

Thursday 15 June 2023**Making Every Contact Count (MECC)****Purpose / Recommendation**

1. The Health Improvement Board is asked to:
 - (a) note the opportunities of Making Every Contact Count (MECC) to improve population health and reduce health inequalities
 - (b) note the progress made so far in Oxfordshire
 - (c) review the Oxfordshire MECC mapping and implementation plan and offer any feedback and suggestions where they or their organisation could support (see appendix)
 - (d) support and encourage organisations in Oxfordshire to embed the principles of MECC into their work as part of their wider prevention programme.

Background

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is an evidence-based approach to health improvement which involves training people to give them the confidence to raise issues about health with others and follow up with very brief advice and signposting for support.

MECC involves responding appropriately to cues from others to encourage them to think about behaviour change and steps that they could take to improve their health and wellbeing. MECC works through opportunistic conversations in everyday life – this could be at work, at school pick up time, in a shop. Anywhere, where there is contact between individuals, not just in health-related settings.

Training in MECC can take various forms including face-to-face and online training. The training typically covers five lifestyle behaviours: healthy eating and maintaining a healthy weight; physical activity; smoking; alcohol and mental wellbeing. People who receive MECC training are not expected to be health experts but will understand the basis of MECC and gain confidence to use the skills learnt. Across Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB), we also encourage a sustainable cascade approach by training staff in different organisations to become MECC trainers themselves and roll out the training within their team. These courses are currently delivered by the BOB Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB).

MECC is recommended by a range of health organisations, policies and strategies as a key driver for improving health outcomes in a population. These include The

Local Government Association¹, The NHS 5-year Forward View², Health Education England³ (which has now merged into NHS England) and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities⁴. An overview of MECC in health policies can be found [here](#) on page 10.

Given the potential for MECC to be rolled out to a wide range of organisations and services in Oxfordshire, MECC supports the shared vision of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-23)⁵: “*To work together in supporting and maintaining excellent health and wellbeing for all the residents of Oxfordshire*”. The Oxfordshire MECC programme also supports the Health and Wellbeing Strategy’s “live well” and “tackle inequalities” priorities.

A paper⁶ was taken to the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board on 16th December 2021 to highlight the opportunities for MECC to contribute to the delivery of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy. The paper explained the significant potential and broad scope of MECC and its application to any stage of the life course to help improve health outcomes. The paper recommended the arrangement of a workshop for members of the board which was subsequently delivered on 8th March 2022.

System partners who attended the workshop were very enthusiastic and keen to see MECC implemented further at scale across the system. It was identified that resource would be needed to achieve this and Oxfordshire were successful in securing £200,000 of MECC funding from what was the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (the OCCG has now become BOB ICB).

In February 2023 and using part of the OCCG funding, a Health Improvement Practitioner was appointed to the Oxfordshire County Council Public Health team to help support the strategic scale-up of MECC across Oxfordshire. A more strategic approach to MECC will mean that the foundations already in place for MECC delivery can be built on and scaled up as well as encouraging new organisations who are not yet engaged to start using MECC. This will help enable more people to talk about health and wellbeing as part of everyday conversations.

In March 2023, a workshop was held with the Oxfordshire MECC Partnership at Rosehill Community Centre to discuss how we can work together as a system to strategically scale up MECC across Oxfordshire. Members of the partnership can be

¹ LGA case studies <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/making-every-contact-count>

² NHS 5 year forward view <https://www.england.nhs.uk/five-year-forward-view/>

³ Health Education England <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/making-every-contact-count/>

⁴ Office for Health Improvement and Disparities <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-health-improvement-and-disparities/about>

⁵ Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s45109/HWB_MAR1419R27-%20The%20revised%20Joint%20HWB%20sTRATEGY%20-%202018%20-%2023.pdf#:~:text=Oxfordshire%20Joint%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%282018-2023%29%20Amended%20draft,who%20live%20in%2C%20work%20in%20and%20visit%20Oxfords
[hire.](https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s45109/HWB_MAR1419R27-%20The%20revised%20Joint%20HWB%20sTRATEGY%20-%202018%20-%2023.pdf#:~:text=Oxfordshire%20Joint%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy%282018-2023%29%20Amended%20draft,who%20live%20in%2C%20work%20in%20and%20visit%20Oxfords)

⁶ Health and Wellbeing Board paper December 2021 https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s58758/HWB_DEC1621R11%20-%20HWB%20Strategy%20Priorities%20and%20MECC%20opportunity%20Dec%2021.pdf

found in the chapter “Communications”. The insights obtained from this workshop were used to develop a MECC mapping and implementation plan to support the delivery and strategic scaling up of MECC across Oxfordshire. This plan is attached as an appendix to this report and members of the Health Improvement Board are asked to review the plan and offer any feedback. Key headline actions are summarised below:

- Work with BOB ICB to ensure there is a sustainable and efficient MECC training programme in Oxfordshire
- Support organisations and services who are already using MECC such as the Oxfordshire Library Service, Oxford University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Oxford Health and the voluntary and community sector
- Support pharmacy, optometry and dentistry services in Oxfordshire to embed the MECC approach in their work
- Embed MECC within Public Health commissioned services and other local authority services including those within the district and city councils
- Provide financial support to organisations to help them rollout MECC
- Evaluate the Oxfordshire MECC programme to demonstrate impact
- Implement measures to promote the long-term sustainability of the Oxfordshire MECC programme

Key Issues

Members of the Health Improvement Board are asked to note the content of the Oxfordshire MECC mapping and implementation plan and offer any feedback and suggestions where they/their organisation could support with the rollout of MECC.

Increased promotion of MECC training may increase pressure on our training providers in the BOB ICB. Public Health and the BOB ICB will monitor this closely and consider how a cascade training model can be more widely implemented across Oxfordshire to promote sustainability.

Budgetary implications

Oxfordshire County Council’s Public Health Team are currently holding two pots of funding on behalf of the Oxfordshire MECC Partnership, totalling £87,800 to support the strategic scale-up of MECC.

This consists of:

- the operational budget (£80,000) part of the funding which was received from the previous Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) (The OCCG has now become the BOB ICB) in 2022 to spend on the MECC work programme in FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25
- Carryover funding from Health Education England Thames Valley that was previously held by the BOB Training Hub (£7,800).

We are currently establishing a process where part of this funding can be used to award organisations/services with financial support to help them rollout MECC and

embed it more strategically within their work. The process is subject to procurement guidance/procedures.

Equalities implications

The key focus of the Oxfordshire MECC programme is to tackle health inequalities. The programme will focus on embedding MECC within organisations/services that are located in or serve people living in areas of inequality in Oxfordshire.

Organisations supporting people across the life course will be encouraged to get involved in the MECC programme such as early years settings and services aimed at older adults. Where possible, organisations/services that support particularly vulnerable people (e.g. people who are homeless, people who have experienced domestic abuse) will also be approached as these groups are more likely to experience poorer health outcomes compared to the rest of the population.

It is anticipated there will be no groups who would be disadvantaged by the proposed MECC programme and implementation plan.

Communications

The Oxfordshire MECC mapping and implementation plan has been developed in collaboration with the Oxfordshire MECC Partnership. Members of the partnership include:

- Active Oxfordshire
- Adult Social Care
- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
- Carers Oxfordshire
- Cherwell District Council
- Good Food Oxfordshire
- Fire and Rescue Service
- Health Education England Thames Valley (recently merged into NHS England)
- Library Service
- Local Pharmaceutical Committee Thames Valley
- Oxford City Council
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Oxford University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Oxfordshire Mind
- Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- South Central Ambulance Service
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council

Key Dates

None

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