



**Cherwell local
strategic Partnership**

BRIGHTER FUTURES IN BANBURY

Annual Report 2021 -2022



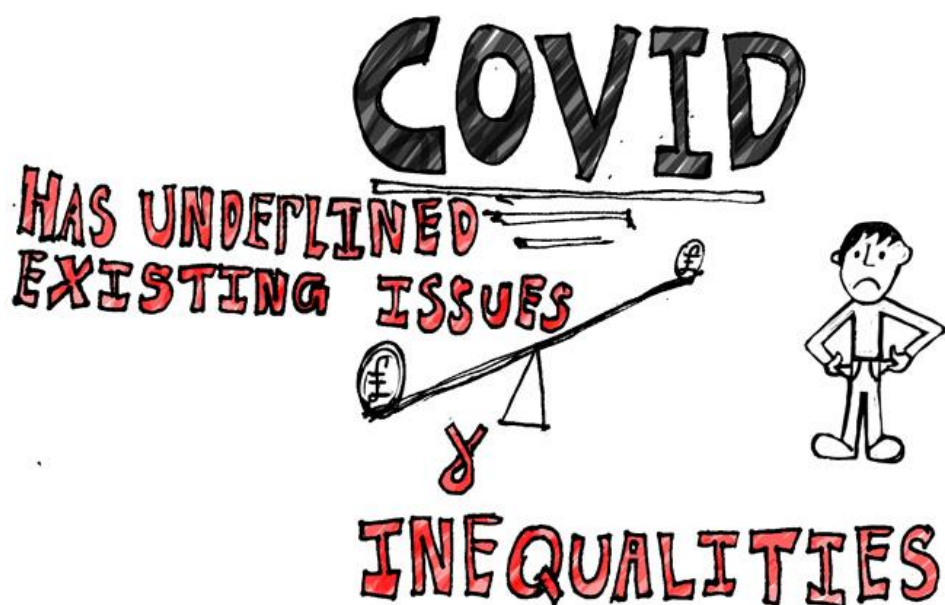
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Foreword from Councillor Phil Chapman – Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities

In my role as Portfolio holder for Healthy Communities, it gives me huge pleasure to be part of the Brighter Futures Partnership. It is a great way to be in touch with the many community partners who work together to promote health improvements, to raise aspirations for individuals and to develop strong healthy communities.

I have been impressed to learn of the many different ways partners work together to improve the lives and opportunities of residents, in an area where the evidence shows us that some residents need support to access happier, healthier lives. “Living your best life” moves from a cliché to a reality through the kind of work led by Brighter Futures partnership projects.



In the 2021/22 year on which we are reporting, there were still many difficulties and restrictions due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Some new organisations emerged, and others found it necessary to change their ways of working to adapt to the community's needs. In this report, you will read stories which are personal, but also illustrate the type of work which goes on every day, making a difference in small and large ways to people's lives. I hope you will be as impressed as I am when you read about the way that support is meshed around individuals and their communities in the Brighter Futures area, with different organisations and sectors coming together to provide opportunities for residents to access the support they have available.

Looking ahead, we know that many people are going to find paying for energy and other household necessities a real challenge, and this is where the partnership is focussing its effort for the coming year.

The Brighter Futures partners want to make sure that people have knowledge and opportunities to help them cope with this. Residents need to access advice, and we will be making use of the superb new pop-up space in Castle Quay (hosted by Cherwell District Council) as well as other venues in the communities we serve. We know that there is an impact on physical and mental health when people are under stress, and we will work to help residents access free and low-cost ways to exercise and for families to be together.

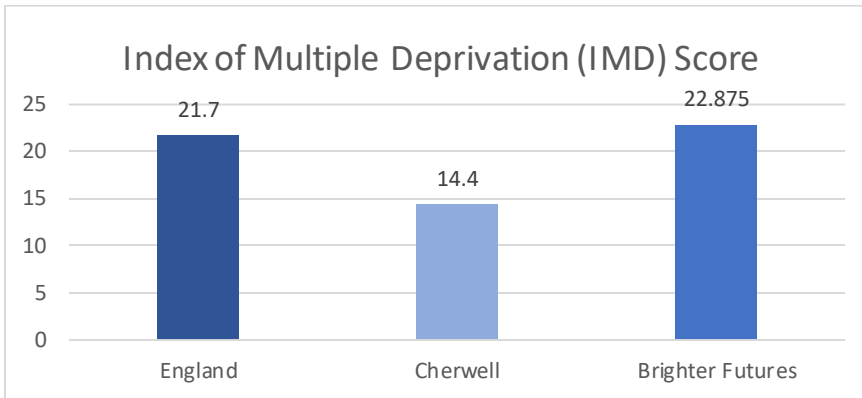
Local networking and partnership are going to be even more important than ever as we face the cost-of-living crisis. Brighter Futures has a strong foundation to work from with over 10 years of partnership behind us. We have nurtured new partnerships with residents through the Grimsbury and North Banbury Community Partnerships, and we are constantly learning and innovating to improve health and reduce income inequality.

Councillor Phil Chapman

Background to the Brighter Futures Partnership

Where we work

The Brighter Futures partnership work focusses on four wards in Banbury, which contain areas which rank on the lower end of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. There are several areas in Banbury across the four wards of Hardwick, Ruscite, Neithrop and Grimsbury and Castle which rank amongst the 20% most deprived in the country. The indices of multiple deprivation measure relative deprivation across small areas.



Index of Multiple Deprivation Score (IDM)

Source: fingertips.phe.org.uk/Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Figure 1 – The indices of multiple deprivation measure relative deprivation across small areas:

