

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024

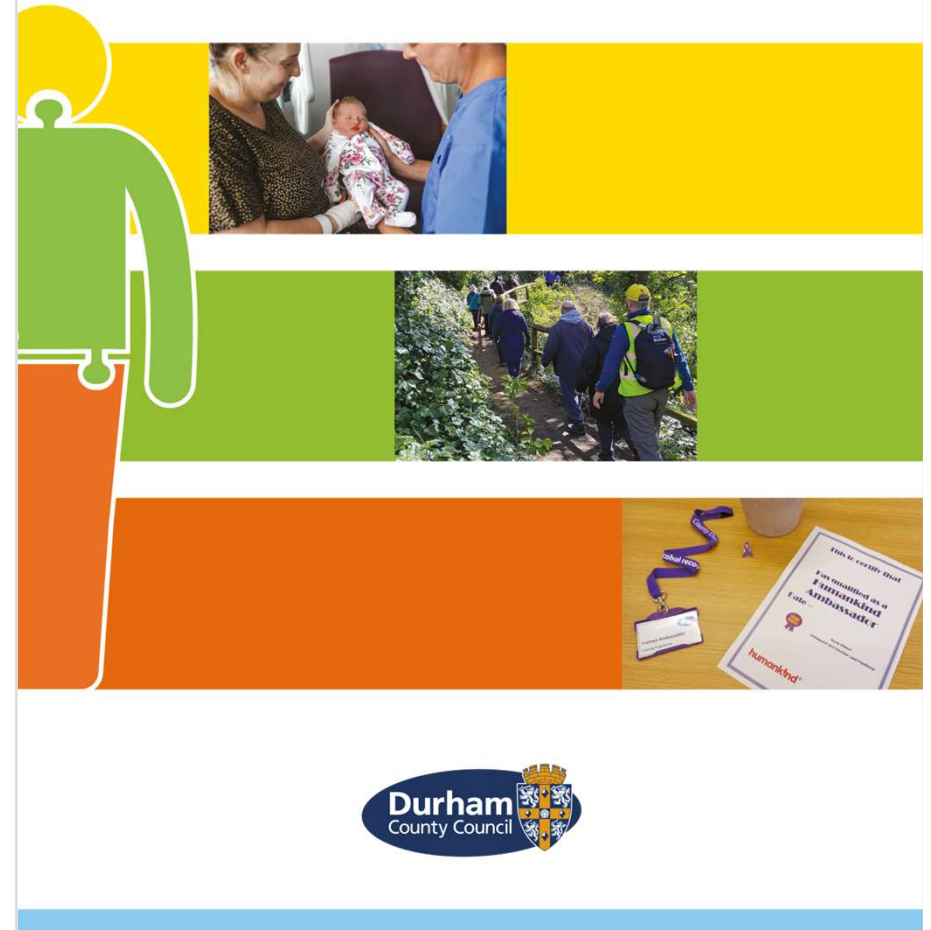
Overview and Scrutiny
Committee
13th January 2025

Amanda Healy
Director of Public Health

The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024

Unfair and avoidable

Looking ahead to health in 2040



Health of our people

Understanding our health, wellbeing and assets

- Access to high quality health data, health intelligence and wider partner data helps us understand the health of our people.
- Underpins our work to plan, commission, deliver and target services and resources to improve health.
- Work with local, regional, and national organisations, alongside our communities to gather health data and information.
- Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JSNAA) is where we describe County Durham's current and future health needs.
- Share this information publicly through Durham Insight www.durhaminsight.info
- Use tools like health needs assessments and health equity audits, along with information from partners, and where possible, our residents lived experiences to help us plan and deliver the most appropriate interventions to improve public's health.
- Within the last year, the following pieces of work have been undertaken to inform our JSNAA.

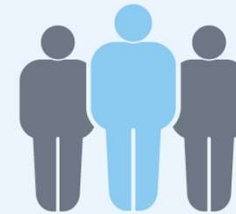
Health of our people

Mothers smoking at time of delivery equity analysis

- Smoking when pregnant is a leading cause of preventable harm and health inequalities in County Durham.
- Currently, around **1 in 7** mothers smoke at the time of giving birth, which is significantly higher than the average for England.
- We conducted an equity analysis to understand more and to identify inequalities across the county.

