

‘County Durham is a healthy place where people live well, for longer’



**County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board
Annual Report
2021-22**

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If you would like more information about this report email HWB@durham.gov.uk

Welcome from Chair and Vice Chair

Welcome to the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board annual report 2021-22.

As Chair and Vice Chair we are privileged to have been supported by a wide range of partners who have gone above and beyond during an extremely challenging time to deliver on our shared vision to make County Durham a healthy place where people live well, for longer.

The pandemic has impacted disproportionately on people across the County, particularly our older population, people with existing/underlying health conditions such as diabetes and obesity, our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) populations as well as those living and working in more disadvantaged circumstances. We have also seen how the virus has had a direct impact on our communities in terms of their health and also a wider indirect impact instigated by lockdown on mental wellbeing across the whole life course, exasperating issues and widening health, social and economic inequalities.

Despite the challenges and the widening health inequalities, we have continued to deliver against our three priorities across the life course, and this annual report is testament to that with the examples of our achievements including several new initiatives to address the demand on mental health provision, launching the health and wellbeing framework for schools, and using additional Covid funding to actively engage and re-engage people who are inactive, into physical activity.

The HWB met five times during 2021-22, these meetings took place virtually and in-person to comply with changing government coronavirus guidance.

As we move into a new way of working, with the Integrated Care System, we will ensure that County Durham is positioned well across the region and continues to work for the benefit of our communities.

We would like to thank everyone, for their hard work and continued commitment in these unprecedented and challenging times.



Cllr Paul Sexton
Portfolio Holder for Adults & Health
Services
Chair of the Health and Wellbeing
Board
Durham County Council



Dr Stewart Findlay
Vice Chair of the Health and
Wellbeing Board
Chief Officer, County Durham
Clinical Commissioning Group

About the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board

The County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is a strategic partnership, which sets the vision and direction for health and wellbeing across the county.

The HWB's vision is to 'make County Durham a healthy place where people live well, for longer'. To achieve this, we identified three strategic priorities in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) 2021-25:

- Starting well
- Living well
- Ageing well



Responsibilities

The County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory committee of Durham County Council. The Board is committed to working together with key partners to set the direction and improve the health and wellbeing of the local population and reduce health inequalities. This includes working closely with County Durham overview and scrutiny committee to deliver a complementary work programme.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has a number of statutory responsibilities:

- Assess the health and wellbeing needs of the local population and how they can be addressed through a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).
- Produce and implement a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) based on the information in the JSNA.
- Promote integrated working and joining up services across health, public health and social care services.
- Work closely with organisations or departments who provide services related to the wider determinants of health.
- Produce a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in County Durham builds a picture of current and future health and wellbeing needs of local people. It is a suite of resources locally that helps to inform the planning and improvement of local services and guides us in making the best use of funding available. We use it to shape joint commissioning priorities to improve health and wellbeing as well as reduce health inequalities in our communities.

As we look beyond the Covid-19 pandemic it is vital that we understand the protective factors and strengths across communities. This combined view of both needs and assets (building on our Approach to Wellbeing) will allow us to build a

broader understanding of health and wellbeing and how we can support and protect the health of our local communities.

Approach to Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing Board has championed the County Durham Approach to Wellbeing and its implementation across the County Durham Partnership. The Approach is evidence-based, asset-based and seeks to involve communities in decisions that affect them, in order to achieve better health outcomes. The Approach comprises of seven wellbeing principles which have evolved in partnership and now form the basis of a new self-assessment framework which can be used by organisations to reflect on how they could support better health and wellbeing outcomes across our communities.

Community partners are supportive of this approach and feedback has been positive:

“.....this wellbeing approach could work and would make a difference now..... is very much about giving the power back, or moving the power back out into the community”

“.....rather than thinking ‘patients’ we need to think about ‘partners’.... we need people to start to take responsibility for their wellbeing and not be patients themselves but actually be citizens, residents and not just service users but actual genuine partners in their wellbeing”

“I suppose that’s the kind of overall goal isn’t it that people don’t ever need to see the model people just work in that way because that’s the right thing to do and there is that culture and system wide change that means that you don’t have to sit down with a set of principles and say to people this is how you need to be working or this is how you should be working in order to improve the wellbeing, that people just do it”

Governance and partnership working arrangements

The County Durham Partnership is the overarching strategic partnership in County Durham, with thematic boards leading on the priorities in the County Durham Vision 2035. These are the Health and Wellbeing Board, Safe Durham Partnership, Economic Partnership, Environment and Climate Change Partnership and County Durham Together Partnership. Effective joint working takes place between these strategic partnerships to improve outcomes for residents in County Durham.

