

Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28

*Vision: County Durham is a healthy place,
where people live well for longer*



Better for everyone

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Our Vision

Our vision is that **County Durham is a healthy place, where people live well for longer**

Our strategic approach across County Durham is to work together to:

- Put people at the heart of everything we do and work with communities in the decisions that affect them
- Ensure place (County Durham) remains at the forefront of our actions and delivery of this strategy
- Maintain focus across the life course, from starting well, through living well, to ageing well, in our four priority areas
- Build upon what we already have and what works well
- Continue to implement the Approach to Wellbeing
- Draw on evidence to help us decide where our money is spent, and where possible spend money on trying to stop problems before they happen
- Learn lessons from what we have done in the past, when things have worked well and when things have not worked well
- Tackle unfair difference in health and wider contributing factors so everyone has the best chance of good health
- Work together with the key leads to make sure they do what they say they will around delivery of the JLHWS
- Invest in projects which will have a positive impact on our priority areas
- Work together across the whole system to make it easy to access advice and support.

Enablers

These are the things that will help us achieve our vision:

- A sustainable workforce with good physical and mental wellbeing
- Clear communication with the public and staff across the system
- Using the [Approach to Wellbeing](#) focusing on **how** we work with communities
- Adopt a family focus in all our work
- Strong and robust governance
- Using data and evidence from local conversations to influence our decisions
- Build and make best use of our evidence base
- Make sure partners use the 'making every contact count' approach

What difference can we expect to see

- **Tobacco** - Reduction in the percentage of people who smoke to 5% by 2030
- **Healthy weight** - Increase the proportion of children who are a healthy weight
- **Mental Health:** Improvement in mental health measures
- **Alcohol:** Increase in the numbers of adults and young people suffering from drink dependency, who are in treatment

County Durham Wellbeing Principles

The County Durham Approach to Wellbeing uses seven principles to help us focus on the key role that people, families and communities play in supporting health and wellbeing.



The infographic is a blue-themed graphic with white clouds at the top. It is organized into two columns under the headings 'People and Places' and 'Supporting Systems'. Each column contains three principle boxes. At the bottom, there is an illustration of a diverse group of people, including a woman with a baby, a man, a woman with a cane, and a man in a wheelchair, next to a final principle box.

People and Places	Supporting Systems
Empowering communities working with communities to support their development and empowerment	Working better together working together across sectors to reduce duplication and ensure greater impact
Being asset focused acknowledging the different needs of communities and the potential of their assets	Sharing decision making designing and developing services and initiatives with the people who need them
Building resilience helping the most disadvantaged and vulnerable and building up their future resilience	Doing with, not to making our interventions empowering and centred around you as an individual
	Using what works everything we do is supported by evidence informed by local conversations

Drivers of differences in health outcomes (Inequalities and Wider Determinants of Health)

What has the biggest influence on lives being cut short?



McGinnis, J.M., Williams-Russo, P. and Knickman, J.R. (2002) cited in The King's Fund (n.d.). Time to Think Differently. Broader determinants of health: future trends. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/time-think-differently/trends-broader-determinants-health> (Accessed: 9 March 2023).

- We often think of health as being defined by access to and quality of health care. While this is of course really important, it accounts for as little as **15%** of the health and wellbeing of a population. The Joint Committee is directly responsible for health and social care services in County Durham. The Joint Committee is a subgroup of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Behavioural risk factors, such as what we eat, how often we are physically active, whether we smoke or drink alcohol (and if so, how much), all have a huge effect on our state of health and wellbeing. It remains, however, that achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can be challenging for many within our population – and it is not just down to individual choice. Decisions about food, exercise, smoking, and drugs and alcohol use, are often influenced by other factors such as:
 - Family and social networks
 - Education
 - Poverty
 - Culture

These healthy behaviours/risk factors' account for **40%** of our health and wellbeing. The Health and Wellbeing Board has oversight and influence over these behavioural risk factors.

- The conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age have a greater impact on health outcomes. These are known as the ‘wider determinants’, which help to build good health, and account for approximately 45% of our health and wellbeing.