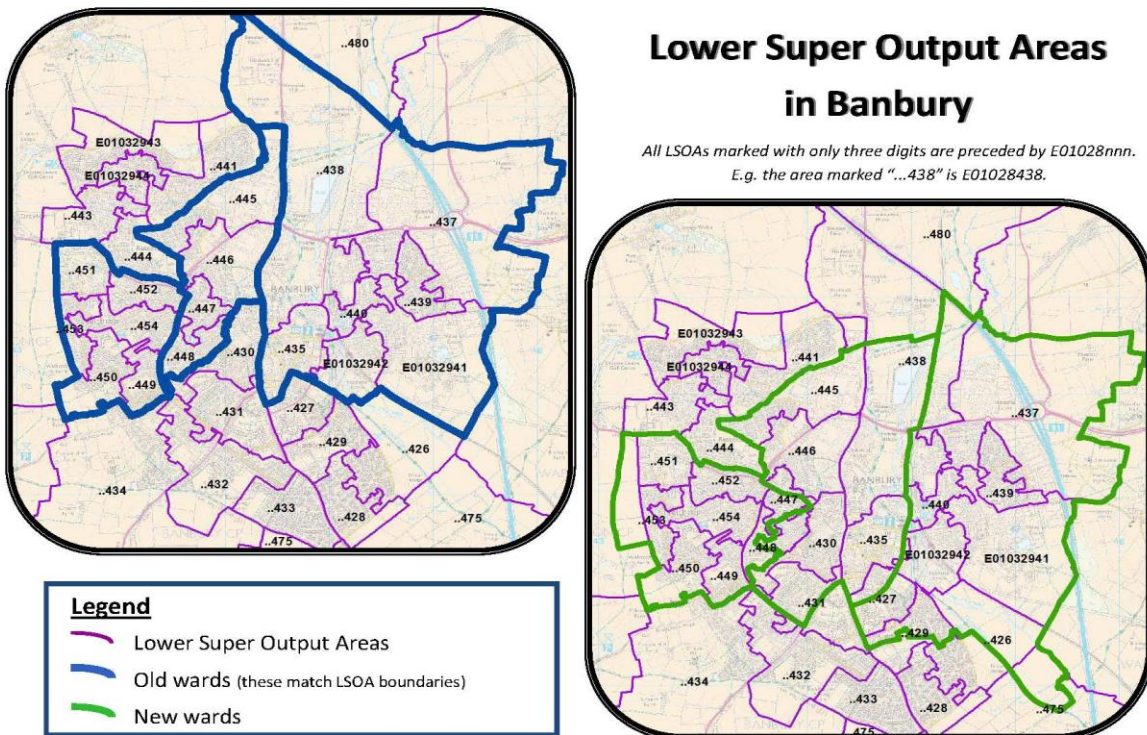


Figure 2: Brighter Futures geography

Why we work in this area

There is a huge amount of evidence that health inequalities are correlated with disadvantage and deprivation that results from social inequality. The Brighter Futures Partnership aims to increase life chances and raise aspirations within the area of Banbury which experiences the greatest levels of deprivation. We know this is a challenge at a time of great financial and other uncertainty, but we are determined that working together gives us the greatest chance of success.

How we work

The Brighter Partnership is co-ordinated by a steering group comprised of representatives from the anchor organisations working in the area, including, community and faith groups as well as the District Council and public health. The steering group meets regularly to bring together information and intelligence from both residents and service providers. Interaction with residents can be on a formal basis via the community network groups or informally via community groups and the professionals and volunteers who support them. This rounded view provides an insight into local residents' ambitions and needs, which in turn leads to dynamic, responsive action planning, based on evidence. This is translated to the strategic vision as well as practical actions.

The partnership focuses on long-term change, looking at a wide variety of measures which support strength and cohesion in the community. The long-standing nature of the partnership has led to trust between the partners, and enables efficient working across organisations and sectors.

A wide group of organisations which are invested in the area is invited to an annual reference group for networking and shared insight. The event in February 2022 was the first opportunity for many partners to meet face to face following the pandemic. It led to some new relationships between organisations, and a range of pledges to support the work of the Brighter Futures partnership.

Our partnerships and support focus:



Figure 3 - Areas of support (updated)

Strong local partnerships - Banbury & Grimsbury Networks

The Brighter Futures in Banbury partnership places great importance on bringing the local partners and stakeholders working in these communities together regularly to ensure there is a consistent well-informed approach to the work being delivered in these wards. The North Banbury and Grimsbury networks both meet quarterly to discuss projects, initiatives and events that groups and organisations are currently delivering, to share good practice and resources and most importantly work together with a joined-up approach. This provides an immediate insight into communities' perceptions of challenges that face them, as well as a place to develop innovative ways of helping residents achieve their ambitions.



Winter Wishes and New Year Wishes events are now firmly in the diary for these communities. Locally based partners come together to deliver an engagement event each year to consult in a fun way with residents, to hear from them about their priorities for where they live for the year ahead. This is how BFIB deliver

consultation each year, with all partners using the same questions to help create an action plan for the community with voluntary sector partners, statutory organisations and the community itself working together to address issues, develop new initiatives and create a strong community for the future. The response rate is excellent as local residents are not put off by a formal consultation arrangement, rather, they feel as though they are sharing their concerns and possible solutions to them, as equals.

Key priorities developed from these two-way conversations include community partners working together to deliver events in partnership to engage all ages, joined up ways to promote opportunities, activities and information and making sure their communities are safe places where residents feel happy to live. The strength of these partnership can be seen in the success of now having a number of annual events each year with all partners joining to support the delivery, including Springfest, Grimsbury Play Day and Summerfest. These events act as great platforms to invite partners to join the day to promote information and advice around community safety, health & wellbeing, debt & money advice and education & skills. In addition, they provide free and low-cost ways for families to have fun together, building and improving their relationships.

The partnerships all produce a quarterly newsletter to bring together good news stories and information for residents, shared electronically and also held as a hard copy in all community facilities in these wards to help the community feel connected to what's going on locally.

Who we are

The steering group has representatives from

- Cherwell District Council (including Safer Communities, Well-being, Housing, Performance and Insight)
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Sanctuary Housing
- The Sunshine Centre
- Citizens Advice
- Oxfordshire County Council (including Social Care, Public Health)
- Department for Work and Pensions

The influence and reach of this partnership stretch out to other professionals, organisations and community groups, some examples of which appear in Appendix 1. This is not an exhaustive list! If you would like to know more about being a partner to the Brighter Futures project, please get in touch.

How does the partnership tackle inequality?

- Working with residents to understand their ambitions and translate them into action
- Providing opportunities for a secure home and sustainable tenancies
- Helping families support their children into life readiness
- Improving access to healthy, affordable food for everyone
- Better opportunities to improve mental and physical health
- A strong local economy with sustainable job opportunities
- Understanding the causes of crime and anti-social behaviour, to provide locally sensitive solutions

Our themes

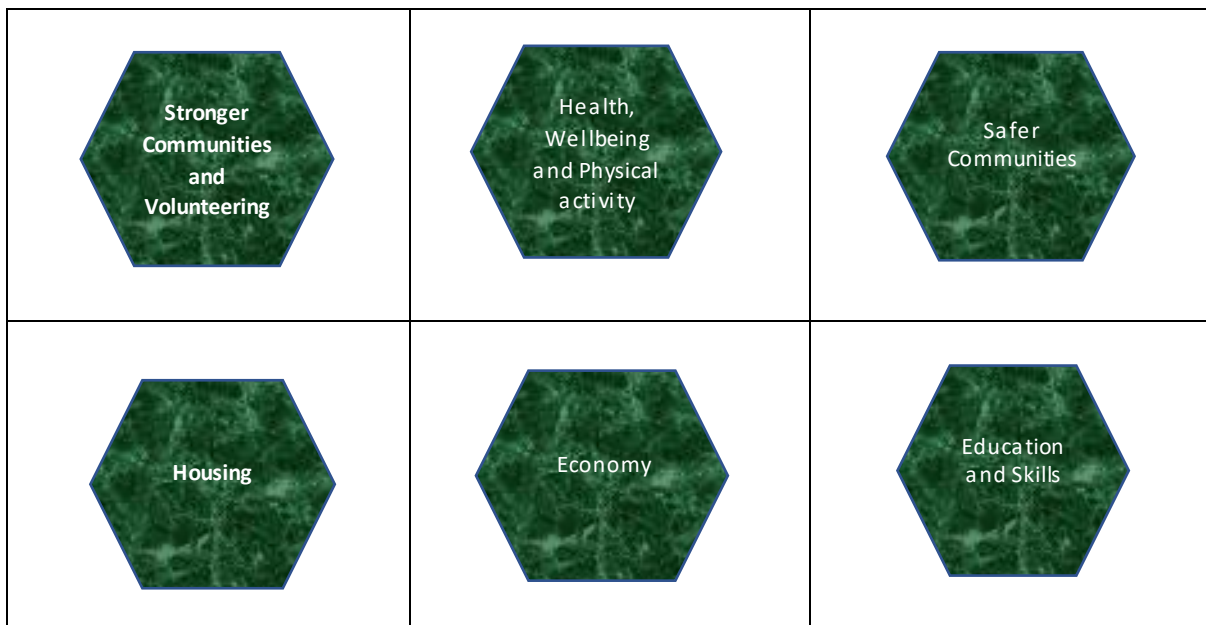


Figure 4 Brighter Futures Partnership Themes

The work of the Brighter Futures partnership sits under the themes shown above, and staff from a variety of organisations take on the co-ordinating role of theme leads. However, the strength of the partnership shines through when these themes are set aside and partner organisations make contributions to improving residents' lives in their complex entirety. We see the work the partners do as forming a web of support which crosses these boundaries.

