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# SANDWELL Holiday Activities

There are 54,163 children and young people aged 5-16 years living in Sandwell, with over 18,903 children receiving free school meals

**School Holidays = pressure**  
School holidays are a period of real concern for some families

- Childcare Costs
- Extra Meal Costs
- Cost of activities

The Department for Education invested £220 million delivered through grants to all local authorities. The allocation for Sandwell is £1,954,950 per year up to 2025.

This is to provide Holiday provision over Easter, summer and winter holidays for low income families. It provides a range of enriching activities and free healthy meal

f @SandwellHAF

@SandwellHAF



### We Guarantee

- A Warm Welcome
- Trusted Spaces
- Opportunity to try new things
- Affordability
- **And lots of Fun, fun, fun!**



The programme supports school aged children (reception to year 11) including SEND who live or attend school in Sandwell and are eligible for benefit related Free School Meals.

### #MakingMemories

Taking this approach has meant that registrations have increased to 32% in 6 months



Families tell us that they don't want to be singled out, they don't want the shame and stigma of being classed as a 'low-income family'  
**In June 22 only 20% had registered to take part**

<https://holidayactivities.sandwell.gov.uk>

In Sandwell we are taking a slightly different approach

Ours is a universal offer: We offer fun, affordable and high-quality school holiday provision for **all** children age 5-16 across Sandwell.

WE DIDN'T REALISE WE WERE MAKING MEMORIES, WE JUST KNEW WE WERE HAVING FUN



This offer ensures there is something for every child no matter what their circumstance or situation.

This approach reduces stigmatisation, increases inclusion & ensures sustainability.

We have a strong existing offer through our universal, Go Play provision & Just Youth provision.

We have providers that offer paid and free provision. We are working with over 60 providers to offer HAF provision.

### Sandwell's Approach

- De-stigmatise HAF
- A universal blended approach
- Provision to suit all families



# Schools & Community Health & Wellbeing Project

## Context

Health Improvement support communities to Start Well, Live Well and Age Well using a community-centred evidence and asset-based approach. This focuses on achieving positive health outcomes through community driven neighbourhood solutions.

In October 2021 the team secured council funding to progress this programme of work, identifying four intelligence led projects working with our CORE20PLUS population groups.

## What we did

We've been working with our schools to reduce health inequalities and tackle childhood excess weight and obesity. Using the insight gathered over this time we have developed the Schools Health & Wellbeing Programme divided into a three-tiered approach to test what works for our schools and progress this programme of work.

Tier two of the programme was funded through HIF which supported 20 schools & 25 Early Years Provision in areas of high deprivation. A variety of initiatives and training has focused on healthy eating and cooking, physical activity and emotional wellbeing.

## Feedback and Evaluation

- As a result of educational healthy eating sessions schools have revisited the content and worked with the kitchen to increase uptake of school dinners to promote healthy eating.
- We have implemented a whole school healthy eating policy
- We have developed a pupil peer support group to continue promoting physical and mental wellbeing, called Wellbeing Warriors
- Children were surprised that they liked the taste of fruit and vegetables at the education session and now bring a range of these in their lunchbox
- After receiving healthy movers training, the nursery carries out 2 sessions a week at each site, which has helped encourage more movement through fun and active ways and also increased parental engagement
- After receiving Active 30:30 training the school is more active as they have implemented monthly challenges that engage everyone including SLT. More staff CPD was undertaken to highlight the importance of active children and they were given ideas and tips for activity in the classroom

## Impact

Initiatives implemented include:

- The Eat Well project provided nutrition education sessions to over 6,300 children. Examples include sugar swaps, the eat well plate and cooking on a budget tasters.
- 12 schools received Youth Sport Trust, Active 30:30 training.
- 8 private early year settings and 15 onsite school nurseries attended Youth Sport Trust Healthy Movers training. The largest training session ever facilitated.
- Supporting governors to prioritise pupil health and wellbeing
- Supported schools to develop their own health initiatives and increased the number of schools participating in the Daily Mile. One school opted for a daily 15 minute dance session to increase children's physical activity levels, another has developed a pupil wellbeing group and a third school has set-up regular family cooking sessions.