Unfair distribution of these wider determinants, such as good education, employment, the safety of our neighbourhoods, the quality of our homes and our environment and climate, can result in avoidable and unfair differences in health between different groups of people – or health inequalities

Rates of some of the risk factors for ill health are all negatively associated with poverty. Simply put, some of our residents and families with the least money in their pockets are likely to live in poorer health, and die earlier, than those who have more money

Action to address these wider causes of poor health and avoidable health inequalities is essential if we are to achieve our vision that *County Durham is a healthy place where people live well for longer*. Our other strategic partnerships, and their plans, which focus on things such as poverty, employment, education, safety of our neighbourhoods, the quality of our homes and the environment we live in, play a key role which will support improving and protecting people’s health by ensuring good health is a key factor in these plans. These plans include but are not limited to the:

- Inclusive Economic Strategy
 - Safe Durham Partnership Plan
 - Growing Up in County Durham Strategy
 - Poverty Action Plan
 - County Durham Housing Strategy
 - Environment and Climate Change Partnership Plan
- We also need to uncover and promote other factors that protect and build health and wellbeing. Many of these are at a family and community level and include community life, social connections and having an equal voice in local decisions. Clearly, preventing poor health and tackling the wider determinants in a meaningful way requires system-wide action across a range of partners, including those for which health is not their primary focus.

Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JSNAA)

The JSNAA in County Durham is an evidence base that builds a picture of the health, care and wellbeing needs of local people and communities, based on a range of data and analysis.

The JSNAA informs our plans and strategies, which allows the council and partners to plan and buy services to meet the needs that have been identified.

It is important that we also understand what we already have available to support good health in communities. These are what we call assets, strengths, or protective factors. Things that can support good health are things like buildings, facilities and services as well as people and families who live, work and volunteer in communities, with their skills, knowledge, social networks, and relationships.

This combined view of both needs and assets builds on our [Approach to Wellbeing](#) and allows us to build a better picture of health, care and wellbeing, for example, community networks, physical environment, economic resources, skills and knowledge (the evidence). This helps us to plan and work with communities to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of our residents. All this information can be found on [Durham Insight](#), our shared intelligence and local evidence base.

The information contained in our JSNAA helps us to compare County Durham to other parts of the region and the country, and to see what has been happening over time. This gives us a view of how well County Durham is doing, and where we need to do better. Our JSNAA includes intelligence on:

- the current and future health and wellbeing needs of local people
- wider social factors that have an impact on people's health and wellbeing, such as housing, poverty and employment
- the inequalities between County Durham and elsewhere, and also inequalities between communities in County Durham
- what is strong and good in our communities to support good health

The evidence in the JSNAA identifies the four priority areas of the Health and Wellbeing Board as being the biggest contributors to dying early and living in poor health or with illness: smoking, unhealthy weight, mental health and alcohol use.

We also need to work with our communities and partners to understand what underpins these factors, being clear in terms of what works and targeting our work and resources appropriately at those most in need. This will give us the best chance of bringing about change and reducing the unfair differences in outcomes we see currently.

Health and Wellbeing Board priorities

The Health and Wellbeing Board has chosen four priority areas of focus for 2023-28, which have been identified from the evidence base in the JSNAA. These are the biggest contributors to people in County Durham dying early, living in poor health or with illness.