Within our partnerships and support network, we offer a wide range including:

- Help with the cost of living
- Links to the Local Strategic Partnership
- Shared partnership information
- The opportunity to book community space in Castle Quay (the town's main shopping centre)
- Increased connection with nature
- Employment support
- Access to activities to improve physical and mental health
- Informing the Emergency Plan
- Advice on road closures for community events
- Links for voluntary and community associations
- Community Grants
- Cherwell Lottery
- Shared applications for good-cause community grant funding
- Support for Ukraine

Our stories

Here are just some of the stories from our work tackling health and social inequalities in 2021/22. They illustrate amongst other things, the two-way benefits of volunteering, how important confidence and support can be on the pathway to employment. Also included in this part of the report is some of the data behind the stories

About the data

Please note that as the Census was done last year, the data is not available yet at ward level detail. We expect to have all the up-to-date data at ward and LSOA levels for next year's annual report.



Move Together

Move Together focuses on supporting people who have been shielding as a result of COVID-19 and those with a long-term health condition whose physical or mental health and wellbeing have been impacted by the pandemic and people affected by isolation and loneliness. There are currently 550 people on the programme with each participant doing an average of 99 extra minutes a week as a result of being on Move Together.

One of the participants told her story

“When lockdown came, I found it quite hard to cope with not meeting people, not seeing my neighbours. I have a close family who would visit and use face time, but the reality is that you are completely isolated. For months and months, I didn't go outside the door. I began to notice that my balance was becoming extremely wobbly and the muscle tone in my legs was diminishing. I really was quite worried that I would have a fall.

I received a leaflet through the post about Move Together. I was contacted by Claire and she was just amazing – so sweet and so enthusiastic...really kind and supportive and encouraging. When I spoke to Claire, she was so friendly and really just cheered me up. She made me feel that actually I didn't have to do very much to get myself going again, and that my ability to move easily would gradually return. She sent me a pack with exercises I could do at home and even from my armchair, as well as bands to help me with resistance.



I began to go out again and my daughters would come and just link arms with me to help me walk along, before I got my confidence back. Just to have somebody link arms with you is a really reassuring thing. You begin to use your muscles and your muscle tone comes back a bit. Things moved on and I did get my confidence back. My balance is back pretty much to normal. If you can't do anything else, walking is so good – it helps your balance and

the tone of your muscles all over. That's really important because it makes it less likely that you will have a fall.

So, all in all, Move Together really has made things better for me. I think it is brilliant. Thank you very much to the Move Together team you've really helped me."

Bradley Arcade anti-social behaviour reduction

Up to 30 young people could regularly be found gathering outside the local shops when local CIC BYCE (Banbury Youth and Community Enterprise) began working to tackle anti-social behaviour there. Shop keepers and residents felt unhappy about it, and were sometimes abused by the young people. Potential customers were put off by young people riding motorbikes and electric scooters. There was often fighting.

BYCE used a lot of strategies to work with the young people involved, including supporting them to attend technical music sessions at the Hill, football in the park and offering social and educational activities.

Selma Wakeman at BYCE shows great respect for young people, describing them as having “impressive problem solving and practical skills.” She comments that they are shaped by their experience into “skilled critical thinkers and can link their situations to their behaviour, family, and reputations, which are often very stressful and related to the impact of poverty and lack of what they perceive as, meaningful education and opportunities.”

As part of their work, BYCE was involved in co-ordinating the community-led response to providing food and activities for young people in the area, and used this as a way of engaging Elliott, one of the young people regularly to be found in this group. She used this empathy and understanding to engage Elliott on the holiday programme.

He began by making sandwiches and his confidence grew to the extent that he undertook food hygiene training. Following on from the temporary work in the summer, Elliott has since found work in the hospitality sector.

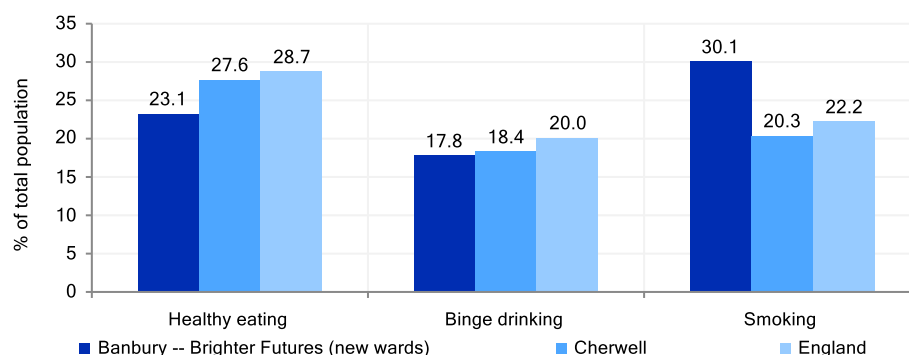


Figure 5 - “Healthy eating” (consumptions of 5+ fruit and veg a day), binge drinking and smoking
Source: Health Survey for England 2006-2008

Cooking with Lucy

Many of the families who regularly use the Sunshine Centre had a massive change in circumstances during the pandemic. A variety of reasons – from the need to isolate to unexpected financial problems meant that we were able to reach out to many of them by supplying food parcels and children’s activity packs.

One of these parents, Lucy, established a love of cooking along with her 3 children. They had fun devising recipes and cooking together, coming up with tasty and imaginative ways to use the food provided. Lucy wanted to share this enjoyment with other parents and children and so she came up with the idea of making recipe cards. Once she shared these with the Sunshine Centre along with photos of their cooking creations, we could see she was on to a winner and we printed them up. This soon grew into the “Covid- 19 cooking creations” recipe book.

