

**Report of Councillor Matt Golby
Deputy Leader of the Council
Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care &
Public Health &
Regulatory Services**



18th July 2024

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services

The continuing increase in safeguarding demand was a consistent theme of updates during 2023/24; during quarter 4 of the financial year a programme of interventions was designed and implemented to ensure that the council is responding to, and handling, safeguarding concerns as effectively as possible. This involved key changes being made to the safeguarding process, a full review of our internal safeguarding policies and procedures and the implementation of a new decision-making framework to support partners to understand the most appropriate response to potential safeguarding issues they may deal with. By the end of the year, we were able to see a positive movement in the number of safeguarding concerns recorded, which reduced by 39%, to bring them in line with expectations. However, the number of referrals being received remains high and therefore the focus of our activity moving through 24/25 is to work with partners to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals being received which is having a significant impact on our resource within the safeguarding team.

In the past 3 months we successfully secured money from the Accelerating Reform Fund to support the development and expansion of our Shared Lives scheme. Shared Lives is a care and support service which offers an alternative to supported living or residential care. The support helps adults to live independently in their community with the support of a family and community network. The funding received will be focused on increasing the size of our existing scheme and recruiting carers that enable people with a wider range of care and support needs to be supported by the scheme.

We have now completed the disaggregation of the Assistive Technology service from North Northamptonshire Council, which as with other service disaggregation's gives West Northamptonshire Council the opportunity to shape the future delivery of this service to meet the specific needs and demands of its population in future. In addition to this the Assistive Technology team have again been shortlisted for Health Service Journal Digital Award for their work during this year.

The Therapy team has now successfully completed the delivery of its Single Handed Care project which involved reviewing new and existing care packages to identify the opportunity for specialist equipment to be used to support the movement of people whose care package involved manual handling to be carried out by one person instead of two. This has reduced both the cost of care delivery and the demand on the social care workforce across West Northants. From late Autumn the team have also led a piece of effective joint working with paediatric colleagues and with health partners in response to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency alert on faulty bed rails ensuring reviews and mitigations are put in place to support people to use the identified equipment safely.

We are currently in the process of updating our CQC Local Assurance Self-Assessment Report in preparation for assessment under the Local Assurance Framework arrangements which went live during 23/24. During the process of completing the self-assessment feedback will be sought from staff and stakeholders to help us understand areas where we need to improve our service delivery in future. Whilst we are still awaiting notification of when we will go through the assessment process the updating and monitoring of our self-assessment helps us to ensure work to develop the delivery of our services is focused in the right areas.

Commissioning and Performance

In April 2024, we closed the Home Care recommissioning project following successful implementation of a new 5-year contract framework. The new contract has meant that we have shrunk our commissioned Home Care market down from 97 providers to 15 providers. This allows us to generate operating cost efficiencies for our market and to allow them to work with us and the Local Area Partnerships as strategic partners.

We launched formal consultation for our new West Northamptonshire Carers Strategy following approval from Cabinet in April 2024. The strategy sets out our priorities for better supporting unpaid carers and this was coproduced with experts by experience. The feedback received on the strategy will be presented to Cabinet in July 2024 for formal sign off.

We have been working on our Market Position Statement over the last few months. The purpose of this document is to give information about our demand and capacity within our independent care sector, and the areas where there are gaps in service provision. This will help our prospective care providers to develop their business models in line with the needs of people.

The Quality Improvement Team is preparing to refresh their Quality Improvement Programme which is aimed at supporting our commissioned care providers to improve the level of service delivered to our people. The approach will look at embedding quality improvement support within contract monitoring visits which will help to gain a strategic view of challenges within the market.

We are currently working on our commissioned solution for Supported Living services for people with a learning disability, mental health concerns, physical disability and acquired brain injury. Our proposal will be at Cabinet in July for approval, and this includes a refresh of our contracted fee rates.

Adult Services

All of the Adult Community teams are now aligned to the boundaries of the Local Area Partnerships (LAP). This will enable them to work more closely with the LAP leads, ensuring that services can be tailored for individual communities and more robust links can be made. For example, within the Northampton Central area we are planning a pilot for an integrated Health and Social team and recognised that further work in relation to homelessness needs to be a priority.

The employee consultation with the Supporting Independence Programme team concluded and progress is being made for the new Wellbeing service to begin mid-June. This will see

Wellbeing advisors linked to each of the Community teams and provide an increased prevention and early intervention offer to individuals who contact Adult Social Care.