Category: Schools health and wellbeing



Nurturing children's cooking talent with a Phunky Foods School Cooking Club

School family cooking session is a hit for pupils, parents and teachers

How dancing can boost health and happiness in school





# SHAPE

**"Where every child's voice matters in Sandwell"**

Sandwell's SHAPE Programme is a Child's Voice Initiative designed to listen to children and young people in Sandwell. It focusses on the 5 Every Child Matters Outcomes:

**Staying Safe** **Being Healthy** **Enjoying & Achieving** **Making a Positive Contribution** **Economic Wellbeing**

**Some of our key events throughout the year include:**

- **Anti- Bullying Roadshow** - a week event during anti-bullying week in November where SHAPE, Youth Services and West Midlands Police visit Primary and Secondary schools in Sandwell to raise awareness about Bullying
- **Takeover Challenges** - Children and young people takeover council and partner agency board meetings to challenge senior officers on a variety of issues affecting young people
- **Make Your Mark** - Young people aged 11-18 in the UK get the chance to vote on the biggest issues facing young people in today's society
- **SHAPE Our Future Conferences** - Annual school conferences for children and young people, based on issues relating to the 5 key areas of SHAPE
- **Annual SHAPE Survey** - Annual online survey sent to schools and colleges for children and young people aged 9 – 18 to consult with them on SHAPE topic areas
- **SHAPE Your Talent** - A talent competition for 8-19 year olds (Up to 25 for disabilities) to showcase their talents in music, dance and entertainment with a chance to win £500
- **SHAPE Youth Summer Festival** - An outdoor community event for young people showcasing what services are available to young people during the summer holidays.
- **SHAPE Youth Forum** - Young people aged 11 – 21 meet on a bi-weekly basis to discuss issues affecting them. They are an engagement group for Sandwell Council and partners to consult with, on any service changes within their organisation, which affect young people. Two Youth Commissioners and two Members of Youth Parliament are also part of the forum.

**For more information about SHAPE, please visit: [www.justyouth.org.uk/shape](http://www.justyouth.org.uk/shape)**



# Year of Wellbeing

## Context

The council's corporate plan pledges to ensure 'every child, young person and adult lives well in their community' and a **focused campaign was identified as a key priority in the health and wellbeing strategy.**

After the **COVID19 pandemic caused increased anxiety** and lack of social connections the delivery of the campaign was brought forward.

The campaign aimed to encourage residents to **make small changes to improve how they feel.** In particular, it aimed to **reduce health inequalities** in the borough by using data and insight from the public health team to target groups who have historically seen poorer health outcomes.

## What we did

The campaign content and advice was built around the evidence based Five Ways to Wellbeing (developed by the New Economics Foundation): **Connect, Give, Keep Learning, Take Notice and Be Active.**

Communications activity and content followed the EAST behavioural change framework - '**easy, attractive, social and timely.**'

**Priority audiences most affected by the pandemic, based on national and local research were identified and targeted through the campaign:**

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
- Lower socio-economic groups
- Underlying health conditions
- Disabled
- Lonely or socially isolated

Residents (16+) made a pledge to improve their wellbeing by completing a short form. They then received a **drip-feed of timely direct emails with simple tips and information over a 12-week period,** as research shows this is the time it takes for a habit to embed.

**A Year of Wellbeing Coordinator was employed to engage priority groups** offline and reduce health inequalities. They also supported organisations and businesses to promote the campaign.

## Impact

**Data collected from an exit survey showed:**

- **1,844 people from priority groups** made an online pledge – our target was 500
- A total of **3,024 online pledges** were made
- The **total number of pledges was 3,555** (including **531 physical pledge cards**)
- **73 organisations** made a pledge to champion the Year of Wellbeing in their workplace
- Nearly 50,000 emails were sent as part of the campaign with **open rates averaging 52%**

**Of those who completed the exit survey:**

- 92% were now **more motivated** to look after their wellbeing
- 80% were **happier or healthier**

**The survey asked what specific behaviour changes people had made:**

- 52% said they're now **walking regularly**
- 49% get more **regular sleep**
- 42% **make time** for themselves
- 40% spend time **connecting** with others
- 31% **avoid using the phone** before bed



# The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust – Top Recruiter in the ABA-feed infant feeding study!



- Over 200 participants recruited in Wolverhampton in 2022
- [www.aba-feed.org](http://www.aba-feed.org) for more info

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with your first baby?

