



**Report of Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services, Durham County Council**

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**Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to share the key findings and recommendations from a Health Needs Assessment (HNA) undertaken to identify the health needs of people aged over 50 living in County Durham. The findings from the HNA will inform a new strategy and action plan for supporting the Ageing Well agenda across the county, helping to support people aged over 50 to lead happy, healthy and fulfilled lives.

**Executive summary**

- 2 There is no formal or commonly accepted definition of older age, however, much of the available data begins at age 65. Healthy ageing is determined by a broad range of wider social factors such as finances and employment, caring responsibilities, long term conditions and their management, housing, social isolation and loneliness and ageism within society.
- 3 To cover a broader ageing population and enable a focus on prevention this HNA looked at the concept of healthy ageing from 50-plus years. The HNA concentrated on the wider determinants of health such as social, behavioural, environmental, and economic determinants, alongside the impact of the physical environment. The report covers a wide range of priority areas using the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework to provide the parameters and structure for the assessment process undertaken.
- 4 The Age-Friendly Cities Framework promotes a shift in thinking away from deficits and issues experienced by older people and moves towards a cultural shift in what it means to age-healthily. The Framework contains eight priority themes to enable a system to become age-friendly:

- (a) Information and Advice
  - (b) Transport
  - (c) Respect and Social Isolation
  - (d) Social participation
  - (e) Housing and neighbourhoods
  - (f) Outdoor spaces and buildings
  - (g) Economic activity and civil engagement
  - (h) Health and wellbeing
- 5 The population of County Durham is ageing due to people living longer. There are currently 110,000 people aged 65 and over in County Durham and this is projected to increase by a further 31% by 2035.
- 6 As people live into older age, they are more likely to develop long term conditions and become frail. The recommendations from the HNA enable system-wide partners to consider a range of approaches to ensure that as people age they can live healthier lives for longer.
- 7 A HNA is a systematic approach to understanding the needs of a population. This includes determining whether certain groups appear more prone to illness and vulnerability than others and pinpointing any inequalities in terms of access to support, service provision and health and wellbeing outcomes.
- 8 The HNA links closely to the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) with a focus on the health needs of older people and identifies factors which affect their health and wellbeing. The HNA aligns with the strategic priorities of the JHWS in particular to develop and implement an Active Ageing Strategy, support community connectivity and the approach to wellbeing principles to help address social isolation and loneliness and ensure work on economic inclusion takes account of the greater proportion of older people in the population in addition to those with mental ill health, learning disabilities and those with long term conditions.
- 9 The HNA also forms a key part of the JSNA process in gathering and analysing information around the health and wellbeing needs of people aged 50 plus in County Durham.
- 10 The outcome of the HNA process has provided a list of key findings and recommendations. These will then be used to build an affiliated Action Plan that can be used to inform the actions of an Ageing Well Strategy Group. This group will aim to implement a system-wide approach to

address the needs of the County Durham 50-plus population to ensure healthy ageing in the future.

## **Recommendations**

- 11 Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:
  - (a) Note the contents of the Health Needs Assessment for Ageing Well.
  - (b) Endorse the recommendations in the Health Needs Assessment
  - (c) Champion the development of an Ageing Well Strategy Group to deliver on the recommendations and affiliated Action Plan across the wider system.

## Background

- 12 The parameters of this HNA focused on prevention and the concept of healthy ageing from age 50-plus. The HNA concentrated on the wider determinants of health such as social, behavioural, environmental, and economic determinants alongside the impact of the physical environment.
- 13 Healthy ageing is determined by a broad range of wider social factors such as finances and employment, caring responsibilities, long term conditions and their management, housing, social isolation and loneliness and ageism within society. Working across these wider determinants of health to enable health promotion and prevention activity across the life course, gives the best chance of improving wellbeing as people in County Durham age.
- 14 There is no formal or commonly accepted definition of older age. It could be argued that the process of ageing begins at birth however, pragmatically this would lead the focus of the HNA to become too wide. Other datasets consider over 65 as older age. The focus of this HNA was to look at how people who are approaching older age can be better supported, to ensure when they reach their advanced years their health and wellbeing is improved and they are able to live well for longer.
- 15 The HNA therefore, considered the population of people aged 50 plus in County Durham. This allowed people to be followed through the full spectrum of advancing age in order to identify opportunities to influence healthy ageing across the later lifespan. The public health scope of the project was on the next generation of older people, addressing the years before people become frail and require care pathways.
- 16 The HNA covered a wide range of topics, and the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework was used to provide the parameters and structure for the process to be undertaken.
- 17 The Age-Friendly Cities Framework looks at the determinants of ageing including economic determinants, health and social services, behavioural determinants, personal determinants, physical environment and social determinants. It aims to aid a shift in thinking away from the deficits and issues experienced by older people and towards a different language and culture around ageing. It enables thinking to be widened beyond services in order to look at what it means to age-healthily as a whole system.
- 18 The eight priority themes to become age friendly as defined by the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework are:
  - (a) Information and Advice
  - (b) Transport