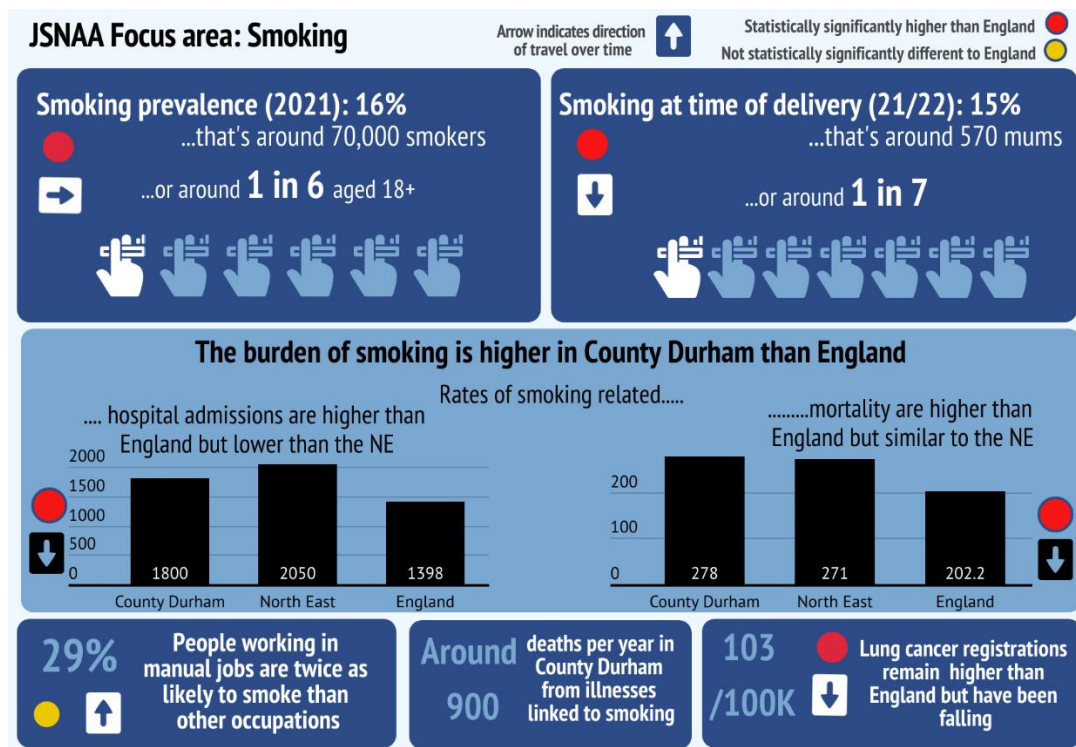
To achieve our overarching objective of **“Improve healthy life expectancy and reduce the gap within County Durham and between County Durham and England”** these are the priorities we need to focus on.

Leadership in each of the four priority areas will be through a formally established Partnership or Alliance, each of which will deliver against a high-level action plan.

1. Making smoking history

Why is this a priority?

- Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable deaths and one of the largest causes of unfair health differences in England
- Nationally, approximately 64,000 people are killed by smoking each year
- In County Durham, around 900 people die every year from smoking related illnesses
- Smoking harms continue to have the biggest impact on some of our residents with the least money in their pockets. When income and smoking costs are taken into account, over 25,000 households are driven into poverty each year
- Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, asthma and chronic lung disease
- Smoking in pregnancy impacts on the health of the mother, the unborn baby and wider family members by inhaling second hand smoke. In County Durham we have higher numbers of women who smoke while they are pregnant than the national average
- In County Durham over 41,000 children live in households with adults who smoke, and this not only damages their health but increases their chance of becoming smokers themselves
- In the UK 207,000 children start smoking each year. Among adults who smoke 2 in 3 reported that they started smoking before the age of 18 with 75% regretting ever starting smoking in the first place
- In County Durham there are approximately 69,000 people who continue to smoke, 16% of the adult population – and this is higher than the national average



In County Durham we use the eight-strand approach supported by Fresh North East, the tobacco control office, and we will work towards making smoking history through the Tobacco Control Alliance, by focusing on the following key priorities:

- All partners using an evidence-based approach to reducing smoking prevalence in County Durham
- Motivating and supporting smokers to stop and stay stopped
- Reducing the demand and supply of illegal tobacco products, increasing price and addressing the supply of tobacco to children

This ambition is driven by a vision to achieve a tobacco-free generation and requires around 60,000 smokers in County Durham to quit by 2030.