Several HR activities have taken place over the last couple of months, in consultation with the Trade unions, these include implemented revised Job descriptions for all assessment and Social Work staff, changing the operating hours of Adult Social Care to align with the corporate hours and a new flexible working pilot.

We continue our focus on quality assurance, using the CQC assessments framework as a guide as to how we can improve, ensuring we celebrate what we are doing well and learn lessons from things that go wrong or when things don't work. This work includes ensuring that the Practice Audits and supporting process is embedded across the service and that clear policies and procedures are in place to support staff to work effectively.

The Supported Living Review Team project is in the process of being evaluated and planning is underway to identify what reviews they will complete in this year, ensuring people receive their statutory review and the support they have in place is meeting their identified outcomes.

Health & Reablement Services

The service is currently reviewing the national Urgent Emergency Care Recovery Plan (Year 2) and producing an action plan. The system has a strategic workshop scheduled for the 12th of July and an operational workshop being scheduled for August. The system is also firming up their business continuity plans in response to the Junior Doctor strike which is taking place from 27th June to 2nd July.

Upscaling social care at home capacity continues to improve. Reablement West capacity continues to grow due to vacancy rate reducing from 30% to 2%.

Implementation of new case management system – implementation is going well; configuration has now taken place and the team are busy building new design. The priority for the implementation team is to produce testing strategy and plan in readiness for User Acceptance Testing (UAT 1) first 2 weeks of August. Project plan remains on target for new system to go live in QTR 4 of 2024/25.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Local Area Partnerships

All 9 LAP Websites were launched on 9th April 2024 and will be in soft launch phase for 90 days <https://westnorthantsliveyourbestlife.uk/>. To date the websites have received over 4,500 contacts and we hope this will continue to grow. Each LAP has its own individual website that sets out the priorities for that area and the rationale for why those local priorities have been agreed for the Partnership to work on together. The websites also include the logos of those organisations working together in partnership in the local area. Key spotlights are highlighted together with news stories covering local activities and events. The websites focus on local places and where people live, and we are planning to make them more interactive as we move into phase two.

Action for Happiness has now been rolled out across all the LAPs, Health and Wellbeing Forums and adopted through the West Northants Health & Wellbeing Board. We have access to a wide range of resources including an online programme, community App, 10-day learning course, calendars, talks and local groups that help with supporting people with their wellbeing.

Sport England have identified an area in Northampton Central LAP that they would like to include in their Place Expansion Programme. Nationally Sport England have identified £250M over the next 5 years to invest in areas to improve access to sport, physical activities, and local facilities. Plans are in progress to apply for funding, and we are talking to residents living in the local area to make sure we include their preferences and ideas.

We continue to work with social care and health colleagues to bring together social workers, mental health practitioners and community nurses to work in local teams aligned to the needs of the LAPs.

Health Improvement & Communities

Young People's Vaping Summit

The vaping summit held in February was very successful bringing together partners across health, education, the council and the voluntary sector to understand the issues and agree the way forward. It heard from young people on the day addressing the major issues for young people in this area.

The areas for development arising from the summit are:

- Formation of a children and young (CYP) people's expert group to help shape future development and actions
- Link with mental health colleagues
- Development of a system comms and social media campaign
- Engaging and supporting parents and those supporting CYP. Guidance is due to be circulated to schools this month.

Tobacco Control Alliance

The Northamptonshire wide Tobacco Control Strategy has been agreed by the Tobacco Control Alliance with key goals of:

- *Leadership and Governance - Ensure that tobacco control is a strategic priority across the system;*
- *Cessation - Offer effective evidence-based support to help smokers quit, and encourage regular quit attempts;*
- *Prevention - Prevent children and young people from taking up smoking/vaping;*
- *Enforcement - Disrupt the sale of illicit tobacco products and prevent underage sales;*
- *Prompt quit attempts and share key tobacco control messages through consistent communication;*
- *Exercise our collective voice to advocate for effective national policy.*

Public health will work with key teams and partners in West Northants on a local action plan to support this strategy.

Smoking Service

The Stop Smoking Service has now recruited to all the additional roles that the further government funds have enabled including a team leader, six stop smoking advisors, one stop smoking specialist and a senior administrator.

