



The Health
Improvement
Commission



2024
ANNUAL REPORT

A healthier life for our islands.

Our mission is to empower, enable and encourage healthy living in Guernsey and Alderney.



Foreword From Our Chair



I am delighted to present the Commission’s 2024 Annual Report – another year of significant progress and improvement.

Highlights of 2024 included the success of our conference (see page 7), the continuing progress of our Eat Well and Be Active initiatives (especially in education settings) and the Substance Use team’s continued work in the

community and with our commissioned services. In Healthier Weight, we have collaborated with Public Health Services in the development of a programme to support new adult weight management services (see page 20). These have the potential to be transformational for people in Guernsey, and address health inequalities. Furthermore, these programmes are likely to improve public finances over the medium and long term. Finally, the BSP team completed its multi-year, independently financed pilot project. I am especially delighted that the positive outcomes demonstrated by this work have led to committed States funding benefiting not only those who use BSP’s services but also the health service and the wider economy.

Particular thanks are due to Dr Simon Sebire, our CEO, and to our excellent, committed and hard-working staff, also to fellow directors for their support and engagement. In addition, we highly value the insight and counsel of Dr Nicola Brink, our partners within States departments, and the private and third sectors and, of course, our Patrons.

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About the Health Improvement Commission

Established in 2018, The Health Improvement Commission for Guernsey and Alderney LBG is a charitable organisation (CH601) that brings together public, private and third sectors to encourage, enable and empower healthy living in Guernsey and Alderney.

Our Vision

For our islands to be places that support us all to lead a healthier life

Our Mission

To empower, enable and encourage healthy living in Guernsey and Alderney

Our work focusses on the leading causes of preventable non-communicable disease and ill-health locally; unhealthy diets, obesity and overweight, physical inactivity, tobacco, alcohol and drug use, as well as the social causes of health.

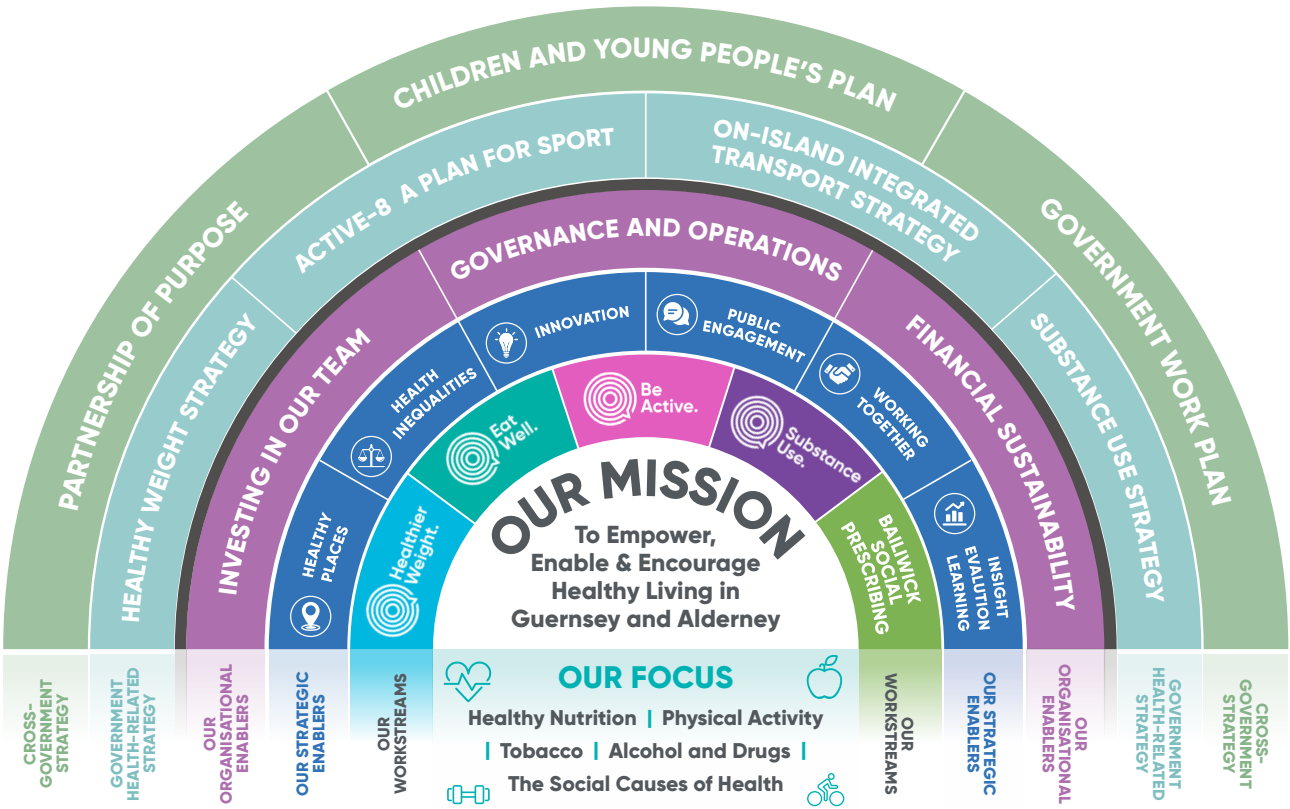
We prioritise prevention and early intervention focussing on five areas:
Eat Well, Be Active, Healthier Weight, Substance Use and Social Prescribing.



Working in close collaboration with a range of sectors, organisations and individuals we identify, develop, fund and deliver initiatives, community-led projects and services which improve health.

We also provide non-financial support and expertise on health improvement matters, run campaigns, develop resources, undertake research and provide education and workforce development.

We commission community-based services, advocate for health and advise on health-related policy in our areas of focus.



Governance

In 2024 our team comprised 17 staff; 11 direct employees and 6 staff seconded from the States of Guernsey.

Our Board of Directors meet every 6-8 weeks and we are grateful to our volunteer Directors; Mike Bane, Glen Broadhurst, Rachel Copeland BEM, Michelle Le Clerc and Edel Falla.

The Director of Public Health, Dr Nicola Brink MBE, joins our meetings as an attendee and States of Guernsey representative.

We are also grateful to our Patrons Sir John Collins, Elizabeth Couch and Andy Prialux MBE.

Our Funding

The majority of our funding is through service level agreements with the States of Guernsey, linked to government health improvement strategies, or other States strategies which are relevant to health improvement. We raise additional funding outside of government to add value to States funding for example to deliver projects such as the Bailiwick Social Prescribing pilot scheme.

Organisational Development

2024 saw positive developments in each of our strategic Organisational Enablers; Investing in our team, Financial Sustainability and Governance and Operations.



Team L-R: Sarah Penney, Sam Green, Alex Costen, Trish De Carteret, Ellie Gould, Lucy Cave, Alex Bowtle, Maddy Diligent, Evie Hollis, Andrea Nightingale, Cat Tyrrell, Candace Green, Jo Hollyer-Hill, Dr Simon Sebire, Alex Kosmas (absent), Caroline Hoar (absent)

Investing in Our Team

Evie Hollis joined HSC as Adult Weight Management Dietitian in May. Evie mainly works clinically, but is seconded to the Commission and contributes to other initiatives related to diet and health.

Our team away day in November focussed on collaboration and communication styles in addition to valuable team building.

In 2024 our team undertook a range of training including:

- Health behaviour change
- Motivational interviewing
- Health inequalities
- Healthy urban design
- School physical activity
- Cyber security
- Leadership

Financial Sustainability

We successfully secured funding for Bailiwick Social Prescribing to continue beyond the pilot programme.

We raised £132,574 in addition to our funding from the States of Guernsey. Thank you to the businesses, charities and grant givers who generously supported our work in 2024.

Governance and Operations

Edel Falla joined the Board as a Director in 2024. With a background in pharmacy, health economics and research and development, Edel brings a wealth of knowledge to the Board.

The Commission adopted a digital HR platform, streamlining many of our processes.

We joined Liberate's Rainbow Mark programme.



Communications

Community Stories and Impact

In 2024 we focussed on using human stories and video to communicate our work and document our impact. We created short videos for each of our workstreams, as well as videos focussing on projects such as our Early Years work on healthy nutrition.