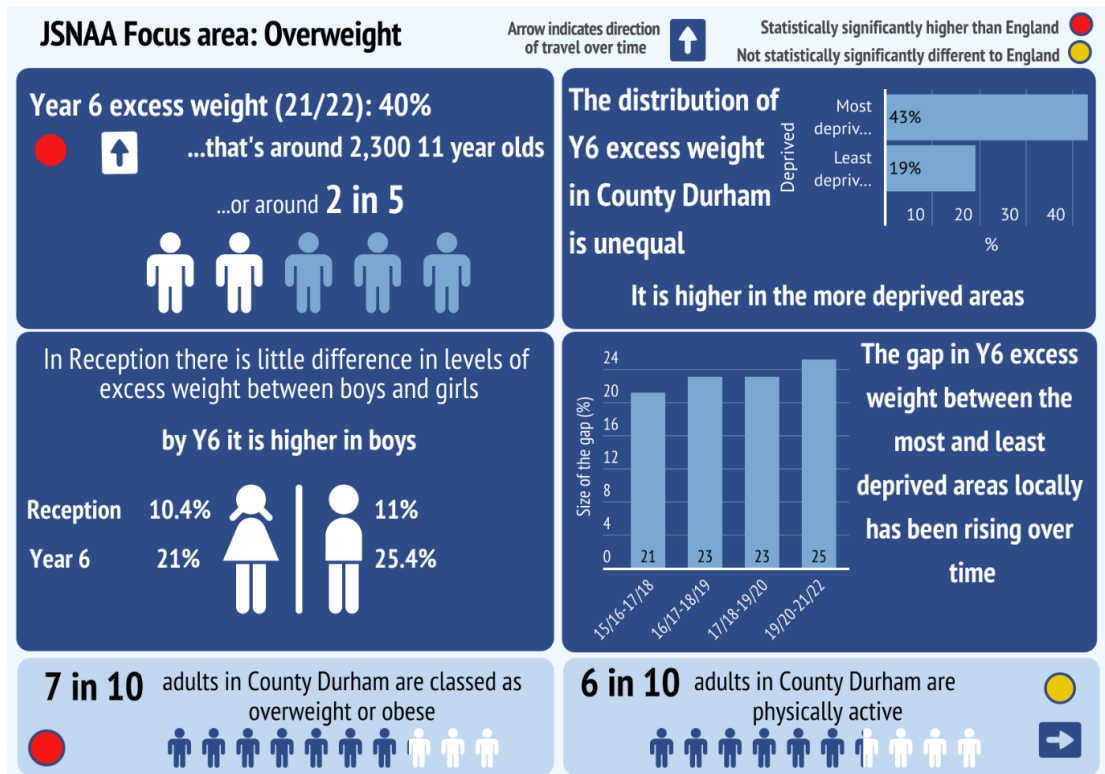
What difference we can expect to see in these areas across the life of the JLHWS (2028)

- Reduction in the number of people smoking to 5% by 2030
- Reduction in the number of hospital admission episodes for diseases related to smoking
- Continued reduction of smoking related deaths
- Reduction in the proportion of mothers smoking at time of delivery
- Significant move towards:
 - Being smoke free
 - Age of sale increase
 - Fairer access to stop smoking services to help those who need them, to use them

2. Enabling healthy weight for all

Why is this a priority?

- What we eat has a big impact on our health, and being overweight or very overweight can lead to significant issues across the life course and into old age
- Being overweight is linked to a wide range of preventable diseases including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some cancers
- One in five children are overweight or very overweight when they start school, rising to one in three children when they leave primary school. Not only does this increase the risk of becoming overweight in adulthood, but it increases the risk of ill-health and dying early in adult life
- There is a strong link between those who are overweight and some of our residents with the least money in their pockets
- BMI (Body Mass Index) is strongly associated with all deaths
- Depending on how severe it is, being very overweight can reduce life expectancy by an average of three to ten years
- We want to lessen the impact of advertising and the environment which tends to cause unhealthy weight, such as highly concentrated numbers of take aways
- We want to increase breastfeeding rates, as breastfeeding has significant health benefits for babies and their mothers, which include reducing a child's risk of being overweight or very overweight. In County Durham fewer women breastfeed than the England average



In County Durham we will work through the Healthy Weight Alliance, who will work with the Physical Activity Strategy Committee and the Food Partnership, to support people to achieve a healthy weight by focusing on the following key priorities:

- Improve the local food environment so that our residents are able to make more healthy choices
- Empower our residents to be more active in their daily lives by shifting the culture towards moving more, and making this an easy option
- Taking action to improve support and information so that residents are better informed and equipped to make healthier food choices

