



Making a difference where you live



County Durham Primary Care Trust  
Darlington Primary Care Trust

## **County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

### **Summary Consultation Document**

**June 2008**

## Welcome from Durham County Council and County Durham Primary Care Trust

We know everyone has different health and wellbeing needs, but now we want to find out more.

Durham County Council and County Durham Primary Care Trust are working in partnership with other organisations to draw up a detailed picture of the health and wellbeing needs of the people of County Durham. Health has been described as “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” – something which is important to us all.

This, the very first County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, highlights areas where we need to do more to improve people’s health and wellbeing. It also looks at issues relating to drugs and alcohol, smoking, housing and even how the local economy and crime can affect people’s health and wellbeing.

We’ve already put together this report based on our findings so far but now we need to hear from you.

We want to know what the County’s health and wellbeing needs are, what you think the priorities for your local area should be and what you think the priorities for the County should be. Your thoughts and comments on this will help produce an even clearer picture of the health and wellbeing needs of the County’s communities

We look forward to hearing from you.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Rachael Shimmin'.

Rachael Shimmin,  
Corporate Director,  
Adult and Community Services,  
Durham County Council.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Tricia Cresswell'.

Dr Tricia Cresswell,  
Executive Director of Public Health,  
County Durham and Darlington  
Primary Care Trusts.

## Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Summary Document

The County Durham Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides a top level, holistic view of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people of County Durham. It is based on both local and nationally available data along with locally derived information.

The principle of JSNAs has been driven by the national agenda with the publication of a number of White Papers along with pieces of legislative guidance. The Department of Health White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" and the Local Government White Paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities", both stressed the need for services to be more integrated, both in terms of planning and commissioning, across the spectrum of public sector providers.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 now place a legal requirement on local authorities and primary care trusts to produce Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of the health and wellbeing of their local populations.

To help achieve positive outcomes for the local population the County Durham JSNA aims to:

- Highlight areas where there is a need to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for the local community.
- Aid decision makers in targeting resources to both areas and services.
- Act as resource document to support health and wellbeing planning and commissioning.
- Help inform the Local Area Agreement and provide a basis on which to achieve local outcomes and targets.

This is a brief summary of the JSNA priority key messages regarding the health and wellbeing needs of the local population.

### **Demography**

#### **Population**

- After two decades of population decline, the population of the County has begun to increase again, with most of this increase coming from net inward migration.
- Birth rates in the County have climbed steadily since 2001 and are currently at a level last seen in the late 1960s. The Government Actuary now views this as a significant change in trend.
- The increase in births will have implications for the Children and Young Persons Services in the County.

- Notwithstanding the increase in births, the increasingly ageing population will generate more deaths in the population over the coming decades, causing the population in the County to eventually fall because of natural decline.

### **Dependency Ratio**

- In common with the rest of the country, County Durham's age distribution currently has an unhealthy shape and will become increasingly top heavy as time progresses.
- Improving this situation will be a long haul - the numbers in the retirement age group are not predicted to peak until the year 2037, and the numbers of those aged 85+ will not peak until 2056.
- The current increase in the birth rate will need to be sustained over the next two decades in order to improve the shape of this age distribution.
- The older person dependency ratio will effectively double over the next 25 years, placing increasing stresses on health care over the intervening years.

### **Birth Rate**

- The birth rate in the County has increased since 2001 and is now at a level close to population replacement.
- The birth rate in County Durham is due to rise significantly over the coming years to such an extent it may have profound implications for service delivery.

### **Deprivation**

- County Durham remains relatively deprived, particularly in relation to both health and employment, but it is getting better. Significant improvements in the level of worklessness have improved the ranked position of the County when compared to the results from the ID2004;
- However, County Durham remains the most deprived shire County in England and will be amongst the most deprived unitary authorities after April 2009.

## **Health and Wellbeing: Lifestyles**

### **Smoking Prevalence**

- Within County Durham, smoking prevalence is estimated to be highest in Easington and Wear Valley. Local Stop Smoking Services are good. Nonetheless, sustained action across all six strands of tobacco control is essential to reduce the prevalence of smoking, therefore reducing deaths from heart disease and – in the longer term – cancers.