There are close links between the statutory Durham Safeguarding Children and Durham Safeguarding Adult Partnerships and the Health and Wellbeing Board to provide assurance that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

The [Health and Wellbeing Board governance structure](#) includes responsibility for Mental Health, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Physical Activity, Healthy Weight and Tobacco Control, as well as health and care integration.



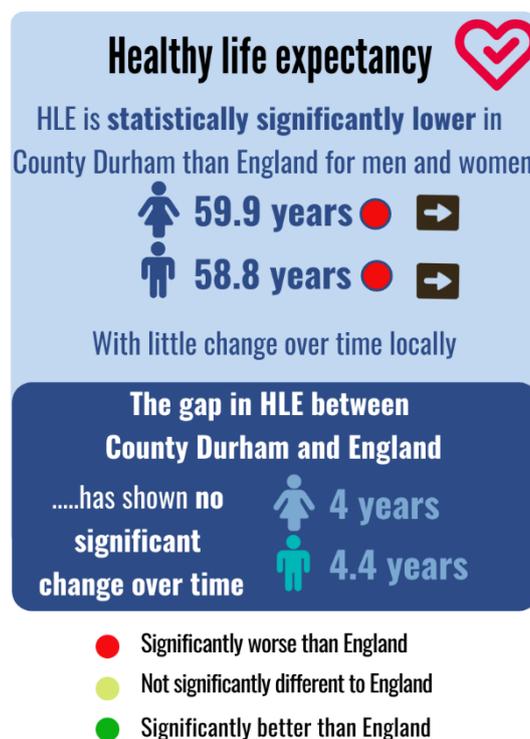
Better for everyone

Performance monitoring

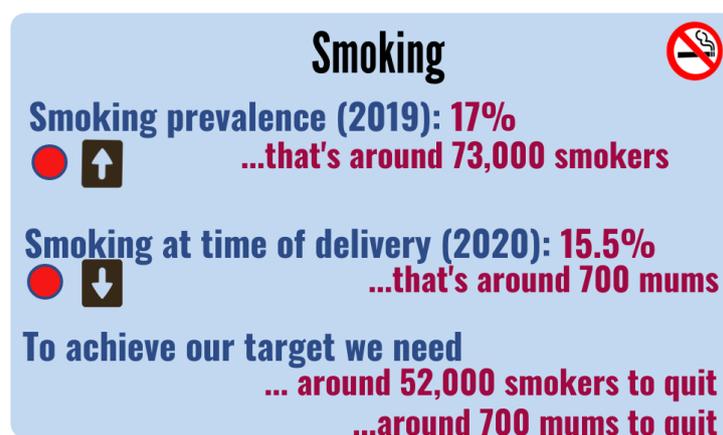
Monitoring performance against the JHWS is important to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Below is an idea of the direction of travel on several of the key performance indicators.

The JHWS features six objectives across our three strategic priorities of starting well, living well and ageing well. These are long-term health and wellbeing outcomes which take time to show meaningful change. This update is intended to demonstrate the impact of our work has on the trajectory of people's health and outline where we aim to be in 2025.

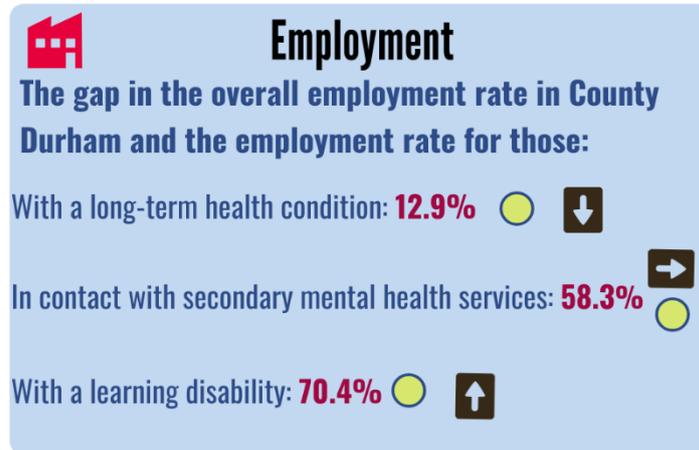
- **Improve healthy life expectancy and reduce the gap within County Durham and between County Durham and England.**



