

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019

# Time to Talk

... about mental health and wellbeing



**Durham**  
County Council





## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to

Sean Barry – Public Health Practitioner

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## Foreword



Amanda Healy

Welcome to my second annual report. It is my role as Director of Public Health to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people in County Durham.

Last year I set out seven priorities to fulfil this role and in this year's report you will see an update on each of these.

These priorities are closely aligned to the County Durham Vision 2035 which is a document developed with partners as a shared vision for the next 15 years with three strategic ambitions of:

- More and better jobs;
- People live long and independent lives;
- Connected communities.

In this report you will also see a more in-depth focus on mental health at scale and healthy workforce. For both of these areas there has been a real emphasis supporting people to be able to talk more openly about mental health. A quarter of people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their life. In County Durham over 51,000 adults have depression and 1 in 10 of our children have a diagnosed mental health disorder.

You were also introduced to the "Taylor" family last year, and there is an update on how the work carried out has made a difference to them. This year will see the links that the family have into their local communities, workplaces and schools and how the work we are doing is making a difference to real people's lives.

Last year's report also had a focus on smoking with a recommendation to continue with the ambition of only 5% of our local residents smoking by 2025. I am pleased to report that our levels of smoking are now at 15% (compared to 22.1% in 2013). However, smoking during pregnancy remains a key concern with over 18% of babies born to women who smoke.

As ever, no work to improve public health can ever be achieved without working with others, our partners and most importantly our local communities. My role as Director of Public Health is about working on behalf of local communities and the elected members who represent those communities.

I trust you will see the commitment to making a difference to health and wellbeing in this year's report. Wellbeing will become more prominent as we work with our communities and partners in 2020. Some countries are starting to use wellbeing as an equivalent measure to economic growth when defining the success of their policies and I am keen to develop that concept here in County Durham.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Amanda Healy in black ink.

**Amanda Healy**  
Director of Public Health



## Health and wellbeing across County Durham

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) helps to inform the planning and improvement of local services and guides us in making the best use of funding available. It builds a picture of current and future health and wellbeing needs of local people. This is used to shape joint commissioning priorities to improve health and wellbeing as well as reduce health inequalities in our communities. It is currently informing the refresh of our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Over the last year our JSNA has been transformed to create a tool that is fit for the future and rooted in intelligence and wider evidence about what drives health and wellbeing across the county.

The development of assets within the JSNA is a key priority. By focussing only on the “needs” of local communities we do not acknowledge the importance of the assets, or take account of the protective factors and strengths within individuals and across communities. This should incorporate practical skills, capacity and knowledge of residents and the networks and connections in a community. In short it should cover:

- Where we live
- Our services
- Our community

We are building assets into the JSNA and you will see them throughout this report.

The JSNA is now part of Durham Insight which is a shared intelligence, research and knowledge base for County Durham, informing strategic planning across Durham County Council and its partners. This site includes in-depth JSNA and insight factsheets, health needs assessments, health equity audits and lots of topic based intelligence including infographics, maps and story maps. New intelligence content is regularly added, and the site is continuously being developed and improved. [www.durhaminsight.info](http://www.durhaminsight.info)



During 2019 recent additions to Durham Insight include JSNA factsheets on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Children Looked After (CLA) plus the development of a vulnerable children's landing page and infographics to support our new Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

The JSNA, along with the use of evidence and local conversations, helps us to focus on the most important issues for the Taylor family and our communities across County Durham.



