

*Our vision:*

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

**County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board  
Annual Report  
2022-23**

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Better for everyone

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If you would like more information about this report email [HWB@durham.gov.uk](mailto:HWB@durham.gov.uk)

## Welcome from Chair and Vice Chair

We are delighted to welcome you to our first annual report as Chair and Vice Chair of the County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board. This report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

In May 2022, the Health and Wellbeing Board functioned as the Local Outbreak Engagement Board for the Covid-19 pandemic for the last time and our ongoing activity in relation to Covid-19 is now incorporated into our wider Health Protection arrangements. As a Board we remain conscious of the way the pandemic has increased the differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society, and we continue to focus our efforts to address these.

Partners continue to spread the message across the wider County Durham Partnership about the impact of wider social and economic factors on our health, influencing developments in Housing, advising local businesses, and informing economic and climate strategy. It is estimated that the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age account for approximately 45% of our health and wellbeing. 40% of our health and wellbeing is attributable to healthy behaviours such as what we eat and drink, our use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, and whether we are physically active; with the other 15% dependent on health and social care services.

In July the Integrated Care Board was formally implemented and we have drawn on our strong partnership structures to work within the new health and social care system and progress our integrated working arrangements. The Health and Wellbeing Board will continue to provide a powerful voice for Durham residents as the County Durham Local Plan is developed over the coming months.

This report brings to a close the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25, which focussed on six objectives over the life course. Whilst Covid-19 has stalled some of the progress made nationally, we have continued to deliver against Starting Well, Living Well and Ageing Well under difficult circumstances. In March we agreed a new approach for the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-28, focussed on tackling the four biggest contributors to poor health - smoking, alcohol, mental wellbeing, and excess weight - which will provide a clear message and focussed approach for strategic decision makers, commissioners, frontline staff, and the wider County Durham Partnership to make a real difference.



**Cllr Chris Hood**

Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board  
Portfolio Holder for Adult & Health Services  
Durham County Council



**Michael Laing**

Vice Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board  
Director of Integrated Community Services  
County Durham Care Partnership

## 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 and Assets Assessment (JSNAA)

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) enables Durham County Council and the NHS to assess the current and future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local community to inform local decision making, including providing intelligence and insight about County Durham's population and the wider factors affecting health, wellbeing, and social care needs.

Using what we learned from the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of partnership working, integrated data, and led by our Approach to Wellbeing, we are refreshing the County Durham JSNA to incorporate the wider factors (Assets) impacting our health, and the protective factors and strengths across communities.

The refreshed Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JSNAA) is a continuous process, providing refreshed, timely and in-depth data to inform forthcoming strategies across the County Durham Partnership, champion prevention and population health as important strategic issues and influence organisations, partners and commissioners in allocating resources where they can have maximum impact.

This year we have completed a Health Impact Assessment of the County Durham Plan, to maximise the positive and minimise the negative impacts of new initiatives. A Veterans Health Needs Assessment and an Ageing Well Health Needs Assessment, developed in consultation with local people, help us to better understand and respond to the health needs of these groups.

### **County Durham Together**

The County Durham Together (CDT) Partnership is a relatively new partnership, which will be an asset to the Health and Wellbeing Board. CDT brings together partners from public, private and voluntary and community sectors to work together with communities, especially those most in need, making sure they are at the heart of decision making, building on their existing skills, knowledge, experience, and resources to support everyone to thrive and to live happy, healthy, and connected lives. The Partnership has set out several ambitions underpinned by the County Durham Approach to Wellbeing which will contribute to a reduction of differences in health and improve the wellbeing of our residents.

## County Durham Approach to Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing Board has continued to champion the County Durham Approach to Wellbeing and its implementation. The Wellbeing Approach is an evidence-based approach which can support us to build health and wellbeing of our local communities in the work that we do. It is based on seven Wellbeing Principles that are being embedded in many areas of work through tools such as the Approach to Wellbeing Self-Assessment Framework, a dedicated webpage and bespoke support for teams to identify and encourage further implementation.

Further information at: [Approach to Wellbeing \(countydurhampartnership.co.uk\)](https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk)



### **Case Study: Approach to Wellbeing and Public Health's Cree Network**

The County Durham Cree network is a community driven programme of small projects, set up and led by volunteers, supported by Durham County Council's Public Health and Durham Community Action through small grants and access to training and resources.

People can be referred to Cree groups by a range of partners and agencies. This network embodies the County Durham Wellbeing Principles and is a great example of how putting decisions in the hands of communities and supporting them to find solutions that work for them can be highly effective in achieving health outcomes.

***“Coordinating the network is all about helping Crees come together to work collaboratively and develop a shared culture of support and learning together, so that they can achieve these vital outcomes in our communities. The recent Members ‘Health & Wellbeing Survey’ showed a 38% reduction of thoughts of suicide, so it really does work”*** Susan Tron, Durham Community Action

### **Case Study: Approach to Wellbeing and the OPCC**

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) included a workshop in its recent whole team away day that introduced staff to the Wellbeing Principles and focused on ‘empowering communities’ and ‘sharing decision making’ through a workshop to establish the values and behaviours that mattered most to them.

Facilitated by the Approach to Wellbeing Implementation Officer, the consensus workshop created a space for all members of the team to contribute to a statement of values and behaviours. Following the workshop, the team suggested they would like to use this statement throughout their management and performance processes, and to inform their work both internally and externally.