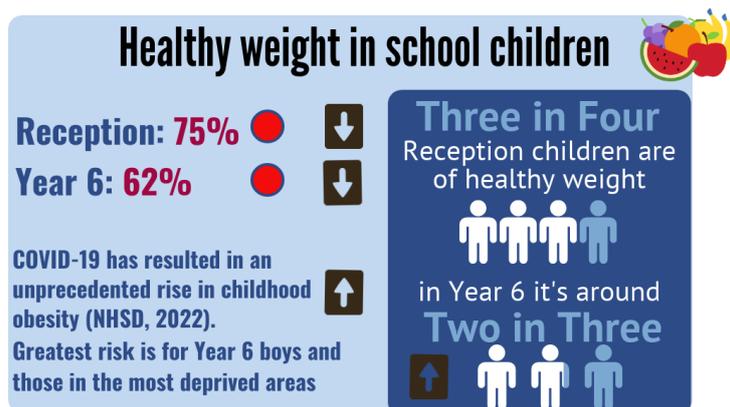
- **We will have a smoke free environment with over 95% of our residents not smoking and an ambition that pregnant women and mothers will not smoke.**



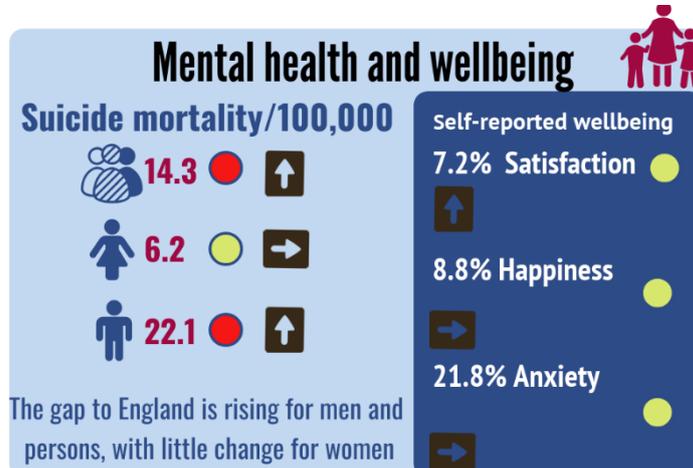
- Decrease overall levels of unemployment and specifically close the employment gap between the general population and those living with a long term physical or mental health condition, or with a learning disability



- Over 90% of our children aged 4-5 years, and 79% of children aged 10-11 years are of a healthy weight.



- Improved mental health and wellbeing evidenced by self-reported wellbeing scores and reduced suicide rates.



- Increase the number of organisations involved in Better Health at Work Award (to improve health and wellbeing interventions at work).

Better Health at Work Award

79 organisations now signed up 

40,000+ employees 

DCC hold 'Continuing Excellence' BHAWA status

'Maintaining Excellence' status applied for

The Health and Wellbeing Board response to Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has been at the forefront of the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board throughout 2021-22 as all services responded to a changing situation which has affected every part of our society. Throughout the pandemic local, regional and national partners have worked together to deliver local interventions and to protect and support our residents, families, businesses, social care, community organisations, and NHS structures in County Durham.

The HWB has overseen the **Local Covid-19 Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP)**

which was developed to deliver our Covid-19 response and protect our communities from the virus. The plan includes a range of actions including the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination programme, our local Covid-19 testing offer and support to our communities, particularly those who are

vulnerable or needing to self-isolate. Partners worked across key settings (including care homes, schools, workplaces and a variety of community settings) to rapidly detect and manage outbreaks and implement appropriate infection control measures.



The HWB has also overseen the allocation and expenditure of the Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF). This funding was provided to Local Authorities from central government for public health purposes to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 in local areas. During the pandemic a total of £23.9 million was provided to County Durham.

COMF has supported a diverse range of projects including increasing access to testing and vaccination, supporting re-engagement with physical activity, improving the quality of life for people living with long covid and for improving wellbeing for people currently on NHS waiting lists, targeted work to support vulnerable populations including those needing emergency housing, Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET), and children and young people experiencing mental health issues. Evaluations from the bids have shown how this funding has helped to develop future programmes and service plans.

The Health and Wellbeing Board functioned as a Member-led **Local Outbreak Engagement Board** to answer crucial questions posed by members of the public around the pandemic and response.

Sacriston Youth Project Food for Thought project which was created in March 2020 and ran throughout 2021/22 provided care packages, hot food provision, prescription collection, advice and information and a doorstep befriending service using 30 volunteers. At their peak the service received calls for help from 7am – 10pm, 7 days a week with approximately 80% of the people who were supported were unknown to the project prior to the pandemic.

As of January 2022, the Food for Thought Project is now a permanent part of Sacriston Youth and Community Project's offer. The elements of the project include care packages, debt management support, white goods and digital poverty support, school uniform bank, community shelves/larder and information/advice/guidance/signposting.