## Where we live, our services, our communities

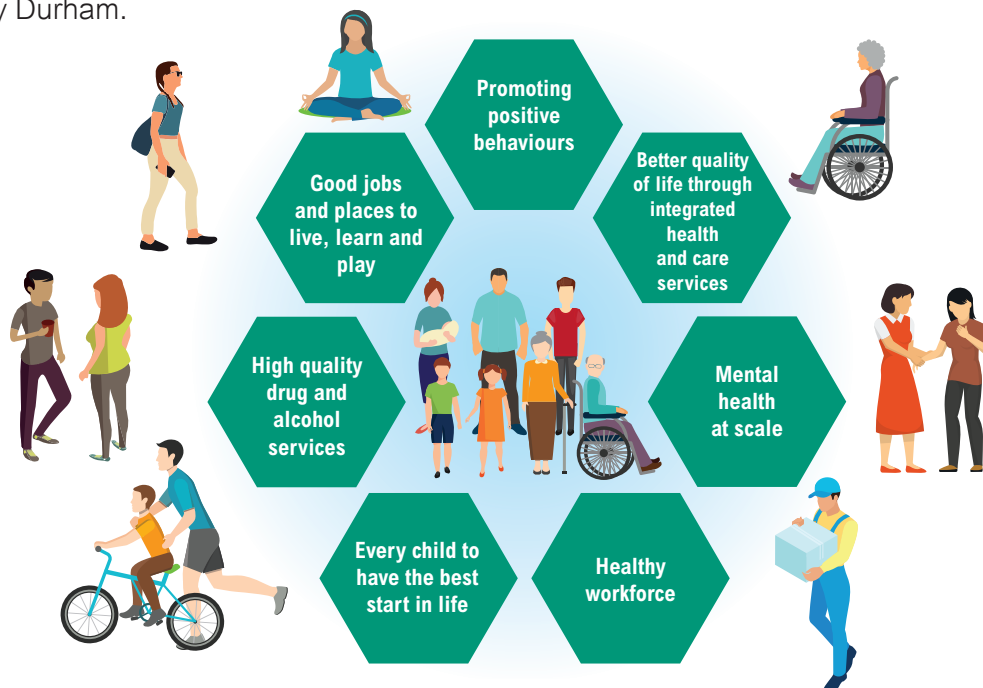
The many challenges to health and wellbeing were highlighted in my 2018 report. The emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in this year's report also reminds us we have a long way to go. However, County Durham also has many assets that can support and protect health, some of these are set out below:



\*A Cree is County Durham's version of Australia's Men's Shed. Crees aim to engage with those at risk of suicide by tackling social isolation and self-harm through skill-sharing and informal learning to promote social interaction. Although Crees were originally aimed at men, some have developed for women and young people.

## Update on Public Health priorities and actions

In my first annual report I identified seven key public health priorities for the Taylor family and local communities to lead healthier lives. These were based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) but also evidence of 'what works' to make a difference. A recommendation from 2018 was to implement the actions for each priority working with partners across County Durham.



### Good jobs and places to live, learn and play

#### Action

- 1 To develop health standards for private landlords to implement.
- 2 Older people to have support to ensure their homes are warm and safe and not at risk of fuel poverty.
- 3 Set out a plan to restrict the increase in take-away food.

#### Progress

- 1 Linked with housing colleagues to incorporate health priorities and standards within the new housing strategy.
- 2 Identified the most vulnerable older people with respiratory illness to access home improvements and financial advice. This contributes to benefits in health, a warmer home environment and protection against fuel poverty.
- 3 Published our 'Working towards a healthy weight in County Durham' (2018) to guide planning and licensing including hot food takeaways.

### Every child to have the best start in life

#### Action

- 1 All schools in County Durham working towards healthy schools with emphasis on mental health.
- 2 Provide dedicated support for women smoking while pregnant and include support for their partners.
- 3 Introduce breastfeeding friendly venues.
- 4 To understand the health and wellbeing needs of children with special educational needs and disability.

#### Progress

- 1 Worked with schools to understand the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people. An improvement plan is being piloted across County Durham from Autumn 2019.
- 2 Made changes to services after listening to mothers and partners to understand their needs to stop smoking during pregnancy.
- 3 155 local businesses are now signed up to the Breastfeeding Friendly County Durham scheme.
- 4 We have a much clearer understanding of the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in County Durham. A health needs assessment has been completed and this will inform our work moving into 2020.



## High quality drug and alcohol services

### Action

- 1 To support people needing help with our new drug and alcohol service.
- 2 To work with families to help them with drug and alcohol issues.
- 3 Promote awareness about sensible levels of alcohol intake.