Lucy’s love of cooking and sharing didn’t end there. She launched into making video tutorials at The Sunshine Centre which support the book and can be found on a private YouTube thread. Now the Sunshine Centre is offering a course – “Cooking with Lucy” – where parents are provided with the ingredients to cook Lucy’s delicious family recipes. *“This works so well for our families”* said Centre Manager Jill Edge. *“Families can cook together at a time that suits them, and know that the recipes have been tried and tested in a home kitchen.”*

Children and Families Community Worker, Katie added *“we have delivered a ‘Cooking with Lucy’ pilot programme with 6 families, the feedback has been so positive. We plan to deliver ‘Cooking with Lucy’ on a rolling programme and are halfway through at the moment. Families have commented that the recipes are easy to follow, and it has allowed their children to try new foods. We are also planning on providing ‘one off’ sessions of cooking with Lucy for celebrations such as Easter and Eid.”*

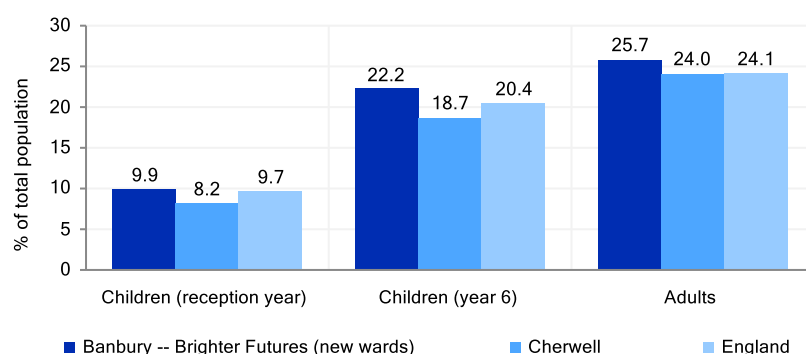


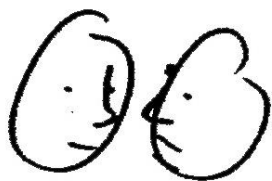
Figure 6 - Children and adults classified as obese

Source: National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) (2017/18-2019/20), Health Survey for England 2006-2008

Lucy’s confidence has grown over the months and has secured a job working in the kitchen of a local school Lucy added *“I recently took on a new creation and made a rainbow cake for a friend it was a bit of work and outside my comfort zone, but the outcome was amazing, and I really do feel all this cooking and just having a go has really boosted my confidence to just try. Many thanks Katie and to all of you at the Sunshine Centre for supporting me when I needed it and including me to help others.”*

Men's Breakfast Club

Charlie is a senior user of The Hill who regularly attends Men's breakfast club. He owns his own home, but has shared with the team that he struggles financially at times. Charlie told the team that since his wife died some years ago, he hadn't been anywhere to socialise for some time before accessing The Hill.



FACE TO FACE SERVICE

"We were able to refer Charlie to the Winter Warmers soup project (set up to provide a hot, nutritious meal for older residents during lockdown). We were also able to assist him on the phone after he had struggled for 10 days trying to get a GP appointment" the Hill team explained.

"Charlie has made friendships at the men's breakfast and the difference in the way the group converse with each other now in comparison to when it started is remarkable and wonderful to witness. We regularly support C with food items

donated by Banbury Food for Charities."

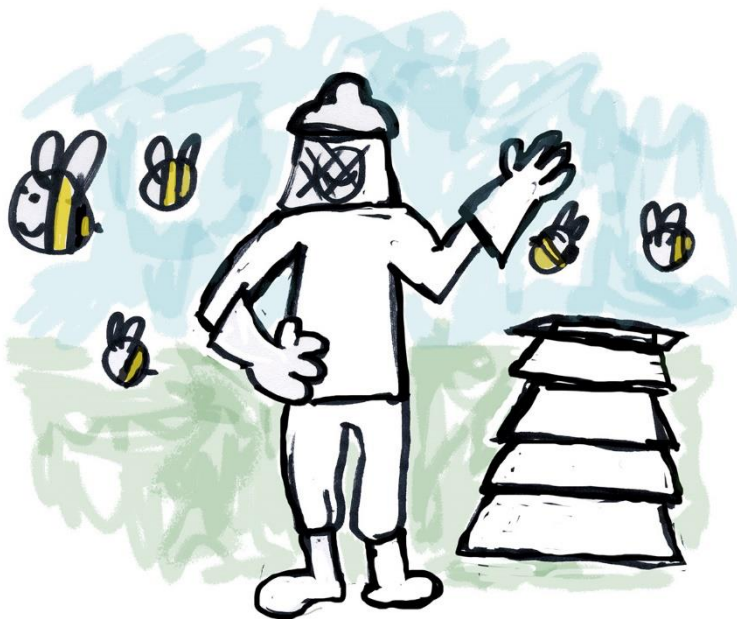
Building skills for life – Warriner School Farm summer initiative



Warriner School in Bloxham is unusual in having a 47-hectare farm on the school campus. Each year, the Sunshine Centre works with local primary schools find 20 young people who would benefit from spending a week at the Warriner School Farm during their summer holidays. This project highlights the great partnerships in place to help give young people that extra opportunity which they would not normally have the chance to have, a week's holiday on a farm, making new friends, trying new activities and learning essential life skills for the future. The children's confidence grows massively even during the week. During this summer's week the young people built outdoor clay pizza ovens, and learnt about foraging for food in the countryside.

They helped to set up growing spaces, and learned some horticultural skills. Every day the young people are encouraged to get involved in farm life, feeding the livestock and moving them around the farm, collecting the eggs (which are sold in the village), and farm yard maintenance. They got to meet a local bee keeper to learn about the importance of bees to our natural environment as well as stepping into a bee keeper's suit to have a hands-on experience dealing with the hives and the bees themselves. The week ended with a celebration and a homemade pizza cook off, with fresh salad from the farm's garden, hedgerows and greenhouses.

All the young people keep journals of their week's adventures. All the young people take these journals back into their school, for ideas of what they can do in the new term ahead and to tell teachers and friends what they got up to in their summer holidays. The Warriner Farm return to visit these young people in their local communities throughout the year, bringing activities to where they live to leave a legacy, these include building giant bug hotels to support the natural environment and creating bird boxes to encourage wildlife to thrive in their back gardens.



Cherwell District Council
Community Development Manager,
Jon Wild loves the Warriner farm
week, for itself and the fun it brings

to local children, saying *"it's amazing how the children's confidence grows and I love to hear their stories of what skills they have learnt and the memories they have made."* He loves it even more for its legacy with those children, commenting *"This really is an example of preparing young people to be life ready, inspiring them to explore new opportunities and to have positive aspirations of what they can do in the future!"*

Seaside trip – making memories

After lockdown and other restrictions began to lift, the Hill Community Centre organised a trip to the seaside.

Bhumika* has a long-term illness which restricts mobility and has 3 children, one who suffers with extreme anxiety and is a school refuser. The family are also on a low income and the children are eligible for free school meals. The Hill has enabled the family to access days out and activities during the holidays which they would not normally be able to afford including The Hills seaside trip last summer.

For the youngest child it was the first time she had ever been to a beach, and it was only the second time for the middle child aged 11. *"We have regular contact with the family and are able to support Bhumika by being a trusted organisation willing to listen and support where possible"* said centre manager, Lorraine Squire.



One of the most excited people on the trip was 16-year-old Sara*, who had never seen the sea before. As well as their unforgettable day, some of the travellers also received a sketch as an unusual memento.