- (c) Respect and Social Isolation
- (d) Social participation
- (e) Housing and neighbourhoods
- (f) Outdoor spaces and buildings
- (g) Economic activity and civil engagement
- (h) Health and wellbeing

## **What is a Health Needs assessment?**

- 19 A HNA is a systematic approach to understanding the needs of a population. This includes determining whether certain groups appear more prone to illness and vulnerabilities than others and pinpointing any inequalities in terms of access to support, service provision and health and wellbeing outcomes. This HNA provides a list of key findings and recommendations which will be used to inform a proposed Ageing Well Strategy Group to implement a system-wide approach to address the health and wellbeing needs of the 50-plus population.
- 20 The methodology and process used in the HNA included;
- a pragmatic literature review to provide a critical assessment of the research evidence available on ageing well
  - quantitative findings and qualitative findings via national and local data and stakeholder feedback to explore understanding of the population's beliefs attitudes and experiences.
  - key themes from within the data.
  - recommendations formed from using the above evidence

## **Local Context**

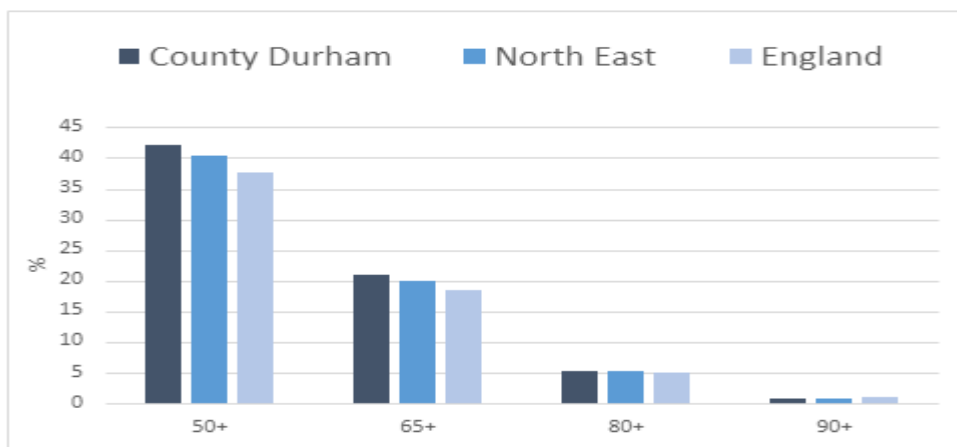
- 21 The population of County Durham is ageing due to people living longer. The number of older people in the population is expected to increase over the coming years. There is no concrete definition of 'older people' but much of the available data begins at age 65.
- 22 As people live into older age, they are more likely to develop long term conditions and become frail. The recommendations from the HNA will enable system-wide partners to consider a range of approaches to ensure that as people age they can live healthier lives for longer.

## **The over 50's population in Durham**

- 23 There are currently 110,000 people aged 65 and over in County Durham and this is projected to increase by a further 31% by 2035.

24 According to the latest available data there are 224,063 people aged over 50 in County Durham. As a percentage of its' population, County Durham has higher numbers of people aged over 50 and over 65 than the North East and England. There are similar numbers of people aged 80 plus and 90 plus compared to the North East and England. This will impact on future local infra-structure and service provision, requiring informed planning in advance to address the demands placed on the system by an ageing population. This will also help to reduce inequalities in the process.

**Figure 1:** The numbers of people aged 50 plus, 65 plus, 80 plus 90 plus (as a percentage of the total population) in County Durham, the North East and England. Source: Office for National Statistics Mid-2019 Population Estimates.