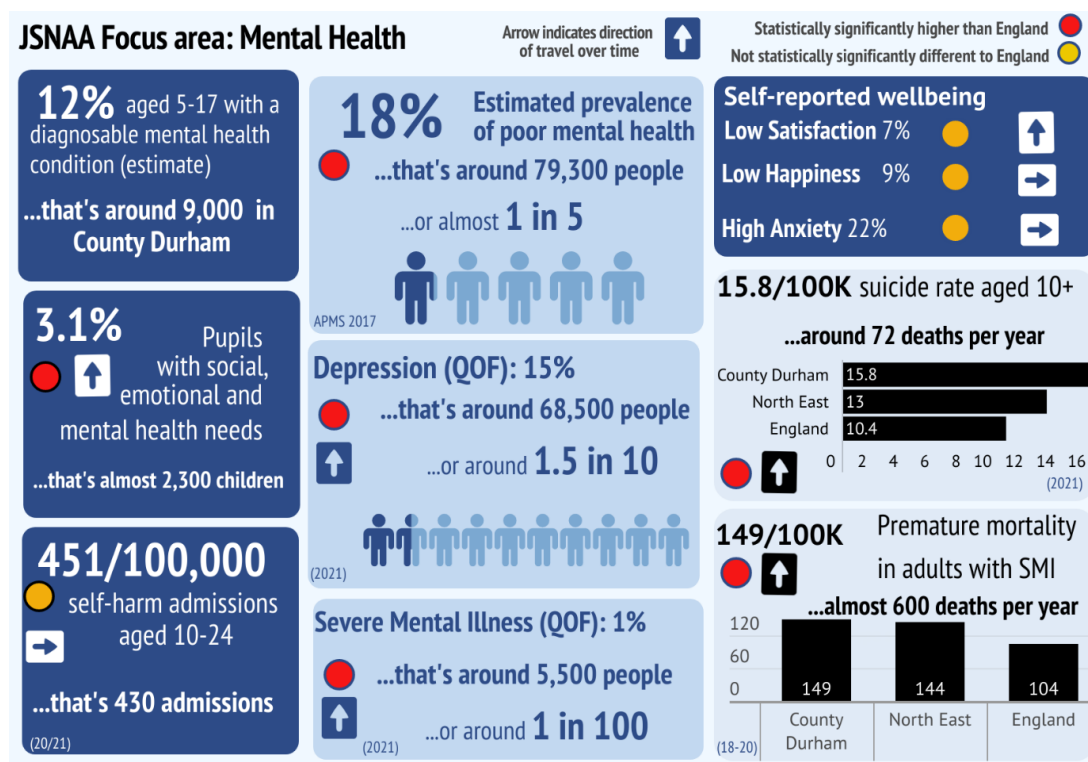
What difference we can expect to see in these areas across the life of the JLHWS (2028)

- Improved stakeholder engagement, where all services are committed to working together to increase levels of healthy weight
- A reduction in the access to and promotion of unhealthy food, with a focus on ensuring prevalence of hot food takeaways does not exceed the County Durham Plan threshold of 5%, and monitoring of the policy that restricts advertising of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar on Durham County Council platforms
- Increase the number of children who are a healthy weight
- Reduction in the proportion of adults who are overweight and obese
- Increase in the number of physically active children, young people and adults

3. Improving Mental Health, Resilience and Wellbeing

Why is this a priority?

- Mental and physical health are equally important parts of overall health, and can impact on each other
- Depression increases the risk of many types of physical health problems, particularly long-lasting conditions like heart disease, stroke and diabetes
- Poor mental health affects a high proportion of the population, of all ages and from all stages of life
- Its impacts are felt across society on family life, friends and relationships, education, finding work, working, caring for others, leisure pursuits and retirement
- Serious mental illness can cause people to die earlier than those who don't have a serious mental health issue
- Reduced levels of mental resilience, making it harder to recover from challenging events, is more likely to affect residents with the least money in their pockets, who were also worst hit by COVID
- Deaths by suicide have been rising over time across the North East including County Durham. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy affecting individuals, families and communities
- Children and young people are now more likely to have a mental health disorder compared with before the Covid-19 pandemic