### **Smoking and Pregnancy**

- Pregnant women need help and support to quit smoking – concerted action is required to reduce smoking pre-conception, during pregnancy and after delivery.

### **Improving Sexual Health - Teenage Conception**

- Teenage conception rates are falling in County Durham, but not fast enough. To accelerate progress, a whole system approach is required with a focus on areas of greatest need.
- Comprehensive and accessible contraception and sexual health services are required. It is important such services are accessible and user friendly, available to young people across the County and in all colleges.
- Better sex and relationship education is needed within the County including work to raise aspirations, self esteem, assertiveness and negotiating skills.
- Increased support for pregnant and parenting young women is needed within the County.
- Attention must be given to reducing second teenage conceptions. To achieve reductions such things as access to long-acting contraceptive care and consideration of a woman's contraceptive needs after the delivery of a baby must be given consideration.
- Enhanced support is needed to enable the parents of teenagers to better support their sons and daughters.

## **Breastfeeding**

- The rate of breast feeding initiation in County Durham is similar to that in the North East as a whole but falls short of that achieved across England as a whole. Targeted work is required to increase the proportion of women initiating breastfeeding and to support new mothers to continue their breastfeeding beyond six weeks. Achieving the UNICEF baby friendly standard across County Durham is central to this.

## **Physical Activity**

- Physical activity participation rates in County Durham range from 9.3% (in Easington) to 17.2% (in Teesdale) and are similar to those for England. Nonetheless, at only 11.8% for the County as a whole, concerted action is required if 70% of the population are to be reasonably active by 2020.

## **Obesity**

- Rates of obesity in County Durham are rising in children and adults and are higher than the England average. Action is required to:
  - Promote healthy food
  - Build physical activity into people's lives
  - Establish formal referral systems to 'lifestyle alteration packages of care' for at-risk individuals
  - Support structured family interventions for seriously obese children and families
  - Increase access to effective treatment.

## **Reducing the Harm Caused by Alcohol**

- Admissions to hospital for acute intoxication have increased over the previous six years for all seven districts within County Durham. Clear action is required to increase the availability of brief interventions, access to services and, more challengingly, to change perceptions about the acceptability of drunkenness.

## **Drug Use**

- To date, action to increase access to drug treatment and care planning has produced positive results. This action must be maintained to ensure that the whole system works to protect families and communities from the harm caused by drugs.
- Numbers of children entering care as a result of their parents' substance misuse continues to rise, from 54.2% in 2005/06 to 60% in 2006/07.

## Mental Health

- There is evidence in the Community Health Profiles 2007 stating that crude rate claimants of benefits allowances for mental or behavioural disorders per 1,000 population working age in 2005 was higher in County Durham compared with the national average. The rate is also high when compared to other local authorities who have similar deprivation levels. The rate is 5<sup>th</sup> highest out of 12 neighbouring authorities and is very high in comparison to County Durham's Institute for Public Finance (IPF) grouping. Easington is significantly high for this indicator.
- The national prevalence of mental health is 0.6%; therefore, all Primary Care Trust locality areas in County Durham except Easington are under the national average.
- The crude rate for claimants of benefits/allowances for mental or behavioural disorders per 1,000 population working age for County Durham in 2005 was 44.2 claimants per 1,000 population compared with an England average of 27.4 per 1,000. There is also substantial variation within County Durham.
- National research shows that many people with mental health conditions experience problems finding and keeping employment.
- A recent report from the Social Exclusion Taskforce highlights the fact that in Durham, only 9% of adults in contact with secondary mental health services are in employment, this is set against a national average of 20%.
- There is evidence that mental illness in children and young people continues through to adulthood.
- There is a high correlation between parental mental ill-health and child protection listing and children entering care. 47% of such children's parents have mental health needs.
- Evidence shows that County Durham has lower levels of unemployment when compared to other neighbouring authorities but higher rates of incapacity benefit due to mental health problems. In effect this indicates that more people in County Durham are absent from work due to ill health than other neighbouring authorities.
- There are a wide range of services available within Easington locality including early intervention, employment and counselling services. However, some of the services have only been in existence for a short period and will take time to have an impact on mental health issues and employability.
- It is important that people with mental health problems receive support and intervention at an early stage to try and prevent their illness from progressing.