Our films featuring the stories of local people who have successfully quit smoking and promoting Quitline continue to feature in local GP surgeries, Beau Sejour and other public locations.

11,200 online views across 20 short films

"Lunch boxes are 200% better than they were when we first started this venture, which is amazing."

Elaine Allen, Manager / Owner – Butterflies Pre-school

Building on training from the Lloyds Foundation and the Social Investment Fund, we've adopted an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach to communicating the impact of our work.

Focussing on three questions: 'What did we do?', 'How well did we do it?' and 'Is anyone better off?'. Throughout the year we produced a range of OBA infographics across various projects.

"The Health Improvement Commission [are] experts about what they do and they're really passionate about the science behind what they do. When you're working with them you can get excited about new projects."

Aaron Davies, Service Manager, Action for Children

Advocacy for Health Improvement

In 2024, our work featured across the media in print, tv and radio. In line with our conference theme, we focussed on advocacy around the importance of prevention for improving health and were delighted that this resulted in extensive features in both the Bailiwick Express and the Guernsey Press.

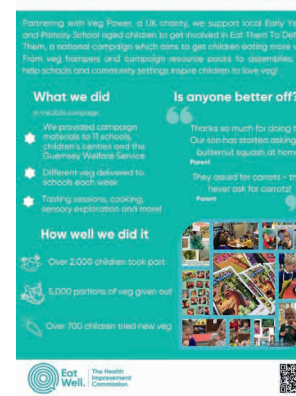
Social Media and Website

Our social media presence continues to grow and evolve responding to changes in the popularity of some platforms. 2024 saw a 15% increase in our social media followers and over 200,000 engagements.

Creating Active Schools



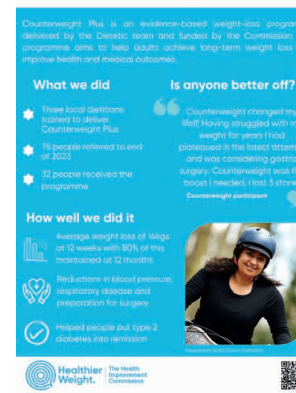
Eat Them To Defeat Them



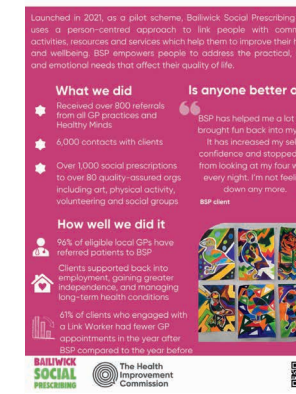
The Count 14 Campaign



Counterweight Plus



Bailiwick Social Prescribing



A selection of OBA's (Outcome based accountability) from our workstreams

Our website attracted over 17,300 page views, including 4,600 new visitors

Increased Visibility

Articles shown below have been published in: Guernsey Press (Including "In Focus" stories on prevention and BSP), Bailiwick Express, ITV, BBC News, TV and Radio, Aurigny inflight magazine, Channel Eye and Island FM online.



NEWS FOCUS - PREVENTING ILL HEALTH



Prevention of major part of



by Mark Ogier

maogier@guernseypress.com

PREVENTION of ill health is increasingly at the centre of discussion when senior health professionals meet to talk about the future of health and care in the island.

There are benefits to the individual of remaining healthier for longer – and to public services and taxpayers as people avoid or delay the need for expensive drugs and stays in hospital.

Dr Nicola Brink, who has been the island's medical officer of health since 2018, identified 10 chronic illnesses which were likely to increase in people over the age of 75, a part of the population which is quickly and significantly increasing in size.

"What we can say is that the current hospital capacity will not serve our needs and that is the biggest and strongest argument for putting in prevention," said Dr Brink.

Currently, 10% of the island's population was over 75, but in 20 years' time this was expected to be 17% – not far off a doubling in size in the space of just two decades.

Assumptions used by professionals planning future health and care services show an anticipated increase in hospital bed days of approximately 30%.

Sceptics of the role which prevention should play in health planning had argued that it would lead to a rise in longevity, and therefore the economic arguments for major investment in prevention were weak, but Dr Brink disputed this.

She said work done by public health officials suggested that longevity in the island was probably at or very near its peak and any rise in the foreseeable future was likely to be insignificant.

Dr Brink said it was important to realise that prevention was not just about very early intervention and stopping people becoming ill, but also about helping patients with chronic diseases already to remain as healthy as possible, and keeping them out of hospital.

Her views were shared by Dr Peter Rabey, who has been Health & Social Care's medical director since 2015.

HSC president Deputy Al Brouard has indicated that, if resources allowed, he would be happy to invest in all drugs approved by the UK's National Institute for Clinical Excellence, but Dr Rabey said there was a strong case for shifting more investment into the prevention of ill health.

"If we want to go to the same cancer drug fund type of funding that the UK has in place, that's a political decision. We will take the money and we will spend it and some patients will benefit," said Dr Rabey.

"But for me the best next investment in health and social care in Guernsey is to ringfence some money for prevention, because we will be thanked in 10 or 20 years' time for doing that."

INVESTMENT in preventing ill health has a long way to go before it equals money spent on treating diseases and conditions.

Health Improvement Commission chief executive Dr Simon Sebire would like preventative medicine to be seen as no less important.

But he said the island's current investment in prevention was only a fraction of what it spends on people who already require treatment.

"Nobody is going to suggest stopping treatment services. Therefore, if we're going to invest in prevention, we're going to have to do it at the same time as the treatment."

"You have to be brave," said Dr Sebire. But he expected that increasing work on prevention would, over time, reduce the demand for acute and chronic health services.

"You will see that only if you take a medium- and long-term view and invest in treatment and prevention at the same time, and I think that's possibly the next step for us here."

The Health Improvement Commission was set up in 2018 as part of the Partnership of Purpose, developed by the previous Health & Social Care Committee and approved by the previous States.

It operates as a charity independently of the States. It was established to bring together the public, private and third sectors to help limit diseases and conditions, which are more typical later in life, and can be expensive to treat.

"Health improvement is a broad area. Our real mission is to enable, empower and encourage healthier lives, and to do that we focus on the leading causes of preventable ill health."

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Some of the commission's initiatives are offered directly to people who want to lose weight or take other actions to improve their health, while others are more focused on creating healthier environments.

Its website features details of five key areas of work – eating well, healthier weight, being active, substance misuse, and social prescribing, which revolves around helping people to access support and services in the community which can improve their health and wellbeing.

The commission recently launched a campaign to provide a food map of the island, which it called Nourishing Guernsey. Some of its work is with schools, encouraging children to think about what they eat. It has initiatives for young people and adults.

"Prevention is absolutely critical," said Dr Sebire. "This is a bit like an oil tanker. It takes a long time to turn. People use that phrase for lots of things, but it really is going to take time to turn trends around."

"We have to keep that focus on prevention, even when systems are facing acute challenges."

Over the past 10 to 15 years, attitudes towards prevention have changed, with more focus on how a person's surroundings shape them and affect their behaviour, whereas in the past more attention was paid to health promotion and encouraging individual responsibility for making healthier choices.

"I'd really love to see a common currency of prevention across government, where everybody sees prevention is their business, whether they are the Health & Social Care Committee or a different committee," said Dr Sebire.

"Ultimately, our surroundings are created by all of these different areas, so everyone can do something towards prevention."

He said he perceived a shift towards looking at the building blocks of health and 'understanding what housing means for health and what people's poverty means for health and working conditions, and so forth'.

"Without those things in place, it's very difficult to have a healthy society."

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NEWS FOCUS - PREVENTING ILL HEALTH

ill health needs to be future health planning

Chest and Heart Guernsey manager Caroline Ogier said there was clearly more awareness of prevention today than there was in the past.

"Prevention is always better than cure," she said.

However the health service has a budget, and they are very busy spending their budget supporting those patients who need health care and are unwell.

She agreed that there was a gap for work on prevention to fill in her clinic's area of expertise, but added that was nothing new and was the same across all areas of health care and wellbeing.

