

PEOPLE PORTFOLIOS

The 'People' portfolio consists of:

- Councillor Gillian Campbell - Cabinet Member for Inclusion, Youth and Transience
- Councillor Jo Farrell - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Community Health and Wellbeing
- Councillor Jim Hobson - Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Schools

The full details of the portfolio areas can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Your-councillors/Executive-members.aspx>

Strategic Issues

OFSTED Annual Conversation

Blackpool officers met with OFSTED for the Annual Conversation in May, with robust discussions covering Schools, Early Years, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Early Help and Children's Social Care. OFSTED continues to see an improving picture in Blackpool across all services for children and young people and we welcomed the inspectors for a monitoring visit in the week commencing 13 June. Focussing on Children and Families who are supported with Child in Need and Child Protection plans, the inspectors planned to review files, speak with children and families and meet with staff and managers from across these services. We look forward to receiving their feedback from the visit in the coming month.

I am pleased to report that we have welcomed Chris Coyle in to the post of Assistant Director for Children's Social Care this month. Chris joins us from Lancashire County Council and is looking forward to working with Vicky Gent, the Director of Children's Services and the team to ensure that the children and families are well supported.

Charging Reforms Summary

The Government is reforming the way people in England pay for their care. From October 2023 there will be a cap placed on care costs which means that people who are 18+ in England will not pay over £86,000 in eligible personal care charges during their lifetime. The current upper capital limit of £23,250 for local authority financial support will be increased to £100,000.

People in England will also be able to ask the Local Authority to arrange their care and support no matter what their income and savings are, currently those with savings over the limit tend to arrange their own care.

A person's progress towards the care cap limit will be captured within their care account. In order to access this, they must have a needs assessment under the Care Act 2014. Services that Blackpool Council deem meet their eligible needs will be counted. These include care at home, day care and direct payments as well as 24 hour care.

Along with all Local Authorities nationally, Blackpool Council is currently undertaking fair cost of care exercises with providers to improve understanding of how much it costs to provide care in the specific area, including assessing the changes over recent years and still ongoing in overheads and staffing costs.

Blackpool Council has signed up to be a Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Trailblazer, along with a small number of other local authorities in order to pilot the reforms. This means that we will begin early Care Act needs assessments and financial assessments under the new guidance in September 2022 and, if everything progresses to plan, we will go fully live in January 2023 which is 10 months ahead of all other areas. There is funding for Trailblazers to enable them to do this. Staff members from Adult Social Care, Accountancy, Revenues and Benefits and ICT services are involved in the project group.

We are currently working closely with the DHSC to develop national guidance and implementation of the reforms alongside other trailblazers. Alongside this, the Financial Reforms and Billing Project Group are planning how we will implement the reforms locally and what this will look like for the people who use our services. The DHSC trailblazer team are visiting Blackpool on 13 June 2022. Being a Trailblazer gives us an early sight of the many potential impacts of the charging reforms, ensures that Blackpool's position is clearly understood within a national context and gives us extra input from DHSC, the Local Government Association (LGA), the Care Provider Alliance, and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS).

Community Engagement

The Parks Service Community Engagement Officer is making valuable contact with our "Friends of..." groups, helping to gain feedback and public consultations for future projects, such as our Park Development Plans and Stanley Park Masterplan. We have also ensured several projects were successfully installed such as the floral clock linked to The Queen's jubilee.

Corporate Issues

'Making Moves' Tier II programme funding extension

Active Blackpool has received over 200 referrals onto the Adult Weight Management programme which began in September 2021. Delivered within leisure centres and community venues, the 12 week programme is the traditional face-to-face Tier II weight management programme for overweight and obese adults with a BMI between 25 - 39.9. Funding from Public Health has been extended which will allow the programme to continue until August 2023.

Blackpool Youth Games

Blackpool Youth Games is making a welcome return for 2022 after an absence of 2 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A weeklong celebration of school sport will take place at Blackpool Sports Centre and Stanley Park from Monday 20 June through to Friday 24 June, and will see a combination of old favourites including football, netball and athletics along with new events including quidditch, glowfit and foot-golf in an attempt to provide opportunities for as many children and young people as possible. Blackpool Youth Games is the highlight of every school year, but this year more than ever it will be the perfect opportunity to bring schools together for five days of fun, physical activity and friendship.

Lancashire School Games

The Lancashire School Games is once again heading back to Blackpool and will see 1,500 talented children and young people from across the county come together for a sporting spectacle that will feature eight different events for both primary and secondly school aged participants. Qualifying events have been taking place throughout the spring and summer terms to determine who will represent Team Blackpool to go head to head against their Lancashire counterparts on Tuesday 5 July. The event will be the culmination of another great year of PE, School Sport and Physical Activity for Blackpool Schools and we are looking forward to cheering them all on.

Catering Services win "Peas Please" Veg-O-Meter Award

In the first live ceremony for two years, the Food Foundation's executive director, Anna Taylor, presented awards to the seven category winners of the 2022 Peas Please Prizes. Singled out for special mention was Blackpool Catering Services who scooped the Veg-O-Meter prize for achieving a winning 171% increase in the number of vegetable portions served, as well as dramatically boosting the quantity of vegetables served in children's school holiday meals.