### Progress

- 1 Increased our focus on the physical and mental health needs of those with drug and alcohol problems with a particular focus on women.
- 2 To be more family focused and flexible to the individual needs of families we have reshaped services to improve outreach support within our local communities.
- 3 Making alcohol unit guidelines more visible through work with licencing.

## Promoting positive behaviours

### Action

- 1 Introduce the Active 30 to help children to become more active.
- 2 Reducing exposure to second hand smoke.
- 3 Increase awareness about the risks of alcohol.



### Progress

- 1 150 schools have pledged to provide children and young people with up to 30 minutes of fun physical activities every day in school.
- 2 The danger of second hand smoke is now part of all training delivered to people who work with families (this includes brief intervention training for midwives, health visitors and staff in children and family settings).
- 3 Reviewed and developed our partnership response to tackling and reducing harmful drinking through local campaigns such as *what's the harm*.

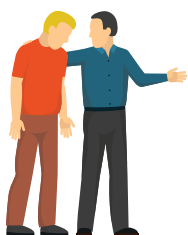
## Better quality of life through integrated health and care services

### Action

- 1 To encourage people to have the flu vaccination.
- 2 To work with health and social care organisations to integrate services to improve quality of life.
- 3 Support people to get involved in local social and physical activities to reduce social isolation.

### Progress

- 1 Established a County Durham and Darlington Flu Board to promote flu immunisation and protect people most at risk from flu.
- 2 Worked towards and actively promoted integrated services including our work within the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).
- 3 Continue to fund local social activities and groups including Ways to Wellbeing, Crees/Men's Sheds, Area Action Partnerships (AAP) projects and Macmillan Joining the Dots. We are working with GP practices to develop link worker roles to support the most vulnerable in our communities.



### Mental health at scale

Mental health is a focus for this annual report see pages 10-12.



### Healthy workforce

Healthy workforce is a focus for this annual report see pages 13-15.



## What our work has meant for the Taylor family

The Taylor family is a fictional County Durham family that I introduced in my 2018 report. The challenges they face represent the key health and wellbeing issues across County Durham.



### John and Sarah

2018

- John is in a low paid job and worries about money especially with a new baby on the way.
- Sarah is pregnant and has been drinking quite a lot to cope.
- They live in a privately rented house.
- John and Sarah are smokers.
- Strong sense of family and support for one another.
- John enjoys his job and has some great friends. He coaches at the local football team.
- Sarah is very caring and spends time helping out at Olivia's school.
- Sarah and John provide a loving, safe home for Olivia and Callum and keep in touch with Dan.

A year ago

### Dan

2018

- Dan is Sarah's son from a previous relationship.
- He was doing well at school but felt under pressure to do better and ended up dropping out of school.
- He has been staying at a friend's house on the sofa and taking drugs to fit in with his friends.
- Dan enjoys physical activity and runs on a regular basis.

A year ago

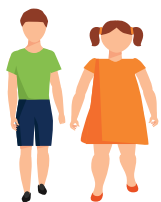


### Jean and George

2018

- Their house is always cold and damp and George was very ill with the flu last winter.
- Both struggle to move around their home safely.
- Jean has just had a fall and can no longer care for George.
- They often feel isolated from their community.
- Jean until recently volunteered at the knit and natter group, teaching others to knit.
- George enjoys researching his family history.

A year ago



### Callum and Olivia

2018

- Callum has a learning disability and Olivia is overweight.
- They both eat lots of fast food and play video games for hours after school.
- Callum receives good support in school.

A year ago

The work carried out over the last year will have started to make a difference to our local communities. Some priorities will take a long time to change and I hope you can see how the Taylor family have started to improve their health and wellbeing along with where they live, learn, work and play. We have made a commitment to test every decision we make in terms of the impact it will have on families such as the Taylors.

### Good jobs and places to live, learn and play



- John's employer is working to achieve the Better Health at Work Award, this has changed the culture in the workplace enabling John to be more confident to discuss his mental health.
- Dan has a part time lifeguarding job and is also studying part-time for an NVQ.
- Jean and George have received help to improve the energy efficiency in their home.