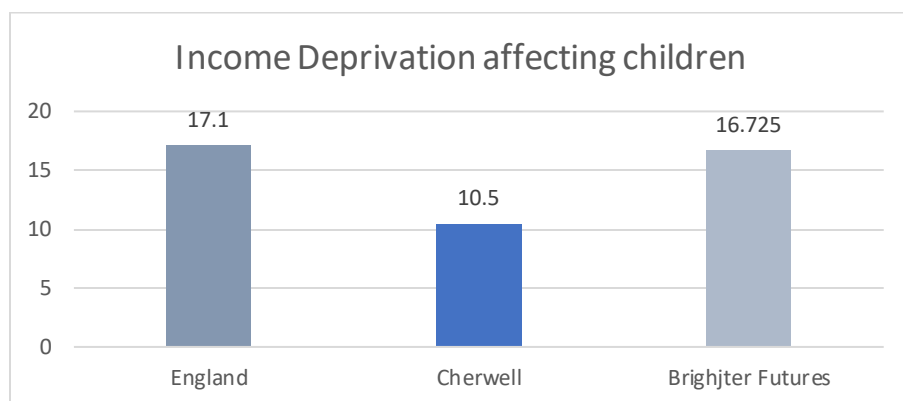


Figure 7 income deprivation affecting children

“The trip didn’t just give families a chance to take a break from everyday life” explained Lorraine, “experiences like this really bring a family together and give them a chance to build their relationships”

*name changed

Health Walks – “the gift that keeps on giving”

Across the Cherwell District, people’s preferred activity is walking, with a recent survey showing 63% of residents walking at least twice in the last 28 days.

3 new health walks have been designed and opened to make it easier for families and individuals to get walking for their health and to build walking into their lives as means of travel. In Grimsbury, the 5K health walk connects St Leonard’s School and the Dashwood Academy to Moorfield Park. There is also a ‘cut through’ enabling people to take in the local shops and doctor’s surgery.

A further two routes in Banbury form a figure-of-eight, running through Ruscote, Bretch Hill, and Neithrop. The northern 5K loop includes William Morris Primary School and Hill View Primary School. The southern 3K circuit connects Princess Diana Park with Stanbridge Park.

The Sunshine Centre are always open to opportunities to promote physical and mental health and are particularly excited with activities which will improve both. Being outdoors, walking and being next to nature has been proven to maintain and increase our health.

Funded by Sport England our walking challenge was launched in 2021 along with our walking map. We threw down the gauntlet to the community to collectively walk the distance from Land's End to John O'Groats using footpaths around the estate and from the estate into the countryside.

The challenge was embraced and exceeded our expectations when 2265 miles was achieved. This took our walkers from Land's End to John O Groats and back and then from Banbury to Hennef, Ermont and back to Banbury (Hennef and Ermont being our twinned towns in Germany and France).

The types of participants ranged from families with small children to older people and included a teenager with learning difficulties, a pensioner with Alzheimer's, a homeless mother, a woman with severe anxiety and a young person working towards their Duke of Edinburgh's award.

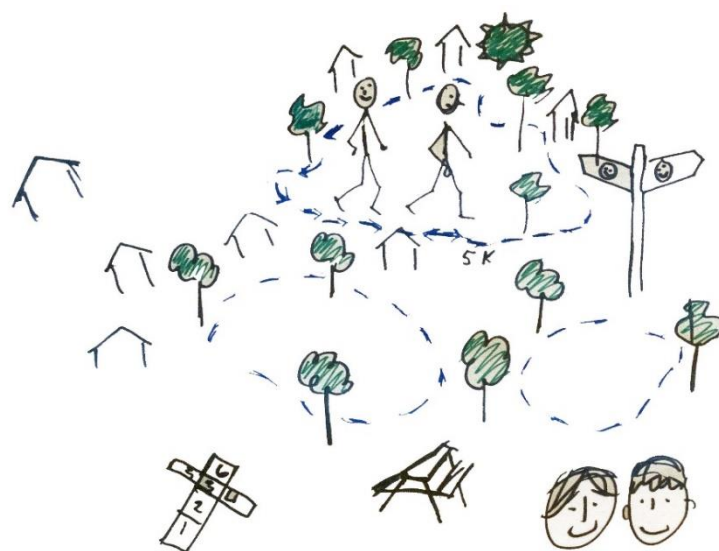
As a sequel to this amazing achievement, we decided to promote the Banbury Healthy Spaces map. Our Easter family fun day saw families being led by a monkey a teddy bear and an elephant around the new Healthy Spaces walking route, stopping to play on the painted pavement games before arriving at Stanbridge Park where the Easter Bunny was waiting to greet the children and an Easter egg roll then ensued.

Participants commented that the incentives had *"encouraged them to go outside and just begin walking"*,

"Encouraged them to leave their home at a very difficult time",

"Made them realise they are able to walk further than they thought".

"Walking routes/maps are a gift which just keeps on giving" commented centre manager, Jill Edge, "and we will continue to promote their use".



Youth Activators in Grimsbury

Cherwell District Council's Youth Activators work with 8–16-year-olds across the district of Cherwell to engage with them through the use of physical activity, delivering fun alternative sports. Free sessions are put on by the activators in three main areas, recreational spaces, multi-use games areas, and voluntary youth clubs, where the Activators work on engaging with the young people, trying to eradicate any of the barriers restricting their participation in sport.

This year activators Hayley and Laura have been working in partnership with the charity Women in Sport to carry out research with teenagers in Banbury, including the Brighter Futures area of Grimsbury. The aim of the project is to understand how teenage girls use parks in their local area and why, so we can influence the development of these spaces and ensure every teenager feels welcome within them and has opportunities to use these spaces in a way that works for them.

At this stage in the project, we have completed an initial workshop with stakeholders including members of the council, representatives from local community groups such as the Mosque and police community support officers to introduce them to our project and get their thoughts on how local parks are used. We then sent out surveys to teenagers in Banbury secondary schools to gather research.

We have also completed two walk arounds with a small group of teenage girls in Banbury parks to really delve deeper into their views and see it through their eyes. Next steps will be to carry out further research with focus groups and try to establish a plan for making improvements to three park spaces in Banbury. “We are really proud to be working on this project with Women in Sport and can't wait to share the results later in the year” said the Activators' manager Tom Gubbins.

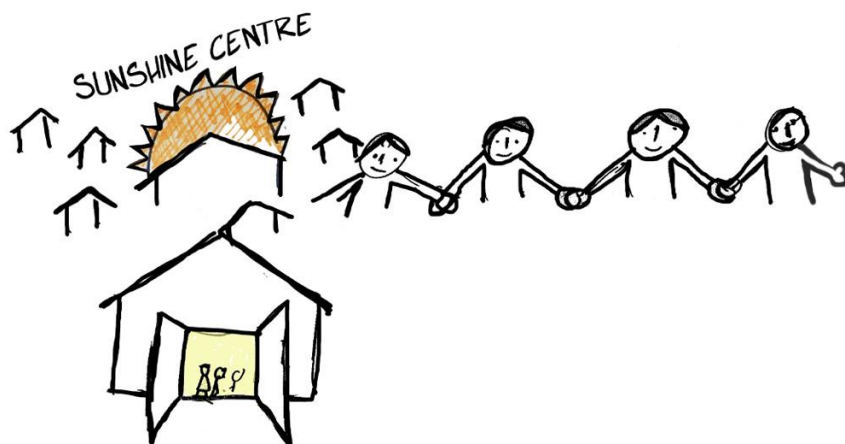
The activators have run cycling sessions at Banbury Mosque to help children enhance their cycling skills or teaching them how to ride a bike. A range of bikes was donated to the mosque for the children were to use. Children who could already ride a bike completed fun games and activities focusing on different cycling skills. By the end of the four weeks, six children had successfully learnt how to ride their bike and progress into the other group.