Transforming Services

Parks Tennis Courts investment

In October 2021, the Government announced it was investing £22m into public tennis courts across Britain. This funding, together with an investment from the LTA of £8.5m, is aimed at bringing public park tennis courts in very poor or unplayable condition back to life for the benefit of their local community. The initiative is also aimed at engaging 1 million more players in tennis, supporting health and wellbeing outcomes. Active Blackpool are working with the LTA and have been approved at Stage 1 of the application process. The capital investment will see the development of four courts in Stanley Park and renovations to the existing courts in Cavendish Road Park, Claremont Park and Anchorsholme Park. The £150,000 investment will also see the introduction of a gate system which will allow tennis courts to be booked and help monitor the usage and provide participation data.

Stanley Park 3G Pitch development

Working in partnership with the Football Foundation, Lancashire Football Association and following community engagement with grassroots football clubs in Blackpool, £250,000 of funding has been secured to convert the existing sand-dressed pitch which is in poor condition to a 3G pitch in Stanley Park. Contractors have been appointed and work is expected to start during the summer.

Children's Social Care

Demand for support from Children's Services remains high at the front door and throughout the system, but worries and concerns about children continue to be responded to promptly. We have seen a recent rise in the number of Children Looked After by the local authority in Blackpool and continue to work hard to ensure that support is available to help families when it is needed so that families can stay together. We are seeing evidence that the Early Help Partnership Strategy, launched last year, is having an impact. The number of children open to children's social care has fallen by 9% since June 2021, while the number supported by early help services has risen by 30% across the past year. The total number of children with child protection plans has fallen steadily over the past year (down by 20% since the end of June 2021). Current analysis tells us that the recent rise in the number of children entering care has been chiefly driven by a small number of large families.

Working with Partners

Blackpool and Fylde Coast Place Based Partnership Virtual Ward Development

Colleagues from Blackpool Council's Adults Department have been working closely with Blackpool Teaching Hospitals, Fylde Coast CCG and Fylde Coast Medical Services (FCMS) partners in the development of the Virtual Ward model for Blackpool and Fylde Coast. Social care in its broadest context is the golden thread that runs through this development and Blackpool Council has been an active partner over recent months helping to influence and shape the model we have today.

Our Council services are providing out of hours monitoring via the Vitaline Service and linking in with FCMS and a GP practice to support people with stable long term conditions to help prevent hospital admissions. Our adults Social Workers via Transfer of Care HUB and Rapid Response are joining the daily multi-disciplinary meetings with clinicians and supporting decision making around how best to care for people in their own homes. Our internal Homecare Service is providing the additional wrap around care that might be required by those individuals who, for a short period of time, might need some extra care and support.

Funding to cover social care interdependences is being considered by the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Blackpool is joining the meetings and working groups to explore this with other Local Authorities across the ICS. However, instead of waiting to secure funding, we have approached this development from a position of 'doing the right thing for Blackpool residents'. The Virtual Ward approach to meeting holistic care and health needs in people's own homes absolutely ensures our residents receive the 'right care, in the right place at the right time' and truly delivers tangible person centred care to people when they most need it.

Blackpool Autism Partnership

We are currently constituting our Blackpool Autism Partnership to take us through the local delivery of the National Autism Strategy, which covers every area of life from childhood through to education, employment, lifestyle, housing, leisure, general health and care and specialist diagnostics and service delivery. Membership will encourage autistic people to be visible leaders and influencers in the development of actions, to guide the delivery of our local strategy and its plans, which will be much broader than health and care services.

On the ground in our social care service, the Autism Team is now fully staffed and fully engaged with those people with a primary diagnosis of autism. Demand for the service is high. The team has good contacts with health diagnostic staff, working closely with them. This team also experiences high demand relating to the needs of autistic children approaching adulthood and entering Adult Services. One of the key success criteria for this team is its individually person-

centred approach to support – tailored to the needs, aspirations and wishes of each person, and at a pace appropriate to them. This high level of bespoke responsiveness is already delivering amazing results for autistic adults of all abilities that have not been well-served by the existing health and care system but poses a challenge for how to meet growing demand – a problem that the Autism Partnership will need to get a grip of and will require a whole system response.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The multi-agency partnership for SEND has been working to develop the action plan to address the concerns raised during the recent SEND inspection and to ensure that there is assurance that we continue to build on the good work that was recognised and address areas for development across education, social care and health. A recognition that meeting the needs of children with SEND and their families is everyone's business and ensuring that universal services are inclusive and promote independence is a key area for attention in the coming year.

Cosy Homes in Lancashire

The Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL) Initiative, led by Blackpool Public Health and supported by all the Lancashire Local Authorities continues to support low income households living in energy inefficient homes to access funding to install energy saving measures. The main objective of the scheme is to ensure residents live in a warm home and have a reliable heating source. In the last 12 months the scheme has fitted 75 first time central heating systems and replaced 48 broken boilers using emergency funding in Blackpool.

In addition, CHiL has successfully secured £23m of Government Green Homes Grant funding to install insulation, green energy technologies and window/door upgrades to low income households across Lancashire, contributing to the delivery of our Climate Emergency ambitions. The scheme is ongoing but will deliver energy saving measures to approximately 2,400 fuel poor households living in properties with EPC ratings of D, E, F and G, of which 275 properties are in Blackpool.

CHiL has also secured £8.5m of Government Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) funding which offers grants of up to £25,000 to install energy saving measures including low carbon technologies, insulation and single glazed window upgrades to low income households who do not have gas central heating as their main heating source. The scheme runs until March 2023 and is currently being marketed to 5,000 eligible properties in Blackpool. The Government has indicated that HUG will be available to Local Authorities until at least 2025, so the intention will be to submit additional funding applications to enable more properties across Lancashire to benefit.