Our key findings were:

There is a significant difference in smoking rates among mothers across County Durham. In some areas, as many as **1 in 3 mothers smoke**, whereas in other areas, the rate is less than 1 in 20.



- The areas with the highest smoking rates have remained the same since our previous analysis, with only two areas showing a significant reduction in smoking rates.
- Babies born to mothers who smoke are more likely to live in the most deprived areas.
- The inequality in smoking rates has widened, indicating that the risks for mothers and babies are not evenly distributed across the county.

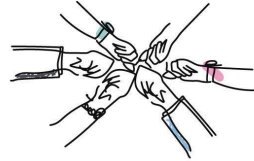
Health of our people

Dementia Health Needs and Asset Assessment



- Over the last 12 months, we have worked with a range of key stakeholders to produce a comprehensive Dementia in County Durham Needs and Asset Assessment to evaluate local dementia prevention, care, and support.
- The assessment detailed the increasing prevalence of dementia and highlighted the critical need for early diagnosis, targeted interventions, and timely support networks.
- Key findings revealed that while most patients and carers are satisfied with the existing services, improved communication about available resources is needed.
- Recommendations include enhanced training for healthcare professionals, improved public awareness campaigns about dementia risk factors, and stronger collaboration among service providers to ensure integrated care for individuals and their carers.

Health of our people



Sharing Decision Making
Designing and developing services and initiatives working with the people who need them.



Empowering Communities
Working with communities to support their development and empowerment.



Using What Works
Everything we do is supported by evidence informed by local conversations.

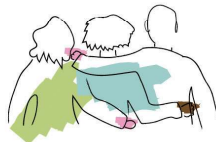


Being Asset Focused
Acknowledging the different needs of communities and the potential of their assets.

The County Durham Approach to Wellbeing



Working Better Together
Across sectors to reduce duplication and ensure greater impact.



Doing with, not to
Making our interventions empowering and centred around you as an individual.



Building Resilience
Helping the most disadvantaged and vulnerable build up their future resilience.



Better for everyone

Health of our people



Using What Works

Everything we do is supported
by evidence informed by local
conversations.

Embedding Research into Practice

- Developing high quality local research projects can help inform and influence future priorities, public health initiatives and add to our existing data and intelligence sources.
- It is vital that our communities have a greater say in what matters to them and we record their views to help shape solutions to local problems and strengthen our JSNAA and evidence base.
- We recently launched our Health Determinants Research Development Programme (HDRD) in collaboration with Durham University and Durham Community Action.
- The aim of the programme is to, “together harness the power of research and innovation to tackle the causes of unfair differences in health outcomes across County Durham.”
- This approach enhances the approach to wellbeing and enables Durham County Council to continue to work towards being a research active organisation, ensuring that local research and evidence are embedded into policy, strategy, and other key decisions.

Future health of our people

How many people are living with major illness in County Durham now and what may the future look like?

By 2040, over 86,000 people,

around **1 in 5**

of the adult population in County Durham could be living with major illness.