### High quality drug and alcohol services

- Dan has accessed services for his drug misuse. This support together with the responsibilities he has in his role as lifeguard has helped him to stay drug free.
- Sarah stopped drinking alcohol in early pregnancy with the support from her local children's centre.

### Better quality of life through integrated health and care services

- Jean and George are finding it increasingly difficult to get out and about. An Area Action Partnership (AAP) funded car scheme helps them to travel to their classes.
- Jean and George have both taken up their free flu vaccination.
- Jean is showing signs of early dementia.
- Jean and George feel more connected to their community and are making new friends at their local classes.

### Every child to have the best start in life

- Callum lacks confidence and his parents are finding it hard to understand how best to support his future needs in school and at home.
- Olivia is a healthy weight and has joined a brownie group to try and make more friends.
- Sarah suffered with post-natal depression and struggled to breastfeed.
- Due to the demands on Sarah's time, Sarah has not made all appointments for Charlie. Charlie is not up to date with all vaccinations.



### Promoting positive behaviours

- Callum and Olivia's school has signed up to the Active 30 pledge and Callum and Olivia are enjoying being more active.
- John and Sarah both gave up smoking but unfortunately John started again as he was worried about the security of their home.
- Charlie is gaining weight and developing at a normal rate.
- John was worried he was drinking too much, so he has cut down on his alcohol intake during the week.



## Mental health at scale

### In my 2018/19 report I said we would:

- Support small businesses to take action about mental health, and train staff to become mental health first aiders;
- Get involved in Time to Change to reduce stigma and discrimination due to mental health.

County Durham has been one of 14 places across England to be part of a national programme of work called prevention at scale. In County Durham we chose a focus on mental health, prevention of suicide and tackling stigma and discrimination.

There was already a huge amount of work taking place across the county to improve mental health via a partnership group. This included work with children and young people, suicide prevention, crisis care, dementia and resilient communities.

This work, while very challenging, has also seen success in 2019 including a £1 million mental health trailblazer bid for children's mental health. Mental health at scale has enabled us to build on all of that and encourage more people to talk about mental health.



### Why is this important?

The figures below highlight the size of our challenge, and why we should not accept this situation. Participation in the mental health at scale programme allowed us to use national expertise and local knowledge and experience to begin to tackle some of the systemic challenges across County Durham.



## During this time, we have:

- Worked with businesses and organisations across County Durham partnership, including:



- These organisations have come together to help reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health and to make it easier for people to talk about mental health. This includes training for staff, supporting Time to Change and ensuring support is available for staff in the workplace.
- Most of our businesses in County Durham are small or medium sized and they employ a significant proportion of our workforce. Working with Business Durham and the Federation of Small Businesses we have engaged a large network of employers and are using local knowledge to advise and help co-ordinate our approaches to improve mental wellbeing to ensure a consistent approach across all of our workforces.
- We have worked with Business Durham and its networks to find out how we can continue to support small and medium businesses to reduce mental health stigma and discrimination and achieve and sustain good mental health amongst their staff.



## Behavioural insights

We worked with students (aged 14-16) and men (aged 40-49) to gather their opinions, perspectives and thoughts on mental health stigma. Interviews were also held with professionals working in this area, so that we could learn more about the challenges they face and the success that they experience in their work. This learning highlighted the stigma that exists and how we require collective efforts to promote and protect mental health, provide help and support for those who need it, and a concerted effort to actively challenge stigma itself, to begin to make a difference. This learning has been fed through key mental health groups to inform their current practice and plans.





## Working with County Durham Time to Change Hub to tackle stigma and discrimination

Being part of mental health at scale has helped us to talk about mental health. On World Mental Health Day 2018, the County Durham Partnership held an event where Durham County Council and Pioneering Care Partnership signed the Time to Change employer pledge showing our commitment to change how colleagues think and act around mental health in the workplace. On Time to Talk day, in February 2019, senior leaders and staff across all areas from Durham County Council championed good mental health and endorsed our wide-ranging approach to improve good mental health. All partners committed to working towards the Time to Talk Employer Pledge.

