

# Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023

**Cabinet**  
**11 October 2023**

**Amanda Healy**  
**Director of Public Health**

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023

**10 years in Local Authority -  
Looking back to plan ahead**



# Health of our People

- Good quality data and intelligence underpins effective working across multiple local organisations.
- Data is used to carry out health needs assessments, health equity audits, commissioning and delivery of services, public health surveillance and identifying inequalities in the way people access services.



The Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JSNAA) provides a detailed overview of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of the people of County Durham.

Examples of work undertaken via the JSNAA strategic group:

- **Veterans' Health Needs Assessment**
  - The recommendations were developed in conjunction with members of the County Durham Armed Forces Forum.
- **Ageing Well Health Needs Assessment**
  - The key themes and recommendations were used to populate the Ageing Well Action Plan which is now being implemented



# Health of our People

## The strengths and assets in County Durham

- County Durham has many assets that can support and protect the health of our 522,000 residents.
- Assets are used as a support structure on which to build and improve local services and benefit local people.
- Communities work together and alongside us to both strengthen existing assets and develop new ones.
- Our stunning countryside and landscapes, hills, dales, rivers, waterfalls and coastlines, all make County Durham a great place to be physically active.

### Physical Activity



- 15 council owned leisure centres including 10 swimming pools.
- 340 fixed play areas.
- 120 hectares of outdoor sports pitches
- 441 hectares of allotments.
- 32 hectares of play space (children and young people).

### Assets and green space



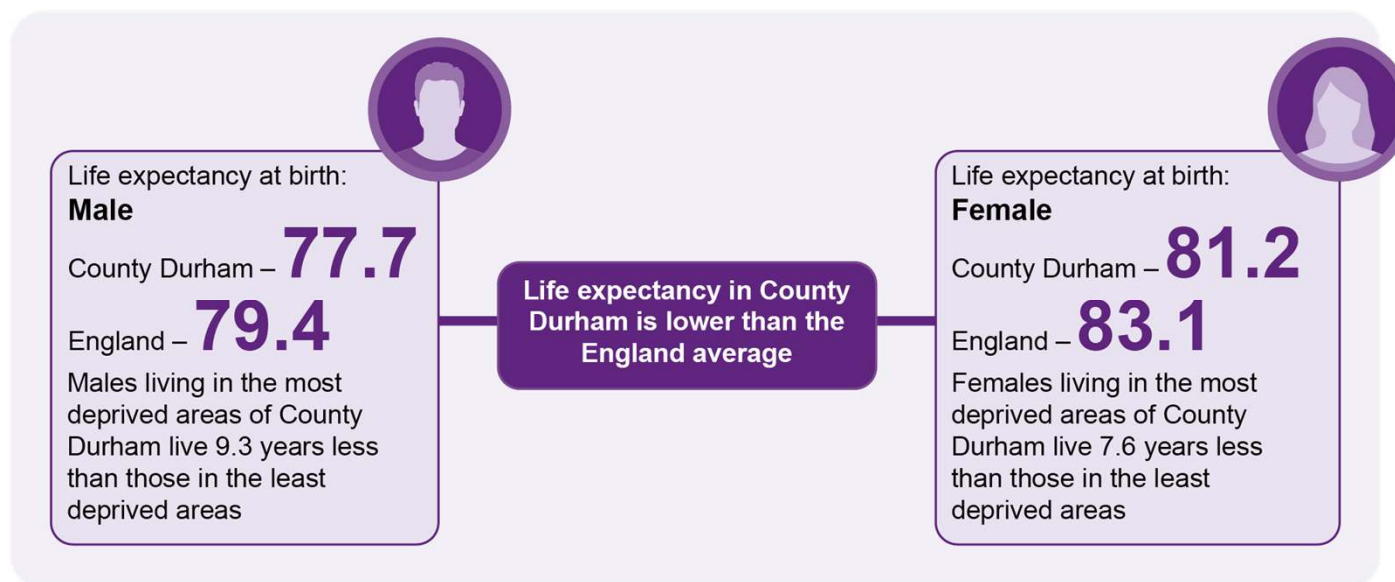
- 312 local wildlife sites.
- Over 400 miles of recreational routes for walking and cycling.
- Almost 120,000 hectares of Accessible Natural Green Space.
- Over 1,200 hectares of Limited Access Natural Green Space.
- Community engagement, volunteering and outdoor education provided by the Countryside Service.
- Community countryside programmes to promote the importance of conservation and biodiversity.
- In 2022/23, our Countryside Service benefitted from 128 active volunteers and 85 corporate volunteers.