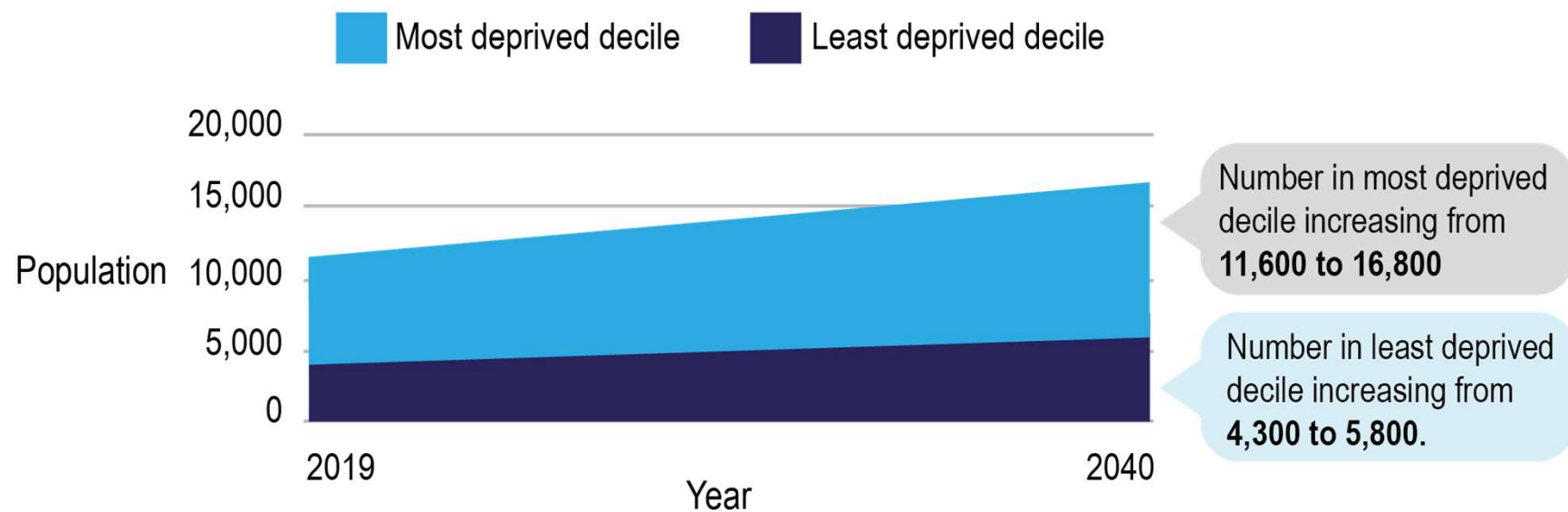


That's an increase of **39%**
24,000 people

Future health of our people

Inequalities

- The projected rise in major illness and specific conditions in County Durham by 2040 will not be spread evenly across the county.
- We project a **46%** increase in major illness in the most deprived areas versus **35%** in least deprived.
- The number of people with major illness is projected to increase by **5,200** (11,600 to 16,800 people) in the most deprived communities.
- Whereas in the least deprived communities it is projected to increase by **1,500** people (4,300 to 5,800 people).

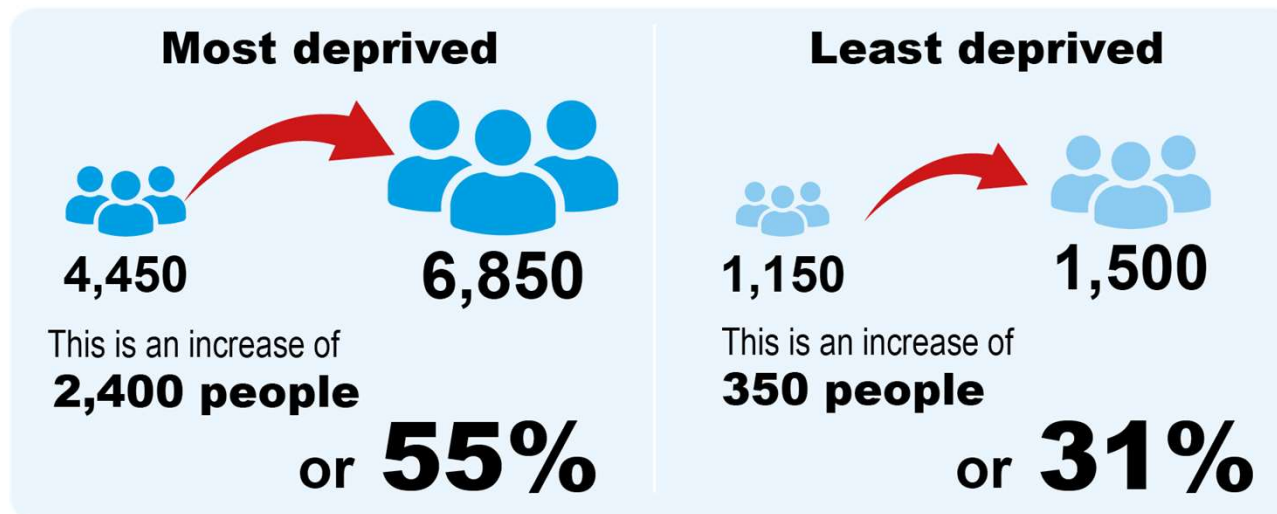


Future health of our people

Diabetes projections and inequalities



Projected increase in Type 2 Diabetes prevalence in the most and least deprived areas in County Durham, to 2040.