- The level of worklessness due to mental and behavioural problems is the highest in Easington (compared to other districts in the County).
- Better communication and information sharing between partnership agencies and the statutory, private and voluntary sectors is essential to improve knowledge and understanding of mental health problems and the support services available in each area.

## **Health and Wellbeing: Ill-health**

### **Health Equity**

- There is widespread geographical variation in life expectancy between the wards in County Durham. The difference between the best and worst wards is 18 years for men (or 26%) and 17 years for women (or 23%).
- Gender differences exist for males and females in County Durham. Overall better progress is being made at narrowing the gap against the England average for men than women. However, women overall live longer than men.
- The trends in male and female life expectancy at birth for County Durham are upwards.
- The life expectancy gap between County Durham and England has decreased for males over the period 1995/97 to 2003/05 and increased for females over the period 1995/97 to 2003/05.
- Patterns of mortality in County Durham show that, for both males and females, circulatory diseases and cancers are key factors contributing to poor life expectancy; these causes are likely to be largely responsible for the significantly higher, all cause mortality rates.
- Consideration of rates of years of life lost suggests that in County Durham deaths from circulatory diseases, cancers, accidents and suicides are occurring at younger ages than national average. Obesity and the prevalence of type 2 diabetes are likely to have a substantial future impact.



## **Other Chronic Diseases**

- Premature mortality for cancers in County Durham has gradually decreased from 162 per 100,000 in 1996/08 to 133 per 100,000 in 2004/06. Premature mortality rates for men in County Durham (145 per 100,000) remain slightly higher than rates for women (123 per 100,000). However, widespread variations are evident across the five districts of County Durham.
- Continued focus needs to be maintained on population based primary prevention programmes developed through partnership work which has a major part to play in preventing heart disease, diabetes, obesity and cancers.
- Due to the widespread variations in County Durham continued work is required to ensure that equitable access to effective treatment for patients with established disease or at increased risk of illness living in disadvantaged areas.
- Smoking is the biggest single contributor to the shorter life expectancy experienced locally and contributes substantially to the cancer burden.
- There is a need for early identification of cancer (there are variations in when cancer presents itself, lower socio- economic groups have greater delay in presentation).
- Obesity, smoking, physical inactivity and diet are key risk factors for cancer.

## **Excess Winter Deaths**

- Excess mortality in winter is an important public health issue in County Durham. Within County Durham in 2004/05, the Excess Winter Deaths Index is highest in Derwentside (25.6) and Durham (24.8), and lowest in Chester-le-Street (10.3).
- Excess winter deaths are potentially amenable to effective interventions such as insulation and effective heating systems. However, there are complex social factors such as employment, fuel prices, living and housing conditions that impact on the excess winter death rate.
- District Councils have introduced and led many good programmes and energy efficiency is increasing. There are wide variations between localities in terms of investment in domestic energy efficiency schemes and interventions and outcomes.

## **Oral Health**

- Action is required to narrow the gap (by 10%) between the experience of dental disease amongst five year olds in the 25% of wards with the worst dental health and the 25% of wards with the best dental health by 2015.
- All children aged 0-10 living in the 25% most deprived wards should have access to an evidence based oral health improvement programme delivered by a primary care dental practitioner by 2010 and every member of the population should be able to access NHS dental services.
- All residents of County Durham should be able to access NHS dental services meeting all of the various needs of the diverse population.

## **Health and Wellbeing: Social Care**

### **Needs**

- Approximately half (49.3%) of the critical needs identified refer to 'Personal Care', 'Health Issues' and 'Falls'.
- Approximately half of the substantial needs identified refer to 'Personal Care', 'Falls' and ability to manage 'Home Environment'.
- There appears to be a very high number of abuse/neglect substantial needs identified in Derwentside (approximately 55% of County total for this need).