# Health of our People

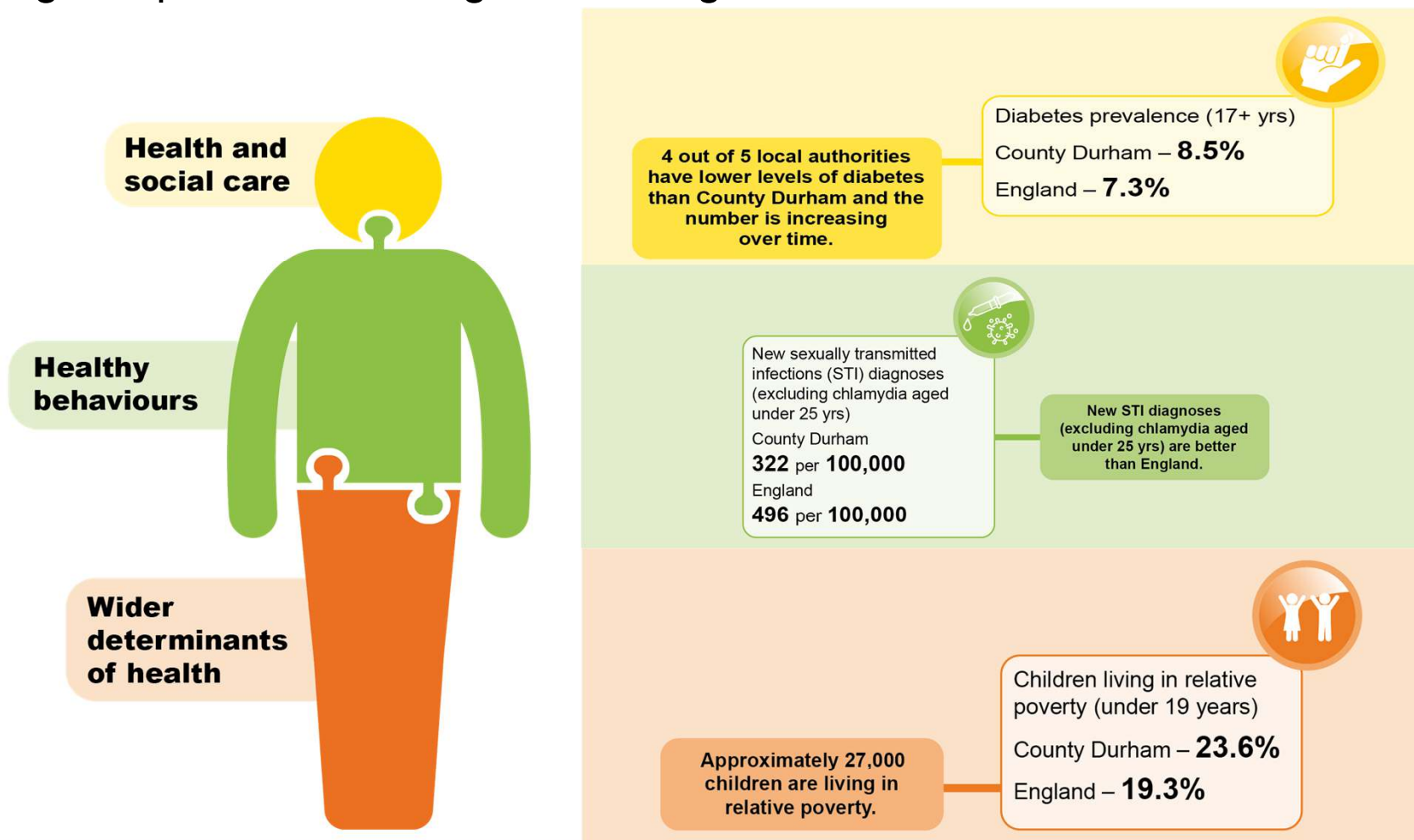
## Life Expectancy

- Life expectancy is an important measure of the overall health of our residents, and is an indicator of inequality both between and within areas.
- Life expectancy for both men and women is statistically significantly lower than the England average.
- It is 9.3 years lower for men and 7.6 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of County Durham than in the least deprived areas.