Chief of Staff Andrea Petty said:

***“it was good to work through our thoughts about values and behaviours together and we’ve learnt more about each other as a team. I think it will help us to embed the Wellbeing Principles as we move forward in our One Team Approach”***



## 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.



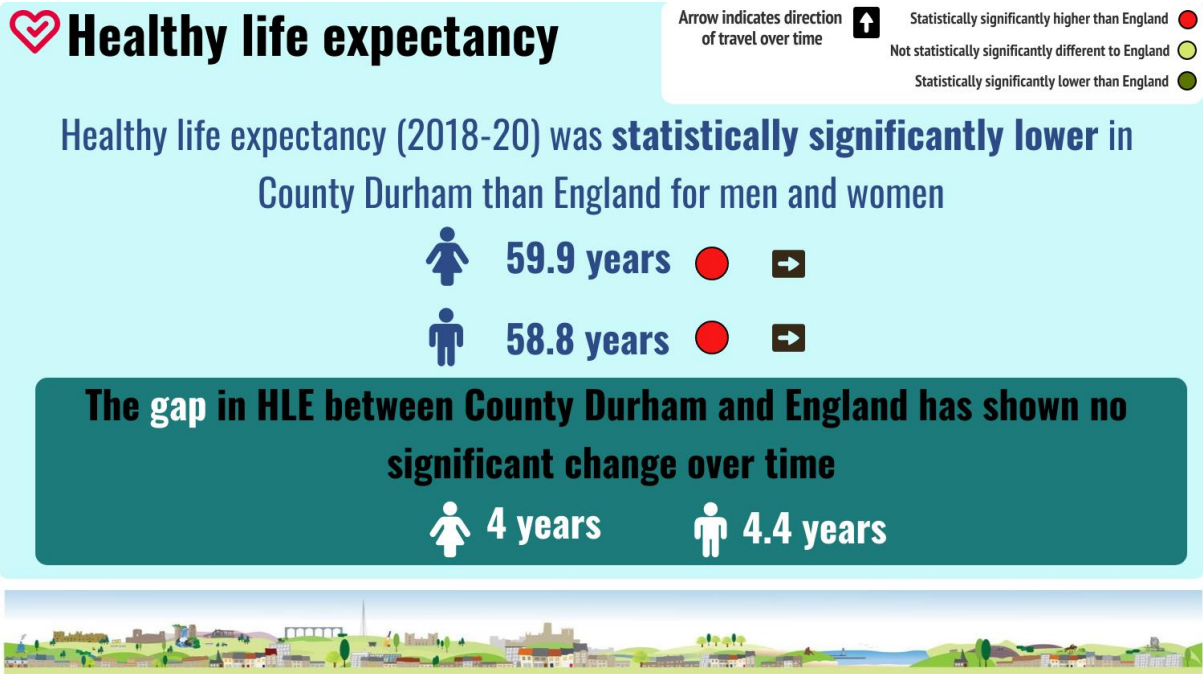
**Better for everyone**

## Performance monitoring

Monitoring performance against the JHWS is a key function of 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 on the trajectory of people's health and outline where we aim to be in 2025.

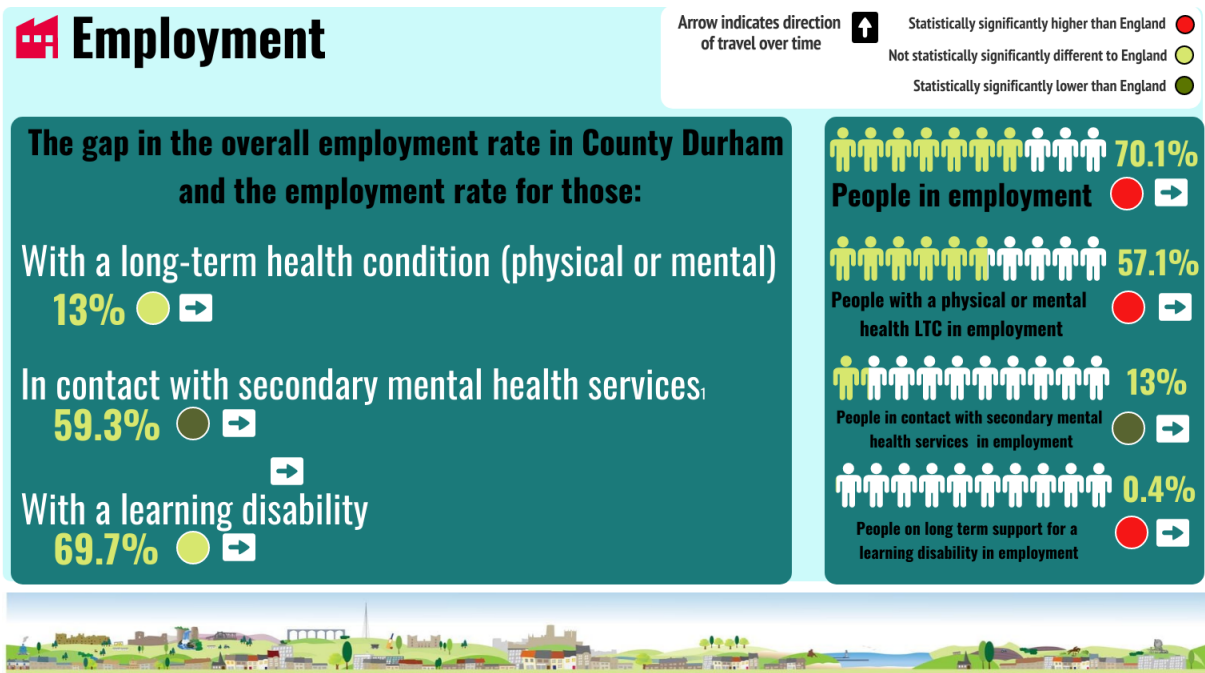
- **Improve healthy life expectancy and reduce the gap within County Durham and between County Durham and England.**



- 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.