Tom Gubbins commented “*It was really rewarding for the activators to see the children progress and learn how to cycle on their own. A fantastic additional benefit is that a bike library has been set up at the mosque. The children are able to use the bikes in their own time and practice the skills which the youth activators taught them.*”

Supporting residents' mental health

"The support and care I received from staff at the Sunshine centre has been second to none. Ella has been my biggest supporter, my cheer when I was up and my shoulder when I was down. She has been my anker who kept me grounded through*



one of the darkest places I've ever found myself. I am beyond grateful for the team at the sunshine centre, I know the door is always open & no words can express my gratitude for this. Thank you, ladies for being my backbone when I was falling. X"

*Name changed

The wider benefits of music technology

The Hill youth and community centre has been hosting a Technology led music project a project for young people at risk of exploitation which covered topics such as drug exploitation, consent, safe relationships and various other topics over a 12-week period. The project aims to develop new skills and raise expectations, leading to changes in lifestyles for participants. This project run in partnership with The Hill, Community Albums, Step Out and Banbury Youth and Community Enterprise also allowed for some small group mentoring.

The sessions are attractive to young people who wanted to learn about the technical aspects of music making, but in fact they offered much more.

Cyrus (name changed) was initially referred to The Hill by Oxfordshire County Council Early Help team. Cyrus suffers with poor mental health and was finding it difficult to maintain good attendance at school for various reason. They had been struggling to maintain both education and a stable home life. In addition, Cyrus had low self-esteem and had difficulty understanding how to keep safe boundaries, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and had also been exploring issues around their identity.

Cyrus had an interest in music, so Community Albums began to work with on a 1:1 basis to their build self-esteem and confidence. Cyrus was into drill music and enjoyed engaging with debate about culture and influence when he was challenged about the use of language and the attitudes associated with his preferred style of music.

As a result of attending the music sessions, Cyrus has remained engaged with The Hill, and begun to show an interest in other activities. Cyrus has joined The Vocal Band – the Hill's community choir, and Cherwell Theatre Company have offered a 12-month scholarship, which will support Cyrus to develop their interest in both singing and drama.

Lorraine Squire commented “Cyrus has been a regular attender at the Hill for 8 months now. They accessed a 6-week cooking project and gained their food safety hygiene certificate, which will open up employment opportunities. We are thrilled by Cyrus’s great steps in self-confidence and self-esteem”.

Building relationships

Abi first came to the Hill for a family day, and since then has been coming to a regular weekly drop in for about 8 months. She is a mother of 3 children, who she looks after by herself. She has significant mental health issues, and centre staff realised that she was really struggling with money. Coming to the regular drop-in sessions had built enough trust for her to share her circumstances with a staff member.

It became clear that Abi wasn’t claiming the correct benefits, and hadn’t been doing so for the last 12 months. She didn’t feel able to tackle this problem until the Hill team offered to support her by travelling with her to Citizens Advice. Over a series of three appointments, Abi was assisted in transferring her claim to Universal Credit, which increased the household income by £40 per week. This had a significant positive effect on the whole family. Citizens Advice also helped Abi claim a household support grant.

CA

CITIZEN ADVICE

NORTH OX & SOUTH NORTHANTS

The Hill team suggested Abi would find it helpful to get online at home, and sourced a reconditioned device from Get Oxfordshire Online, free of charge.

CONNECTING ONLINE



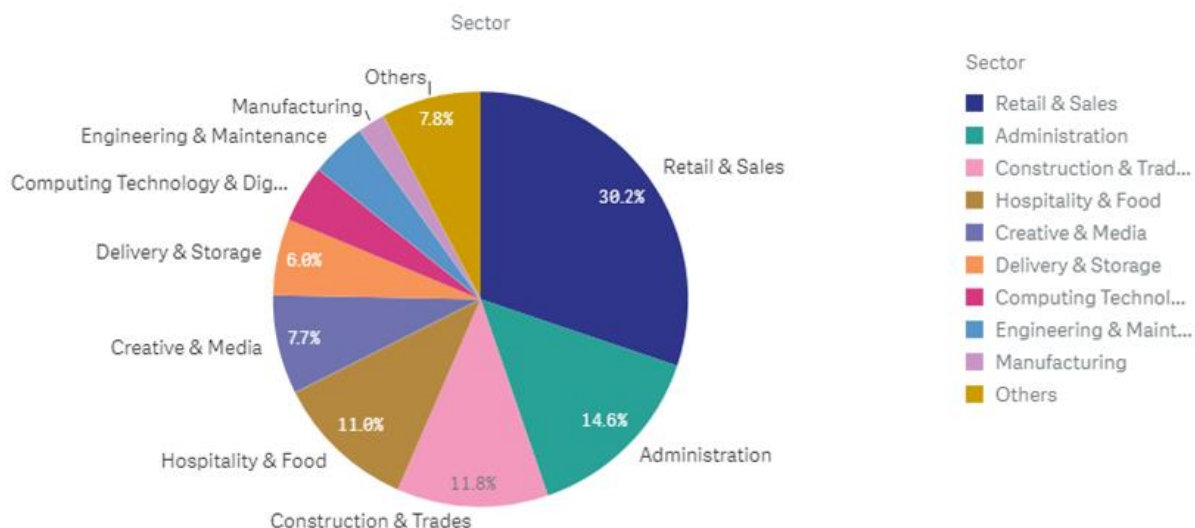
Lorraine Squire, the centre manager is delighted that the way her team work to build relationships with people who use the centre has paid off.

“It’s great to see the positive changes that Abi has felt able to make,” said Lorraine “The family now regularly attend sessions at The Hill and family days / outings. We hope Abi no longer feels she has to cope with everything on her own.”

Job opportunities for young people

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through local Jobcentre Plus (JCP) service, promoted local employment opportunities for young people through the Kick Start employment scheme. There were 153 Kickstart starts, of which 109 completed, with 474 Kickstart vacancies advertised. The chart below shows the Kickstart referrals by sector

Total Referrals made by Sector



The number of people claiming UC in the BFiB wards is greater than the other wards within Cherwell. This means that the employment opportunities offered to people claiming UC are supporting those in these areas access work to improve their lives. As the number and proportion of people of people claiming UC is higher in these areas it shows that there is a greater need for these initiatives in the BFiB wards.

Month	April 2021	July 2021	October 2021	January 2022	March 2022
Banbury Cross and Neithrop	1326	1301	1295	1197	1207
Banbury Grimsbury and Hightown	1176	1097	1070	1036	1009
Banbury Hardwick	733	730	733	684	678
Banbury Ruscote	1392	1389	1392	1323	1310
claimants in BF wards	4627	4517	4490	4240	4204
% claimants from BF wards	41	41	41	42	42
Total in district	11265	10990	10866	10168	10007

Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) impact in the Brighter Futures Area

The Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) provided funding to local authorities in England during 2021/22, to help reduce the spread of coronavirus and support local public health. This allowed local authorities to make tailored responses to local needs. Several projects of the Brighter Futures partnership were funded or partially funded through COMF.