## Life Expectancy

- 25 Life expectancy can be defined as the average number of years that a person lives before death. Life expectancy provides an important measure of the overall health of the County Durham population and helps to identify health inequalities between County Durham and other local authority areas and between areas within County Durham itself.
- 26 Men living in County Durham have an average life expectancy of 77.7 years compared to the England average of 79.4 years. Women in Durham have an average life expectancy of 81.2 years compared to the England average of 83.1 years. This gives a gap in life expectancy between County Durham and England of 1.7 years (2.2%) for men and 1.9 years (2.2%) for women. This gap has not changed significantly over time.
- 27 In County Durham the life expectancy had been slowly improving however, the figures for 2018-2020 show a decline. Female life expectancy fell from a high of 81.8 in 2017-2019 to 81.2 in 2018-2020

and male life expectancy decreased from 78.3 years in 2017-2019 to 77.7 years in 2018-2020. This decline is primarily due to the increase in deaths in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic which disproportionately affected older age groups.

## **Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE)**

- 28 Life expectancy only tells part of the story. As people in County Durham live longer it is important that there is an understanding of if these additional years are spent in good health or in poor health i.e. what is the quality of life like in these years?
- 29 Healthy life expectancy provides us with an estimate of the amount of the lifetime that is spent in good or very good health (according to both mortality rates and self-reported measures of good health.) It is therefore an important measure of both mortality and morbidity.
- 30 In contrast to life expectancy male and female healthy life expectancy in County Durham are not significantly different but both remain significantly lower than the England Average.
- 31 The HLE at birth for men in County Durham is 59.6 years compared to the England average of 63.2 years. For women in County Durham in 2017-2019 HLE was 58.3 (decreased from 60 years in 2009-2010) compared to the England average of 63.5 years.
- 32 The HNA provides an opportunity to benchmark data for both life and healthy-life expectancy in County Durham and once agreed, monitor any positive outcomes delivered through an Ageing Well Strategy that aims to enhance both the quantity and quality of life for those aged 50-plus.

## **HNA Key Findings**

- 33 The HNA process has engaged a partnership approach to undertake the assessment of need for those aged 50-plus in County Durham. The HNA has collated both qualitative and quantitative data and enlisted the help of local residents to provide first-hand information about the eight topic areas highlighted in the Age-Friendly Cities Framework.
- 34 It is important to note that carers, dementia and learning disabilities were not within scope for this HNA as bespoke workstreams, but action has been recommended to ensure they are retained as priority areas for future assessment processes as is appropriate.
- 35 The key findings are presented below. Information pertaining to the specific actions generated by the HNA as part of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework can be found in Appendix 2.

### ***Information and Advice***

- 36 Availability of information for older people and the importance of having a central source of information on ageing well.
- 37 Qualitative feedback also identified the need to consider not only if digital information is accessible but also the need to consider the needs of those that choose to not access information digitally.

### ***Transport***

- 38 The need for transport information and services to be accessible to older people especially those living in rural areas.

### ***Respect and Social Isolation***

- 39 The importance of viewing ageing in a positive light, and the effects of covid on social isolation and anti-social behaviour.

### ***Social participation***

- 40 The role of co-production, intergenerational activity and volunteering and health literacy in increasing social participation in those aged over 50.

### ***Housing and neighbourhoods***

- 41 The availability of suitable local housing close to family members.
- 42 Specific support for older tenants.

### ***Outdoor spaces and buildings***

- 43 The importance of making outdoor spaces and buildings 'age-friendly'
- 44 Combatting anti-social behaviour
- 45 Considering the needs of older people specifically when tackling climate change.

### ***Economic activity and civil engagement***

- 46 The effects of the rising costs of living and fuel poverty on people aged over 50 in County Durham.
- 47 Employment difficulties for older people specifically.

### ***Health and wellbeing***

- 48 Helping people with long-term conditions to live their lives in better health



- 49 Need for services (e.g. sexual health, stop smoking and domestic violence) to meet the needs of people aged over 50