## Healthy weight

Arrow indicates direction of travel over time



Statistically significantly higher than England

Not statistically significantly different to England

Statistically significantly lower than England

### Percentage of school children in County Durham who are of healthy weight:

**Reception: 75.5%** ● →

**Year 6: 59.2%** ● ↓

Three in Four Reception children are of healthy weight



in Year 6 it's around Two in Three



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

## Mental health and wellbeing

Arrow indicates direction of travel over time



Statistically significantly higher than England

Not statistically significantly different to England

Statistically significantly lower than England



### Mortality rate per 100,000 for suicide and injury undetermined (2019-21)



**15.8** ● ↑



**7.7** ● ↑



**24.2** ● ↑

The gap to between County Durham and England is rising for men and women

### Self-reported wellbeing (20/21)

7.4% Satisfaction



11% Happiness



20% Anxiety



- 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

**75 organisations now signed up** 

**40,000+ employees covered** 

**Durham County Council now holds 'Maintaining Excellence' status**



## Update on priority areas in 2022-23

### All priorities

#### Integrated Care System

The new Integrated Care System came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022, and County Durham is part of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board. The Health and Wellbeing Board reviewed and provided feedback on the Integrated Care Partnership Strategy prior to its launch.



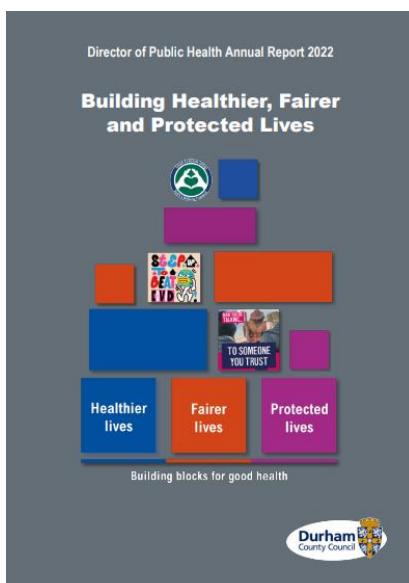
The Health and Wellbeing Board receives regular updates on the challenges, systems, integrated processes, and priorities and will be involved in developing the County Durham local plan.

#### Director of Public Health (DPH) Annual Report: Building Healthier, Fairer and Protected Lives

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.

Over the last year the County Durham Public Health Strategic Plan has been reviewed and reshaped to align to three themed areas of work:

- **Healthier:** Having and promoting a healthier population.
- **Fairer:** Improving health across the whole life course, access to good quality health services and those wider services that also have an impact on population health while reducing population health inequalities and inequities.
- **Protected:** Protecting the health of our communities against communicable disease, domestic abuse, tobacco, drugs, and alcohol that can cause severe harm and plan for future emergencies.



The [Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022](#) introduces the concept of 'building blocks' of good health, including how much money we have, the quality of the house we live in, the natural environment surrounding us, our access to transport, education and work and their impact on our chances of living a long and healthy life. Our response to Covid-19 continues and the report provides an update on our transition to living with Covid-19, the impact of which cannot be underestimated.

Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable deaths and one of the largest causes of health inequalities and remains a key priority for the health of our local residents. This year's report includes an in-depth focus on the progress to make smoking history in County Durham.



The County Durham Care Partnership (CDCP) sits within the governance structure of the HWB. The collaborative approach of the CDCP Forum brings together health and social care and voluntary organisations to help to develop place-based integration, which will avoid unnecessary admissions to acute care, giving people better outcomes and maximising the available resources.

This year the Forum has considered Children and Young People's Mental Health and specifically the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as links between Housing and Health.



### Community Pharmacy Services and the 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 September 2022.

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

There is a network of 124 community pharmacies in County Durham, delivering a range of services to their patients, in addition to their core role of dispensing medicines, supporting people to manage their own health and wellbeing within their own communities. 84% of adults visit a pharmacy every year and 90% of the population can walk to a pharmacy within 20 minutes.

### Health Protection annual assurance

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

Significant work has been undertaken this year to secure the restoration and sustained recovery of screening and immunisation programmes following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and work continues to address areas where low uptake rates remain. Local data, community engagement, and community assets are being utilised to address unwarranted variation in vaccine delivery and uptake. These include the autumn winter Covid-19 and flu vaccination campaign, and an innovative

pilot project delivering vaccinations within the nursery to raise uptake rates amongst 2-3year olds.

### **Case study: Horden Nursery School flu clinic**

In December 2022 Horden Nursery School welcomed the opportunity to hold a 2-3 year old flu clinic on site within the nursery. We were part of a pilot project within County Durham where vaccinations were delivered within nurseries in parts of the County where uptake rates were consistently low in a drive to increase vaccinations. We worked closely with the Early Years team in Durham County Council, Public Health, ICB Place and Durham Dales Health Federation.

Having the clinic in nursery provided us with the opportunity to talk positively to the parents and children to alleviate any concerns, talk about the benefits of the vaccine, what was going to happen, and it really put them at ease.

