

## Public Health

The Government's vision for public health was set out in the white paper "Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our strategy for public health in England" published in November 2010. From April 2013 public health services in England return to being hosted by local authorities, funded by a new ring-fenced public health grant.

This is part of a significant change in NHS commissioning, as detailed in the Health & Social Care Act 2012, which, following agreement by both Houses, received Royal Assent on 27 March 2012.

Grant allocations for 2013/14 and 2014/15 have been advised and Central Bedfordshire Council has been allocated £9.9 million and £10.2 million for these years respectively. These budgets have previously been held outside of Public Health and are used to commission a range of services, some mandatory.

Public health supports people to live healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices by either directly commissioning services, informing commissioning decisions of partners or through directly providing services. This is addressed through a range of factors that affect health and wellbeing; protect the populations' health from major incidents and other threats; and reduce the number of people living with preventable ill health and dying early.

Public health helps to improve health and well-being through a thorough understanding of population needs, assessing the evidence base, potential impacts and costs of different options for improving health and well-being to enable informed decisions about the use of resources and (dis)investment.

The three domains of public health practice and key areas of focus are:

- Health Improvement – this includes key work areas such as addressing:

- Inequalities
- Tobacco Control
- Obesity
- Diet and Physical Activity
- Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health
- Maternal and Child Health
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Oral Health
- Active Aging initiatives
- Surveillance and monitoring of specific diseases and risk factors
- Influencing wider determinants, such as education, housing, employment, family /community.

- Health Care/Health Services – this includes applying public health skills to:

Interpret population healthcare needs for healthcare services identifying priorities for strategy development  
Inform the prioritisation policy and processes  
Assess the evidence base for clinical and cost effectiveness, pathway and service redesign  
Apply programme budgeting and marginal analysis  
Audit and service evaluation  
Undertake health equity audit  
Reduce variation in care

These skills are also used and applied in the domains of health improvement and protection

- Health Protection - this includes protecting the health of population from:

Infectious diseases, including healthcare acquired infection  
Screening programmes  
Immunisation and Vaccination  
Chemicals and poisons  
Environmental health hazards  
Outbreaks and incidents Blood borne viruses  
And the successful implementation of:  
Emergency planning and resilience  
NHS carbon reduction strategy