# Impacts on Health and Wellbeing

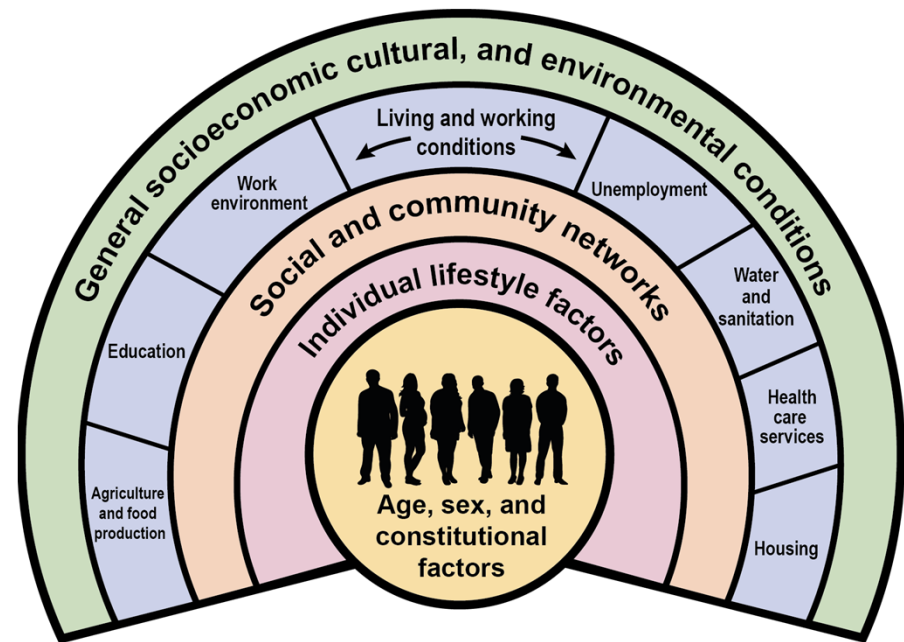
- Our health and the health of our population is dependent on a complex relationship between our genes, and three broader factors.
- Data for County Durham is shown in relation to these influences on health and wellbeing compared to the England average.