We found the experience really valuable, and we got a great response to the vaccination clinic with 27 children vaccinated in the session. Some families did not take up the offer, but the majority of those were children who had already been vaccinated. Parents feedback that having the clinic at nursery was very convenient as they had found it difficult to get appointments and didn't want to take their child out of nursery to attend. It was also a really good way to support our working parents.

At the clinic itself, it was helpful that the children could see their friends and peers and they particularly liked the sticker they got at the end. Key people were able to support children, knowing and understanding their needs. Some were really confident, while others needed support and we were able to provide that in the right way. Children who had additional needs were able to have the vaccination in an environment that they knew and felt comfortable in. Parents had reported that it can be upsetting for some of their children to go into unknown places, often causing high levels of anxiety and upset.

All in all, this was a really positive experience, and we would welcome the opportunity to hold the clinic again in the future.



Key achievements of the Health Protection Assurance and Development Partnership include collaborative work to address emerging health protection concerns including the mpox outbreak, an increase in invasive Group A Strep, and diphtheria cases



amongst asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the UK, favourable flu vaccination rates in County Durham, and completion of a regional Cervical Screening Health Equity Audit and forward programme of work including local actions.

### Winter Planning Arrangements

Planning for winter 2022/23 took place in a sustained period of high demand for services and varying Covid-19 rates, alongside the concurring challenges of cost-of-living pressures, including increased energy costs.

Partners across health and social care and community organisations worked closely together to ensure that they could provide workforce support, respond to surges in demand, protect elective surgery, and maintain effective and safe discharge arrangements. A targeted winter communications campaign was piloted in three County Durham communities: “Warm, Well and Well hydrated”. This was designed with system partners to prompt staff across partner services to deliver brief interventions to residents to check they were warm, well and had a drink, and to signpost them to local services where issues were identified to avoid admissions into hospital or care, and community support was provided during this challenging time.

### Mental Health

Good mental health and resilience is the foundation for wellbeing and effective functioning of individuals and communities. It impacts on how individuals think, feel, communicate, and understand, and is fundamental to physical health, relationships, education, work, and achieving potential. Within County Durham, there is a strong history of good partnership working around mental health led by the Mental Health Strategic Partnership.

In response to increases in mental ill health during the pandemic, and as we now learn to live with Covid, key areas of activity have been developed to promote mental health and wellbeing in the general population. These include:

- A county-wide communications campaign called ‘Now You’re Talking’, encouraging people to talk about their mental health challenges with others.
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Alliance which has been initiated to help coordinate a range of support services for people with low level mental health needs with a focus on promoting financial resilience, bereavement support, access to help reduce social isolation.
- Community Mental Health Transformation which helps to deliver on the NHS Long Term Plan to enable adults across all ages with Serious Mental Illness (SMI’s) to access evidence based treatment and support using a collaborative approach to build on strengths and support choice

A review of the Mental Health Strategic Partnership is being undertaken to ensure all aspects of mental health care and support work in a joined-up way under the new integrated care systems. Working groups for children and young people, suicide prevention, urgent care, dementia, and Resilient Communities have been established with a Lived Experience Advisory Group helping to underpin our mental health strategy moving forwards.

## Oral Health

Good oral health is important because it allows people to eat speak, smile, show emotions and socialise. An Oral Health promotion strategy 2023-2028 has been developed which aims to improve oral health for all residents, with a focus on vulnerable groups and those at most high risk of dental disease.

The strategy is evidence based and relies on working with partner organisations and communities to promote oral health and contribute towards maintaining good oral health throughout the life course. For children, some of the interventions set out in the strategy include supporting our health visitors in delivering key oral health messages: supporting our family hubs in embedding oral health in the services they provide; further developing Supervised Toothbrushing Schemes in early years settings in our most deprived areas; engaging with schools (particularly special educational needs schools) to explore how we can better support them to improve the oral health of our children.

For adults, we will work with partners to fully understand the data, which will allow interventions to be targeted to areas with little primary dental care availability, aim to provide a choice of sugar free food, drinks, and snacks in public sector venues, and explore developing a Making Every Contact Count approach which encourages frontline staff in primary care to discuss oral health with their patients.

The strategy also includes a series of interventions to support people who are at higher risk of poor oral health such as Gypsy Roma Traveller communities, children who are looked after by the Local Authority, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), older people and people with learning disabilities in care homes, and people accessing foodbanks.

## Marketing Campaigns

We have learned many lessons during the pandemic including the power of working in collaboration with our community. We are now taking this forward as a way of working across the public health agenda, not only asking our communities to be our voice, but consulting with them on our work and working alongside them to explore new ways to publish our messages to a wider audience.

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:

- **Covid-19** - We continued to share messages in line with the Government's key messages for Living with Covid, including updating web information and supporting the regional 'Step up to beat Covid-19' campaign. We also promoted key vaccine messages including a local 'Change of Heart' campaign to target men under 30 in areas with low uptake of the vaccine, as well as multiagency social media promotion of the 5-11 years vaccine programme, for which weekend walk up clinics were provided at County Hall.