Would you like to join a  
research study?

Over 1200 women have  
joined the study so far and we  
still need more volunteers.

Shopping vouchers for  
taking part.

Visit [aba-feed.org](http://aba-feed.org)  
for more info.



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# Green Social Prescribing: Exploring perceptions, barriers and ways of encouraging uptake among clinicians and the public

IFF Research, on behalf of DHSC

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## INTRODUCTION

Green social prescribing (GSP) is the practice of supporting people to engage in nature-based interventions and activities to improve their mental health. Social prescribing link workers connect people to community groups and agencies for practical and emotional support, based on a **'what matters to you'** conversation. IFF Research were commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care to gather evidence on perceptions and behaviours related to GSP and its use in support of mental ill health in England as part of a £5.7m cross-government funded programme aimed at preventing and tackling mental ill-health through GSP.

## AIM

The research investigated factors affecting the scalability of GSP in England (barriers and enablers) and the role that nature-based interventions can play in improving the nation's mental health.

## MATERIAL & METHODS

IFF conducted **online surveys with clinicians** (n=501) **and the public** (n=4000) in March-May 2022. The data collected was weighted to be nationally representative of the public and, as far as possible, of clinicians.

The surveys explored awareness of GSP, willingness to participate or refer, perceived benefits, barriers and how could these be overcome.

Following the survey, IFF conducted **qualitative follow-up** interviews with both clinicians (n=25) and people experiencing recent mental health issues (n=15 plus 2 focus groups) to further explore barriers to take-up and potential practical solutions.

## RESULTS

**Awareness and use of GSP is currently limited:** only 16% of clinicians knew a lot about it and only 7% of the public have been referred to a nature-based activity, despite over half (55%) currently or recently experiencing mental health problems.

Nearly all (87%) clinicians see **value in GSP as part of a holistic approach** for treating patients with mental health issues, though:

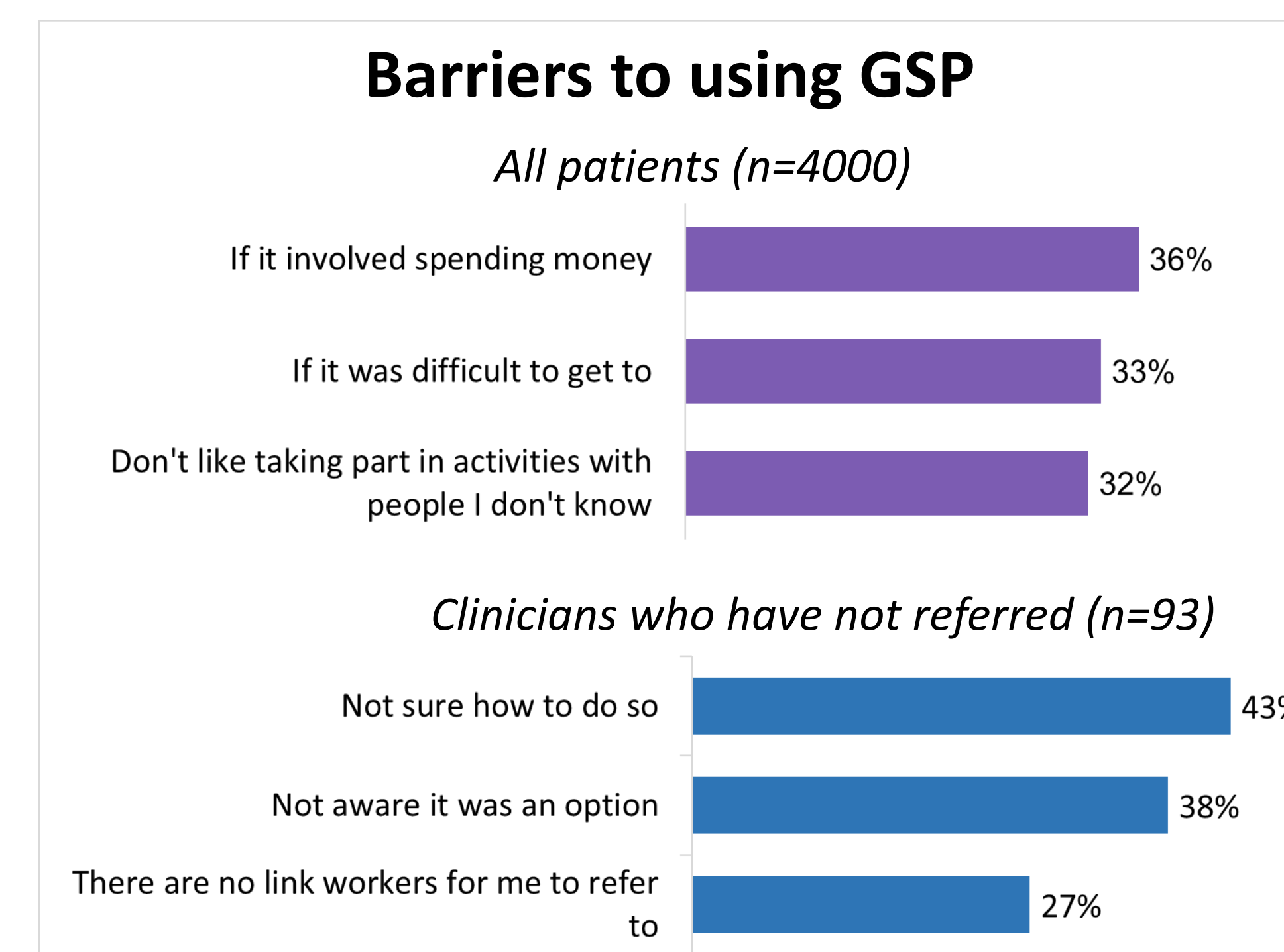
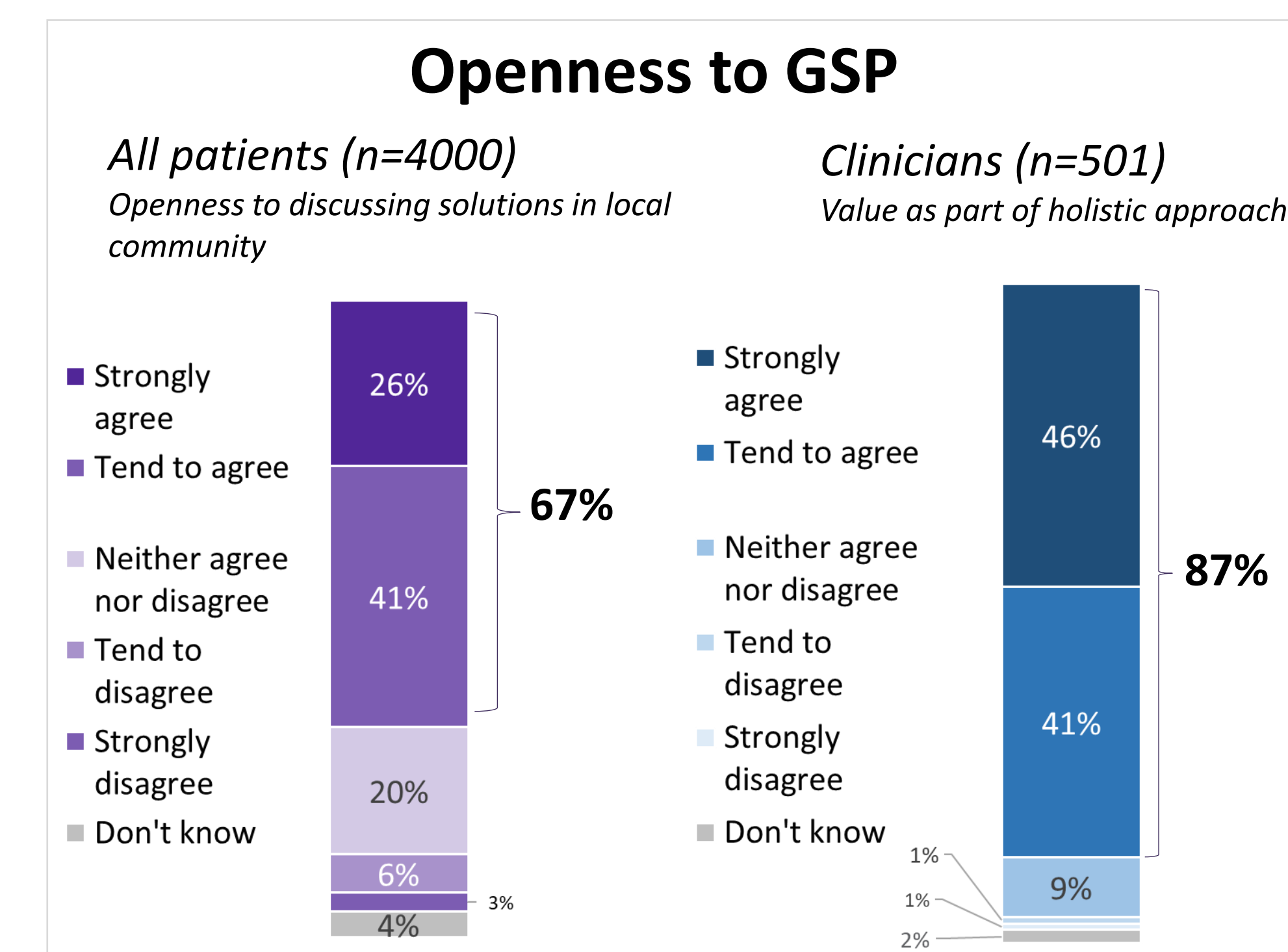
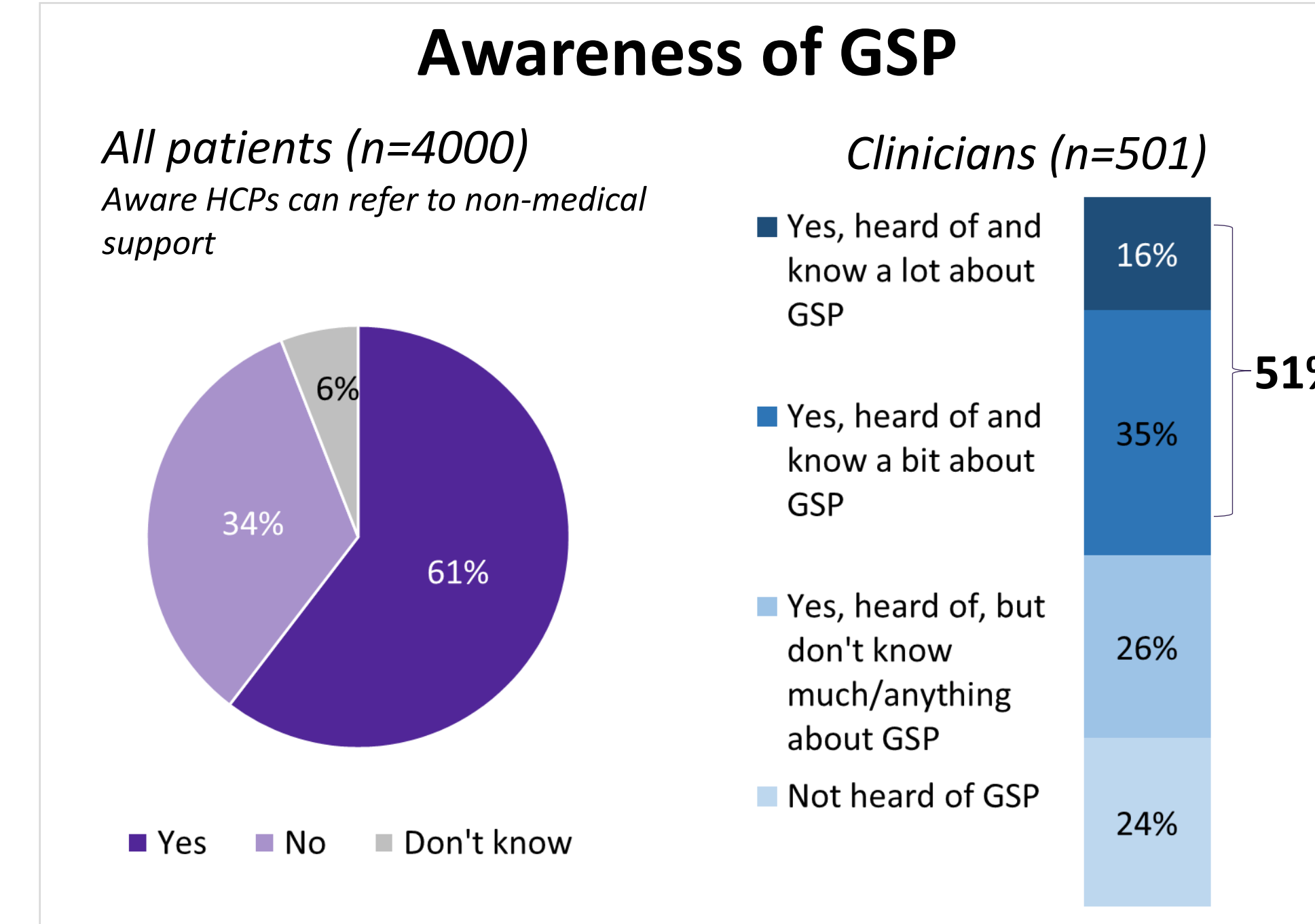
- not all are clear on how to refer (43% of those who have not referred did not know how).
- some (39%) feel that patients would prefer "traditional" treatments such as medication or therapy.