# 10 years of Public Health in Local Authority

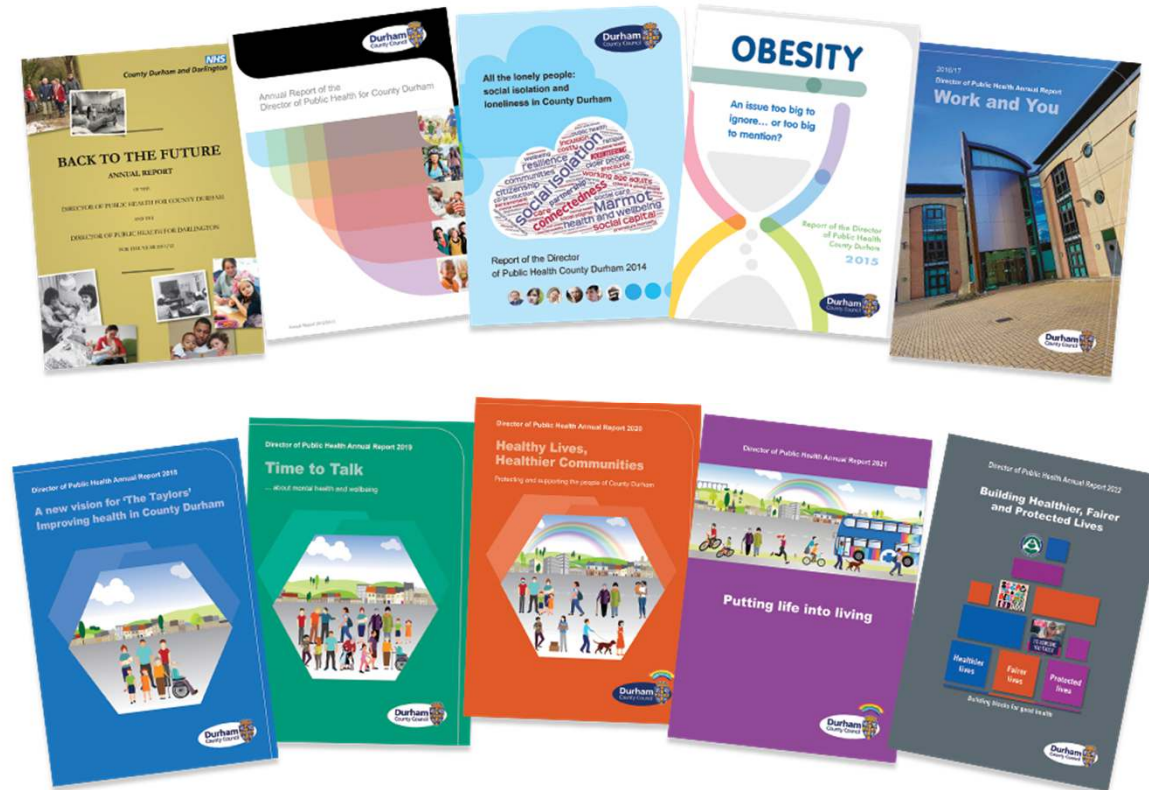
- The public health function and services, including the Director of Public Health's statutory responsibilities, moved from the NHS to local councils in April 2013.
- Moving into the local authority provided the environment for public health to advocate, influence and embed population health principles and healthy behaviours into the development and delivery of evidence-led health and social care strategies and services.
- Driving down the impact of wider social determinants of health and addressing the health needs of the population.



# 10 years of Public Health in Local Authority

- Over the last ten years we have seen how local government is ideally placed to embed and enhance actions to improve population health through collaboration with partners and informed by public health.

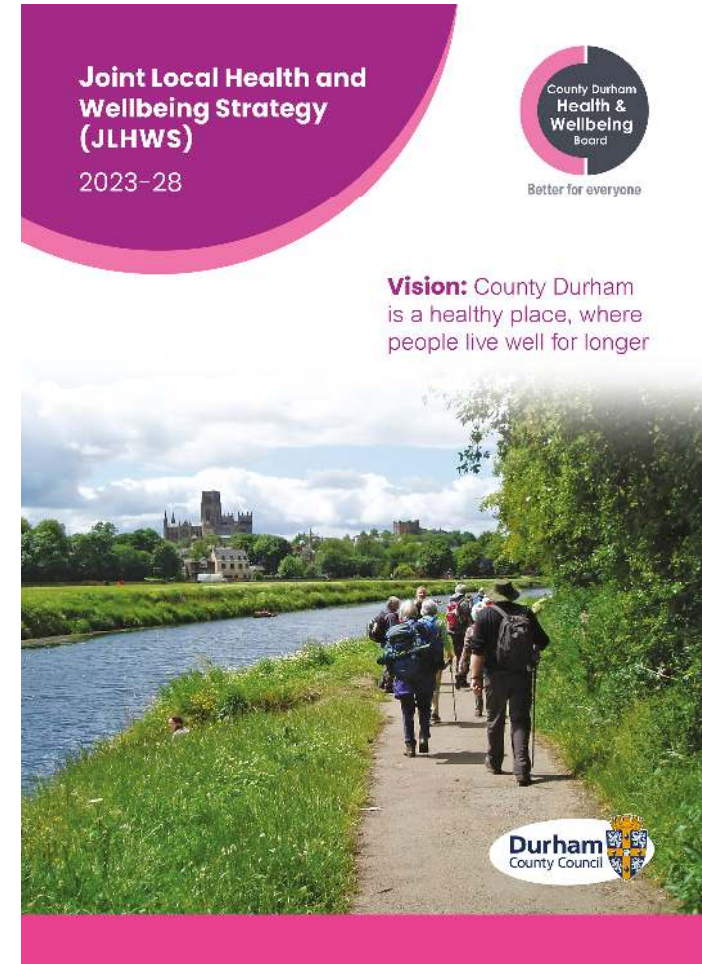
## 10 years of Director of Public Health Annual Reports