Funding has also been allocated to communications and marketing to increase the reach and uptake of the service, with targeted work to reach priority groups (which include people living in areas of deprivation, people with mental health conditions, people who are homeless, people in contact with drug and alcohol services, routine and manual workers, pregnant women).

Weight Management

The re-procurement of the adult weight management service has resulted in one provider – DDM delivering ‘Gro-Health’ for both the face to face and the digital offer.

Targeted weight management services in West Northamptonshire have been designed and commissioned to address the needs of those with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or over, or a BMI of 27.5 or over for adults from black and ethnic minority communities. These are the people whose weight will start to have serious health effects if not addressed.

Our service offer is a free a face-to-face service for those people who meet the eligibility criteria and are in these groups and a digital service for anyone else above the BMI levels referred to above.

In shaping the new service our data showed that certain parts of our community weren’t taking up the previous service. On re-commissioning the service, the Council has sought to address this and focus the resources available on those in most need and less likely to take up services and so seek to address the inequality that exists. We are seeking to focus on adults living in the top 50% most deprived areas: men; adults from minoritised communities; adults with mental health conditions; adults with learning disabilities and post-natal women.

The service went live on 1st May and so far of the 220 people registered on the programme who are eligible, 158 people have selected to take up our digital offer as of June 4th, so over 70% of people have selected this form of support.

Our service provider, Gro Health, are running engagement activities as the offer is rolled out. We will monitor the take up of services and assess, with Gro Health, the needs of our communities. Should there be any significant need not currently meet that is identified, we will work with Gro Health to see how best to address these needs.

A further community offer is currently being developed aimed at providing a community offer with a physical activity focus alongside the healthy eating aspect.

Grow, Cook, Eat

A review of the first two years of the ‘Grow, Cook, Eat’ contract’ has been underway and has highlighted the reach and impact of the project so far and we are currently working with HOPE on the delivery plan for the next 2 years learning from the strengths and challenges of the first phase.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC)

A training plan for frontline staff within the council has been developed with an initial priority focus on colleagues in Adults Social Care and the Contact Centre to fit with the current partnership work. This will enable teams trained to clearly deliver health and wellbeing

messages and signposting in their day job and so make more of every contact they have with the general public and service users.

Workplace Wellbeing

The WNC Workplace Wellbeing toolkit is nearing completion which will enable workplaces to review and plan for health and wellbeing needs.

Breathlessness Project

The Breathlessness Pathway Programme is making progress within the Northampton Central LAP. Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire have been awarded funding to deliver the 2-year Community Health Champions Programme. There are 2 Health and Wellbeing Coaches working for General Practice Alliance to offer 1-2-1 support to patients with COPD. There are plans for outreach events to bring services to the community, such as Stop Smoking Service, Health Checks, Immunisations etc, the first will be one for the Romanian community in July. Northants Carers are receiving funding to extend their current Breathing Space offer to provide support for Bengali, Polish and Romanian speakers. The evaluation Partner has now been appointed and we have started working on a full evaluation of the place-based programme of work.

Wider Determinants of Health

Anti-Poverty

HSF5 is now being distributed as agreed at Cabinet, with the grants for VCSE support currently out for application and our trusted referrer scheme being rolled out with key partners and will be gearing up for the provision of vouchers for the summer holidays soon. We are also planning a food sustainability workshop which will support the development of our offer beyond HSF.

Built Environment

We have undertaken a Health Impact Assessment on the consultation version of the Local Plan and shared initial recommendations with the planning policy team. We have also contributed to the Health Impact Assessment for the Local Transport Plan and working closely with colleagues on the development of the consultation to make sure all communities are reached. Continuing to develop guidance and an offer of support for Town and Parish Councils to build on their links to health and wellbeing and development of health and wellbeing plans.

Drug and Alcohol Services

The Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grants continue to support the increase in number of adults and young people in treatment and recovery. There is additional investment into the grant for 2024/25. There is a plan to increase the workforce and numbers in treatment with an ambition of increasing by 10% this coming year.

The Individual Placement Support (IPS) funding has been awarded to run for the next two years. The scheme supports people in drug and alcohol treatment into employment.

The services are also taking part in a transformation project to improve the pathways and response to rough sleepers. The SSMTRG currently funds a Homeless Treatment Team which is seeing very positive outcomes. The team is using a new medication that is having significant changes in the service user's lifestyle for the better.