*Starting Well*

- Breastfeeding** – Local breastfeeding events were held during National Breastfeeding Week and World Breastfeeding Awareness Week, including a Teddy Bears Picnic, Fun Day, and County Durham Breastfeed-along, to highlight the huge benefits that breastfeeding can bring. Work continues to recruit new local businesses and organisations to sign up to our Breastfeeding Friendly Scheme. This helps us to create places which reflect a positive and inclusive breastfeeding culture, so breastfeeding is seen as a normal way of feeding a baby, and an accepted part of everyday life



- Digitised Healthy Start Voucher scheme** – The Healthy Start Voucher scheme, which assists eligible parents financially to buy healthy food, cow's milk, infant formula and provides free vitamins, has this year moved from paper vouchers to a pre-paid card which is automatically topped up every four weeks. The new scheme was promoted, to increase awareness of the change and highlights its benefits. This was shared across DCC/NHS social media platforms and with partners including VCS. We now have 74% take up of the vouchers and we are committed to further increasing the uptake of both the healthy vouchers and vitamins.



- NHS Weaning campaign** – Partners used social media to share a range of materials to promote an NHS-led campaign offering advice and ideas for parents on introducing solid foods to their baby. New research highlights that three in five first-time parents found the decision to start weaning confusing, and almost two thirds have received conflicting advice on what age to start introducing solid food. The campaign sought to reduce this confusion and encouraged parents to use the weaning hub on the Start for Life website, which includes recipes as part of the content.



- **Physical Activity** – Free swimming at DCC leisure centre venues was offered to under 19s during school holidays, and activity camps were advertised as part of ‘Fun and Food’, which provided healthy food as part of the activities. The campaign was targeted to children and young people in deprived areas. The County Sports Partnership funded a pilot to offer free top up swimming to target primary school children during the holiday periods to target the children in areas of deprivation who missed out on school swimming during Covid-19 restrictions.



### Living Well

- **World No Tobacco Day** – DCC and partners supported a campaign by led by FRESH to promote the World Health Organisation’s World No Tobacco Day. Activity included localised versions of TV Adverts on ITV catch up for five and a half weeks and outdoor advertising on buses and bus shelters. Social media from DCC channels directed traffic to the Smokefree County Durham website.
- **Reducing Alcohol Harm** – We supported the Balance campaigns for Alcohol Causes Cancer and Dry January, through social media, messages shared with partners and digital screens.



- **Physical Activity** – We delivered the Durham MOVE campaign promoting physical activities, targeting inactive populations, and offering free 1:1 support appointments and signposting to leisure centre and community activities. This has been reviewed and evaluated and integrated into the physical activity framework. A range of organised and recreational opportunities across the county were promoted to raise the profile of National Walking Month. Between October and December 2022, we consulted on our strategic framework for the Physical Activity Strategy, and we worked with communities to produce a people and place based action plan.
- **Healthy Options Takeaway (HOT) masterclass pilot – Horden:** A pilot programme was delivered in Horden to engage local takeaways and food outlets to take part in training to maximise health in our communities through the provision of healthier options takeaway food, whilst supporting our local businesses to thrive.
- **Now You’re Talking campaign + Mental Health Awareness Week** – Our combined approach involved sharing Stress Tips videos and ‘Lift Someone Out of Loneliness’ campaign videos with our staff and on social media, buses, and bus shelters across the county. We shared tips on how to look after our mental health and promoted ‘Stamp It Out’ our commissioned service. We also featured a case study on a Mental Health First Aider to highlight how others can seek or offer help. It was also important to highlight





the links between mental health and alcohol, tobacco and physical activity, as well as identifying the small behavioural changes that can be made to improve our overall physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- **Domestic Abuse** – In aid of White Ribbon Day on 24<sup>th</sup> November, we took part in 16 Days of Action Against Gender-Based Violence, providing learning opportunities for professionals working across County Durham to help them better understand the issues, risks, experiences, impacts and ways to support those experiencing or who have experienced domestic abuse.



### Ageing Well

- **We are Undefeatable** - In April 2022 we launched the 'We Are Undefeatable' campaign in East Durham featuring a group of local swimmers. The national campaign sought to encourage more movement amongst people with conditions that might otherwise limit their ability to take part in such activities. Working with a range of partners it supported both physical and mental health improvements through movement.
- **Help us to Help You** – The NHS campaign was launched during the Covid-19 pandemic to persuade the public to seek the urgent care and treatment that they need, when they need it. We supported this campaign locally through Better Health Cancer Awareness and Diabetes Awareness.



### Carer Support Services

Unpaid carers play a crucial role within the wider health and care system, and we must ensure that they are supported to so that they can continue their caring role without their health, employment, finances, education, and development being adversely affected. A comprehensive review of carer support services was undertaken this year, with a considerable amount of input from key stakeholders and service users. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive about how effective the existing services are in delivering support to adult, parent, and young carers.

Partners have agreed to continue to fund these crucial preventative services over the next four years. As part of this re-procurement work, we will look at further options around targeted support to Young Adult Carers, as well as exploring those ways we

can reach more hidden carers with a focus on identifying more male working age carers and those living in rural parts of the county.

### Case study: Supporting carers

#### David

David is a local carer who has shared his caring story and explains how it has affected him and why the support he has received as a carer has made such a difference.