Wellbeing for the time being is an integrated patient focused service development within County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) to support patients currently on the waiting list for surgery and patients with a recent diagnosis of cancer awaiting treatment.

Patient needed support with chest clearance which has since improved with breathing exercise support. Lots of advice given on energy conservation and pacing although patient is currently maintaining a fairly good activity level.

The patient is to receive weekly telephone reviews as chemo hasn't started yet.

Surgeon Feedback on pilot:

"Good to see the referral process is working. Just need to work on patient engagement now! Really keen to support this as definitely has impact on patient outcomes. Keep up the good work! Delighted you have funding for another year"

The **County Durham Together Community Hub** was introduced in March 2020 as a single point of access for people in County Durham who required support to remain at home because they had to shield or self-isolate. Initially the focus of the Hub was around provision of food, but the remit of the hub adapted to the needs of communities through the different phases of the pandemic, based on continuous feedback and built on assets within communities.



The **Covid-19 Community Champions Programme** recruited people representative of our communities to become volunteer Champions who shared important information with their local communities and provided feedback to the HWB on what local people think is going well, what can be done better and any questions. This enabled organisational and professional responses to be shaped by local intelligence and ensured information was being shared in the best way for each community.

As the pandemic has progressed the Champions programme has continued to evolve in line with public health messaging, to promote the vaccination programme and respond to issues identified within communities with a focus on reducing inequalities.



The rollout of the **Covid-19 vaccination programme** across County Durham began in December 2020 and is ongoing. Vaccinations have a critical role to play in the fight against Covid-19 and the vaccination programme has seen high uptake rates across County Durham.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has been supportive of significant work by partners to ensure equitable access to the Covid-19 vaccination

programme in all sections of the population. Specific promotional activity is aimed at grass roots level and targets low uptake communities.



Between May and November 2021 **mobile pop-up vaccination clinics** were delivered in communities. Alongside community engagement activities and supported by Covid-19 Awareness Co-ordinators and Covid-19 Champions the interventions were well received and thought to impact positively on vaccine uptake.

January 2021 saw the transfer of national NHS Test and Trace tracing services to County Durham Together under the umbrella of the **Local Tracing Partnership (LTP)**. The LTP continued to support the national NHS Test and Trace tracing services, prioritising geographies with lower vaccine uptake, higher than expected rates of Covid-19 and those where engagement with NHS Test and Trace had been low.

At the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting in March 2022 the Board discussed local and regional plans for transition to a '**Living Safely with Covid**' response and how we embed this into wider health protection measures. We intend to take forward the learning, expertise, good practice, flexibility and collaborative relationships gained by all partners from the response over the last two years. The Health and Wellbeing Board will remain at the forefront of this approach.

Update on priority areas in 2021-22

All priorities

Integrated Care System

Plans are progressing regionally for the Integrated Care System – County Durham will be part of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. HWB members have shared feedback with the Integrated Care System Programme Board and expressed strong views that County Durham is not disadvantaged in the new system.



Implementation of the new Integrated Care System is from 1st July 2022.

Director of Public Health (DPH) Annual Report: Putting life into living

The Director of Public Health is a statutory member of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, one of the statutory requirements of the Director of Public Health is to produce an annual report about the health of the local population. The local authority has a duty to publish the report.

In addition to recognising our response and recovery to the Covid-19 pandemic, the [Director of Public Health Annual Report 2021](#) brings to a close the last four DPH annual reports which have introduced us to the Taylor family and looked at progress against the seven priorities to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of the people of County Durham. This report focuses on promoting and supporting positive behaviours across our communities so we can achieve and sustain active lives which includes the Active 30 campaign to help schools across the County support every pupil to participate in the recommended 30 minutes of activity every day at school. It also details the work of the County Durham Tobacco Alliance to reduce the impact of smoking on families and reduce the exposure to second-hand smoke.

Providing high quality drug and alcohol services to work with families to ensure a joined-up systems approach across County Durham is really important including establishing outreach facilities in the local community to ensure services are accessible to those most in need.

Working together, in a joined-up way across health and care services, benefits and advice services, as well as the VCS can ensure that the needs of people with long term conditions, and their families and carers are met. Over 1,200 people have benefitted from Macmillan Joining the Dots, a cancer support programme, designed by people who have lived experience of cancer. Most of these have been people who have a diagnosis of cancer, but there is also a strong element of support for family and carers.