The public mostly agree that **nature-based activities can be good for mental health** (74%).

However, while most (67%) of the public are open to discussing solutions in their local community, a significant minority (22%) remain **unsold on nature-based activity even if prescribed**.

- This is more likely among those with disabilities (30% would realistically be unlikely to take part), for whom there are likely to be practical barriers to accessing such activities, and those with no formal qualifications (28%).

Some also hold **practical concerns about accessing** a prescribed nature-based activity, including cost (36%) and distance to travel (33%). Others lack confidence to attend an activity on their own (32%). This may be addressed by allowing a link worker, friend or family member to accompany for the first session.



## SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

Despite modest referral rates at present, there is **scope to scale up GSP**. Both clinicians and the public believe that there are a variety of benefits to be gained from spending time in nature and buy-in to the idea of GSP as part of a holistic care plan. This care plan should include:

- nature-based activities being **offered at the right time** (when mental ill health symptoms are not too acute as patients are unlikely to be receptive to trying a new activity when in crisis);
- other options such as **medication and/or therapy being considered alongside nature-based activity** based on a discussion between the clinician and the patient;
- a **timeframe being agreed** for 'trying out' nature-based activity, with an invitation to return to the clinician if an improvement is not seen after this time.

Clinicians would value **more information on the mechanics** of the referral process including:

- information on local activities** available
- patient outcomes (so that they can start to build knowledge of the success of these referrals).

Social prescribing link workers are valued by both clinicians and patients for the extra time they are able to devote to helping patients choose the right option for them.

Including **GSP in the NICE guidelines** would generally be welcomed by clinicians to boost its credentials as a treatment option, as long as the terms governing its use are not too prescriptive.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IFF would like to thank the team at DHSC for their advice and guidance, as well as all research participants.



# Walsall Council Review of COVID-19 Response: Capturing the Learning



Over the past two years, the scale and severity of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has challenged every aspect of how we live our lives, accentuated pre-existing inequalities and created new and unprecedented demands on services. In Walsall, a multi-agency response involving Walsall Council along with various partners has worked hard to manage these challenges and to mitigate the impact on residents.

A recent **ICRD report** documents the key learning from this remarkable period in time, and captures the real essence of the vital activity, partnership and collaboration carried out across the borough. We identify the best of collective place-based work led by Walsall Council, and explore how people put aside organisational boundaries and came together with a common purpose through both informal and formal partnerships.