### **Social Care Registers**

- Registrations of carers in the County are increasing, over the last 4 years we have seen an increase of 12.45%, there are currently 2,267 people on our carers register.

### **Demand for Social Care Services**

- Overall, the numbers of people referred for an assessment has increased by approx. 10% in the last 5 years. In particular an increasing number of people aged 18-64 (approx 31%) are being referred for an assessment of need, which is significantly ahead of population increases over the same period for the people aged 18-64 (1.4%).

### **Service User Views**

- A number of people told us that they struggled to remember what they'd been told during their social care assessment and wanted things explained clearly and written down for future reference. People also want more information and highlighted the need for easier access to services, and help with bathing and toileting.

- Wherever possible, families and carers need to be involved in assessments, reviews and hospital discharges or told what help service users need.
- Carers said that they wanted to receive information about ways to look after their own health and wellbeing. Carers also said they wanted support and breaks service.
- Service users want their home care worker to stay the agreed length of time.
- During the 2007 Durham County Council 'All our Tomorrows' conference delegates raised issues around communication, information, quality and accessibility of services. Telecare was seen in some respects as being useful for service users to retain independence at home, however some older people did not understand how to use it and find that the increasing use of technology can make them feel marginalised and isolated.
- People with Learning Disabilities have told us that they want more consultation and input to give choice and control over their care services and activities, more information and advocacy and to be able to feel safe in the community.
- Most of the people who responded to our Telecare survey felt that Telecare helped them stay at home, gave them greater peace of mind and helped them feel safe in their homes. Over 90% of people said that Telecare was "excellent" or "very good".
- Gypsies and Travellers in County Durham in July 2007 highlighted the need for health visitors, the need for access to council houses or sites, more funding for services and better family support.

## **Services**

- Across the County number of people receiving community based services has shown an increase from 34,148 to 37,451 (9.67%). The number of people receiving services for long stay / residential and nursing care has decreased by 11.08% over the same period.
- People aged over 65 accounted for 80.3% of social care services provided in 2007/8.
- Between 2004/05 (296) and 2007/08 (554) the numbers of people provided with direct payments services increased by 87%.
- There has been an increase of 26.1% in relation to the number of people receiving intensive home care in County Durham, and a decrease in the numbers receiving non intensive home care services of 12.8%.

- There has also been an increase of 24.4% in the numbers of people aged 18-64 receiving home care services, which includes increases in those receiving both intensive and non intensive services.

### **Safeguarding / Child Protection**

- There were more child protection registrations in the Easington District (278) between 2005 and 2008, with Derwentside (131) and Sedgefield (129) ranked second and third.
- The increasing ratio of children with child protection plans is consistent with an increase in the number of child protection conferences and numbers of children subject to family (court) proceedings, illustrating an overall increase in demand for children's services.

### **Looked after Children**

- The ratio of looked after children per 10,000 population has decreased over a 5 year period, whilst the proportion of looked after children from ethnic minority backgrounds has increased in line with the general population.
- The proportion of Looked After Children adopted exceeds that of statistical neighbours and national averages in 2005/6 and 2006/7, and has remained at a consistent level whilst the size of the Looked After Children cohort has remained at a consistent level. This is regarded as excellent performance.

### **Referrals – Children in Need**

- The ratio of referrals per 10,000 has fluctuated over a 5 year period. Current referral rates in 2007/8 are lower than that of 2004/5, although referral rates consistently exceed national averages and statistical neighbours.
- Repeat referrals rates are indicative of unmet need and at current levels 1 in 4 child / young person is subject to a repeat referral.
- The percentage of repeat referrals has dropped by 0.7% from 2006/07 to 2007/08.
- A majority (85%) of care proceedings are the result of parental lifestyle and behaviour e.g. domestic violence, substance misuse and alcohol – or a combination of these – resulting in neglect of their children's needs.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour and Public Reassurance**

- Police data shows rowdy nuisance behaviour as the most problematic category of anti-social behaviour.
- Our communities are most concerned about drunk or rowdy behaviour, speeding vehicles and people using or dealing drugs.
- Criminal damage is the highest volume crime in the County.
- There is a national drive to provide positive activities for children and young people and avoid creating negative perceptions.