Chest and Heart is associated with another charity, Health Connections, and also gets involved in social prescribing.

"Working in partnership with a lot of different charitable organisations is really key to promoting preventative health care"

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Henry helping with the healthy eating message

HENRY is the name of a programme developed by the Health Improvement Commission to encourage exercise and healthy eating in young children and help prevent obesity.

Health Exercise and Nutrition in the Ready Young is aimed at parents of children up to the age of five and delivered via health visitors and children's centres.

"It's a project that helps them understand physical activity, nutrition, parenting strategies, and how to manage, for example, a child who might be more choosy around what they eat," said Dr Simon Sebire, chief executive of the commission.

The programme also focuses on shared cooking and tasting experiences. Dr Sebire said that a number of families had used the programme. They did not need to attend special sessions because the work of the programme could be included in their daily or weekly encounters with health professionals to make sure a consistent message was supplied about health and nutrition.

The commission has also worked with Hautes Capelles Primary School to bring in a healthy snack policy to help pupils reach their recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

They were given the opportunity to eat one of their five-a-day during break time. Figures from the latest local child measurement programme report showed that the island had a much lower rate of overweight and obese children compared to the UK and Jersey.

About 16% of children in Year 1 in Guernsey were overweight, whereas in Jersey the figure was more than 25% and in the UK it was 22%.

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Conference 2024

Five Years of Prioritising Prevention

In June we marked our fifth year of operation with a conference titled "Prevention and Partnership for a Healthier Future". We were joined by 120 delegates from across the public, private and third sectors as well as States Deputies and a contingent from Public Health Jersey for a day of health improvement themed talks and workshops.

The conference was opened by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor Richard Cripwell, CB, CBE, who reflected on his personal and

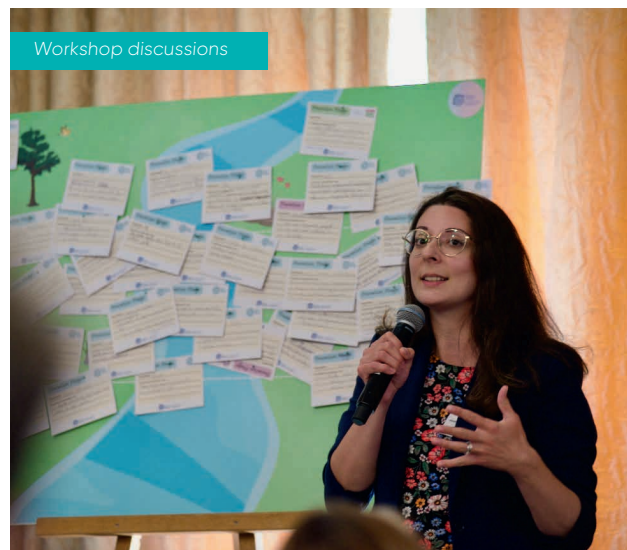
professional experiences to focus delegates on the importance of health improvement for an inclusive community.

We were delighted to welcome two keynote speakers; Professor Kevin Fenton, CBE, FFPH, FRCP, PhD – President of the UK Faculty of Public Health and Dr Kelly Parsons, Research Associate in food systems, from the University of Cambridge. Professor Fenton outlined current complexities and challenges to the health of the public, the case for investing in prevention, early intervention and health equity. Dr Parsons used our food system as an example of how the whole of civil society has a role to play in shaping our health.

"Congratulations on an excellent conference, I very much enjoyed it and found it really informative. The agenda was very good, the speakers were great and the videos were a very clever way to show the important contribution of the whole team. I hope the decision makers in the room took away the need for transformation when it comes to health and preventative healthcare. To use an analogy I learnt today, we shouldn't be trying to reshape a caterpillar but be working towards a butterfly!"

Conference Delegate Feedback





"I just wanted to say 'Congratulations' to everyone at HIC – what a fantastic conference you organised on Thursday – wonderful, inspirational speakers and such a lovely event with so much 'food for thought' excuse the pun!! Shows what a fantastic job with demonstrable outcomes a charity can do with 'collaborative commissioning' as the model."

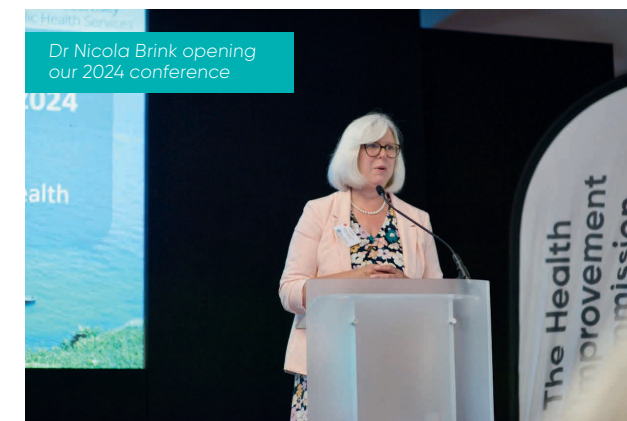
Conference Delegate Feedback

After lunch, delegates took part in a workshop which asked them to identify actions that they could take, in their sector of work or influence to support health improvement across our five workstreams. In 40 minutes, over 250 ideas were generated ranging from sustainable funding, alcohol-free social opportunities, workplace health, nutritious school meals, breastfeeding support, active travel infrastructure and health and fiscal policy and regulation.



Throughout the day, our team presented short films showcasing our work and its impact. These are available on our website.

Our thanks to St Pierre Park Hotel who hosted and facilitated an active meeting including a healthy lunch. We are also grateful to the conference sponsors; Adventure Cycles, Clarity and Aspida Group.





Creating the conditions for healthy eating in the Bailiwick

Supporting Change in Early Years Nutrition

For five years, our joint initiative with States Early Years has seen our team support all nurseries and pre-school settings in Guernsey and Alderney to implement an Eat Well policy – a comprehensive whole-setting approach to good nutrition. This universal project is leading to positive impacts on thousands of children's nutrition and health.

In 2024 we repeated our survey of children's lunch boxes, which was first undertaken in 2018, aiming to identify the impact of our work. Using data from 136 lunchboxes (with parent consent) across five settings we found:



99% of lunchboxes contained fruit (85% in 2018)



50% of lunchboxes contained vegetables (32% in 2018)

Switching to wholegrain carbohydrates remains a challenge, and whilst processed meat has decreased from 86% to 82% in lunchboxes that had a source of protein, it remains a common feature in lunchboxes, as do sugary snacks.



Scan the QR code to watch our film on 5 years of improving nutrition in the Early Years



Growing Gang in action at St Anne's Alderney

"We've seen a huge improvement in menus with lots of reflection regarding the balance of food groups offered. Some practitioners are involving children in preparing snacks. As a result lots of children are eating more variety of foods in Early Years settings and also at home because this has been fed back to parents. The positive impact has been really strong across the board."

Kate Hynes, Early Years Education Officer

"The children have really enjoyed the process of watching their seeds grow and getting to take some produce home."

Monkey Puzzle Preschool



The Growing Gang

We delivered The Growing Gang project again in 2024, providing early years practitioners everything that they need to engage children in hands-on vegetable growing activities; learning about where food comes from and tasting a variety of vegetables.

In 2024 approximately 900 children from 20 settings took part – an increase in engagement from 15 settings in 2022. A huge thank you to the Friquet Garden Centre who donated 28 bags of compost and 130 packets of seeds to help bring the project to life!

Nutrition Knowledge Sharing

Our team continued to provide training to early years practitioners in 2024 with 14 professionals from 9 settings receiving training in how to support parents and carers with their children's nutrition. We also worked directly with parents and carers themselves.

Training in nutrition was also provided to students and apprentices at The Guernsey Institute.

We were also delighted to be invited to share our work with an early years network group comprising members from around the UK run by Bremner & Co, a UK food policy and food systems organisation, who recently released a report on the role of Local Authorities in Early Years Nutrition. We will continue this work in 2025 to share good practice and learn from this network.





Children, Young People and Schools



Eat Them to Defeat Them

For the fifth consecutive year, this initiative was taken up by 11 schools, with five community settings also participating for the first time. Approximately 700 children took part, trying and eating over 5,000 portions of vegetables.