County Durham Place Based Commissioning and Delivery Plan

The [County Durham Commissioning and Delivery Plan 2020-25](#) sets out the health and care commissioning intentions of the system – how we will achieve the objectives in the JHWS. The Health and Wellbeing Board receives assurance on the commissioning intentions of the Integrated Health and Social Care Commissioning Team alongside the delivery intentions of NHS mental health, acute, community and primary care services.

The plan reflects an increasing maturity of the health and care system in County Durham to collaboratively plan, measure, and deliver integrated services, whilst tackling the health inequalities within the county, and addressing the legacy of Covid-19.

To support the move towards a coproduction model [each chapter of the plan is summarised](#). The website will enable communities to provide feedback on content. It is hoped that this engagement will facilitate improvements in participation and coproduction from non-statutory partners in future editions of the plan.

County Durham Care Partnership
Executive and Forum



The County Durham Care Partnership sits within the governance structure of the HWB. It's first Forum took place in November 2021, which brought together health and social care and voluntary organisations to achieve improved health and wellbeing for the people of County Durham. Attendees raised concerns about the forthcoming changes and were encouraged to share their feedback at relevant forums regarding the place-based arrangements and the need to ensure County Durham was not disadvantaged within the new arrangements.

The collaborative approach of this Forum will help to develop place-based integration, which will avoid unnecessary admissions to acute care, giving people better outcomes and maximising the available resources.

Health Protection annual assurance

The HWB accepted that there were effective assurance processes in place for communicable disease control, strategic regulation intervention and emergency preparedness.

Key achievements of the Health Protection Assurance and Development Group included improvements in flu vaccination uptake amongst eligible groups, sustained delivery of national immunisations programmes and the Antenatal and Newborn Screening programme.

Most of our screening programmes have been impacted by the multiple waves of the pandemic and we are continuously working to get these back on track, whilst learning lessons to improve the uptake of certain vaccinations, the rates of vaccination amongst adolescents and ensure equitable coverage and uptake of screening and immunisation programmes.

Winter Planning Arrangements

Planning for Winter 2021/22 predicted it to be one of the most challenging for public services, with a surge in demand caused by a combination of Covid-19, RSV (a respiratory virus that infects the lungs and breathing passages of children), flu, staffing pressures and entering the winter with already unprecedented demand).

Partners worked together across more areas than ever before to coordinate activity and prioritise work at this challenging time, including health (primary and acute services), social care, public health and a range of council services.

Mental Health

Evidence continues to build, highlighting the impact of Covid-19 inequalities and mental health and emotional wellbeing. The entire system has experienced a significant and sustained increase in demand for mental health and emotional wellbeing support, especially in the past 18 months.

The workstreams of the Mental Health Strategic Partnership (a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board) have continued to progress planned deliverables whilst also reacting to the demands placed on them by Covid-19, in five key areas:

- Children and Young People
- Suicide Prevention
- Crisis Care
- Dementia
- Resilient Communities

The work of the County Durham Suicide Prevention Alliance has been maintained during 2021/22 including the ongoing monitoring of potential deaths by suicide via the Real Time Data Surveillance (RTDS) system. The RTDS system triggers postvention referrals to support individuals, families and friends to help reduce the negative impact of the death on our local communities. Work continues to monitor high-frequency locations across the County and to also provide support for vulnerable groups including those who self-harm, men aged 35-45, Veterans and substance misusers. There has been no statistical increase in the number of potential deaths by suicide in County Durham during 2021/22.

In January 2022 funding for a new mental health and employment service was agreed, to provide additional support to help people with poor mental health find and maintain employment.

As part of the Covid response, additional funding has instigated the development of several new initiatives to address the increased demands on mental health provision.

- Campaigns have been initiated to engage children, young people and adults and address issues such as mental health in the workplace, community issues such as social isolation, low level anxiety and debt.
- Work on a Community Mental Health Framework to support adults with a Serious Mental Illness access evidence-based treatment within their Primary Care Network and transform services for complex emotional needs, adult eating disorders and community rehabilitation, has progressed.

- A Mental Health and Wellbeing Alliance has been developed, bringing together a number of providers to address the wider determinants influencing mental health; helping prevent entry (and re-entry) into statutory health and social care systems; reducing suicide; preventing negative outcomes associated with mental health issues and promoting positive outcomes related to good mental health and wellbeing. The Alliance will be launched on 1st April 2022.
- A Mental Health Resilience Team was created to respond to local people's mental health and wellbeing needs who have been impacted directly from Covid-19, including Covid-19 survivors; mental health impact of lockdown on vulnerable groups; moral injury amongst all front line groups (from any sector).
- In order to maximise the potential of the Voluntary and Community Sector and support grass roots organisations, funding grants were issued to voluntary organisations and community groups to provide mental health and wellbeing support to local populations.