### **Tackling Serious Violence**

- There are clear links associating alcohol related violence with urban centres, licensed premises and the weekend culture.
- Victims of violent crime are most likely to come from the age group 18-24.

### **Serious Violence and Children and Young People**

- Males in the County aged 17 and under are the second most 'at risk' group when it comes to violent crime.
- Violent crime is the crime type most often committed by first time entrants (10 – 17 year olds) to the criminal justice system.
- Assault occasioning actual bodily harm accounts for nearly half the number of violent offences.
- Under age alcohol misuse is associated with increased offending.
- Repeat victimisation may emerge as a problem, however, improved data is required to further examine this.

### **Domestic Abuse**

- There is currently no specialist domestic abuse service provision for people from ethnic minority communities in County Durham. There is a clear need to develop information systems to inform how agencies can meet the needs of these victims and survivors, and to raise awareness of these issues in communities.

- There is also a lack of specialist domestic abuse services for people with disabilities, substance misuse problems, mental health issues and those from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities in County Durham. There is a clear need to develop existing or new services to meet the needs of these groups.
- There were 3,545 reported incidents of domestic abuse to the police, an increase of 15% across the County in comparison with the same period 2006 i.e. April – September 2006. There were increases in reported incidents in Easington (+41%), Chester-le-Street and Durham (+27%), Derwentside (+16%) and Sedgefield (+2%). However, there was a decrease (-12%) in reported incidents in Wear Valley and Teesdale. Increases in reporting must be considered in the context of likely rising numbers of victims contacting the Police.
- There is a high correlation between domestic abuse and child protection listing and care proceedings. 47% of these feature domestic abuse.

### **Offender Profile**

- It is estimated that approximately 10% of the active offender population are responsible for half of all crime and that a very small proportion of offenders (0.5%) are responsible for one in ten offences.
- Probation clients have identified needs in relation to reading (15.4%), writing (16.7%) and numeracy skills (11.6%). 39.1% of clients have experienced domestic abuse of which 43.6% were victims and 77.2% were perpetrators (some clients being both victims and perpetrators).
- There were 69.3% of probation clients who had misused drugs in custody or in the community. Alcohol misuse is also of particular concern with 33.3% regularly consuming alcohol and a further 19.3% engaging in excessive consumption.
- The most problematic groups are males in the age groups 20–24 followed by those aged 16 - 19.
- Probation clients have issues with accommodation, employment, literacy and numeracy and financial management.
- Significant numbers have problems with drug and alcohol misuse and domestic abuse.
- The most problematic crime type is violence

## **Drugs**

- There is a need to identify why women do not follow the steep misuse pattern of men, and in particular whether this represents a barrier to accessing services.

## **Alcohol**

- Alcohol is a contributing factor to crime and disorder, however, our understanding of the nature and extent of its impact upon crime and disorder is currently unclear.
- There are clear links to alcohol and offending amongst children and young people.
- 94.4% of secondary school age young people never or almost never take drugs, 49.8% reported that they drink alcohol sometimes or often.

## **Achieve**

### **Narrowing the Gap in Attainment**

- The consistent improvement in narrowing the gap at foundation stage and GCSE results of young people is a key step toward ensuring that the most vulnerable children are afforded every possible opportunity and that the overall attainment of all young people is consistently improved and exceeds the national average.
- It is recognised that more work must be done to help those children who are underachieving and to ensure that they can achieve as well as their peers both in County Durham and nationally.
- New National Indicator measures are targeted at both vulnerable groups and children in deprived areas. In practice, we will have to target localities or schools in deprived areas if we are to “narrow gaps”.

### **Looked After Children Achieving 5 Grade A\*-C Passes**

- Durham has consistently improved the attainment of looked after children between 2005/07, with an average 7.1% annual improvement in young people achieving at least one grade A to G GCSE.
- The number of looked after children achieving 5 grade A\* to C passes remains small with only two young people achieving this in 2006/07.
- Performance in this area remains below the national average; however, steady improvements have been made between 2003/04 and 2006/07.