Future health of our people

Anxiety and depression projections and inequalities

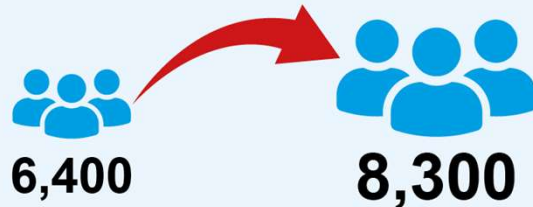
By 2040, a total of
89,700
people in the county
could be living with
anxiety/depression.



That's an increase of
17,400 people (24%)

Projected increase in Anxiety prevalence in the most and least deprived areas in County Durham, to 2040.

Most deprived



This is an increase of
1,900 people
or **30%**

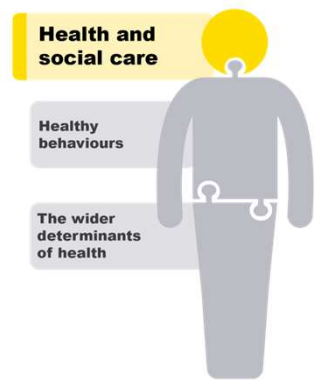
Least deprived



This is an increase of
150 people
or **9%**

Health and social care

It is estimated that around 15% of a person's health status are met by health and social care services.



Supporting Carers

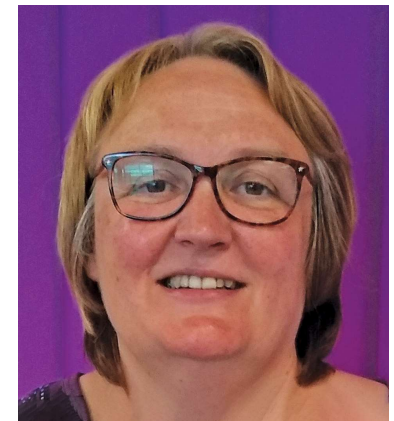
- Unpaid carers are a critical part of the health and social care system and help lots of people with major illness to continue to live independently.
- According to the Census 2021 there are around 52,700 unpaid carers in County Durham, of those 52% described themselves in poor health, this is an increase of 35% from the previous return in 2011.

Evidence into practice

Durham County Carers Support service provides an accessible, high quality, countywide independent service offering a range of support for adult and parent carers.

Jenni Wood, Chief Executive of Durham County Carers told us:

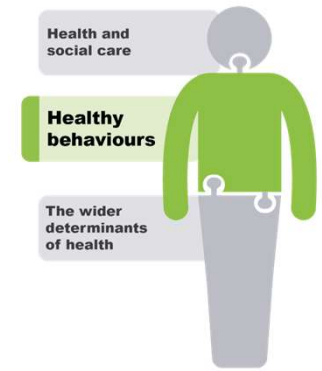
“Our mission is to improve the lives of Carers. We support Carers to understand the importance of self-care and to access a wide range of tools and opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing.”