Lunchbox Heroes

When we work with parents they often ask for ideas and inspiration for lunchboxes.

In collaboration with the Channel Islands Coop and Jersey Public Health, the new Lunchbox Heroes initiative introduces in-store signage across all Coop shops in the Channel Islands showing which foods are the healthier and more nutritious options for a child's lunchbox.



The in-store promotion is complemented by island-wide advertising in the Guernsey Press and online as well as our resources including shopping lists, recipes, videos and nutrition tips which are available online.



Primary teachers taking part in food curriculum training

Cooking in the Curriculum

In 2024 we worked with Education Officers and all primary school Design & Technology leads to review the Food and Nutrition section of the Design & Technology curriculum with the aim of making cooking more equitable and healthier in primary schools.

As well as informing changes to the curriculum, in February we delivered a training day for 9 primary Design & Technology Leads which included how to help children make simple healthy recipes that are easy to follow and expose them to a variety of flavours and textures.

We also supported 8 schools including making links with their Secondary feeder schools to use their kitchens, providing basic equipment such as chopping boards and knives and giving 1:1 support for teachers.

"Having on-island experts in food and nutrition that can support with either their knowledge in the

subject area or tapping into additional resources has been invaluable. As a result of this joint working our schools should be better equipped and the pupils' learning experience will be richer."

Jess Melniks, Education Development Officer

Pupil-Power Leads to Healthier 'Focus on Our Diets'

In 2024, Hautes Capelles Primary really stood out for their work on improving nutrition in their school. Having worked with us since 2022 the school identified a member of staff as their Eat Well Lead to implement their whole-school approach to nutrition.

They established a pupil group – self-named as the FOOD team, which stands for "Focus On Our Diets". We worked with the FOOD team to gather pupils' opinions and ideas for change. This resulted in the pupils leading on a new school-wide snack policy; that all morning snacks should be either fruit or vegetables.

The FOOD team developed videos about healthy snacks and launched the policy in an assembly with free fruit and vegetables for each pupil. Hedge veg boxes were kindly built by the team at GROW and were decorated by the FOOD team to present the free fruit and vegetables they receive each week from Les Cotils.

The new approach means that every child now eats nearly 200 of fruit and vegetables at school, each year. For a child who previously had a snack bar or a bag of crisps, we estimate that they will have 500 fewer sugar cubes or 10 fewer teaspoons of salt in the school year due to this simple pupil-led change.

"It is making children healthier by having a breaktime snack of fruit and veg. Maybe it will encourage children to have more fruit and veg in their lunchbox now."

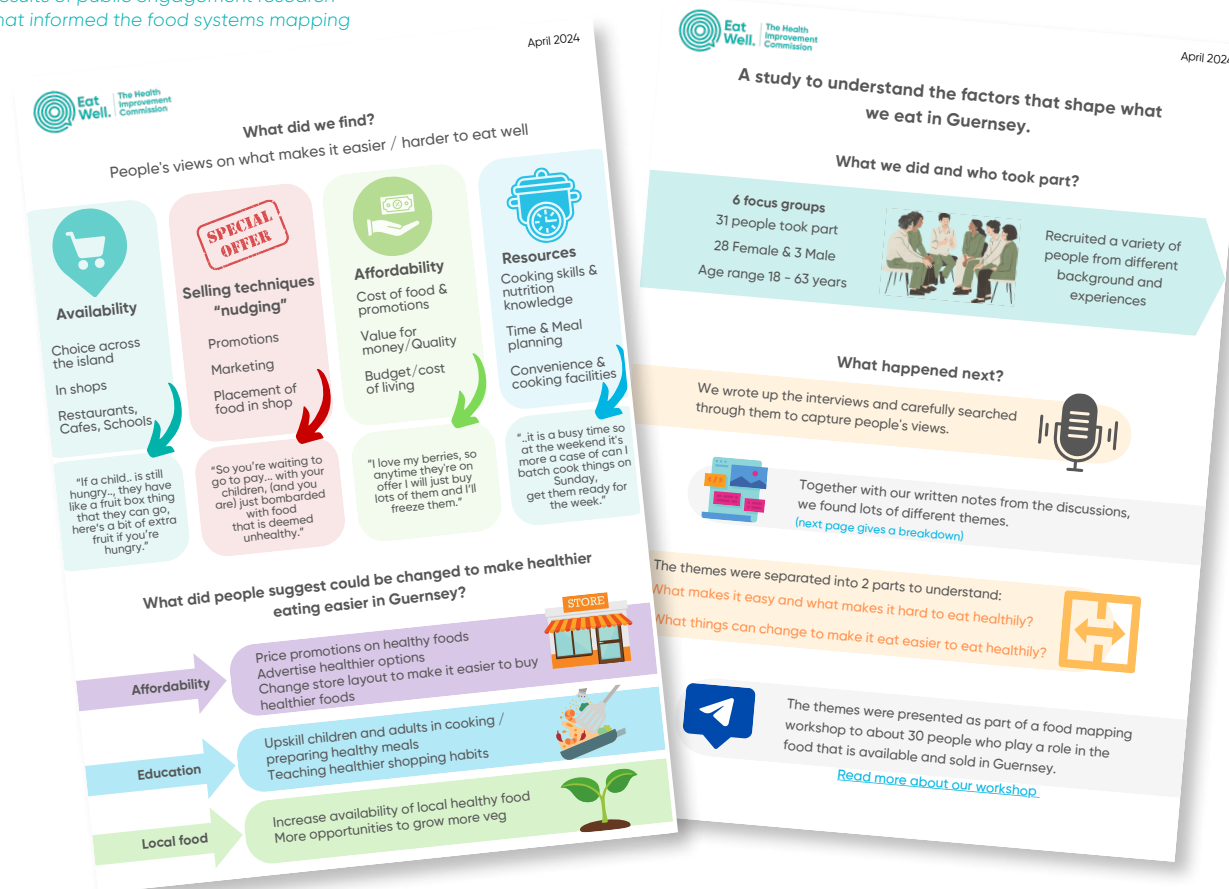
Esmail Allen, aged 8 and member of the pupil-led food group



"It's really clear to see how this small change has benefitted our pupils. Our pupil-led food group is still going strong, and they enjoy coming up with new ideas for eating well at school. Parents are also in support, and we now see more fruit and veg being sent in with lunchboxes. We're lucky as well to have some fruit donated each week from Les Cotils. Eating fruit or veg at breaktime is now so normalised with our pupils, that they readily help themselves to a portion from our decorated hedge veg stalls if they don't already have a piece in their lunchbox."

(Stephanie Williams, Teacher and Eat Well Lead at Hautes Capelles)

Results of public engagement research that informed the food systems mapping



Mapping Guernsey's Food System

What we eat is strongly determined by our unique local food system, so the Commission was pleased to launch Nourishing Guernsey in 2024, the island's first attempt to create a map of our local food system, from farm (and boat!) to fork.

This project aims to help us better understand the different parts of our food system, and how they combine to shape our opportunity to access nutritious, affordable food. We also want to find ways that our food system could change to make it easier for all Islanders to eat well. We are very

grateful to Professor Martin White and his team from The University of Cambridge's Centre for Diet and Activity Research (CEDAR) for collaborating with us on this project.

As a first step we conducted focus groups with the public to explore their views on factors that shape their access to nutritious food in Guernsey. The results are shown above.

The focus of the project has been the co-development what's known as a causal loop diagram – a visual representation of the elements of our food system, how they connect, interact and impact our diet. This was achieved through two participatory workshops each with 30 stakeholders including representatives from retail, education, catering, hospitality, agriculture, logistics & policy. 35 further food system stakeholders were engaged to explore topics raised in the workshops.



The CEDAR team are now creating an open-source interactive system map which will be used to explore strategies that could improve our local food system to better support health.



More people,
more active,
more often

Movement as Medicine



It's commonly said that 'If physical activity were a pill, it would be the most commonly prescribed medication in the world'. That's why the Commission have focussed on promoting the integration of physical activity in healthcare.