- Looked after children remain a significant vulnerable group with clear challenges in enabling young people to reach their full potential in terms of academic attainment.
- It is anticipated that service improvement, driven by the CYPP, will ensure that steps are taken to further narrow the gap in attainment for looked after children over the coming years.

### **Care Leavers in Employment, Education or Training**

- In general terms, the steadily improving performance and exceeding of national and regional performance against NI148 (Care leavers in Education, Training or Employment) provides optimism that steps can be taken to further develop employment, education and training opportunities for care leavers.
- Identifying and supporting vulnerable individuals and groups is key to driving improvements and building upon successes to date. Staff across CYPS have worked hard to identify the needs of these groups and to monitor their progress. It is anticipated that through the work of local partners, Durham's performance will continue to exceed comparators and improve year on year.
- Further steps are required to continue to maximise the potential of care leavers to ensure they are prepared to seek and grasp future education, training and employment opportunities.

### **Young offenders' engagement in suitable education, training and employment**

- Young people in the youth justice system are rightly recognised as a vulnerable group – at risk of significant social exclusion in the future. Durham has made considerable steps to achieve this challenging target, with partnership working playing a vital role which has impacted on performance and has promoted new ways of working.

### **Lifelong Learning**

- Informal adult education courses provide opportunities to re-engage in learning, improve their own skills and knowledge, improve their job and career prospects, increase confidence and self esteem, become more economically active and gain a vocational qualification.
- Over 14000 learners enrolled on Education in the Community activity during 2006/07 with a success rate of 92%.
- Lifelong Learning Projects deliver successful Skills for Life projects throughout the County with 301 service users completing projects between April 2007 – March 2008.



## **Enjoy**

### **Culture and Heritage**

- There are significant environmental, heritage and tourism attractions within the County. These help provide for a wide range of opportunities for young people to access cultural, sports and leisure activities to support learning, help them develop their talents and enjoy the benefits of participation. The creation of the new Unitary council offers opportunities to develop these facilities further, to create new opportunities and to promote both existing and new opportunities so that they reach even more people. The new Unitary Council working in partnership with the County Durham Tourism Partnership and One North East will develop the tourism offer of the County.

### **Environment and Outdoor Activities**

- County Durham has an attractive and accessible environment which can be utilised to improve health and wellbeing. New developments at Hamsterley Forest and the creation of a new Visitor Centre at Hardwick Park are some of the examples of how the Environment and Outdoor Activities can play even more strongly into this agenda.

### **Sport and Leisure**

- Leisure centres and sports facilities are available in the majority of major settlements in County Durham with a cluster in and around Durham City. The County has good tourism and retail offer, however, this can be seen as quite limited when compared to the regional offer. Provision of entertainment facilities within the County is deemed to be poor.

## **Economic Wellbeing**

### **Productivity**

- The latest official figures for Gross Value Added (GVA) show that in 2005 the GVA in the County stood at £11,554 per head of population, whereas the corresponding figure for the North East region and the UK were £14,419 and £17,577 respectively. Worse still this gap is widening. Over the period 1995-2005, on average, £340 per head was annually added to the per capita GVA figure in County Durham, compared to £522 and £710 for the region and nation respectively.
- The County Durham per capita figure is 63.4% of the national figure.

- If past trends continue, then the per capita figure in County Durham by 2009 is anticipated to rise to £12,744, compared to £16,134 and £20,922 in the region and nation respectively. These figures imply that the relative County Durham figure for 2009 will fall further to just 60.9% of the national figure.