Jenni Wood

Healthy behaviours

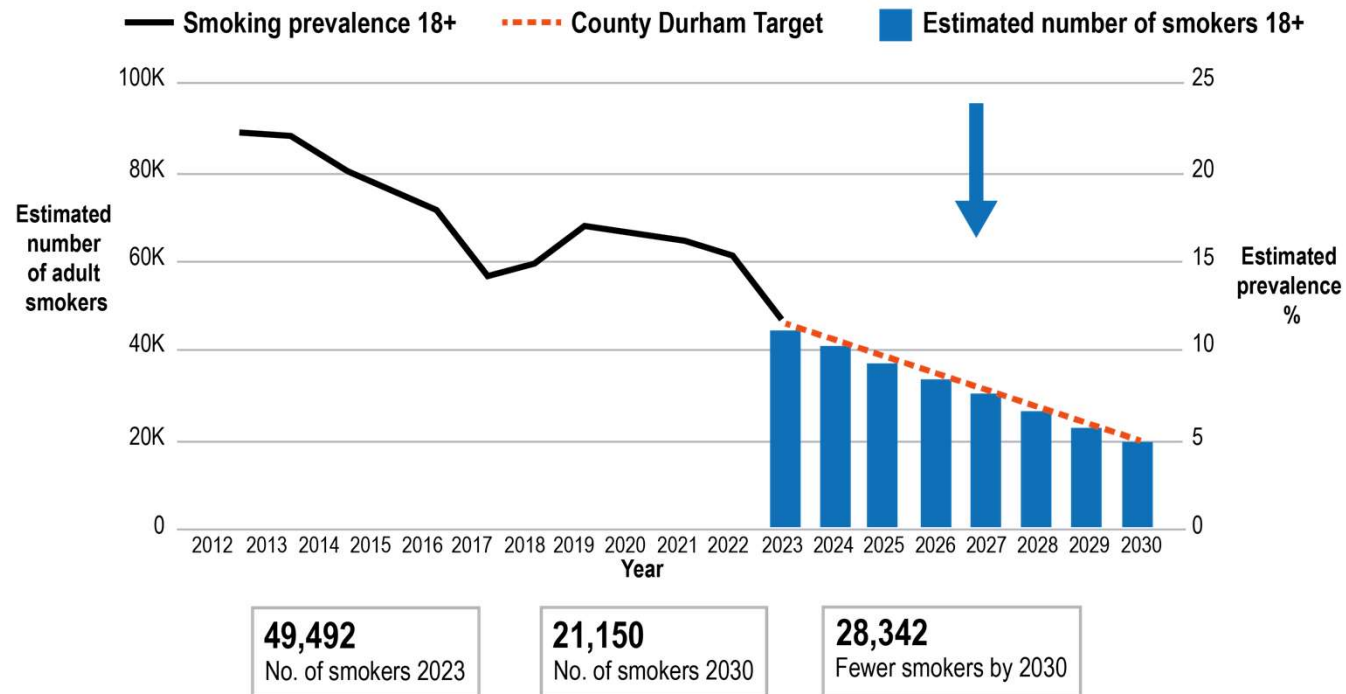
It is estimated that around 40% of a person's health is influenced by our behaviours.



Making smoking history

- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the UK.
- In County Durham, around **894** people die each year from causes linked to smoking which could have been prevented, **1 in 9** (11.7%) adults smoke and around **1 in 7** (14.2%) mothers smoke during pregnancy.

In County Durham we want to reduce the number of people smoking to 5% by 2030...



Healthy behaviours

It is estimated that around 40% of a person's health is influenced by our behaviours.

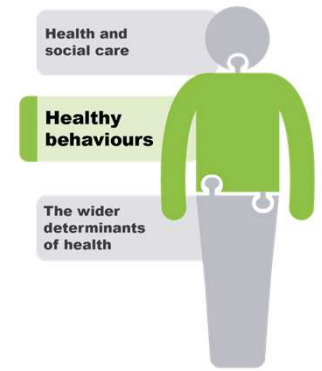
Enabling healthy weight for all – living healthy for longer

- Approximately 78% of adults are overweight or living with obesity.
- Rates remain higher in more deprived areas of the county.

Evidence into practice

Noel, one of our volunteer walk coordinators, states that joining a walking group helped him lose weight.

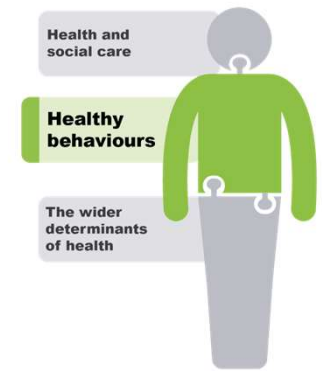
“Due to walking regularly and eating healthier, I have lost over 6 stone and this in turn gave me the confidence to become a volunteer and try to help other people improve their health both mentally and physically, which walking in a group is perfect for”



Noel Harrison

Healthy behaviours

It is estimated that around 40% of a person's health is influenced by our attitudes to health and wellbeing.



