessions launched across the County



The Healthy Worcestershire programme offers a range of free activities in the heart of communities aimed at improving health and wellbeing. It is delivered by Solutions 4 Health in a way that brings people together and builds social connections. The weekly two-hour sessions include strength and balance exercises, healthy lifestyle advice, community safety information and links to a wide range of other health promoting activities in the local community.

Sessions have launched at venues across the County with more to follow in the coming months. The reasons people have shared for joining the groups include 'getting out to meet new people' and 'to get fitter', but what is being noticed most is the connections being built as people come together to improve their social wellbeing and have fun!

Find out more about Healthy Worcestershire:

### healthyworcestershire.org.uk





# Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run is a huge success

Over 500 people enjoyed Wythall and Hollywood Fun Run and family day on Sunday 23rd June at Wythall Park. The event was such a success, plans are already in place for its return next year!

"We have had a phenomenal day here in Wythall Park. The Community Association have been phenomenal. We tried to create a party atmosphere, which has gone down well. All in all, a brilliant day and one which we are looking forward to repeating next year."

# Steve Cram, World and Olympic medallist.

"I really enjoyed the route.
It was beautiful and
the marshals were so
encouraging which helped in
the heat! The whole day was
really well put together and
my family loved the fun day
element of the day as well."

Sarah, 10K race runner.

# From Couch to 5K to a new running group

Alongside the fun run, Worcestershire County Council Public Health funded a new Couch to 5K programme in Wythall which was delivered by Rush Active. A fantastic 25 runners graduated on race day.

I saw the couch to 5k advertised and wanted to take on a challenge. The fun run was the target at the end of the programme and was a local event.

**Couch to 5K Group Member** 

The Wythall running bug doesn't stop there, several members of the now finished Couch to 5K have since set up their own local running group and have 36 members so far!



### Bike Bus gets families cycling to school



The Bike Bus encourages families to get active by cycling to and from school together. Local initiatives are set up and led by parents and families, with support from Bike Worcester volunteers who plan routes and marshal rides to make sure children are kept safe from vehicles on route.

With support from a Healthy
Worcestershire grant, Bike Worcester would
like to encourage more parents across the
County to set up their own Bike Bus and
promote active travel for short journeys,
provide families with cycling experience,
and empower them to safely take space
on road.

Find out more about Bike Worcester here: **bikeworcester.org.uk** 

### **Community Story: Sing for Health**

Sing for Health is a free weekly group that focuses on whole body breathing through singing. Sessions have many different benefits for breathing, low mood or anxiety, confidence building and postural alignment. In the words of one of the participants, 'Sing for Health groups are friendly, welcoming and nonjudgemental'. Sessions are held in Pershore and Worcester and they are free to attend and available to everyone.





### Sing for Health: youtube.com/watch?v=5hEZBAHeztQ

"I have COPD, since joining Sing for Health my cough has become much better and easier to control. It raises my spirits and make me feel good, I always leave the sessions feeling happy and more confident. I find the exercises and breathing techniques very useful in everyday life ... it helps me stop coughing fits and relieves stress and tension."

**Sing for Health Participant** 

Find out more about Sing for Health sessions: paulaevansvoice.com/singforhealth

# Quality local jobs and opportunities

Having access to quality and fulfilling local jobs and opportunities and feeling supported into employment, is vital for our community mental health and wellbeing.

# Volunteers give up to 10,000 hours to our libraries and feel the benefits in return!

More than 350 volunteers of all ages generously gift between 8,000 and 10,000 hours of their time to Worcestershire's libraries each year.

Their contributions include selecting and delivering books to Library Service at Home customers, helping people to develop their digital skills, meeting and greeting library customers and supporting young readers completing the Summer Reading Challenge.

Library volunteers make a huge contribution to library services and report a wide range of health and wellbeing and other benefits including improved community connections,



making friends, finding a sense of purpose after retirement or bereavement, developing skills and confidence, improving digital skills and increasing motivation to look for work or pursue additional education or training.

As a carer for someone struggling with their mental health, it has given me a space to do something creative and connect with others.