In County Durham we will work together to improve mental health, resilience and wellbeing, through the Mental Health Strategic Partnership (MHSP), focusing on the following key priority areas:

- Improving the mental health of children and young people
- Suicide prevention
- Developing robust system responses for urgent and emergency mental health care
- Develop and implement a consistent dementia strategy
- Resilient communities
- Deliver and embed new transformed models of care for adults with serious mental health issues

The Mental Health Strategic Partnership are developing new approaches to improve everyone's mental health and to enable local residents to gain access to mental health support within their communities.

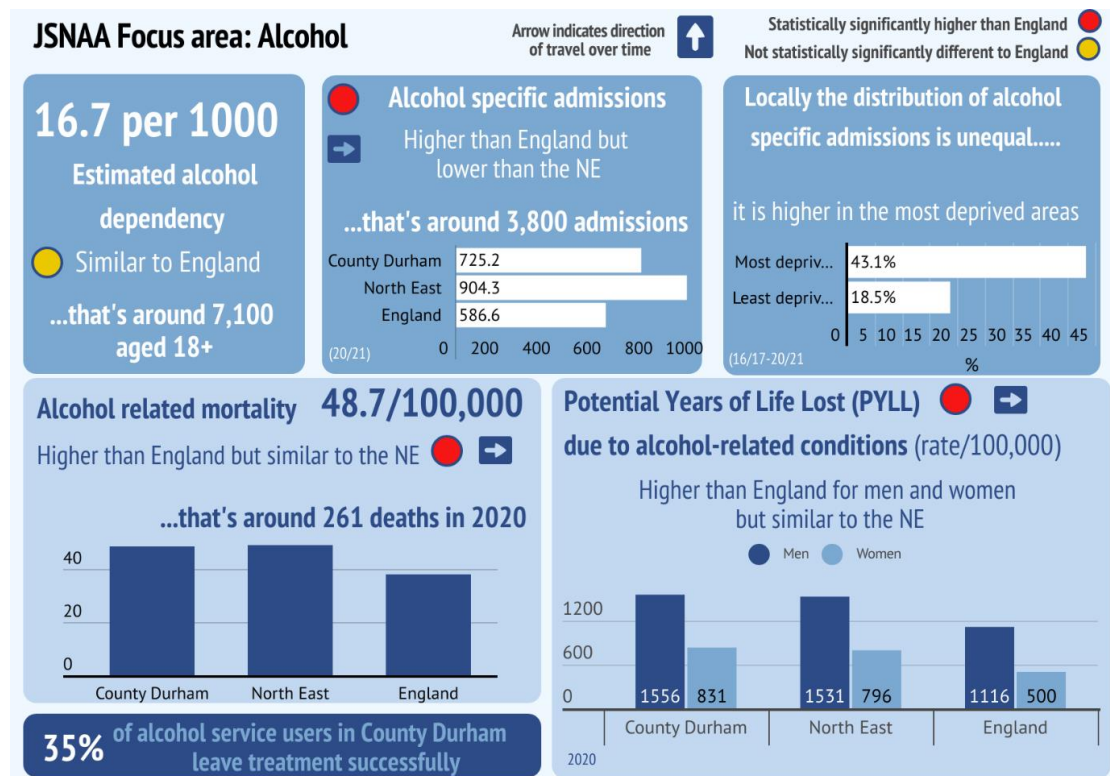
What difference we can expect to see in these areas across the life of the JLHWS (2028).

- Improvement in self-reported wellbeing
- Reductions in reported anxiety levels
- Reductions in depression levels
- Reductions in demand for specialist mental health services
- Reduction in suicide rates
- Increase in people reporting they can access the right help when they need it
- Reducing premature mortality for adults with Severe Mental Illness

4. Reducing Alcohol Harms

Why is this a priority?