Northamptonshire's local drug information system (LDIS)

There has been an increase in drug alerts recently with an increase in synthetic opiate type drugs including nitazines. The LDIS protocol and processes are in place, with a comprehensive Professional Information Network (PIN). A core multi-agency panel has also been established to oversee local drug alerts.

Drugs & Alcohol Commissioning

Following on from the last portfolio update, all drug and alcohol services have now been commissioned and contracts are in place. The Drug & Alcohol Treatment & Recovery Re-commissioning Board has been developed and the board will aim to prepare for the re-commissioning of drug and alcohol services from 1st April 2026. The Board has developed a risk assessment and a procurement timeline which will be monitoring on a regular basis. We are currently drafting a commissioning options paper regarding proposed model moving forward.

People & Wellbeing

Wellbeing and Early Intervention Service

Progress has been maintained with the development of a Wellbeing and Early Intervention Service, bringing together existing Public Health services with ASC community teams. A “soft launch” of the new Wellbeing service is planned for 17th June 2024, with further Comms being developed. This is part of a wider programme of work to develop a corporate approach to promoting the wellbeing of residents and preventing the onset of illness and disease - through provision of targeted information, support, and early intervention.

Healthy Active Ageing

An additional element of this work is the “Healthy Active ageing” initiative that is being developed through close working relationships with VCSE colleagues and being coordinated at a LAP level. A network of “activators” has been set up to take the work forward in a way which is consistent with the Well Northants model of asset-based community development. Work is also taking place to extend the reach and uptake of the SPRING social prescribing programme that Public Health fund jointly with the ICB to provide community-based support to people with long-term conditions. This enables individuals to find non-clinical ways to maintain their health and wellbeing – for example through membership of community groups and activities.

Suicide Prevention Strategy

The annual review of the county-wide, all Age Suicide Prevention Strategy has been completed and an updated Suicide Prevention Action Plan has been launched. Work is now taking place to deliver further awareness raising over the next few months, building on the extensive cross county links that have already been developed.

Children and Young People

Following the presentation of the option appraisal to re-commission the 0-19 Public Health services at Cabinet, we have progressed with the agreed option to deliver the 0-19 services through a partnership agreement with NHFT. We have sought legal advice and agreed to deliver the service via a Section 75 partnership arrangement with NHFT from April 2025. The partnership is developing well with a new governance structure that has been put in place including a Partnership Board and Partnership Delivery Group.

The 0-19 Service Partnership Delivery group will develop the service specification and identify the transformation needed and report to the Partnership Board. We have set up three

workshops to develop the service specification in coproduction with NHFT. We have also developed a clear timeline that sets out the journey from now until April 2025 including the public consultation which will take place post-elections.

The options papers for the Strong Start universal early years' service, REACH youth mental health and wellbeing service, and Flourishing Babies parent-infant relationship support service are in development.

The development of the new services will align with the council's Live Your Best Life Ambitions and the Health and Wellbeing strategy – Ambition 1 “Best Start in Life” and will report into the Best Start in Life Strategic Board. A key aim is to align the transformation of 0-19 services with Family Hubs and Early Help developments, SEND Improvement Programme and county-wide transformation programmes.

Health Protection and Healthcare Public Health

In response to the recent national increase in measles cases, the Public Health Team worked with systems partners to identify pockets of population where individuals may have unknown or incomplete MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination status. We identified approximately 3,000 students at the University of Northampton (UoN) whose MMR status were unknown or incomplete and as a result, we coordinated two vaccination clinics at UoN in February and April. The aim was to engage young adults and offer the MMR vaccination. In total, 544 doses of MMR were given.

To support Northamptonshire Measles Elimination plan and preventative measure to protect our children from rising Diphtheria cases, the Health Protection team has led and co-ordinated a childhood immunisation programme to help practices with very low uptake, especially in marginalised groups.

The 760 patients registered with the Mounts and Maple Access Practices who were not fully up to date with their childhood vaccinations were invited to attend (279 Maple, 481 Mounts) were communicated through a hand delivered personal letter addressed to parents/guardians of the child. In total 39 children received vaccinations (14 Maple (5% of invited patients), 25 Mounts (5.2%) Saturday 1st of June. The clinic was staffed by vaccinators and administrators from both practices, and Public Health provided nonclinical logistical support.