NHS Dentistry

NHS dental practices have been operating at significantly reduced capacity whilst adhering to national infection control guidance related to the nature of dental practice causing increased likelihood of Covid-19 infection spread. It has been necessary for dental practices to triage patients who contact them to ensure patients with the greatest clinical need. Those requiring urgent dental care and vulnerable patients (including children) are prioritised. The Health and Wellbeing Board received assurance that all opportunities are being explored to increase the clinical treatment capacity available.

Marketing Campaigns

HWB partners have supported a coordinated approach to key public health marketing campaigns which have an impact on health inequalities and early deaths.

Campaigns supported include:

- **Regional Don't Wait Campaign and localised Durham amplification**
Collaborating with the Stop Smoking Service and FRESH regional tobacco control programme, a County Durham campaign raising awareness to risks of smoking, benefits of quitting and access to local Stop Smoking Service was targeted in areas of high smoking prevalence. TV ads were shown on ITV On Demand featuring Dr Ruth Sharrock [Hope and Harm videos](#). The campaign was promoted via community bus shelters, Go North East/Arriva bus sides, localised posters, flyers, digital screens, and paid promotion via Facebook.
- **Ask for ANI** is a mental health and wellbeing campaign which encourages people to ask if they need support from police or other domestic abuse support services. 'ANI' stands for Action Needed Immediately and is a pharmacy offer of a private space and phone.

- **World Breastfeeding Week/Big Latch On**
Partners used their resources to raise awareness of World Breastfeeding Week across social media channels, driving traffic to The Global Big Latch On event, which took place virtually.
- **Physical Activity**
Additional Covid funding was used to proactively engage and re-engage people who are inactive into physical activity within their local community, and to instil key health behavioural messages as we recover from the Covid19 pandemic. The 'Move' campaign launched in September with over 191 one to one appointments booked as of 11 October.



Our marketing and communications activity has supported the changes to the Covid-19 Government Roadmap, including a regional approach to key messages with the strapline 'Covid Safe County'. Regular social media, outdoor ads and updated web pages have supported prevention work in response to outbreaks and changes in guidance, the Covid vaccination programme and promoted health and wellbeing services with the general population, education settings, parents, prisons and other targeted groups.

Starting Well

Healthy Framework for Schools

In September 2021 the Health and Wellbeing Board launched the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Framework for schools and education settings. The framework was developed collaboratively with schools, DCC Education Services and Harrogate and District Foundation Trust (HDFT), to address both physical and emotional wellbeing and improve outcomes for children, young people, staff and the education setting.

Education settings play an important role in supporting young people with their mental health by providing stability, routine and consistency. They also offer protective factors for young people through a connection to trusted adults such as teachers or pastoral



support. Increasing evidence exists demonstrating the close association between the wellbeing of pupils and their educational outcomes.

The framework helps education settings to understand the importance of health and wellbeing and the close association with progression, engagement and attainment, and to make appropriate and informed choices according to their needs and evaluate impact and value for money.

Poverty

Additional Covid support funding was used to enable local authorities to support people struggling with the cost of food, energy and water bills, and other associated costs arising from the pandemic. Food hampers were distributed to our most vulnerable families, food vouchers to care leavers, kinship carers and children during the school holidays. Vulnerable households with children were supported to keep them safe, secure and have access to cooking facilities over the winter period, including help with fuel costs.

To help increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers for milk, baby milk and some foods, partners have continued to promote and raise awareness of the programme through staff training and communications. The focus on uptake has led to an increase from 54 percent to 68 percent – higher than the regional and national average.

Funding has been allocated to setting up ten food hubs through the 'That Bread and Butter Thing'. Approximately 50 families engage with each of the five operational hubs each week – which provides access to low-cost food and access to advice and provides a stepping stone from the crisis support through food banks and through the Welfare Assistance Scheme. Work is underway with community groups to open a further five hubs in the coming months.

Holiday activities with Healthy Food

Continuing the Holiday Activities with Healthy Food (HAWHF) project, the group have worked together with the Area Action Partnerships to develop, administer and distribute funding for enriching holiday activities with healthy food over the school holiday periods

During 2021, 381 Fun and Food projects were allocated funding for the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays, through the funding from the Department for Education, engaging 32,423 children and young people including 2,355 with additional needs.

Government funding does not include half term holidays, however additional funding was secured from Durham County Council to provide enriching activities and experiences with healthy food for the May and October 2021 and February 2022 holidays, funding 181 different projects in total.