Project	Description
The Hill Senior Youth Club	The Hill was funded to provide a senior youth club, which included football sessions as well as more traditional youth club activities. Young people who attended were able to discuss their issues with staff and to access individual sessions where appropriate
Growing project with Banbury Community Action Group and Harvest at Home in Banbury	The Community Garden at Bridge Street has enjoyed a renaissance. Banbury Community Action Group has extended its reach and has regular contact with Age Friendly Banbury, Restore (mental health charity) and Home:Start (working with parents of under 5s)
Oxford United in the community working with older people, women and young people	Participants had the opportunity to improve their physical health through targeted football sessions, and to improve their mental health by participating in a group activity where mental health issues could be discussed
Starting, a reuse, recycle, upcycle project at the Sunshine Centre	People who use the Sunshine Centre were encouraged to reuse items which had been donated by accessing a weekly market where the goods could be purchased
Extending the Banbury Cooking Skills Project	Group activity had not been possible during the lockdowns. The COMF funding enabled the group to restart and look for new venues

More than just a kick about

During 2021/22, a free, group-based programme was started. The aim was to offer an opportunity to explore different topics promoting positive wellbeing and mental health led by Oxfordshire Mind, alongside a fun, football based physical activity run by Oxford United in the Community.

One of the participants, Olivia*, told the organisers about how deeply the group affected her:



"I joined the wellbeing group sessions because I thought it would be an opportunity to learn some things about mental health and about myself.

I felt I've always been teetering on the edge of being ok and finding ways to cope with day-to-day challenges as well as personal life challenges, so the wellbeing group really helped me find a safe space to talk about things and provide different positive ways to cope but to also be able to do more than just cope day to day.

There wasn't really anything that didn't work in general because what might work for others potentially won't work for me and vice versa, overall, for me the sessions were fab!

For me I've really got into podcasts and reading, I'm used to just blasting music out and finding that'll plug the issue until that plug isn't sufficient anymore but podcasts and reading has really helped me to focus on other things, take time to really think about what's bothering me and should I really be letting it bother me so much plus breathing techniques and being mindful of not allowing things to be bigger than they should be.

So as a result of the programme I've actually applied for a new job and pushing myself way out of my comfort zone, but I feel more confident in myself that I can do it and be successful in my new career!"

*name changed

Sofia and the Garden

The Bridge Street Community Garden is one of the projects run by the Banbury Community Action Group. It's open to everyone. It was developed in 2015, in a previously unloved, unused space. As well as regular gardening sessions, the garden hosts events such as the intergeneration fair held in March 2022.

Sofia and her toddler son volunteer at the garden once or twice every week, after going to a volunteering event there. Sophia had seen advertised on social media.

"I joined the group of volunteers at Bridge St Garden during a stressful time of my life. I wanted to make new acquaintances for my toddler and me. I had tried mother and toddler groups, but I didn't feel like I belonged, so I decided to give volunteering at the community garden a go. Giving my time as a volunteer helps me in so many ways. Even though I am not a gardening expert, I find spending time outdoors surrounded by nature very therapeutic.



I also want my young son to find a connection to the natural world, so I bring him along when I volunteer. Children grow up in a fast-paced world dominated by technology; spending time outdoors is essential for their development. I believe that by contributing to our local community projects (such as Bridge St Garden), we can be part of something bigger.

Being originally from Portugal, I find that meeting people from different backgrounds at the Garden gives me a sense of belonging to the local community which is extremely important to me."

It's not just Sofia and her son who have benefitted from her volunteering. The Bridge Street Community Garden Organisers said
"Sofia helps in many ways at the Community Garden. She waters the planters, looks after the plants, helps set up before events and puts tools away after our gardening sessions.

She greets people, making them feel welcome. It is so lovely having Sofia and her son in the Garden. Sofia is always open to get involved and help others"

Looking ahead

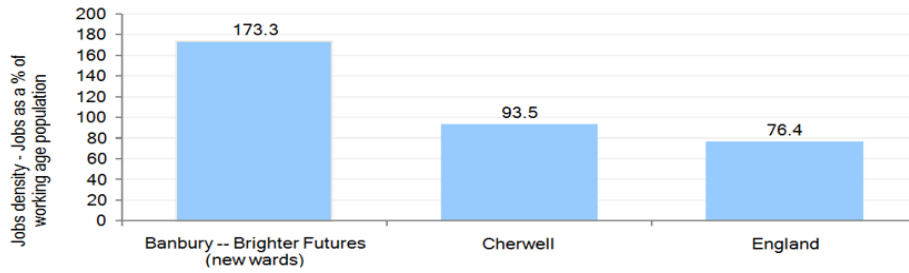
Supporting residents with increased cost of living

The Brighter Futures Partnership is looking ahead to a year where the cost of living is set to increase dramatically, through increased energy costs and inflation. We know that this has the potential to cause hardship and stress to residents and we are focussing all our efforts on a holistic approach to tackling this. Our mitigation will include bringing advice and information to where residents are, support to people to access healthy food and cheap ways to cook it, providing free and low-cost activities which support family and community bonding, and many more initiatives.



Supporting residents to improve their employment prospects

The Partnership will work to ensure that jobs and employment opportunities for both the current and future workforces were supported. This is important for the Brighter Futures in Banbury wards (which includes Banbury town centre and the industrial estates) as there are more than 1,500 businesses providing over 25,000 jobs.



Source : Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)

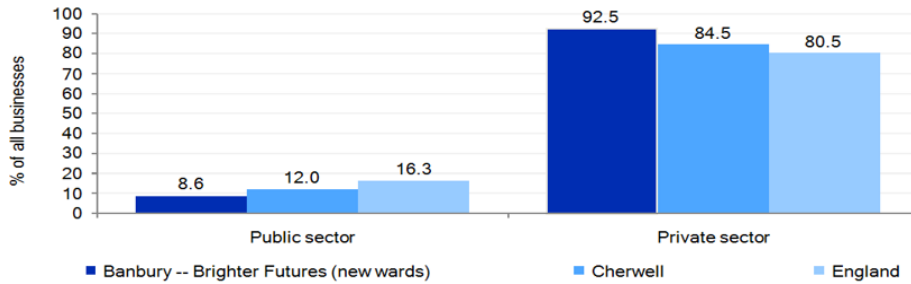


Figure - Employment percentage Survey - Jobs by public sector/private sector (2020)
Source : Office for National Statistics

Employment support schemes being delivered through Job Centre Plus (JCP) alongside local partners, with particular focus on young people and sectors important to local economy (e.g. construction and hospitality). We are aware of skills shortages in the area of construction and care, which may bring opportunities for local residents. DWP have a new focus on those over 50 to encourage people to work longer - It is critical that individuals have the choice and opportunity to work longer and save towards a financially secure retirement.

The objective is to enable those aged 50 and over, through early and targeted employment, skills and employer led support to stay in, progress or return to work and to build their future financial resilience and wellbeing.