## Key Findings

- (1) The three major factors that facilitated the response were: i) effective leadership from Walsall Council; working alongside ii) a spirit of shared endeavour and iii) a shared sense of purpose amongst partners in the borough
- (2) Partnership-working was a dominant feature. The response worked to strengthen some pre-existing partnership arrangements within the borough but also helped to produce new relationships and forms of co-learning between partners
- (3) The response demonstrated multiple examples of agile, innovative and resilient local governance in the face of crisis
- (4) There is potential for the increased capacity of local governance into the future should this learning be consolidated and these new opportunities be seized. This has implications not only for better responding to future crises, but also for developing more holistic approaches to pandemic recovery in order to reduce pre-existing inequalities and to build a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient society for the future
- (5) Given some challenges experienced in engaging diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged communities within the borough, there is scope for agencies to continuing learning more about, and working with, residents. This is vital as long-standing challenges in Walsall – such as multiple deprivation – are likely to be exacerbated as a result of the pandemic

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# Wellbeing Cafes Project

## Context

Health Improvement support communities to Start Well, Live Well and Age Well using a community-centred evidence and asset-based approach. This focuses on achieving positive health outcomes through community driven neighbourhood solutions.

In October 2021 the team secured council funding to progress this programme of work, identifying four intelligence led projects working with our CORE20PLUS population groups.



## What we did

Expressions of interest were sought in accessing funds to deliver a 'Wellbeing Café'.

The premise of the Wellbeing Café was to tackle loneliness & social isolation through conversation and company, beginning to understand interests and activities which support an individual's health and wellbeing. Cafes would support people to be connected, increasing the number of social contacts and improving the quality of relationships.

Six new wellbeing cafes were established in areas of high deprivation and the majority where there was a higher risk of loneliness. Delivered by Community, Faith and Housing organisations, mainly through volunteers each café offered support (24 weeks), to local residents with a friendly face, a cuppa (not too much cake) and a variety of activities that were physical, creative, social and fun.

*"It's just nice to sit quietly have a cup of tea with others around me, out of my own four walls"*



*"absolutely fantastic café – something to look forward to every week, especially when having a bad week. Learning great techniques to manage mental health and making new friends at the same time".*



## Impact

Six wellbeing cafes were established each delivering 24 sessions of a range of activities and social opportunity i.e. singing, crochet /wool craft, seated exercise, tai chi & chat, art & chat, cooking and yoga.

A total of 143 people participated, 113 of which were 50 years and over and 70 with a long-term health condition or disability. An example of the impact in one community.

*Pauline found it very lonely and isolating due to COVID19 and had difficulty in finding friends. Attending the chatter café has given her a reason to get out of her house and to be more sociable with people.*



*Connie's decline in mental and physical health made her feel lonely and isolated in her own home. On a home visit Connie said she no longer felt able to go out on her own due to her health and mobility and that she would just love to chat to someone. Connie made friends with Pauline, and they are always together outside of the chatter café, providing support for each other!*



# DON'T SWIM UNSUPERVISED IN OPEN WATER!

If you decide to take a swim make sure it's a safe place to do so, is supervised and look out for any warning signs or hidden dangers.

**IF THERE'S NO LIFEGUARD – DON'T GO IN!**

Every year around 400 people on average die in the UK from drowning, with thousands more rescued but left with permanent and life-changing injuries.

Enjoy the water –  
swim safe!



Dudley Safeguarding  
People Partnership





# **KNOW MORE** **about prop feeding** **your baby**

**Whilst feeding your baby with a bottle, you must always hold the bottle and your baby during the feed.**

**If your baby's bottle is propped up by something, your baby could choke, suffocate or die.**



**Local babies have died this way.**

Keeping babies safer in the Black Country designed and developed by Dudley Council Public Health endorsed by Black Country CDOP