A dedicated web page has been set up for the project www.durham.gov.uk/funandfood along with a facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/funandfoodcountydurham/>. Videos of previous activities can be viewed at [Videos of previous activities - Durham County Council](#)

Living Well

Better Health at Work Award

The BHAWA gives a framework for workplace health. The award asks businesses to promote campaigns and deliver interventions and activities to promote positive health.

New College Durham - Better Health at Work Award case study:

The College recognises and takes seriously its commitment to promoting a supportive culture that recognises the importance and value of staff wellbeing and the positive impact that this can have on recruitment and retention of staff and students.

Being involved in the Better Health at Work Award has allowed us to look at our offer of wellbeing activities for staff and students and led to the creation and delivery of a calendar of wellbeing events. This has allowed for significant collaboration between those staff leading on the staff and students' mental health and wellbeing strategies, notably Human Resources and Occupational Health staff and student support services. It has allowed us to.

- Create a positive working environment that supports mental health and wellbeing, creating a culture of openness by lifting the stigma surrounding mental health.
- Ensure that Governors, Staff and Students recognise and embrace that mental health and wellbeing is the responsibility of everyone.
- Enhance the support available to staff and to increase awareness of and participation in wellbeing activities and initiatives.

It is recognised that there are tangible benefits from such a collaborative approach in demonstrating that health and wellbeing is a strategic priority for the College in terms of staff and students.

Some campaigns that have taken place:

Wellbeing

- New You have engaged 20 staff in two weight loss, health and wellbeing programmes.
- Dedicated health and wellbeing budget and staff who have specific wellbeing roles, including a Health and Wellbeing Coach and Occupational Health Technician.



New College Durham New You Group January 2022

New College Durham - Better Health at Work Award *continued*:

Mental Health

- Thirty staff have completed Level 2 mental health qualification, we have held variety of events where we have invited external partners in to share information with staff and students including Kooth and Qwell, Samaritans, If U Care Share and many more.
- In support of these efforts the College has signed up to AOC Mental Health Charter, DfE for Wellbeing Charter and Durham County Council Schools and Education Settings Health and Wellbeing Framework.

Tobacco control

Adult smoking in County Durham has nearly halved since 2005 but remains a key driver of health inequalities and therefore a priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Tobacco Control Alliance strategic plan now embraces activity to address the impact of Covid on tobacco control.



FRESH continues to work on a denormalization programme for tobacco control across the region. A campaign was run between July 2021 and March 2022 to amplify the awareness of the health harms of smoking at a local level.

The Stop Smoking Service has retained a continuity of service during the pandemic, promoting quitting smoking as a way of reducing the harms caused by Covid. Referrals into the service are continuing to increase, with numbers of quit dates being set and smokers quitting at 4-week follow-up being maintained.

The Chair of the HWB also wrote to local MPs to advocate for the introduction of a “polluter tax” for tobacco manufacturing firms.

Case study:

KL (25) quit smoking in March 2021, after finding out she was pregnant.

“I wanted to quit as soon as I found out I was pregnant. It was knowing anything I put in body goes to the baby, too. Obviously I didn’t want to risk having a premature baby and all of the other risks to my baby’s health as well as my own.”

K had given up smoking during a previous pregnancy but started again once she’d had her baby and started socialising with friends. She found smoking was having an impact on her day-to-day life.

“After I’d do something I’d go for a tab, which takes about 5 mins so that’s an hour a day spent just going for tabs. If I was in the middle of something I would have to stop doing it just to go for a tab.”

Case study continued:

K used a temporary vape and patches with support from a Stop Smoking Advisor.

“The patches really helped reduce cravings... Having the patch felt like I didn’t know I even used to smoke; I just wasn’t bothered.”

K feels good about being an ‘ex-smoker’ and noticed improvements to her health.

“I’ve saved a lot of money for the bairn – over £700 since quitting. I’ve been putting the money away which will go towards Christmas for the kids....Also, I feel like I can breathe again – I can go outside and not feel like I’m struggling.”

Housing and Health

Housing is a key social determinant of health and the Health and Wellbeing Board recognises the need to work with colleagues to ensure homes in County Durham provide a safe, inclusive and secure environment for people to live and grow within their local community. This includes accessing funding to improve heating and insulation systems, helping people with money management to pay their fuel bills, developing a hospital discharge protocol and facilitating early intervention to reduce hospital admissions.