## **HNA Recommendations**

- 50 The key findings presented above have been used to formulate recommendations for the proposed Ageing Well Strategy Group. These have been developed from the evidence presented in the HNA, stakeholder feedback, conversations with stakeholders and wider reading.
- 51 Further consultation with communities, by way of co-production, will be undertaken as the Ageing Well Strategy is developed to ensure that this fits with what people would like to see. The approach to the new Ageing Well Strategy will incorporate the approach to wellbeing principles.
- 52 The key recommendations are set out in line with the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework with affiliated actions include:
- (a) Implement an Ageing Well Strategic Group representing partners from across Durham County Council, Primary and Secondary Care, Mental Health, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), building upon representation found within the current HNA Steering Group. A co-chair arrangement between Durham County Council and wider partners will ensure an Ageing Well Strategy and an affiliated action plan can be implemented within an agreed timeframe.
  - (b) The Ageing Well Strategy should work to reduce ageism and stigmatisation towards older people. This will help influence a cultural shift towards older people being viewed as valuable assets to the community who provide positive contributions to wider society.
  - (c) Recognise areas highlighted, but not specifically targeted, with in this HNA that may require further bespoke work to provide insight into the needs of the associated communities i.e Carers, Dementia and Learning Disabilities. The need for in-depth reviews of the health needs of carers and dementia should be raised with County Durham Carers, the Mental Health Strategic Partnership and the Durham, Darlington and Teesside NHS Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Partnership.
  - (d) Increase the availability of data at the 50 plus age-group level in order to recognise the diversity within the cohort and develop a baseline to identify which groups are benefitting from current provision of approaches and interventions, and to target future work accordingly.

- (e) Develop Public Health Guidance on key areas identified within the HNA to consider under the Age Section on any equality impact assessments, or comprehensive assessments undertaken across the wider system.
- (f) These over-arching key recommendations are supported with further actions cited under the eight priority area themes of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework.

53 As above, information pertaining to the specific actions generated by the HNA as part of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework for further consideration by the Ageing Well Strategy Group can be found in Appendix 2.

### **Background papers**

- County Durham Ageing Well Health Needs Assessment

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## Appendix 1: Implications

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**Legal Implications** - none

**Finance** – all recommendations and action points made by the HNA will help to inform future commissioning intentions

**Consultation** – undertaken as part of the HNA process. Further consultation and co-production methodology will be implemented to help develop the Ageing Well Strategy.

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** – the impact on ageing in BAME communities and those within vulnerable groups has been considered as part of the HNA process to ensure inequalities within population groups are highlighted.

**Climate Change** – the impact of extreme weather and access to green spaces has for the ageing population has been considered as part of the HNA process.

**Human Rights** – the Council of Europe Report (2017) - Human Rights of older persons and their comprehensive care, highlights that older people continue to suffer from negative stereotypes that lead to discrimination, isolation and exclusion. The data considered by the HNA and consultation process undertaken with older people will provide information to help inform future processes to help reduce ageism and inequalities impacting on age groups for the 50-plus cohort.

**Crime and Disorder** – the impact of the fear of crime on those who are 50-plus has been considered within this HNA process.

**Staffing** - none

**Accommodation** – impact of appropriate housing and accommodation for older people has been considered by the HNA.

**Risk** - none

**Procurement** – none to date

## Appendix 2: WHO Age-Friendly Cities Framework

### Actions for further consideration as part of the proposed Ageing Well Strategy and affiliated Action Plan.

#### Information and Advice

Action	Who for?	How to implement
Champion the availability of information within a range of formats on services appropriate for older people, reflecting the expressed need of the client cohort. e.g. development of the Community Book should include access to a range of materials for easy access to information at a geographical level.	Durham County Council via County Durham Together  Primary Care Networks  VCSE  Business Durham  Community Champions/ Community Connectors	Utilise co-production methods in development of information tools as part of the Digital Strategy and e.g. Community Book.       All partners across the system to take a role in ensuring all information and advice is accessible across the life course.
Take into consideration views of stakeholders to confirm the naming of the Ageing Well Strategy.	Public Health	Review qualitative data to identify options for the naming of the new strategy and seek further co-production to finalise this.

#### 2. Transport

Action	Who for?	How to implement
Collect up to date data on transport and active travel for the over 50s population and consider	Neighbourhoods – Planning and Traffic.	Ensure public health input into local transport

the needs of older people in cycling and walking route planning.	Public Health Intelligence  Whole System  Research and Public Health Intelligence  Wider System Partners	teams to help monitor the data.
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### 3. Respect and Social Isolation

Action	Who for?	How to implement
County Durham Together to take a lead role in promoting positive self-perceptions of ageing and building social capital to address broader societal attitudes across the County	County Durham Together  Communications department – to consider campaign to promote health and wellbeing of older people	Co-production with communities and other stakeholders from across the system to develop insight on narrative to be used.
Improve our understanding of distribution and trends in social isolation and loneliness post covid	Public Health  NHS  VCSE – including Age UK  Research and Public Health Intelligence	Ageing Well Strategy Group to consider collation of data from system-wide partners including LA, NHS, VCSE and Business Durham.