**Library Volunteer** 

Volunteering at the library has helped me to regain my confidence, meet new people and given me a new purpose in life.

**Library Volunteer** 

### Work Well Live Better welcomes 80 new businesses to the network

The Work Well Live Better workplace health programme supports workplaces across Worcestershire to improve the health and wellbeing of their employees. Since the programme was launched in January, over 80 businesses have registered to become a member of the network.

By joining the network workplaces can access resources, webinars, events and further targeted support to help keep Worcestershire's workforce healthy.

To find out more or join the network, visit: workwelllivebetter.co.uk

# New Cranstoun service will support more people into work

Cranstoun has launched a brand-new Individual Placement Support (IPS) service, which aims to support people engaged in structured drug and/or alcohol treatment to find and retain paid employment.

The service offers personalised advice to help individuals make the most of available opportunities and find a job which matches their skill set.

You can read more about the service here: cranstoun.org/help-and-advice/alcohol-other-drugs/ips/

### **Neighbourhood Learning Community Projects**

Learning Services' Community Projects bring together members of a local area to learn new skills and work on projects that benefit their community. Here's some brilliant examples:

- A window display to brighten up a shopping precinct in Winyates, Redditch.
- A community treasure hunt for Birchen Coppice, Wyre Forest.
- A gardening project in partnership with the YMCA in Churchill, Redditch.
- A Love Food Hate Waste course with the Westlands Community Fridge in Droitwich.
- A submission to the Malvern Well Dressing Festival.
- Learning screen printing skills and producing decorated tote bags to present to competition winners at the Worcestershire Primary Schools STEM Challenge.



"I have really struggled with anxiety. Taking part in the Neighbourhood Learning Community Project at the local library though has made a huge difference in my life. Creating things, learning new skills and being part of this community has boosted my confidence and helped me feel better overall. It's brought me out of my shell, and now I feel ready to actively look for a job."

**Jackie, Adult Learner** 



# Pitch Up supports young people to develop creative career skills

Severn Art's Pitch Up programme supports college students to experience the artistic commissioning process and build their career skills, for the creative industries and beyond. In just two weeks, participants learn how to respond to a brief, pitch their ideas and co-create an artwork for a public exhibition.



It was incredible seeing the artworks on display after such a short journey from conception to exhibition, you could even see how impressed the students were with themselves ... watching each group go into their final pitch with real confidence, repeating to each other the advice that they'd be given so far. Their transformation from day one, where some of them had never even spoken to each other before, to now, was incredible to watch.

> Alex Clark-Michalek Project Assistant Intern



### Bringing better bus access to Droitwich Business Park

A new service will make travelling to work by bus much easier for workers at Droitwich Business Park. The new 153 service, secured by Worcestershire County Council's Skills & Investment team, operates from Worcester to Droitwich and is improving access to key areas of the town such as the train station and the industrial parks at commuting times.



The improved transport links make it easier for people to access good jobs, contributing to overall community wellbeing.

Judy Gibbs Head of Skills and Investment Service



# Safe, thriving and healthy homes, communities and places

So many fantastic services and projects are working to improve mental health and wellbeing by creating safe, healthy homes, communities and places for our residents.

### **Spreading JOY across the County**



Worcester Community Trust's JOY project has expanded across all six districts and supported 350 individuals including those with learning disabilities, poor mental health and women from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.

JOY is a community project that supports women to gain skills, improve their wellbeing and confidence, and make their own informed decisions. Activities such as yoga, crafting, training, and volunteering opportunities, offered in both one to one and group settings.

"Without the support of the Joy Project I wouldn't have had the confidence to go and even ask for a job interview let alone attend the interview."

**JOY Project Participant** 

"I've loved doing this JOY Mindfulness course. I've made new friends, and my confidence has grown. I've now got goals for the future."

**JOY Project Participant, Malvern** 

"As a visually impaired person I was never taught to do anything DIY related, and I am not the most practically minded person... We had help with carpentry, measurements, and lining up but I did some of the drilling, nailing, hammering, and sanding myself."