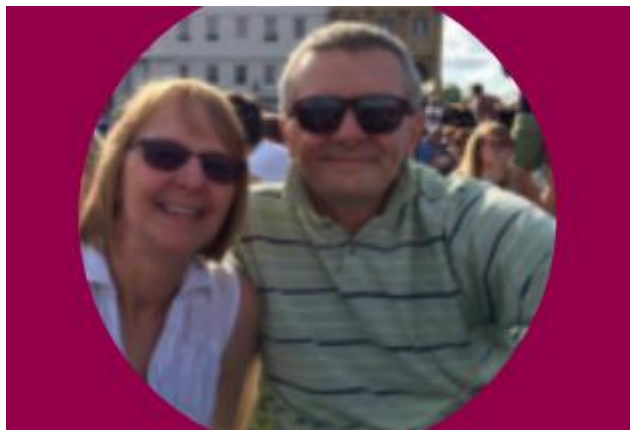
"I care for my wife, Judith, who was diagnosed with an early onset rare dementia almost 5 years ago. I took early retirement to become Judith's carer when she became worried about being by herself. A Community Psychiatric Nurse pointed me towards my local carer centre as I was unsure of what benefits we could claim.

"I always felt we had paid an awful lot of tax over the years and maybe we could have some of it back because now is our hour of need. With their guidance, we now claim PIP for Judith and I now get Carers Allowance.

"Not long after this I must admit I was finding my caring role really difficult. We had been together for 30 plus years and I was watching my wife crumble and her personality disintegrate. I was offered some talking therapy with a counsellor and had 12 sessions. I always came out feeling better than I did when I went in, I was a lot lighter as I had cried a lot.

"I also had help with sourcing some day care and had guidance on applying for Continuing Healthcare with the NHS. Caring is all new to me, it's not a trip I want to take, I've never asked to take it, so any friendly voice I can get, I'm gonna take it. My advice is if you are in a similar position to me, don't be shy, don't be afraid, do it sooner rather than later – register with your local carer centre, you'll only get a warm welcome.

To find your local carer centre visit <https://durhamcarers.info/>



## Health Impact Assessment of the County Durham Plan

All councils are required to have a plan for development in their area, known as a 'Local Plan'. Ours is called the 'County Durham Plan', and it sets out a range of development proposals and planning policies for the county until 2035.

The plan was adopted in October 2020 and benefitted from a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) that was predominantly concerned with the people and population aspects of those planning and development policies within it. A key function of the HIA was to minimise the negative impacts of those initiatives outlined within the County Durham Plan, as well as mitigating wherever possible any existing or future health inequalities. Furthermore, the HIA made recommendations for the plan's process to maximise the positive health impact upon health outcomes for those who live, work, study in and visit County Durham. This is a good example of Durham County Council's 'Health in all Policies' approach, which seeks to ensure that health benefits are realised across the broad spectrum of local authority functions.

The HIA recommendations are reviewed on an annual basis and the findings are presented to (and scrutinised by) the Health and Wellbeing Board. This annual review is an important aspect of the board's work – to ensure that sufficient progress is being made from a public health perspective.

## Starting Well

### Poverty

As we move forwards from the Covid 19 pandemic and continue to operate within cost-of-living pressures, there is still much to do to promote social inclusion and support financially vulnerable residents and their families, who are more likely to suffer from poor health.

In November 2022 the annual County Durham Partnership Event focussed on Supporting our Communities through Cost-of-Living pressures, in conjunction with the Advice in County Durham Partnership, North East Child Poverty Commission and County Durham Poverty Action Steering Group. Workshops focussed on Health and Wealth; Child Poverty; Employability, Skills, and Jobs; and support Beyond the Welfare State.

Holiday Activities with Healthy Food continues to work with children, young people, parents, and carers to deliver help and support which is accessible, acceptable and builds family and community resilience. Utilising Government funding and additional funding from Durham County Council, the programme provides fun things for children to do in the school holidays, as well as a healthy food offer, to ease pressure on parents to pay for extra food and childcare.

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/funandfood>

### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy

Extensive stakeholder engagement and public consultation has resulted in a new County Durham SEND Strategy with a vision for children and young people with

special educational needs and disabilities that is the same as for all children and young people in County Durham: so they are safe and part of their community, have the best start in life, have good physical and mental health, and gain the education, skills, and experiences to prepare them for adulthood.

The development of the strategy aligns with our wellbeing principles in its recognition of the strengths and assets of communities and its aim to support children and young people with SEND to be as independent as possible. Children, young people, and their families were heavily involved in the process and remain vital to the implementation of the strategy.

## Living Well

### Tobacco control

The latest data tell us smoking prevalence in County Durham is estimated to be 16.2%, higher than both regional and national prevalence. Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable deaths and one of the largest causes of health inequalities in England. It is, therefore, a priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Work is underway to transfer Stop Smoking Services from the community to midwifery services to provide further support to those 14.6% of women who are smoking in pregnancy, and new Stop Smoking Advisors have been recruited to provide support to smokers in hospital.

County Durham continues to commission the contract for FRESH, which continues to work on a denormalization programme for tobacco across the region. FRESH's Don't Wait campaign highlighting the smoking harms and risks was delivered via TV adverts, radio adverts and social media to share the messages that "*if you're thinking about quitting, don't wait - there's no better time*".

In Summer 2022 a new website was launched ([www.freshquit.co.uk](http://www.freshquit.co.uk)) as a one stop shop for all our Fresh campaigns with information on quitting and links to local stop smoking services.

The Director of Public Health Annual Report had a focus on Tobacco this year to ensure that this remains a key priority for the entire system working together. The Tobacco Control Alliance retains oversight on this work.

### Housing and Health

Housing (and a positive home environment) is a key determinant to health and wellbeing. Housing conditions can influence our physical and mental health. For example, a warm and dry house can improve general health outcomes and specifically reduce respiratory conditions, and good housing promotes positive mental health.