In 2024, we supported all three local Primary Care groups to sign up to the Royal College of General Practice Active Practice Charter. This recognises their commitment to reduce sedentary behaviour and increase physical activity in staff and patients and that they have partnered with a local physical activity provider.

All practices received Physical Activity Clinical Champion training in 2024 delivered by Dr Georgina Sowman – Sport England Physical Activity Clinical Champion, with the University of Sheffield Hallam and access to a free local resource pack created by the Be Active team.



Active Ageing

Physical activity is a cornerstone of healthy ageing. In 2024 we worked with care homes, residential facilities, carers and healthcare coordinators to increase workforce knowledge of physical activity and recommendations for active ageing. We support teams to explore practical ways to promote physical activity amongst older adults alongside our new activity pack.



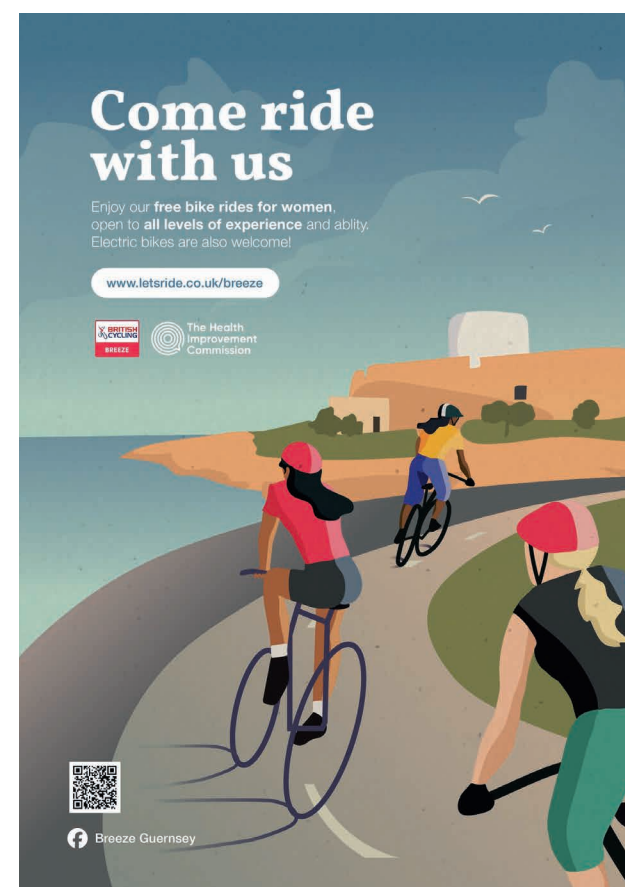
We also launched a new 'virtual cycling' initiative for residents of local care homes to keep active. Ten settings were provided with stationary pedal units that can be used by residents whilst seated. Films have been created of local cycle routes, including through Talbot Valley and along the St Peter Port seafront and are shown on a screen motivating residents and stimulating memories of local places.

Active Workplaces

In 2024, 10 private sector businesses worked with us on our Be Active at Work programme to embed physical activity in their workplace, reaching over 1,300 employees. We've also worked with the States of Guernsey HR team in 2024 and have developed active travel plans for Sir Charles Frossard House and Edward T Wheadon House, including promotion of e-bikes for staff to use and promotion of walking routes.

Making Cycling a Breeze

The 2023 Health and Wellbeing survey measured levels of active travel for the first time. Findings showed that 77.7% of respondents had used walking or cycling for transport in the 12 months before the survey – higher than the 56.9% reported in England. However, fewer women than men report cycling for travel.



The Commission launched Breeze Guernsey in 2024, a programme of free bike rides for women, in partnership with British Cycling. Nine women were trained by British Cycling to lead groups of women returning to cycling, lacking confidence or wanting to join a social ride. Twenty rides were led, involving 104 riders – with more planned for 2025.

Celebrating Local Cyclists

Six 'yellow snoods' were presented to an additional six secondary school students and one member of the community in 2024 as a celebration of people who have embraced cycling as a positive means of travel. This is part of an award instigated by the Commission to

recognise exceptional people who have used cycling to change their lives and the lives of others.

Learn to Cycle

Within schools, a Learn to Cycle course was facilitated in 2024 responding to community interest in options for children who lacked sufficient confidence in cycling to access Bikeability. As a result, a programme was piloted in St Martin's Primary who ran lunchtime sessions for a group of children who didn't have the ability or confidence to ride a bike on the roads. This enabled the children to then access Bikeability training and they can now ride to school.



In addition, adult cycle skills courses funded by the Commission were attended by **33 adults**

Empowering Schools With Activity Data

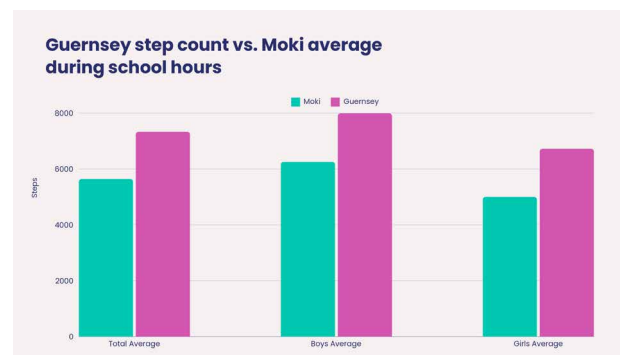
All schools are different and have unique pupil physical activity profiles. We believe that equipping schools with bespoke insight into the physical activity levels of their pupils can help to identify ways to embed physical activity in the school day.

In 2024, data from 789 pupils in 11 primary schools were collected using wearable activity monitors called Mokis. As a group, the results showed that 62% of children get 30 minutes of moderate-vigorous intensity activity in the school day.

That means children are 23% more active than comparable data in the UK, highlighting strong in-school activity levels.

'The children have loved using the activity bands. The data has given us really useful evidence of the patterns of activity both in school and beyond. We will use the results to ensure our pupils have every opportunity to lead healthy, active lives.'

Primary school Deputy Head Teacher.



The data has been used to open conversations with schools resulting in initiatives including the purchase of a set of 'Brainballs' for schools to use, which are small soft balls with letters and numbers, that encourage learning by playing.

Creating Active Schools

The Commission continues to support schools to integrate activity into all aspects of school life, from an active school ethos and active learning to active breaks and active travel and through improvements to the environment.

May 2024's travel survey showed 60% of primary school children reported active travel, the highest level since twice-yearly monitoring began in 2020.



All primary schools have a school travel plan and meet with the Commission's Active Travel Officer and Traffic and Highway's Road Safety Officer on an annual basis.

Thirteen new cycle shelters were installed across the Education estate, plus 50 additional hoops added at St Sampson's High School. La Houquette School Street is now in a long-term trial period after a campaign led by their pupils, and following the success of the St Martin's initiative which was made permanent in legislation.

As one of a range of ideas to encourage active travel and make it safer for pupils and families travelling to Castel Primary school, parking was suspending in Rue Masse for a trial period. We were delighted that this was then made permanent after a positive response from the school and community.

In 2024 we funded a further three schools to install new road markings in their playgrounds (including mini-roundabouts and yellow lines) for children to practice their bike skills in a safe environment, with more upgrades in planning. The Commission has also funded two early years settings to improve their playgrounds with new markings to encourage play.

Three schools were identified as not having enough balance or small pedal bikes to be able to engage with all infant children at their school. Six bikes were donated, alongside encouragement to use a resource called Ready Set Ride.



Active in Nature at KGV

Playing outdoors is a fun way for young children to be active, learn about and connect with nature and build their confidence through adventure.

Using grant funding from the Nature Commission, we introduced 'Wild Wednesday's' in 2024, where early years settings are invited to explore the KGV nature trail for a morning of nature-based activity, supported by a range of interactive educational resources from tree and plant identification to nature stories and insect hunting! Rounded off with a healthy fruit snack, the children enjoy going wild at KGV.

353 children from 18 early years settings and two primary schools took part in 2024.

"The children love being outside in their wellies and splashing around in the mud."

Angela Salmon, Head of Operations and Education at The Nature Commission.

"It's a known fact children learn so much more outside... They love it."