Sexual Health Services

Market engagement is underway to inform the WNC sexual health service recommissioning. Feedback from two market engagement events and meetings with potential providers will inform the commissioning approach. A new service specification is in development focussed on the needs of West Northamptonshire residents.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Health Protection - Ed Cooke

The Business Development arm of the service is actively investigating various additional sources of income including the expansion of the existing pest control service, provision of sampling/certification of high-risk foods not of animal origin, adding more Primary Authority

Partnerships to the existing portfolio and increasing the training of local businesses on food safety and so on. The Business Development Manager is chairing the newly formed Council Income Generation Working Group, a key purpose of which is to review all existing lines of income and assess opportunities for development and growth across the Council.

Senior Officers from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Strategy and Regulatory Compliance Division recently visited the Council to discuss the challenges with addressing the backlog of medium and low risk food hygiene inspections which resulted because of the pandemic. All inspections must be achieved in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (the code) and the FSA Officers cannot currently assure the FSA board that the Council is fulfilling its duties under the code. The Regulatory Services Health Protection team have developed a three-year plan which has enabled the FSA to place their performance engagement under 'monitoring status' rather than 'escalation.' The FSA will comprehensively review the Council's twice-yearly returns over the next three years to ensure that the Council adheres to the plan.

Several local takeaways have been identified as non-compliant under the Smoke-Free law. The Health Protection Team have developed and started to action an enforcement and communication plan to ensure compliance is achieved. The team will also be focussing on education and enforcement to ensure the safety of pressurised systems in local food businesses. Those visits will be combined with the routine food hygiene inspection visits.

The Regulatory Services Business Support team have new processes in place to streamline any incoming contaminated land and pest control enquiries to ensure that they are progressed as quickly as possible, and payment is received in a timely manner. Progress is being made on the cross-training of business support assistants to facilitate a better service to officers, local businesses and the public and increase resilience. As part of the Regulatory Services and Private Sector Housing Management Information System (MIS) Implementation project, all business support assistants will be trained as 'super-users' to help ensure maximum support to MIS users in due course.

Environmental Protection – Karen Pell

The Council is legally required to have an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) given that some of our area exceeds the national air quality objective for nitrogen dioxide, and we have declared 8 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) historically. The team have worked with colleagues across the Council to develop the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for West Northants. The draft plan has been submitted to DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs) as required and the public consultation on the proposed plan closed on 17th March. We were really pleased that 1003 comments were received from that consultation. The main themes of responses were public transport, improving transport infrastructure and supporting active travel, in addition to controlling emissions from industry. The draft AQAP highlights the great deal of work by WNC and its partners that has already improved air quality across the district and that the monitoring carried out demonstrates significant improvements in air quality across the area. DEFRA have requested some further work be completed to allow WNC to better target its actions towards the source of pollution in the AQMA's, and this is underway. The draft plan will be revised to take account of comments received, outline a series of further steps that will be taken over the coming months and years, including undeclaring of 2 Northampton Air

Quality Management Areas. The draft AQAP steps will also support a reduction in small particulate matter pollution (called PM2.5) that is legally managed by national government, not WNC.

Rae King from the Environmental Protection team was awarded the Council wide thrive award for Empowerment after supporting colleagues across the team.

Environmental Crime

The policy to restrict the times that waste bins and bags can be presented for collection in Northampton town centre was approved on 7th May by cabinet. The Neighbourhood Warden team will commence implementation of the policy through engagement with over 500 town centre businesses from 1st July, working towards a cleaner and more welcoming town centre. The monitored CCTV cameras and other cameras continue to yield some useful information and a limited number of investigations have been progressed which have resulted in action against people responsible for fly tipping. Camera work across the whole of the west continues, however, many camera deployments do not yield evidence and we can also use evidence from members of the public who report fly tipping that they witness. Please encourage residents to contact us with ring camera or dashcam footage and we can progress investigations.

Licensing - Carol Gamble

Following the approval of the new taxi Licensing Policy in January, the team have been working to communicate the changes to the taxi and private hire trade. This has included a regular new newsletter distributed to the trade and interested parties which has been very well received. Many of these changes came into force in April 2024 and now include several new guidelines introduced by the Department of Transport and the Institute of Licensing. This has included, for example, implementing a new convictions policy and driver safeguarding training.

In line with the new policy, the team have been implementing new door signage for licensed hackney/private hire vehicles and new signage reporting tools which passengers can use to raise complaints about drivers/vehicles. Procurement is ongoing for garages as the new policy implements the use of external contracted approved testing stations to undertake the taxi and private hire vehicle testing requirements.