In June 2022 the Warm and Healthy Homes Project received the national 'Energy Champions of the Year' award for working with GP surgeries to contact patients who have a cold related illness and providing help ranging from boiler servicing, repairs, replacements, home insulation measures, and support with reducing energy bills. In 2021/22 11,327 patients accessed the service to receive help and support with their



energy bills. The team also provide advice and assistance with fuel and food vouchers, boiler servicing, warm homes discount and winter fuel payments.

Housing Solutions colleagues are now involved in interagency hospital discharge meetings, facilitating work to address housing related issues, reducing delays in hospital discharge, and providing timely support when a person is roofless on discharge. A pilot project to identify people at risk of admission to hospital and provide early intervention to prevent admission took place last year and is being reviewed.

### Veteran's Health Needs Assessment

Veterans can experience a variety of physical health, mental health and social issues which affect their overall sense of wellbeing, and their needs often go unmet. Public Health teams have worked with the Armed Forces Forum to complete a thorough Health Needs Assessment which helps partners to identify the veteran population and establish their health needs across all aspects that impact on health including physical, emotional, and welfare needs as well as those relating to housing, education, employment, and criminal justice.

The assessment examines local resources that are currently available to support the health and wellbeing needs of veterans, identifies areas of unmet need, health inequalities and inequities veterans experience, and works with veterans to make recommendations for change to address the unmet needs and reduce the inequalities.

The recommendations made in the assessment will be taken forward with the County Durham Armed Forces Forum.

### Alcohol and Drug Harms

Following a two-phase independent drugs review by Dame Carol Black in 2021/22 the government published a new drugs strategy, 'From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives in June 2022'. This new drugs strategy sets out the government's intention to combat illegal drug use, reduce crime, save lives, and challenge 'recreational drug use'.

The advent of the County Durham and Darlington Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership now provides a new strategic driver developed to galvanise the collective ambition to reduce harms from substance misuse in our local communities.

Partnership action will contribute to the disruption of drug gangs using county lines and maximise local assets to help encourage more people to access Recovery Services. County Durham has an unmet need of 47% of those using opiates who are not accessing treatment.

The continued funding of Balance across seven local authority areas also helps to provide a population health management approach to address an 80% unmet need of dependant alcohol users not accessing the support they need.

In 2021/22 and 2022/23, Durham County Council successfully secured grant funding from government to support the new national drugs strategy and increase outcomes within our populations. This includes a continuation of the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG), Inpatient Detox across 4 local authority areas, the Rough Sleeper Grant, Individual Placement support to improve outcomes for employability, and a Housing Support Grant to help stabilise those at risk of homelessness.

In 2021/22, Humankind working in partnership with Spectrum CIC and Basement Recovery Project were rated as Outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

### Transforming Care

The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the entire health and care system have been considerable, not least on community support services, several of which closed their services temporarily or permanently during the last three years. Inevitably this has impacted the flow of discharges from inpatient settings into the community.

Nevertheless, the momentum to deliver Transforming Care objectives remains strong in County Durham and case managers and community teams continue to support people in the community through noticeable pressures.

Two key accommodation based developments are underway which will form part of the joint health and social care response to increase our housing and support provision in Durham, alongside supporting people to develop their life skills to promote independence. The strategic needs assessment of people with a learning disability and people with autism is constantly under review to enable services to be shaped around current and future demand.

## Case study: Learning Disabilities Transforming Care Patient Journey Experience

### Les

Les has a diagnosis of a Mild Learning Disability, an Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder and Type 1 Diabetes. Les has spent his whole adult life, 36 years, until 2022 in either prison, long term hospital (including 10 years in high secure services), residential care and supported living.

Durham County Council (DCC) commissioning team started working with Les and his wider care team in late 2020, to identify a discharge plan following his recall to hospital in May 2018, under Section 37/41 of the Mental Health Act 1983.

Les reflected upon and recognised what factors made him feel frustrated and angry. Primarily, the lack of control he had over his own life and decision-making when in hospital, prison and other care settings. Les completed treatment programmes while in hospital and is now confident in his own ability to cope with the stresses of daily life and regulate his emotional responses to these.

Les was an integral contributor to the planning of his own future accommodation and aspirations; he was clear in his views - having his own home in the community with consistent support everyday visiting him would work. DCC's Support and Recovery team were recruited to provide the support Les required. He co-produced a 6 month transition plan, gradually building up to his hospital discharge. Les was successful in his housing application via Durham Key Options for a 2-bedroom house complete with a large garden overlooking the Durham countryside and close to his family.

Community Discharge Grant monies paid for the staff team supporting Les during the transition period from hospital; to furnish his house and pay the rent until he was fully discharged fully and then able to claim Housing Benefit. Les worked up to 5 nights a week staying in his new home, until the Ministry of Justice authorised his conditional discharge from hospital on 23rd June 2022.

Les recalled how it took him time to adjust to life in his own home; the peace and quietness was a stark contrast to his experiences in hospitals and prisons. Les initially came out of hospital with 2:1 support 4hrs a day, 7 days a week, this has been gradually reduced over the past 12 months to weekend support hours by telephone. This has been complimented by Les increasing his community participation, integration, activity and independence.



## Ageing Well

### Ageing Well Health Needs Assessment (HNA)

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. 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 indicating we have not yet addressed this inequality. A Health Needs Assessment has been undertaken in 2022/23 to review our approaches to promoting healthy and independent lives for those residents who are 50+

Recommendations from the Ageing Well HNA included the requirement to develop an Ageing Well Strategic Group representing partners from across County Durham Council, primary and secondary care, mental health, VCS, and wider partners to oversee the implementation of targeted approaches to promote Ageing Well.