### 4. Social participation

Action	Who for?	How to implement
Add to the evidence base for Community	Wider System partners	Using academic links to publish Evaluations

<p>Interventions to engage with the ageing population embedding a true co-production approach.</p>		<p>from local interventions and share our learning.</p> <p>Collect data on volunteering from LA, NHS, VCSE to help shape health promotion strategies around community participation.</p> <p>Wider dissemination of the Wellbeing Approach.</p>
<p>Assess health literacy levels of older people and ensure that health and wellbeing information is accessible across the life course.</p>	<p>Research and Public Health Intelligence</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>Communications department.</p> <p>Wider System Partners – including wellbeing for life and Ways to Wellbeing.</p> <p>Community Champions</p>	<p>Strategies for displaying appropriate, easy read information and alternative ways of accessing this for older people who do not use the internet.</p>
<p>Examine current provision of inter-generational and volunteering activity across County Durham.</p>	<p>Local authority</p> <p>NHS</p> <p>VCSE</p> <p>Business Durham</p>	<p>Via the Ageing Well Strategic Group to examine current provision and to recognise the importance of volunteering activity as a replacement for social participation in a work environment.</p>

## 5. Housing and neighbourhoods

Action	Who for?	How to implement
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Diversification of housing stock to meet the needs of residents of County Durham across the Life Course highlighted in the County Durham Plan	Public Health Housing/Planning Housing Solutions Housing providers	Underway as part of Housing Strategy.
Link with private and social landlords to support tenants as they age.	Local Authority Public Health Housing Solutions Housing providers.	Adaptation of current properties to enable people to stay in their own homes for longer and closer to friends/family.

## 6. Outdoor spaces and buildings

Action	Who for?	How to implement
Ensure the needs of older people are considered when identifying the Public Health role around climate change.	Public Health	Inclusive planning to include older people.  Age related profiles to be taken into account in the Extreme Weather Plans for older people and those with vulnerabilities.  Information and education on climate change in accessible formats.
Inclusion of accessibility and age-proofing in any regeneration plans across County Durham including reducing the fear of crime in older residents.	Local authority – County Durham together to include: AAP's, Regen team, CAT team, Neighbourhood Wardens,  Public Health	Recognition of the needs of older populations across the system at a place-based level – using data and local insight.

	<p>Police</p> <p>Fire and rescue Service</p> <p>VCSE</p>	
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## 7. Economic Activity and Civil Engagement

Action	Who for?	How to implement
Develop age-related measures of poverty to better understand need at age 50 plus.	<p>Poverty Action Group</p> <p>Local Authority – including Welfare Rights, Warm Homes team</p> <p>Research and Public Health Intelligence</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>NHS</p> <p>VCSE</p>	<p>Assess the impact of the increased cost of living on saving for retirement.</p> <p>Explore means to further address fuel poverty.</p> <p>Maximise information available for both financial support and support to re-enter the workplace.</p> <p>Inclusive Economic Strategy to include an older people's theme.</p>
Encourage employers to value an age diverse workforce and ensure flexible working and accessible training is available for all age groups.	<p>Better Health at Work</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>Economic regen</p> <p>Business Durham</p>	<p>Targeted and individualised employment support for older age groups including re-training.</p> <p>Utilise links with Business Durham, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Partnership. Large employers such as DCC and the NHS in County Durham to lead</p>



		by example in connection with Anchor institution work across the County.
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## 8. Health and Wellbeing

Action	Who for?	How to implement
To determine where Dementia sits within the Ageing Well Agenda	Discussion between Local Authority  NHS – CDDFT, TEWV and PCN's  Public Health	Via new Ageing Well Strategy Group
Ensure the Ageing Well Strategy supports the ambition for people with Long Term Conditions to live a good quality of life.	Local Authority  NHS  VCSE  Public Health  All via Integrated Care Partnership	Secondary prevention which allows for person-centred care and Support  Interrogate the NHS Health Checks data set with an Ageing Well lens.
Undertake auditing activity to ensure that Public Health commissioned services are accessible to and meeting the needs of older people including MH Alliance, Stop Smoking, Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service, Sexual Health, Domestic Abuse Services, screening, vaccination and immunisation.	MH Alliance  Stop Smoking Service  Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service  Sexual Health Service  Better Health at Work Award.	Develop an increased understanding of health needs of this group.  Develop indicators that allow for analysis against age range in order to understand current demand.

<p>Link to wider system work across Ageing Well e.g. Frailty and Enhanced Care in Care Homes.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>Initially through the new Ageing Well Group formed from the membership of the Ageing Well HNA Steering Group.</p>
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