- 2020 was the worst year on record for alcohol specific deaths nationally, with the rates being highest in the North East
- There has also been an increase in alcohol-deaths in County Durham, driven by a significant increase in alcoholic liver disease above levels seen before the pandemic
- Despite a decrease in the rates of alcohol-specific admissions to hospitals across the country during COVID, County Durham saw an increase in rates
- Increases in alcohol intake are linked to rises in domestic abuse, tension within the family home, antisocial behaviour and crime rates in communities
- This increases the negative impact and risk to children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Alcohol harms have the biggest impact on some of our residents with the least money in their pockets, which have also been worst hit by COVID
- An estimated 80% of those who are alcohol dependent in County Durham do not access specialist alcohol treatment services. This increases the numbers of people living with long term conditions, including heart disease, stroke and cancer



In County Durham we will work, through the Combating Drugs and Alcohol Strategic and Operational Partnerships, with the support of Balance, our alcohol control office for the North East, to reduce alcohol harms by focusing on the following key priorities:

- Use of an integrated evidence-based strategic approach to reducing alcohol harms in County Durham
- Motivating and supporting people to reduce alcohol intake and encourage those who are drink dependent to access support
- Promote an alcohol-free childhood for all children and young people
- Support minimum unit pricing and lobby for policy change

What difference we can expect to see in these areas across the life of the JLHWS (2028)

- Cultural and policy changes in relation to alcohol consumption
- Reduction in the number of hospital admission episodes for alcohol related incidents and disease
- Reduction of under 75 death rates from chronic liver disease
- Increase in the numbers of adults and young people suffering from drink dependency, who are in treatment
- An increase in successful completions from alcohol treatment
- A reduction in alcohol related anti-social behaviour and crime rates
- More children and young people have an alcohol-free childhood

Informing where we spend our time and money (influencing resources)

- In addition to ensuring the direct spend of the public health grant is used in ways which support delivery against our priorities, the JLHWS will seek to influence the use of resources, financial and otherwise, across the system to support delivery against the four priority areas.
- To maximise the use of NHS resources, the commissioning process will be underpinned by a needs-led approach with a strong focus on ongoing evaluation. Priorities will be determined against impact on reducing health inequalities, improving outcomes, and ensuring high quality service delivery. Where individual initiatives have limited impact, resource will be reinvested to ensure efficient and effective use of public funding. Co-production is embedded within commissioning as well as alignment of the wellbeing principles. In addition, system planning is focussed on longer term transformation, with a clear focus on prevention as well as ensuring sustainability of current service delivery.
- The JLHWS will also seek to influence to maximise the health gain achieved across the spend of every County Durham Pound, again focused on the four priority areas both across Durham County Council and with wider system partners. The County Durham Pound focuses on increasing wealth in the County as a determinant of health but also, seeking to ensure that what is commissioned and provided has a health promoting aspect, or 'health in all policies' approach to it. This could include further development of sustainable transport and action on climate change to maximising health benefits relating to planning applications and new developments, and principles such as community wealth building.
- Beyond financial resources, ensure the Approach to Wellbeing is adopted in decisions affecting resource allocation, for example through work with Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and communities to support the best use of community assets, human resources, expertise and time to guide and influence the focus of health improving activity.

Role of Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board will:

- Maintain a focus across the life course, from starting well through living well to ageing well in our four priority areas:
 - Making smoking history
 - Supporting people to achieve a healthy weight
 - Improving mental health, resilience and wellbeing
 - Reducing alcohol health harms

It will do this by:

- Receiving updates and assurance from the governance groups around our four priorities so the Health and Wellbeing Board can ensure our collective actions are having an impact on our priorities across County Durham
- Providing added value by holding others to account and supporting partners across the wider system with their agendas, and gaining assurance, for example, relating to health service commissioning and delivery, economic, environment, housing and planning impacts on health across the life course
- Strengthening the relationship with partners who will support the wider influences on health
- Having a health advocacy role by speaking up for our communities in relation to their health and wellbeing, and championing policy change

The Health and Wellbeing Board will also ensure their statutory role of governance around key pieces of work is fulfilled. Areas include:

- Health Protection Assurance
- Better Care Fund
- Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment
- Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment
- Transforming care
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Further information on the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board can be found here: <https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk/health-wellbeing-board/>