The roll out of the safeguarding training has commenced, with 13 courses already undertaken and a further 21 courses scheduled until the end of July 2024. The program for the training will continue in the future and will be rolled out to over 1800 existing licensed drivers and new applicants over the course of the next 2 years with compliance for attending the training being managed by the licensing team. To date, the feedback from drivers and applicants has been excellent as to the content, and the training provided has already resulted in intelligence being shared with Northamptonshire Police concerning a vulnerable person who is possibly being exploited.

Members of the team are also actively part of the NAFN (National Anti-Fraud Network) NR3 national register working group and are attending regular meetings to assist with improving and enhancing the newly implemented legislation. The NR3 contains information relating to any refusal to grant, or revocation of, a hackney carriage/private hire driver licence. This information

is important in the context of a subsequent application to another authority for a drivers' licence, by a person who has had their licence refused or revoked in the past

As part of the Safer Streets 5 funding, two taxi marshals have been trained to provide support and safeguarding in the night-time economy. Officers have worked with the Community Safety team to agree some additional dates to cover periods when the night-time economy may be busier than usual.

Licensing team members are busy processing applications for the wide range of licences issued by the Council and to carry out investigation activities to monitor compliance with these licences.

There has been a continued rise in the number of taxi and private hire licence applications which may be on account of several factors including an increase due to persons looking for secondary employment due to the cost-of-living crisis. There are also a high number of drivers currently under review to establish if they are fit and proper to hold a licence.

Trading Standards - Carol Gamble

The National Trading Standards Board identifies the key national threats, emerging issues, and priority areas each year for Trading Standards nationally. For 2024/25 these priorities are:

Doorstep crime and cold calling	Used cars
Estate Agencies and Lettings	Intellectual property
Mass marketing fraud/scams	Other fair trading issues – prices, descriptions etc
Illegal and underage sales of vapes	Animal feed work
Illegal tobacco	

NTS will also have the following cross cutting themes and enablers, as they impact on each priority area:

eCrime and the use of social media/online platforms	Cost of living crisis
Serious and organised crime	

WNC TS works closely with regional East Midlands TS Services. The proposed TSEM priorities for 2024/25 are:

Scams	Vapes
Food allergens	Product safety
Illegal tobacco	Fraud in the home

Trading Standards moved from their old Civica APP database to the new cloud based Civica CX system at the end of March. The systems are fundamentally different, and the team are still getting to grips with the system changes and the impact this has had on inputting times and reporting. The migration has had a significant operational impact as officers have needed to be involved with formatting and technical systems work. TS will be one of the Services that are now involved with the move of all Regulatory Services onto the Idox system.

The team are out every week acting on intelligence about premises selling illegal vapes and cigarettes and seizing all infringing stock. A recent inspection of a storage unit in Northampton resulted in the seizure of 5917 packets of illegal cigarettes and 250 pouches of illegal hand rolling tobacco with a retail value of approx £34k. Since April, around 2400 illegal disposable vapes have been seized by the team with a retail value of approx £20k.

Regular intelligence led underage test purchasing operations have been carried out in relation to premises selling vapes and cigarettes. Since April, 16 visits have been carried out with 1 sale of a disposable vape to the underage test purchaser.

Joint working with the Police has recently been undertaken in relation to a trader selling counterfeit gym equipment and they are currently working with importers of electrical items held in a West Northants fulfilment house. Some items have been found to be unsafe and are to be destroyed, others are to be brought into compliance with relabelling. The team have also just seized 83 counterfeit Apple AirPods.

The Service is about to embark on a takeaway food project where meals are purchased after advising the business about a particular allergy. The meals are then submitted to the Public Analyst to examine for the presence of allergens and further action may be taken if allergens are found to be present. An allergic reaction can have serious even deadly consequences to health.

With the improving weather, there have been allegations of rogue trading reported involving vulnerable consumers and/or significant amounts of money being taken for unnecessary work at consumers' homes. The Service have just charged such a rogue trader with Trading Standards offences and this matter will have its first hearing in the magistrate's court in July.

We are very proud of our Trading Standards apprentices Joe and Gemma who were successful in the Apprentice of the Year category at the THRIVE awards.

Councillor Matt Golby

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Regulatory Services