Rough Sleepers

The HWB endorsed partners’ approach to addressing rough sleepers in County Durham. During 2020/21 and in the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, partners worked to the Governments ‘Everybody In’ initiative, to identify and verify rough sleepers and house them in either temporary or secure accommodation. This work has been built on through various initiatives to increase the accommodation and support for rough sleepers including additional staff, and funding to assist with the shortfall on housing benefit in B&B accommodation, provide food parcels, assist with deposits/rent in advance for private landlords.

This has included Public Health and Housing colleagues working closely together to ensure hard to reach groups including rough sleepers and the Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) community are communicated with in relation to receiving the Covid-19 vaccination.

Alcohol and Drug Harms

In response to increasing concerns about rising levels of alcohol consumption during Covid-19, particularly amongst people who were already drinking above the Chief Medical Officer’s low risk guidelines, and who were likely to be drinking even more as a result of pressure and anxiety during the pandemic, the Health and Wellbeing board endorsed a number of campaign materials from Balance to be adopted across County Durham and cascaded to partners to maximise impact at a local level

- **“Alcohol - Not the Answer”** was re-launched in February 2022 to underline the broad range of physical and mental health problems alcohol causes, why

it is important to reduce drinking, and was targeted at men and women of all ages who are drinking more during Covid-19.

- In May 2021, Balance launched the next phase of this campaign, “**What’s the harm?**”, aimed at helping North East parents to understand the Chief Medical Officer’s guidance around children and alcohol. The summer is often a peak time for teenage alcohol consumption, but the easing of lockdown has moved some of the issues usually experienced during the summer holidays forward in some local areas. The 2021 campaign’s key messages highlight how alcohol consumption before the age of 18 can harm the developing body and brain, raise depression and anxiety and lead to risk taking behaviour.



Key messages include trying not to stockpile alcohol and limit the amount of alcohol bought, opting for non-alcoholic drinks to help stay within the 14 unit low-risk weekly guidelines, the importance of being a good role model to your kids around alcohol, which includes how often and how much alcohol is consumed.

Ageing Well

Ageing Well Health Needs Assessment (HNA)

The Health and Wellbeing Board supports plans for an Ageing Well Health Needs Assessment focussed on people aged 50+, outlining how public health prevention can be used to help people age well in a healthy way. The HNA will make recommendations for this age group, which will be used to inform the Ageing Well Strategy (a key deliverable included in the JHWS 2021-25). The HNA will be structured around eight themes taken from the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Age Friendly Cities framework, including Information and Advice, Transport, Social Participation, Housing and Economic Activity. It will also consider the disproportionate impact of the Covid pandemic on older people, particularly around social isolation and loneliness

Older Persons Accommodation

To support our residents to be able to live independently for longer, the Health and Wellbeing Board endorsed a 5-year Council New Build Programme which outlines plans for delivery of 500 affordable homes, with a large proportion dedicated for older persons accommodation including bungalows.

Looking Forward

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022-25

In line with the statutory responsibilities of the Health and Wellbeing Board, a three-year Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) was approved in April 2018.

A PNA considers the health needs of the population, the provision of pharmaceutical services commissioned by NHS England and Improvement that can support health needs, and therefore whether there are any potential gaps in pharmaceutical service delivery over a 3-year period. The PNA is part of Durham Insight.

Publication of the new PNA was delayed due to services responding to the Covid pandemic and the PNA is due to be agreed by the HWB in September 2022 and will be published in October 2022.

Mental Health Strategic Partnership

The Health and Wellbeing Board supports a refresh of the Mental Health Strategic Partnership for County Durham. Agreement has been reached to add value to the current workstreams for children and young people, suicide prevention, crisis care, dementia and resilient communities by linking-in the Mental Health Alliance, Mental Health Resilience Hubs and other initiatives developed during the Covid-19 response. This will support a coordinated, system-wide response to addressing the mental health and wellbeing needs of our local communities.

Health and Wellbeing Board Work programme

A work programme has been developed for the coming year which includes:

- Physical Activity Strategy
- Breastfeeding Friendly Buildings
- Falls Strategy
- Oral Health Strategy
- Refresh of Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Ageing Well Strategy

Challenges and opportunities for 2022

The year that this annual report covers has been difficult and unprecedented for our residents and those in the health and care professions that have worked tirelessly through Covid-19 and the pandemic. The Health and Wellbeing Board has received updates on infection rates, testing and the roll out of the vaccination programme, along with regular updates on the planned phased recovery during what will be a challenging year to come.

The learning from the previous year will re-shape our services and priorities along with continuing to influence our strong partnership working.

We will refresh our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2023 and will take this learning into account and work with our communities on those issues that will have a wide reaching benefit, including through regional work with the Integrated Care System.