Preschool Teacher



Supporting people to achieve and maintain a healthier weight

Expanding the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme



Breastfeeding is linked to many health benefits for both mother and child, including reduced likelihood of developing obesity and diabetes later in life for the child. Feelings of isolation and fear of breastfeeding in public are amongst some of the reasons why women stop breastfeeding. The Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme aims to support families to feel more confident breastfeeding out and about and further normalise breastfeeding in the community.



The scheme initially commenced in 2018 under the States of Guernsey's Breastfeeding Strategy with State's buildings displaying signage to indicate that they are breastfeeding friendly settings. The absence of resource in government prevented expansion of the scheme beyond government buildings.

In 2024 we took on the roll out of the scheme into the community starting with hospitality venues such as cafes and restaurants. We refreshed the branding of the scheme, created information packs for businesses and provided support to establishments who chose to join. The scheme launched in December and 10 businesses had enrolled by the end of the year. These community

venues can be identified by a pink sticker displayed in their window and are listed on the Commission's website.

Developing Adult Weight Management Services

Full details of the Adult Weight Management Service delivered within Health and Social Care in 2024 are available in the 2024 Healthier Weight Strategy Annual Report (www.gov.gg/healthierweightstrategy). Due to continued staff shortage the service was paused in February 2024. Whilst this was a difficult decision, the Commission is strongly supportive of Health and Social Care's efforts to focus on developing appropriate weight management services which meet our community's needs.

The Commission funds the Counterweight Plus programme, a 12-month programme which supports individuals who require 15% weight loss for medical reasons, delivered by the HSC dietitians. Whilst service numbers were small in 2024 due to limited capacity, the programme remains a valuable option available locally. Testimonials can be seen in this film by scanning the QR code.



We are hoping to expand the initiative in 2025 to incorporate group-based delivery, allowing more people to access the programme.

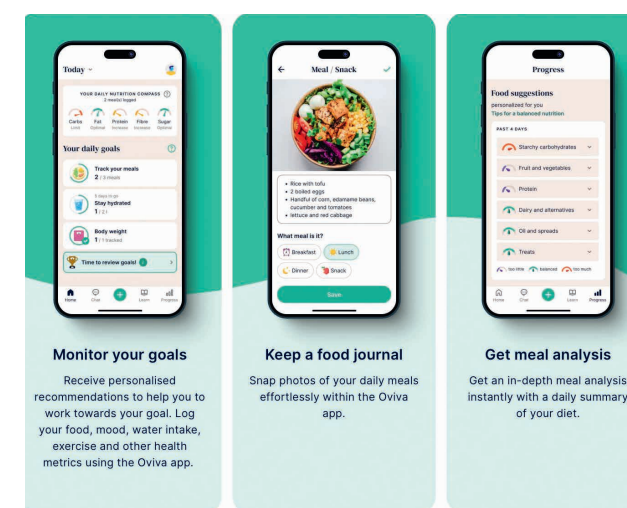
Extensive work continued in 2024 in close partnership with Public Health and the Healthier Weight Technical Team to identify a feasible 'Tier 3' service which would provide service users with support from a Physician, Dietitian, Psychologist, Nurse Prescriber and Health Coach, including access to weight-loss medications where appropriate. This area is developing rapidly both locally and nationally due to advancements made in obesity medications. The Commission remains committed to contributing to the development and funding of programmes that

reduce health inequalities, stigma and improve access to appropriate and effective weight management support for our community.

Digital Weight Management Services

The Commission were pleased to partner with Dietetics and Public Health to commission a new evidence-based remote digital weight management service to meet demand for 'Tier 2' services locally. The Oviva Tier 2 digital weight management service commenced in December 2024. The service was initially offered to people on the local service waiting list and since has been opened up to self-referral for 2025.

The service is a pilot until the end of 2025, with capacity to support approximately 310 people. More information can be found here: oviva.com/uk/en/guernsey



Supporting Children, Young People and Families

In 2024, the clinic for 3.5-Year olds offered Healthier Lifestyle support to 511 children from Guernsey and 11 from Alderney. The clinic involves a range of assessments including height and weight with the results discussed with parents along with the opportunity to explore growth-related concerns and health behaviours. If a health need is identified, parents are offered further support, including advice and signposting to specialist services, ongoing one-to-one support with the Health Improvement Specialist Nurse, or referral to Fun with Food or the HENRY group.



3 'Fun with Food' groups were hosted at the Kindred Family Centre in 2024

These groups aim to help parents develop the skills and knowledge to support their child to develop positive relationships with food and feel more confident trying new foods.

HENRY: Healthy Exercise and Nutrition in the Really Young

The HENRY programme aims to support families to achieve a 'healthy start' in life for their children and is funded by The Commission. It consists of universal training in the HENRY approach for health professionals and the HENRY group programme for families.

The Kindred Family Centre hosted two 8-week HENRY groups in 2024, with demand for further groups but limited staff capacity. The programme offers parents a chance to share ideas and gain new skills and tools to support change in parenting efficacy, family lifestyle habits, emotional wellbeing, nutrition and physical activity.

Twenty-two families commenced the programme, 87% of whom completed. All respondents at the end of the programme described it as "Good" or "Great".



Whilst currently we have data from a relatively small number of completing families, evaluation of the group programme to date shows promising impact:

71% of respondents reported improved confidence in their parenting skills, and

On average respondents feel that their 'family lifestyle' had become healthier (score increase from pre-course = 4.8/10 to post-course = 7.5/10).



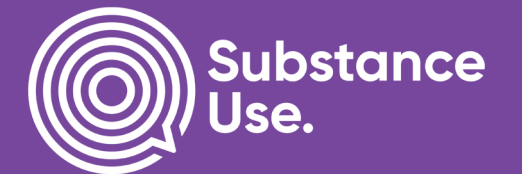
"It was good having the space to share your own personal experiences and help one another. My family is eating more home-cooked meals and doing more outdoor play."

HENRY Parent

"It was an eye-opening experience, both me and my husband were like wow, we should have found out about this a long time ago... we're a better team and family having experienced the Henry club."

HENRY Parent

Reducing harms associated with substance use and increasing the chances of sustained recovery



Community-Based Substance Use Services

Independence

We are now in the 4th year of our service level agreement with local charity Independence to provide a range of community-based substance support services for people affected by drugs and alcohol. This ranges from counselling (including support for affected family members) to the Criminal Justice Substance Service and the Needle Exchange.

Independence's 2024 Annual Report demonstrates another impactful year, working with 94 people within their counselling service, and 24 new clients within the Criminal Justice Substance Service. The majority of people are supported with alcohol dependence, and show meaningful change in their alcohol risk category and psychological functioning.



"I really appreciate how you are able to reflect things back to me in a different way that makes me really think about it and gives me fresh energy and motivation."

"I can't believe I have got to a place where I feel I don't need to use drugs or alcohol on a daily basis."

Service Users – Independence

In November 2024, we were delighted to see Independence move to new premises in Mill Street in November. Their new home provides a range of calm group and 1:1 spaces for their work with service users in a central location. This complements Independence's work to increase the visibility of their services amongst the community using social and traditional media.



The full Independence Annual Report can be read here. Thank you to Tracey Rear and her team for your continued collaboration.

Action for Children

In collaboration with the Committee for Employment and Social Security, under the Combined Substance Use Strategy, we co-fund the Guernsey Youth Housing Project delivered by Action for Children. Our funding ensures that substance use prevention, early intervention and 1:1 or small group support is embedded in the project alongside the provision of accommodation for vulnerable young people between the ages of 16 and 25.

Action for Children received 82 new referrals in 2024 including 37 individuals with needs related to substance use or risk for substance use.



Action for Children's Annual Report can be read here. Our thanks to Aaron Davies and his team for your collaboration.





New Social Spaces for Young People

2024 also saw Action for Children develop the new Social Spaces Project for young people, part-funded by the Commission. This project provides a space for young adults aged 16-25 to socialize, learn new skills, and meet with trusted professionals trained in substance use harm reduction. One of the initiatives, the "Coffee and Create" program, taught new skills over two months, allowing young people to create their own artwork.