**The Time to Change Employer Pledge is a commitment to changing the way we all think and act about mental health in the workplace.**



Time to Talk day, was also celebrated across County Durham. Time to Talk aims to encourage people to talk about mental health and opening up about their experiences, helping to diminish some of the stigma around mental health. A range of campaigns were run across County Durham in workplaces and community centres, which encouraged people to talk about mental health.

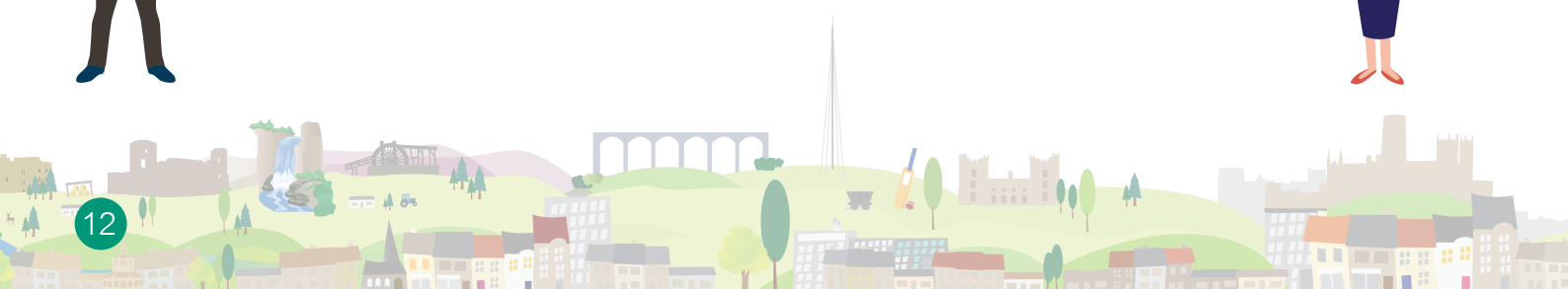
In March 2019, County Durham was successful in becoming a funded Time to Change Hub, enabling us to make positive progress in tackling mental health stigma and discrimination. The hub is co-ordinated by 'Investing in Children', a well-established partner of Durham County Council. Hub Champions have been visible at many events across the county including the Trimdon Community Festival, County Durham Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Network, County Durham's Mental Health Provider Forum and a County Durham Volunteer's celebration event to raise awareness of issues around mental health stigma and discrimination.

### How has this work benefitted the Taylors

John has become a Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) at work. This will help him access the support he needs and help him to offer support to his family and work colleagues, directing them to support services.

During his MHFA training, John learned about the stigma and discrimination that is often experienced by those who have had problems relating to anxiety, depression or due to stress of work or home life. As a result, people are less likely to talk about these issues with work colleagues, managers or their employers. John's employer has signed the Time to Change employer pledge to commit to changing the way everyone in the workplace thinks and acts about mental health. He has noticed posters and information around his work and is hoping that he will be able to use his new skills in MHFA if they are needed.

John feels his MHFA training has helped him to support Sarah through her postnatal depression.



## Healthy Workforce

### In my 2018/19 report I said we would:

- Support organisations to promote the wellbeing of their staff;
- Reach more organisations with our Better Health at Work award;
- Support a range of marketing campaigns to promote health and wellbeing.

Whilst a good working environment is good for health, a bad working environment may contribute to poor health. Effective prevention approaches at work can not only promote better mental health but also help avoid some of the immediate substantial costs of absenteeism and presenteeism that are associated with poor mental health.