For more information go to <https://www.nct.org.uk/>



# NIMROD 2.0 Outbreak Management System

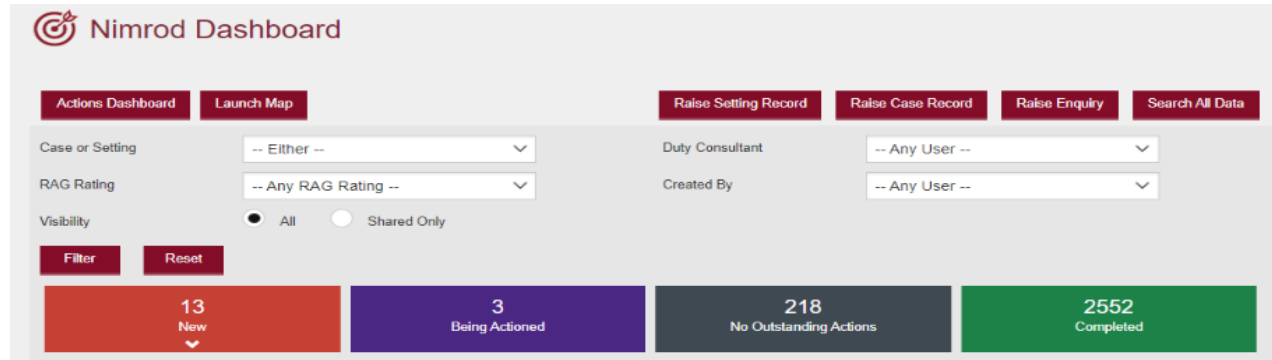


## Background

- Nimrod is a bespoke database and user interface system, developed as part of Worcestershire's local outbreak management plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nimrod development started in June 2020 and version 1 rapidly launched in July 2020. Nimrod Version 2.0 was developed in 2022. This new update gives focus to outbreak recording and management for any infectious disease.
- Prior to Nimrod development, Excel spreadsheets were used to keep track of outbreaks across Herefordshire and Worcestershire, but it was clear that this was only a temporary solution, and a more robust long term solution was required.

## Results

- The development of Nimrod provided the following initial benefits:
  - Consistent way of documenting health protection information.
  - Auditable history
  - Ability to run reports via SSRS to monitor situations in real-time reporting.
  - Concurrent use by multiple users, and multiple organisations.
  - Ability to attach documents relating to a situation/outbreak.
  - Safe storage of information consistent with Information Governance requirements.
- Subsequent iterations to Nimrod added bespoke features such as integrated text messaging, mass importing of spreadsheet data and epidemiological reporting.
- During the COVID-19 Pandemic Worcestershire's LORT recorded over 7,500 individual situations and added over 31,000 case details. The system itself logged over 144,000 individual actions taken by the team during this time.
- Nimrod has improved multi-agency outbreak response and management with colleagues from both internal and external agencies.
- Since its launch, the system has been an integral part in the day to day running of Worcestershire's Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) and Herefordshire's Outbreak Control Hub (OCH), aiding the public health response to the management of COVID-19 across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.



## Method

- A core functional specification and wire frame was developed, with the intention of building the system using a low code SQL platform.
- The core purpose of Nimrod was to underpin LORT activity, to record and document decisions and actions taken about outbreak situations in a variety of settings including but not limited to workplaces, adult social care settings, and education settings.
- Novel functionality was also built into the system, such as live GIS mapping and automated text messaging to individuals.

## Discussion

- NIMROD has had a significant impact on the way the team can operate, monitor local trends, and support work planning which includes scaling up/scaling down of local responses as appropriate in a rapidly changing landscape for infectious disease outbreaks.
- NIMROD has also made a significant contribution to the multi-agency response and management of cases across a variety of settings. Partners from within the council: Adult Social Care, Here2Help, Worcester Regulatory Services, and Environmental Health Teams, and also external partners. NIMROD provides a suite of automated and bespoke reports built-in SSRS, which gives the ability to create reports quickly to understand patterns and trends in case rates.
- NHS partners based in the ICB, including the Infection Prevention and Control Team, use the system daily to monitor cases, support daily huddle reviews and enable the safe and secure transfer of information, including reducing the need to send e-mails externally. This has improved information flow between organisations significantly as well as maximising efficiency with scarce resources.





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