Prison Substance Use Service

The Community Drug and Alcohol Team, the secondary care provider of drug and alcohol treatment services locally, has been contracted by the Commission to provide a Substance Use Service within the Guernsey Prison since January 2022. It is now well established and provides various treatment pathways including 1:1 or group interventions using motivational interviewing, anxiety management, Basic Dialectical

Behavioural Therapy, harm reduction, relapse prevention and recovery plans.



The full Prison Substance Use Service Annual Report can be read here. Our thanks to Jeff Evans and his team for their partnership working.

School-Based Education

We commission Action for Children to provide the substance use education programme in all local schools in Guernsey and Alderney. Age-appropriate and prevention-focussed lessons are delivered within PSHE from Year 5 (alcohol) through to Year 12, with more frequent alcohol lessons in Year 8 and two lessons on tobacco and vaping per year from years 7 to 10.

In total 500 hrs of education were provided in the 2023/4 academic year

"The Drug Lessons this week and last have been really engaging, and the students have asked lots of questions in a safe space."

Teacher

Alcohol Education Through Drama



In December we brought Solomon Theatre Productions to Guernsey for their 10th year to perform Last Orders – a performance and workshop package which, based on true events, helps students learn and develop the skills needed to respond to peer pressure around alcohol use and associated risky behaviours. The production was delivered to 550 Year 9 students from every Guernsey school and college.

"I learned to always be aware of your surroundings and not to trust people you haven't known for very long."

Pupil, St Sampsons High School

We are grateful to Rachel Sykes, Education's Health, Personal Development and Partnerships Officer, for collaborating closely with us on these programmes, as well as curriculum reviews, and responding to what is an ever-evolving area.

Public Awareness Campaigns



Our two alcohol awareness campaigns; Count 14 and Dry January continued in 2024 raising awareness of lower risk drinking habits using adverts on local taxis, prominent locations, radio and social media. Our 'Try Dry Jan GSY' Facebook page launched in 2024 to encourage people to join the challenge.

Our 2024 Stoptober campaign on social media encouraged people to share their stories to inspire others to stop smoking. People shared a wide range of personal experiences; from the

reasons they decided to quit, such as family, health scares, or financial pressures, to the methods they used, like nicotine replacement therapy, support groups, or mindfulness techniques. Many opened up about the emotional highs and lows of their journey, the setbacks they faced, and the tips that kept them going. The 'Share Your Story' initiative received a large number of responses, showcasing the community's commitment to supporting each other in their journey to quit smoking.

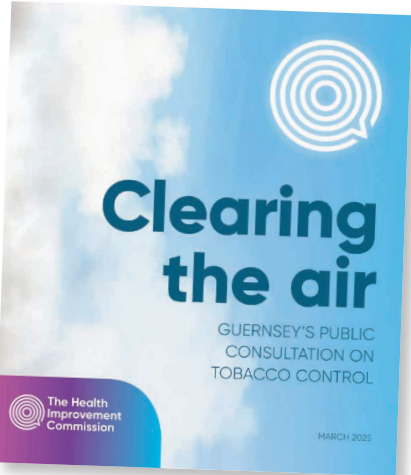
At the end of October 2024 in collaboration with Quitline we produced a survey to gather insights on what potential clients might like from their service, such as location, time, and appointment scheduling. This information will be used in 2025 as we continue our outreach and engagement efforts and helping more people to use local smoking cessation services.

Public's Views Gathered on the Future of Tobacco Control

In 2024 the Commission undertook a public polling project to document the community's opinion on the future of tobacco control policy in Guernsey. Our survey of 906 adults showed considerable public support for a range of new policies that could reduce smoking rates in Guernsey, from creating more smoke-free spaces to increasing the age of sale. All 11 policies that we tested received majority support.

Focus groups with young adults confirmed the survey findings, and revealed alternative ideas and perspectives on how policies could best protect children and young people from the harms of tobacco.

The findings were published in March 2025 and we intend to use the report to provide decision makers with evidence on which to develop Guernsey's future tobacco control policies.



The Clearing the Air report can be accessed in full here.

EXTRACTS FROM 'CLEARING THE AIR'

Key Findings

The **adult survey** showed that there is considerable public support for a range of new policies that aim to reduce smoking rates in Guernsey.

The 5 policies with the most support were:

- 1 **Ban smoking in children's playgrounds** 89% SUPPORT
- 2 **Ban smoking in transit areas such as covered bus shelters** 79% SUPPORT
- 3 **Increase the legal age of sale of tobacco from 18 to 21** 73% SUPPORT
- 4 **Ban smoking in outdoor areas of sports venues** 66% SUPPORT
- 5 **Ban smoking in outdoor areas of restaurants and cafés** 65% SUPPORT

All 11 policies received support from more than 50% of respondents. The most strongly opposed policy option was banning smoking in the outdoor areas of pubs and bars which was supported by 56% of respondents and opposed by 30%.

“The people that are wanting to smoke that are just below that [age] limit, they're just gonna buy it off the streets aren't they.”

EXTRACTS FROM 'CLEARING THE AIR'



Support for smoke-free spaces
There was strong support for creating more smoke-free public spaces, especially in areas frequented by children and large groups.

Extend smoking bans
There was support for extending indoor smoking bans to outdoor areas of restaurants and cafes although less support regarding bars and pubs.

Raise the age for buying tobacco
Raising the age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21 or higher was supported, though incremental age policies had mixed support from the focus groups.

Restrict tobacco retailers
The focus groups strongly believed that there are too many tobacco retailers, with suggestions to reduce their number, especially near schools and in large centres like St Peter Port. There was very strong support for limiting tobacco sales to specific parts of retail settings or to specialised tobacconists to prevent underage purchases and reduce impulse buying.

Address duty-free tobacco sales
The focus groups were concerned that duty-free tobacco provides a cheaper source often sold on to young people, undermining price control measures.

Community Training

Community-wide training for professionals who are supporting people using alcohol or drugs is coordinated by the Commission.

We aim to support the professional development of our local workforce and ensure consistent, evidence-based approaches to behaviour change across local sectors and services.

This continued in 2024 taking a multi-agency approach in collaboration with Action for Children and Independence, featuring a "train the trainer" workshop delivered by drugstraining.com. This has created a broader pool of local trainers who can work with different audiences.



In 2024, over 200 people, including health professionals, parents, workplaces/employers, and government were trained.

88% of attendees rated the sessions 4/5 or 5/5

We also funded:

- Three-day motivational interview training for 24 health professionals from six organisations.
- Multi-agency training/online conferences on policy and practice in areas including alcohol policy and e-cigarettes.

“The training was very informative. The team presented very well and were very approachable.”

BAILIWICK SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

Linking people to non-medical support, helping to improve health and wellbeing

Bailiwick Social Prescribing (BSP) is a social prescribing scheme that links people to activities, groups, and services in the community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing. People can be referred by their GP, Primary Care Allied Health Professionals, Healthy Minds practitioners and for those in custody Probation Officers or Offender Management Unit staff.

Our Link Workers provide people with personalised support to access social and community groups, voluntary organisations, and statutory services. This includes a range of options from physical activity and art to singing and green volunteering, as well as support to find help with issues such as housing, financial worries and bereavement.

BSP launched in 2021 as a pilot programme funded initially by the Guernsey Community Foundation, Public Health Services, the Health Improvement Commission and more recently the Social Investment Fund. 2024 was the final year of BSP's funding as a pilot programme.

Client Support

In 2024, 285 new clients were referred to BSP from across the island's GP practices and Healthy Minds. People referred to BSP ranged from 18 years old to over 90.

Since launch to the end of 2024 there have been 980 referrals to BSP.

The three most common needs impacting on client's health in 2024 were:

- Mental wellbeing, anxiety and low mood (present in 84% of referrals)
- Social isolation and loneliness (present in 65% of referrals)
- Physical activity, nutrition, sleep and healthy living (reported in 37% of referrals)

Link workers made 649 social prescriptions in 2024 to nearly 70 community partners

Successful outcomes were reported for 225 clients (including a cohort of clients still engaged from 2023)

Community Partnerships

In 2024, we entered into a new partnership with the prison to support people who are coming to the end of their sentence to be able to have some structure and activities in place when they leave prison to support their wellbeing. We will be working alongside the probation and officer management unit to provide this support.