**JOY Project Participant, Worcester** 

Find out more about the JOY Project: worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk/joy

# CORE: New men's community network

Following the success of the JOY Project, Worcester Community Trust launched the CORE project, an inclusive service available to all men aged 18+ across Worcestershire. Through a mixture of group work, one to one sessions and practical support, CORE aims to improve wellbeing and help men connect to their local community.

"I just wanted to say I had the best day I've had in years. Great company. Thank you"

### **CORE Project Participant**

Find out more about the CORE project: worcestercommunitytrust.org.uk/core

### Community Story: St Vincent de Paul Society Bereavement Café

Residents who have lost loved ones can get help, support and friendship at local bereavement cafes in Droitwich and Evesham. The St Vincent de Paul Society Bereavement Cafés are free of charge and provide a space for people to come together and support each other.

With support from a Worcestershire County Council Public Health Stay Connected Community Grant, the charity is set to expand the current café and roll out a second group at Evesham Catholic Church.



Bereavement Cafe: youtube.com/watch?v=RUMLP4qzOW8&t=1s

#### **Gather & Grow Women's Wellness**



Gather & Grow, a women's walking and wellness group based in Bromsgrove is thriving, reaching 1,000 followers on social media, as it continues to support people to connect with others in their community.

Supported by a Worcestershire County Council Public Health Stay Connected Community Grant, the group brings women together to walk, talk and practice mindfulness in the form of meditation and other wellbeing exercises. For those who can't attend, they support people on social media, even holding online meditations and exercises such as journaling.

"This group of ladies are amazing, friendly and very welcoming. I can find social activities scary and awkward sometimes, but this group are so welcoming without being overpowering.

Such a mix of great ladies. The Sunday morning walks clear the cobwebs for the day ahead."

**Gather & Grow Member** 

Find out more about Gather & Grow: facebook.com/gathergrow





## **Winyates Craft Centre**

Winyates Craft Centre is in the heart of the Winyates Housing Estate. The centre supports the local community to access a variety of support and training services including wellbeing activities, peer-led support groups, mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse support, a baby bank, charity shop, food bank and a café.

Worcestershire County Council Public Health supported the Winyates Craft Centre so they could continue to provide a range of fantastic services and projects, including encouraging residents to improve their wellbeing through creativity and connecting with others.

Alongside regular creative sessions including a baking class, craft and chat group, and music jam groups, they recently held a Multicultural Food and Arts Festival bringing people together to celebrate a variety of cultures and delicious dishes.



**Community Training and Winyates Craft Centre** 

# Lifesaving equipment at nearby police stations



Five new defibrillators have been installed at police stations in Worcestershire. Worcestershire County Council's Public Health Team has funded the new equipment, with support from West Mercia Police, Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion, and Droitwich AED.

The new devices are now available in police stations in Kidderminster, Worcester, Malvern, Upton, and Evesham, and will join over 860 defibrillators that are already installed in Worcestershire.

The installations came following a real-life incident when a defibrillator was potentially needed, but there was confusion over where one could be found.

You can find a handy map highlighting other defib locations here: **defibfinder.uk** 

## Community Story: Worcester Community Garden



Since its launch in 2020, the Worcester Community Garden has welcomed 150 volunteers and over 5,000 visitors. The garden started with the aim of providing a safe, green space for visitors and volunteers, promoting chemical free gardening and biodiversity, and providing chemical-free horticultural education and training opportunities.

Several events have been held on site including an eco-fair, plant swap and a bug hunt for children. It also hosts an 'outdoor public living room' that invites people for a tea and a chat and works with groups like Mencap supporting people with disabilities to learn new gardening skills.

I'm incredibly proud of the achievements of Worcester Community Garden over the past two years, thanks to the hard work, skills, enthusiasm and kindness of our amazing volunteers. We are thriving as a result and hope to continue to build on this success.

**Chair of trustees** 

### More than a mobile library service



Around 500 people borrow books from the mobile library service each year, but as well as providing access to books, mobile library customers report significant benefits to their social and mental wellbeing from their visits to the mobile library.