Work has begun to increase the availability of data at 50+ level in order to recognise the diversity within this age group and develop a baseline on which to build on current provision and target our future work accordingly.

### New housing for older people

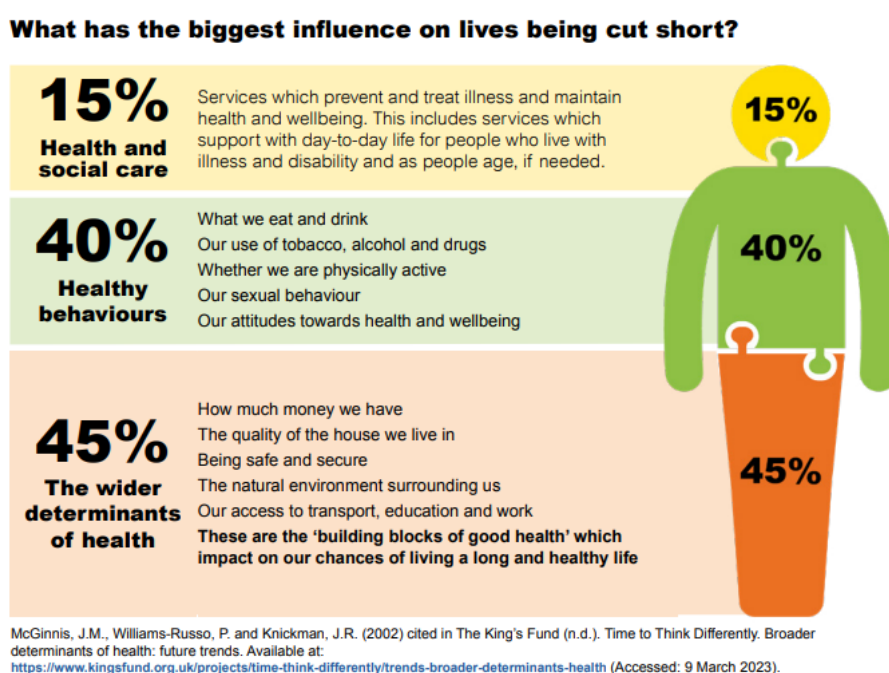
In Summer 2022 Housing Solutions acquired their first four 2 bedroom bungalows as part of a 5-year Council new build programme for the delivery of 500 affordable homes, with a further 2 following later in the year. A report highlighted that there was a clear under provision of affordable rented homes in the County as well as their being a specific lack of bungalow accommodation.

In addition, new policies in the County Durham Plan will help meet the housing needs of older people and people with disabilities, with stipulations that a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings on a new site should be of a design and type that will increase the housing options for older people.

## Looking Forward

With our Approach to Wellbeing in mind we have decided to reflect our communities' assets within our evidence base, progressing our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to a Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JSNAA). These assets are factors that build health and wellbeing, as opposed to solely preventing or curing disease, and could include physical resources, environmental resources, economic resources, skills, knowledge, community networks, relationships, experience, and insights. This will provide partners with a better understanding of the places and communities in which people live so we can work with people to utilise these assets to improve health outcomes.

The image below shows an estimate of the contribution that different factors have on health and wellbeing and ultimately lives being cut short.



In March 2023, the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed a new direction for the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which will focus on the areas identified in the JSNAA which have the biggest impact on local outcomes and health inequalities:

- (a) Making smoking history
- (b) Enabling healthy weight for all
- (c) Improving mental health, resilience, and wellbeing
- (d) Reducing alcohol health harms

Alongside tackling the wider determinants of health, these are the areas which will support the realisation of the HWB Vision. Focussed effort across the system through the new Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JLHWS) is our best chance to make County Durham a healthy place where people live well for longer.

The Health and Wellbeing Board will review and comment upon the Integrated Care Board County Durham place plan which will be aligned to the Joint Local Health and

Wellbeing Strategy and will go on to inform the work of the Integrated Care Partnership.

## Health and Wellbeing Board Work programme

A work programme has been developed for the coming year which includes **regular updates against the four key priorities of the JLHWS** as stated above. In addition, work on the following key areas will be reported to the HWB:

- Better Care Fund
- Preparation for CQC inspection of Adult Social Care
- Health Literacy
- 'Moving Together in County Durham' – our local Physical Activity Strategy
- Review of approaches to healthy weight in County Durham
- Autism Strategy
- Climate Emergency Response Plan
- Sexual Health Strategy

## Challenges and opportunities for 2023/24

2023 marks ten years since the formation of Health and Wellbeing Boards, which were introduced under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to promote integrated working among local providers of health care and social care. The same legislation also moved the responsibility and funding for public health functions from the NHS to local authorities, where they are best placed to utilise the wide range of council functions, community relationships and extensive partnerships to promote health.

The anniversary provides a welcome opportunity to reflect upon the work of the Board, celebrate achievements during that time, and consider what we have learned and how we move forward in the current climate.

In Durham, as elsewhere, some of the progress we have made to improve health and wellbeing has stalled and inequalities widened due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and a focussed effort by the whole partnership is imperative to ensure we can bring about change for our residents.

Innovative, collaborative work, research, and links to culture are all on the horizon and we plan to maximise all opportunities to improve our residents' health.