We welcomed four new quality-assured charity partners and one private sector partner in 2024 who can offer social prescription opportunities to our clients in areas including young people's services and housing. We offered five training opportunities to our partners, including on topics such as substance use and grief.

The BSP community classes (Art, Tai Chi and Singing for Health) were attended by an average of 100 people per week and in 2024 received donation income of over £7000, which is invested back in to funding the classes.

In a partnership with Beau Sejour, 12 clients were supported with subsidised memberships to the Active Health gym for support to increase their physical activity.

Results of social prescribing are 'extremely encouraging'

Medical professionals deem initiative a success as its pilot scheme comes to an end

by Lucy Rouget

lrouget@guernseyexpress.com

BAILIWICK Social Prescribing has been deemed a success by medical professionals as the scheme's pilot comes to an end.

The scheme was launched in the summer of 2021 to help islanders with non-medical issues having an impact on their health by providing non-medical support through various activities, advice and counselling.

During the scheme, 656 people ranging in age from 18 to 90-plus, predominantly people of working age, were referred by a health practitioner to BSP with a range of issues such as mental wellbeing, social isolation, health behaviours and employment.

'The results that have come out from this pilot are extremely encouraging and what the team presented today was compelling evidence for the value of social prescribing,' said director of public health Nicola Brink.

'What was important for us is that the programme was appropriate for our local situation and a programme developed on island for islanders.'

A local profile to suit the needs of islands is incredibly important, but also partnership working between the States of Guernsey and the third sector.

Monthly referrals to BSP have tripled over the last three years.

In the second half of 2023, there was an average of 34 referrals per



Director of Public Health Nicola Brink, left with BSP link worker and link worker manager Trish De Carteret, and BSP steering group member Jo Le Noury, right. (33675561)

month.

Link workers had more than 6,000 contacts with clients and made 991 referrals to BSP partner organisations.

BSP link worker and link worker manager Trish De Carteret said

that she was amazed by the results.

'The feedback from our clients has been amazing and the feedback from the GPs just outstanding,' she said.

The only negative feedback was

our waiting list and the availability of link workers was outdone by the demand for the service, but it shows the real demand in the island for what we do.'

The Health Improvement Commission was commissioned to

run the pilot and prove that the scheme is feasible to keep running. The team has lots of ideas for the direction of the scheme in future.

'We've identified some gaps in the service, there's a lot of social isolation in younger people and not a lot of places that they can be referred to for that,' said Ms De Carteret.

'We'd also like to expand into Alderney and expand our community classes.'

So far nearly all eligible GPs have referred patients to the scheme and 88% of GP survey respondents rated BSP as 'extremely important' to the local health system.

Of the GPs, 92% supported BSP as a key feature of the primary care offer.

'100% of the GPs surveyed felt that Bailiwick Social Prescribing had improved patient wellbeing and that is a really important statistic. Having social prescribing relieves GPs and they can focus on more complex consultations,' said former GP and BSP steering group member Jo Le Noury.

'Being active is one of the most effective medicines, but sessions can be walking or dancing groups, boxing, climbing, or more creative things like art and sewing.'

Social prescribing now needs financing from the States to continue, and it has been included in Health & Social Care's budget for 2025, which will be debated by the States next month.

"Styx centre has been providing social prescribing classes and it is proving to be a very successful partnership."

Anne Thomas – Styx Centre Manager

Evaluating the Bailiwick Social Prescribing Pilot Scheme

The Commission committed to evaluating BSP's implementation when we took on the project in 2021. We've embedded this over the course of the pilot programme collecting a range wide range of scheme data which was triangulated to provide a pragmatic but comprehensive analysis of the scheme.

This included:

- Quantitative scheme data
- Anonymised client GP appointment data
- Interviews with Link Workers, GPs, and BSP Partner Organisations
- Client case studies

● GP questionnaire

● Stakeholder ripple effects mapping

"She (the Link Worker) talked to me and tried to get me interested in doing things, where I had just dropped doing everything. The people who take me out, because I can't drive anymore... I see the sea and the waves, and last week I saw the orchid fields, and it made me feel good! I am back to where I was before I was sick – I was low, I can't tell you how low, but I feel great now."

BSP Client



Presentation of the Bailiwick Social Prescribing evaluation

The evaluation aimed to examine the feasibility of establishing and delivering a social prescribing offer which linked primary care and community assets and on the contribution that BSP could make to the local health system. We sought to inform decision making about the continuation of the scheme, and its role in the future of local healthcare.

Data were analysed (including independent analysis undertaken by Public Health Services) in Q1 2024 and the report was written by the BSP Steering Group by April 2024.



The full report can be found here.

Key Findings from the Report were:

- **BSP makes a valuable contribution to a more collaborative and sustainable local healthcare system uniquely bridging primary care and quality-assured community assets to address the non-medical, practical, social, and emotional needs that affect people's health and wellbeing.**
- **BSP's Link Worker delivery model is feasible.**
- **BSP is positively endorsed by GPs with 96% of eligible GPs referring to the scheme.**

- **BSP is highly valued by its clients and its partner organisations, as it provides "social scaffolding" which helped people "cross the threshold" of services that could support their wellbeing and the factors that shape it.**
- **61% of people who engaged with BSP at two Primary Care groups where data were available had fewer GP appointments in the 12 months after BSP than the 12 months before.**
- **There is strong endorsement from stakeholders that BSP should be embedded into the local healthcare offer.**

The findings were presented to senior management in Health and Social Care and the Committee for Health and Social Care in May and launched publicly at an event in October which was attended by over 80 people representing the third, government and private sectors.

We were delighted that in early 2025 the Committee for Health and Social Care awarded the Commission funding to continue BSP in line with the aims of the Partnership of Purpose. We are grateful to the Committee and Public Health Services for their support.



"The Social Prescribing programme has been transformative in helping GPs to address health issues where the underlying problem is a practical, social or emotional difficulty in someone's life. Now we are able to refer to BSP, it is wonderful to see the rapid improvements in physical and mental wellbeing in our patients by providing solutions that could only be provided through social prescribing."

Dr Piers Mitchell – Queens Road Medical Practice

"SIF agreed to fund the last 18 months of the Bailiwick Social Prescribing Scheme's pilot phase, whilst the impact of the project was being assessed. We are delighted with the results and to see that social prescribing has become embedded within our local healthcare system, benefitting hundreds of patients."

Sadie De Siviter Paucer – Social Investment Fund

Plans for 2025

Alongside many ongoing projects and campaigns, here’s a snapshot of some of the work we will be focussing on in 2025:

Eat Well

- Complete the food system map, identify opportunities for change and engage the public
- Scope a fruit and vegetable scheme to benefit children from low-income families
- Develop an Eat Well parent/carers public engagement group/forum
- Further support early years professionals and settings with food, nutrition and cooking training

Healthier Weight

- Complete and evaluate the Digital Tier 2 Adult Weight Management Service pilot
- Expand the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme
- Continue to collaborate with HSC on developing a Tier 3 Weight Management Service
- Develop and deliver the group Counterweight Plus programme and continue 1:1 delivery

Substance Use

- Publish the findings of our public consultation on future tobacco control policy
- Extend the school-based substance use education programme
- Launch a campaign to create more smoke & vape free alfresco dining areas
- Extend our community training to focus on parental substance use

Be Active

- Expand Breeze and adult learn to cycle initiatives
- Launch of Active Spectators – opportunities for parents to be active whilst their children are taking part in sports
- Establish working party to submit the Global Active Healthy Kids Scorecard
- Expand workplace and community physical activity initiatives

Bailiwick Social Prescribing

- Secure ongoing funding
- Move the scheme from pilot to business as usual
- Expand the BSP team to meet demand
- Identify new referral routes into BSP and onwards to new community assets

Improving health relies on the work of a wide range of sectors, organisations and individuals.

The Commission Team, Directors and Patrons are very grateful to everyone who works with us to empower, enable and encourage healthy living in Guernsey and Alderney.





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