Mental health and wellbeing across all ages

- In County Durham **15.7%** of our adult population (72,302 people) have a clinical diagnosis of depression (2022/23).
- Around **1 in 6** children and young people have a mental health condition.

Evidence into practice

Tanfield Lea Community Primary School wanted to create a positive way for children in their school to communicate and share their concerns and worries as part of the Durham County Council Health and Wellbeing Framework for Schools.

The children have found it really valuable and had lots of other ideas and comments to improve wellbeing:

"Have a friendship bench".

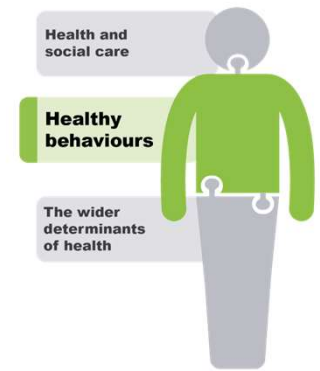
"Brain breaks away from class".

"Provide fidget / stress ball".

"Wellbeing afternoon once a term".

Healthy behaviours

It is estimated that around 40% of a person's health is influenced by our behaviours.



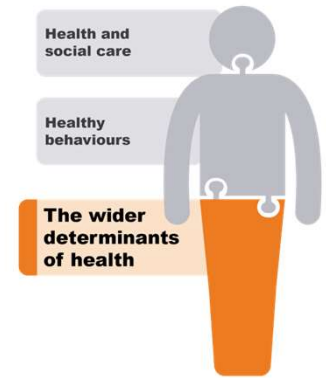
Reducing the rates of alcohol related cancer

- Cancer is one of the leading causes of death in County Durham.
- Our projections show a potential 33% increase in cancer prevalence by 2040.
- A major contributor to a person's likelihood of developing cancer is drinking alcohol.
- Balance delivers alcohol and cancer public awareness campaigns including the widely acclaimed Alcohol is Toxic campaign which details the journey of alcohol through the body, mutating cells and leading to the formation of a tumour.



Wider determinants of health

It is estimated that around 45% of a person's health is determined by the social, economic, and environmental conditions in which they are born, grow up and live.



Education as a protective factor

- In County Durham **7 in 10** pupils are achieving a good level of development at the end of reception, however we know that for children eligible for free school meals this falls to **5 in 10**.

Evidence into practice

We worked with education system partners to identify key issues children and young people are struggling with. School staff and young people told us that mental health and emotional wellbeing was their main concern, particularly anxiety, emotional regulation, and self-esteem.

Dr Peter Mulholland, Strategic Manager for Specialist SEND and Inclusion Support, and Principal Educational Psychologist shared his thoughts about collaborative working:

“Public Health has helped us focus on how we can support the mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people from the earliest opportunity, promoting prevention and early intervention in our work.”



Dr Peter Mulholland

Recommendations

Some examples from the annual report:

Future health of our people

- We will translate the projections into local ambitions, similar to smoking prevalence and focus our attention on the actions which will lead to the greatest reduction in unfair differences in health and wellbeing for our people.

Health and social care

- Ensure that services remain focused on early intervention and support, identifying gaps in care and making sure all families can easily access these essential services.

Healthy behaviours

- To achieve the 5% smoking prevalence rate by 2030, we must continue to use tools like the health equity audit and the collective influence of the County Durham Tobacco Alliance to ensure that we continue to target resources, tackle inequality, and promote equity of access to those at greatest risk.

Wider determinants of health

- Continue to work with partners to deliver a comprehensive and systematic offer of support to victim/survivors of domestic abuse, including children and young people alongside work with perpetrators and those who cause harm.

Conclusion

- Looking forward – focusing this year’s annual report on the future health of County Durham residents.
- Projected increases in major illness.
- Unfairly distributed across the county.
- The inequalities are unfair and avoidable.
- Further work on how we can reduce these inequalities to be set out in future annual reports
- It will require all partners to focus on these inequalities, working with our communities.