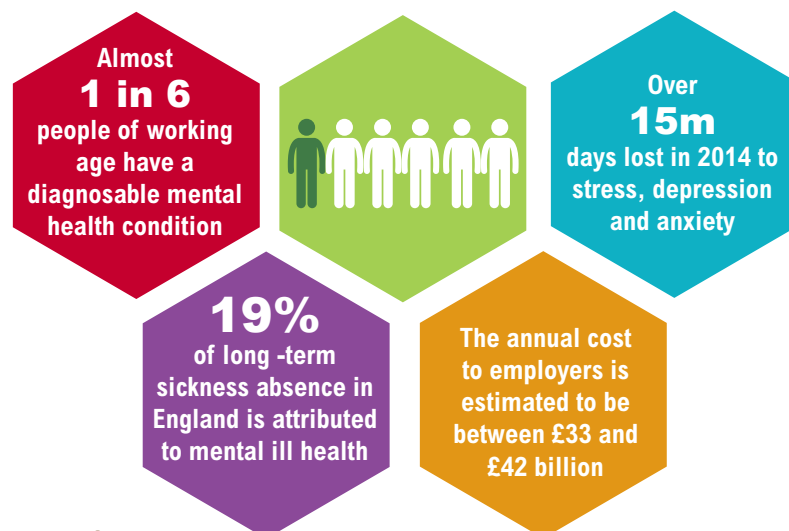
### Why is this important?

We know that good work is vital for people's health and wellbeing, impacting both directly and indirectly on the individual, their families and communities.

Healthier, active and engaged employees are more productive and have lower levels of sickness absence and presenteeism. Organisations that take a positive, proactive approach to mental health can benefit from:

- Attracting the best talent;
- More engaged and motivated staff;
- Retaining staff, with less turnover;
- Reduction in absence;
- Improved professional reputation.

### Poor mental health can have a large impact on a business, we know that nationally:



During 2018, and linked to mental health at scale, we have embedded mental health in the Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA). Equipping staff with the knowledge and skills to improve mental health and wellbeing and prevent mental illness and suicide is a specific recommendation within the NHS Five Year Forward View for Mental Health and Public Health England's (PHE) Public Mental Health Leadership and Workforce Development Framework.

The Better Health at Work Award gives a framework for workplace health. The award asks businesses to promote campaigns and deliver interventions and activities to promote positive health. 11 local authorities across the North East region support the delivery of the award.



### The award is a scheme which is available to all businesses

Pioneering Care Partnership oversees the County Durham BHAWA on behalf of the council. County Durham has 63 businesses currently registered on the scheme (the highest in the region). A variety of businesses ranging from voluntary organisations to large manufacturers and business sizes are involved in the award:

- **Small** (1-49 employees) – **17** businesses (27%)
- **Medium** (50-250 employees) – **28** businesses (44%)
- **Large** (250+ employees) – **18** businesses (29%)

### Achievements 2018-2019 for the County Durham BHAWA:

- **13** new businesses recruited;
- **56** workplaces received mental health training;
- Over **320,000** contacts with a health campaign in a County Durham workplace e.g., stress and mental health, drug and alcohol awareness, stop smoking, healthy eating etc;
- **12** businesses achieved bronze status;
- **8** businesses achieved silver status;
- **6** businesses achieved gold status;
- **16** businesses achieved combined excellence.



Monitoring and evaluation of the award has shown that the participating businesses have reported:

- Reduced absenteeism;
- Increased productivity;
- Increased staff engagement.

This also has a direct influence on physical, mental, financial and social wellbeing of employees and their families.





## Across County Durham, businesses have introduced mental health activities into their workplace in excellent and innovative ways

**Hitachi** ran a campaign to raise awareness of their mental health first aiders (MHFA) by giving them t-shirts as part of their uniforms which had 'don't bottle it up' on the back. This made it clear who the MHFAs were and to raise awareness of mental health.

**Learning Curve** mental health campaign included each employee being given a lollipop stick with a message on it. The message might be to 'hold a door open for a colleague', 'ask someone how they are', 'talk to someone you don't know'.

**Pioneering Care Partnership** encourage staff to go on walking meetings or take phone calls where appropriate outside in the garden.

### Durham County Council

Workforce health and wellbeing is a strategic priority for the council with over 8000 staff, the majority of which live in County Durham. Staff wellbeing is vital to the smooth running of day to day business and delivering the best service to our residents.