# 10 years of Public Health in Local Authority

## 10 years of the Health and Wellbeing Board

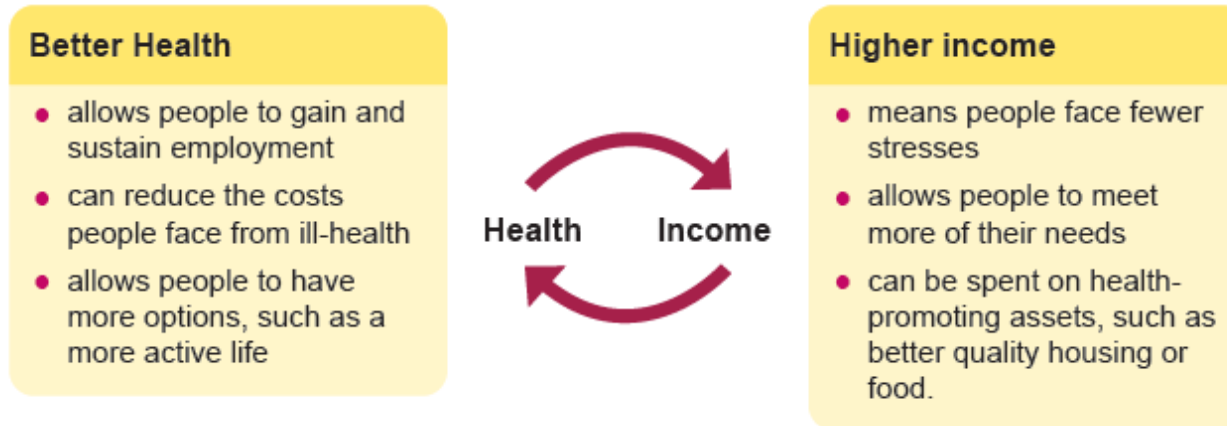
- The Health and Wellbeing Board was created 10 years ago and has overseen progress in the integration of health and social care.
- The annual report provides an update on 10 years of the Health and Wellbeing Board linking to the social determinants of health (including economy) and the work undertaken against the four current key health priority areas for County Durham:
  - making smoking history,
  - enabling healthy weight for all,
  - improving mental health resilience and wellbeing,
  - and reducing alcohol harms.
- The board has led developments across the wider partnership.





# 10 years of Public Health in Local Authority

## Health, wealth, work and economic development



Over the past 10 years there have been a range of initiatives and programmes of work in County Durham to promote a positive, interdependent relationship between health and wealth, including:

- The County Durham Better Health at Work Award and workplace health programme
- Mental Health at Scale
- Employment support
- The County Durham Inclusive Economic Strategy and delivery plan

# Collaboration – working together to improve lives

## Strep A response

One of the main responsibilities for public health is protecting the public from the impact of infectious diseases.

During winter 2022/23 there were more cases of Strep A (Group A Streptococcal) infections than normal.

By acting quickly we kept the number of infections as low as possible and offered support and reassurance to people who were worried.



## Helen Nixon, Lead Officer Early Years and Childcare

‘Public Heath have become a key partner over the last three years providing advice, guidance and support to the early years and education sector.

# Conclusion

- Public health has been embedded across the council.
- The health and wellbeing of residents has seen some change over the past 10 years, with reductions in smoking levels which is a fantastic achievement, though with more to do.
- Areas of challenge – unhealthy weight, mental ill-health and alcohol harms.
- Health and Wellbeing Board has led many changes over the last 10 years.
- Good partnership working.
- Looking ahead to 2033 for improvements in health and wellbeing and reduction in health inequalities.