### **Unemployment and Worklessness**

- Currently the gross average weekly earnings for residents is £400 whilst the average weekly earnings offered by workplaces is only £388, these figures are 13% and 16% less than the national average.
- Workplaces within the more affluent City of Durham district offer the highest wages within the County but its residents still earn on average 9% less than the rest of the country.
- Over the period 1998-2007, wages in County Durham have only risen by 29.1% compared to a rise of 36.1% for the nation.
- The Job Seekers Allowance rate in the County is kept below that of the national rate primarily by the affluence of the Chester-le-Street and Durham locality area which is currently 32% below the England and Wales rate. Easington locality area is the area with the highest Job Seekers Allowance rate but it is currently only 10% above the national and has shown considerable improvement over time in line with that of the County and nation.
- The Labour Force Survey indicates that some 29.9% of people in the North East within the economically inactive group would like a job if suitable employment could be provided.
- The most recent data shows that 10.9% of the working age population in County Durham are currently workless; this is 58% higher than the national rate. Chester-le-Street and Durham locality area has the lowest workless rate at 7.8% and Easington has the highest at 16.3%, respectively these rates are 10% and 131% higher than the national rate

### **Projections of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Worklessness**

- It would seem that these initiatives have begun to work, as worklessness has fallen significantly in the County over the last eight years. In August 1999, 45,674 residents of the County were claiming Job Seekers Allowance/Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disability Allowance, but by May 2007 this figure had fallen to 33,755. This improvement has also been reflected in the changes to the national ranked position of the County on the Index of Deprivation between 2004 and 2007 with a corresponding fall in the rankings. If past trends continue, this workless total is anticipated to fall further to 30,000 by the end of 2009.
- Despite all the recent improvements, the workless rate in 2012 is still likely to be 40% higher than the corresponding national figure; emphasising that

reducing worklessness continues to be a long-term task. The Regional Employability Framework (Skills North East) identifies that a priority is to target and assist the hardest to reach groups with the greatest level of needs to better enable inactive/disengaged people to move into and progress in sustainable jobs.

## **Employment**

- The Annual Population Survey (APS) provides accurate results at the national level and shows that for England and Wales the employment rate has remained fairly static around the 74% mark over the past three years whereas the April 2006 – March 2007 figure for the County has risen by 5% to 73.6%. However the results from the APS sample survey mean that the County results could actually be as low as 71.7% or as high as 75.4% making it hard to confidently describe the situation. In the worst case scenario the County employment rate will be approximately 3.5% lower than the national.

## **Positive Contribution**

### **Having a Voice**

- Although there are mechanisms for the community to become involved in shaping services and influencing decisions, the community, especially those over 50, do not necessarily feel these opportunities are adequate.

### **Perceptions That People in the Area Treat One Another With Dignity and Respect**

- A large number of people within County Durham do not feel they are treated with respect and consideration by others.

### **Volunteering**

- There are high levels of volunteering across the Country however employment is a major barrier to more people taking up formal volunteering opportunities. More work needs to be done to understand the situation with regard to volunteering in County Durham.

### **Young People's Participation in Positive Activities**

- Children of primary school age are engaged in and enjoy taking part in activities and clubs, however, as children get older the numbers taking part in activities and clubs begins to decline.

## **Complaints and Compliments**

- Complaints, comments and compliments are a valued way for service users to make a positive contribution to help develop services, systems and processes.

## **Physical Place**

### **Physical Place**

- Over twice as many people live in rural / rural-urban fringe areas than in the rest of the country.
- The rural nature of the County raises significant issues in relation to access to services.

### **Homes**

- The number of social sector homes within the County meeting decent standards needs to be increased.
- Only 10% of housing association homes are non-decent, however, the majority of these are in Easington.
- Half of all homes which fail to meet the decency standard fail due to inadequate thermal comfort. This would suggest more needs to be done to increase the thermal insulation and energy efficiency of non-decent homes.

### **Homelessness**

- Homelessness remains a serious issue within the County with homeless acceptances per thousand population at 1.09. This figure is significantly above the national average of 0.91.
- Figures suggest that there has been some progress towards reducing and preventing homelessness, however, the pace of change, when compared to national changes, is below average.

### **Vehicle Ownership**

- Vehicle ownership is lower than the national average, which may impact on access to services.

## **The Effects of Population Change in Household Formation**

- Single person households are predicted to rise by approximately 50% from 2001 – 2021, with a significant percentage (65.4%) of these consisting of a pensioner. Housing development will need to reflect this rising demand for single housing.