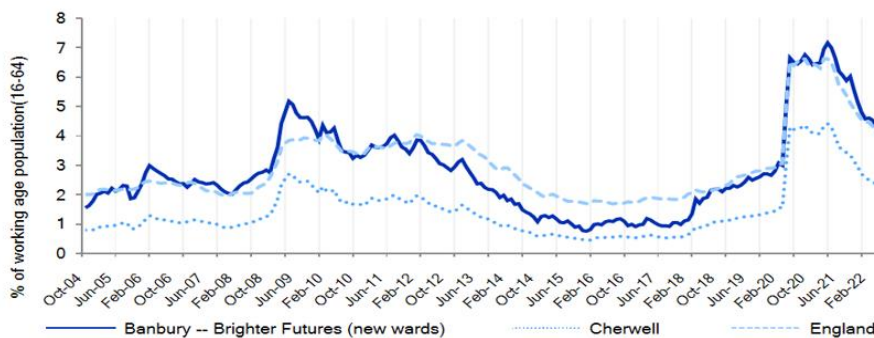


Figure 8 - Claimant Count progression

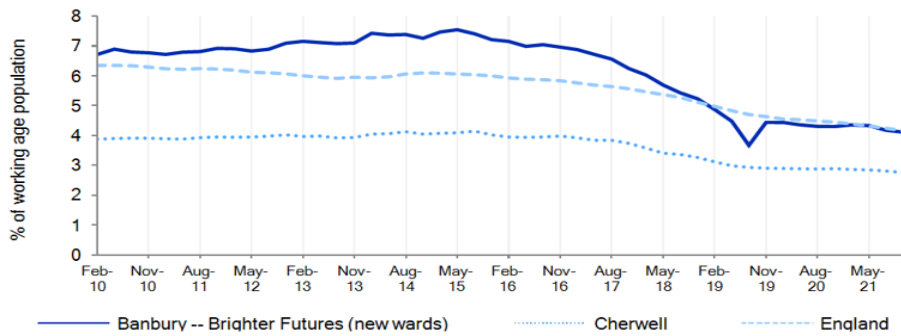


Figure 9- Incapacity Claim progression

Source: Office for National Statistics

Improving our understanding of residents' needs

We are looking forward to accessing the 2021 census data to help us tailor projects with the best local information. In addition, we will benefit from detailed analysis from community profiles of the Brighter Futures work.

The purpose of creating a community profile is to ensure we understand as fully as possible the health outcomes and factors that influence these outcomes within wards in Oxfordshire where residents are most at risk of poor health, or experience health inequalities. We are planning to work with communities to produce profiles to cover the wards identified in the Oxfordshire [Director of Public Health Annual Report](#) which have the greatest number of small areas ("Super Output Areas") that were listed in the 20% most deprived in England in the Index of Multiple Deprivation update (published November 2019) and are most likely to experience inequalities in health. We will be creating a community profile that cover 3 wards within the Brighter Futures in Banbury area which include a profile for Grimsbury and Hightown, and also a joint profile for the Banbury Cross and Neithrop, and Ruscote area.

We are expecting that the profiles will include a range of quantitative data indicators along with qualitative information/community insight and assets for the area. The profiles will link to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and will be a useful mechanism to pull together all the data and insight available at a local level to help inform future action planning, and can shared with relevant boards such as the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board. We anticipate the profile will also be useful for local partners to help with data needed for funding applications, developing local initiatives and communities within those wards may also have other ideas about how the profiles can be used. We want to use the opportunity of undertaking these profiles to better understand the impact COVID-19 has had within these communities.

Steering groups have been set up for each of the Banbury profiles to help support their creation and they are expected to be completed in the spring of 2023.

Developing, listening and growing

The Partnership will continue to welcome input from new partners, to consult residents about their aims and ambitions, and to seek new ways of breaking the cycle of deprivation and health inequality. OxLEP interest in Levelling-Up from within Oxfordshire could bring resources to Brighter Futures in Banbury.

We are working together on projects on a dynamic basis. Recent events have shown us that circumstances can change rapidly, and so should we. We are constantly looking at the “deliverables” – the things that a combination of resident and partner intelligence inform us can make a real difference.



Who's Who

Name and Role	Organisation	Email	Brighter Futures Role
Councillor Phil Chapman	Cherwell District Council	Phil.chapman@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities
Nicola Riley	Cherwell District Council	nicola.riley@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	Assistant Director: Wellbeing & Housing Services
Steven Newman	Cherwell District Council	Steven.newman@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	Employment Theme Lead
Michelle Hoffer	Department for Work and Pensions	Michelle.hoffler@dwp.gov.uk	Employment Theme Lead from 2022/23
Jon Wild	Cherwell District Council	Jon.wild@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	Community Development Manager
Tim Tarby Donald	Oxford United in the Community	charityninja@outlook.com	Stronger Communities and Volunteering Theme Lead
Jonathan Mitchell	Cherwell District Council	Jonathan.mitchell@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	Housing Theme Lead
Charlie Heritage	Sanctuary Housing Group	Charlie.Heritage@sanctuary-housing.co.uk	Housing Theme Lead
Tom Gubbins	Cherwell District Council	Tom.gubbins@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	Health, Wellbeing and Physical Activity Theme Lead
Kate Austin	Oxfordshire County Council	Kate.Austin@oxfordshire.gov.uk	Health, Wellbeing and Physical Activity Theme Lead
Inspector Iain Roberts	Thames Valley Police	Iain.roberts@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk	Safer & Stronger Communities Theme Lead 2020/21
Katey Humphris	Cherwell District Council	Katey.humphris@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	Safer Communities Theme Lead 2022/23
Pat Coomber-Wood	Citizens Advice	Pat.coomber-wood@cano.org.uk	Stronger Communities and Volunteering Theme Lead

Kate Winstanley	Independent	Kate_consultancy@yahoo.com	Facilitation and strategic support
Tom Cross	Independent	thomaswcross@gmail.com	Graphic facilitation and illustration

How to contact us:

Brighter Futures in Banbury Programme
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

Tel: 01295 221980

Email: brighter.futures@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

View the Brighter Futures webpages at
<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/118/communities/873/brighter-futures-in-banbury>

Report written by Kate Winstanley
Graphic facilitation and illustration by Tom Cross

Our Partners

This list is not exhaustive. If you would like more information, or would like to become a partner, get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

Activate Learning	Legacy Leisure
Active Oxfordshire	Lighthouse
Age Friendly Banbury	Living Streets
Age UK	Midwives
Aquarius	National Careers Service
Banbury Aspirations	NHS cancer screening
Banbury Community Church	North Oxfordshire Schools Sports Partnership
Banbury Community Safety Partnership	Oxford and Cherwell Valley College
Banbury Food Bank	Oxford United in the Community
Banbury Healthy Cooking Skills	Oxfordshire Advice Project
Banbury Madni Mosque	Oxfordshire Mind
BYCE	Oxfordshire Play Association
BYHP	Oxfordshire Smoke Free Life
Carers Oxfordshire	OxLEP (Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership)
Cherwell Theatre	Restore
Community Dental services	Safeguarding Children In Banbury
DCLG	Science Oxford
Dementia Oxfordshire	Solutions for Health
Good Food Oxfordshire	Sunrise Centre
GP practices	Sunshine Centre
Grimsbury Community Network	The Hill Youth and Community Centre
Home: Start	Turning Point
Homes and Communities Agency	Volunteer Connect
Housing and Habitat for Humanity	Warriner Farm
Job Centre Plus	