A comprehensive approach across the authority has included senior figures championing mental health at work. Mental health awareness training has been delivered through all levels of management to almost 1000 staff. There are over 100 mental health first aiders and over 80 Time to Change Champions tackling stigma and discrimination. Our commitment to improving mental health has led to us signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge.

### Durham County Council's work towards the BHAWA in 2019 includes:

- ✓ **1124** classes attended including yoga, pilates, metafit and get creative;
- ✓ **430** staff receiving cancer awareness training;
- ✓ **243** staff members participated in Dry January;
- ✓ **180** staff receiving financial wellbeing training;
- ✓ Over **80** personal pledges made for mental health awareness week.

### How has this work benefitted the Taylors

John's employer has applied for the Better Health at Work Award and is promoting healthy eating and the benefits of physical activity to improve employee health. As a result, John has tried some of the healthy food options at work and has enjoyed cooking them at home with Sarah.

John has admitted that he worries about the family finances. Durham Savers delivered a financial wellbeing workshop at his team meeting. John intends to save money through the Credit Union and in future borrow from them, providing him with a low-cost lender and a financial safety net. John has supported Dan in seeking support and counselling for his mental health.



## Recommendations

This report has provided an insight into the work across County Durham to support people to be able to talk about mental health and wellbeing.

We still have a long way to go to make a long term change to those who feel isolated, depressed or in a crisis. The work set out in this report is just the beginning. However, if we keep talking and working with our local people about mental health, we will make a difference.

Following the information presented in my report this leads to a number of recommendations we will take forward next year.

### Mental health at scale recommendations

1. Increase the number of organisations involved in our collective approach to workforce development on mental health.
2. Take a proactive approach to reaching more small and medium sized businesses.
3. Continue our focus on Time to Change and tackling stigma and discrimination by more employers signing the Time to Change Employers Pledge and support the Time to Change Hub.

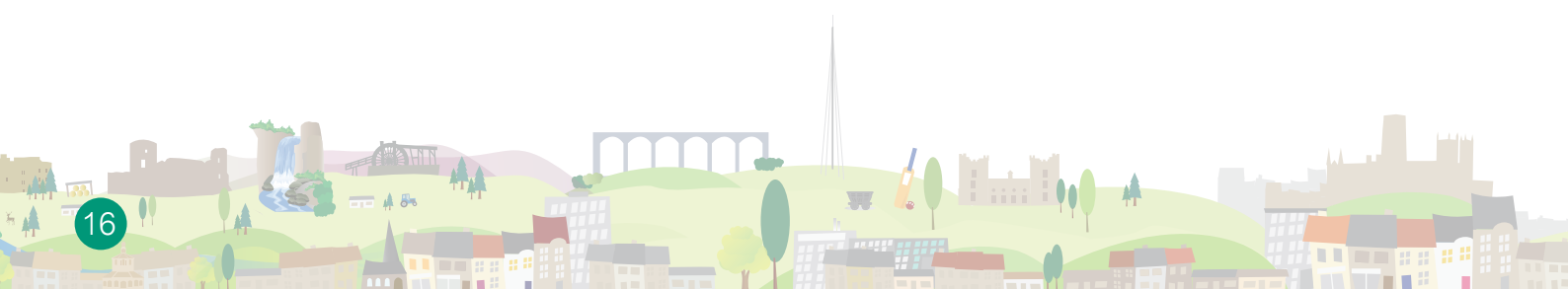


### Healthy workforce recommendations

1. Help create healthy workforces across County Durham by ensuring alignment with key strategies such as the County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
2. Attract more businesses to participate and achieve the Better Health at Work award.
3. Encourage and support progress through Better Health at Work award levels.



The priorities identified and the work to achieve change are aligned to the County Durham Vision 2035 and will also support the refresh of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for County Durham.





## What is coming up in future annual reports

In my next annual report I will focus on the following public health priorities:

### 2020

- Every child to have the best start in life;
- Good jobs and places to live, learn and play.

### 2021

- High quality drug and alcohol services;
- Better quality of life through integrated health and care services;
- Promoting positive behaviours.



Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.



Braille



Audio



Large print

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