"I am a full-time carer and the mobile visit is the highlight of my month without it, I am deprived of books"

#### **Mobile Library Service User**

"As a person who spends long hours a days alone at home and lives with a long-term health condition, such social contact is vital for combatting feelings of isolation and is a very valuable and necessary boost to my mental well-being"

**Mobile Library Service User** 

Find out more about on the website: worcestershire.gov.uk/mobile-library

### beryl Bike's are go!

Worcester's new bikeshare scheme was launched in June 2024. Operated by transport provider beryl in partnership with Worcester City Council, the scheme aims to boost access to active and sustainable transport, cut congestion and improve air quality.

175 e-bikes and 50 pedal bikes are available to hire from a network of 53 beryl bays around the city.

A map of all bays and the number of available bikes can be found on the beryl app and website.

For more information about the scheme and how to sign up:



### The Community Services Directory gets a new look

The Community Services Directory is an online platform for all residents in Worcestershire to find helpful information about registered health and wellbeing groups, services, and activities locally and across the county.

With over 500 groups and services registered on the directory, it's a way to enable people to stay informed, healthy, and connect to local services and voluntary and community groups across Worcestershire. A fresh look will launch this Autumn.

Find out more or add your service or group: worcestershire.gov.uk/CommunityServicesDirectory

#### **Worcestershire On Demand**



Worcestershire on Demand buses provide transport on demand rather than using fixed routes and timetables. The service was successfully launched as a pilot in Bromsgrove in July 2021, followed by a second service covering the south of the Malvern Hills District, which started operating last year.

Over 65,000 journeys have been made on Worcestershire's On Demand buses since they launched three years ago.

Due to its growing popularity, the service is due to expand to the northeast of the county covering Wythall, Alvechurch, Stoke Pound and Stoke Prior. As part of the new launch, new riders will get their first journey free of charge.

On demand buses offer a flexible, affordable, and sustainable form of public transport. Find out more and book a journey: **worcestershire.gov.uk/WOD** 

### **Community Story: Jacks Place**

Jacks Place Care CIC is a community-based day centre for older adults, adults with disabilities and adults with mental health issues and is situated in a rural location on a working farm in Berrow, near Malvern.

Jacks Place worked with Sarah Edwards from Spare Room Arts on a collaborative visual arts project. The art piece was made from cardboard and showcased unique things important to the clients as well as the beautiful Malvern Hills.

"Undertaking arts projects such as this one is so important to me and the other members of the group – they



give us a sense of purpose, bring us together as a group, we learn new skills, we have a laugh and we get such a sense of achievement seeing a final piece of art that we have all worked on together."

#### **Jacks Place client**

Find out more about Jacks Place via the link: jacksplacecare.co.uk



### **MMR vaccinations clinics**

While Worcestershire's MMR vaccination rates is one of the highest in the West Midlands with over 90% of children being vaccinated with two doses by the time they are 5 years old, the number of people getting measles in the West Midlands region has been rising.

In partnership with local NHS colleagues, Worcestershire County Council Public Health hosted free pop-up clinics in libraries across the county throughout February. 144 people attended to be vaccinated, as well as others who attended with their child's personal health record (known as their Red Book) to check if they had already been vaccinated.

Plans are being put in place for further outreach MMR clinics to encourage vaccination in areas and communities where MMR uptake rates are lower, which will be provided by our mobile 'Your Health Your Wellbeing' service.

# Free drug and alcohol training supports school and youth teams

School and youth services staff have welcomed new free drug and alcohol training across the county. Having listened to the experience of school and youth teams, Worcestershire County Council has been working with Hope UK to deliver free sessions to those working with young people.

As part of a Safer Worcestershire project with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, the training aims to equip professionals to better support young people and reduce the risk of them becoming involved in drugs, alcohol and criminality.

Visit the website for more information:

You can stay up to date on news, reports, data and community stories on our health and wellbeing Insights website:

insights.worcestershire.gov.uk



