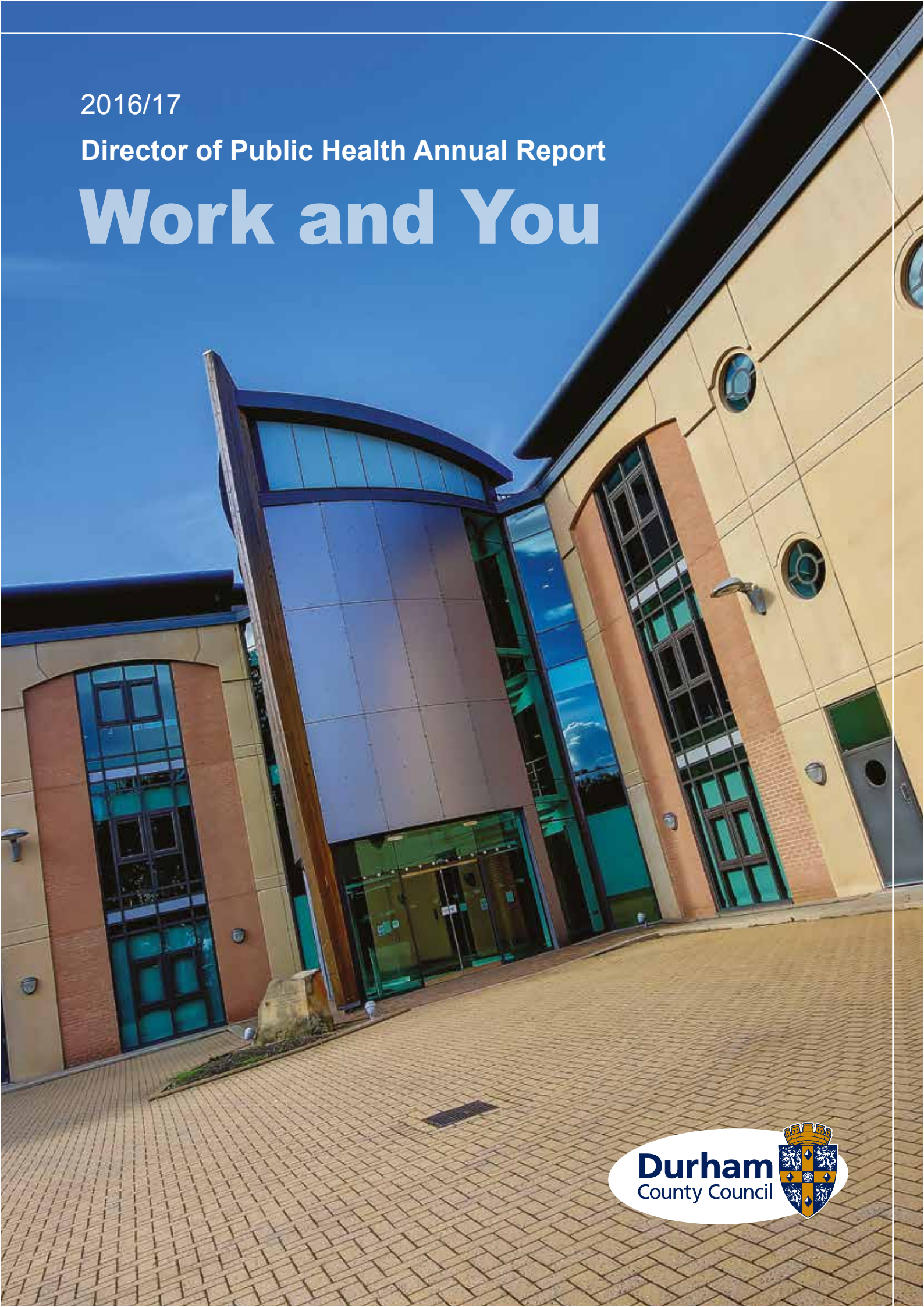



2016/17

Director of Public Health Annual Report

# Work and You







**“Nowhere is the link between health and wealth more important than in relation to work. Good work is both the best route out of poverty and the surest basis for good health”**

*Health and Wealth - closing the gap in the North East: report of the North East commission for health and social care integration; Duncan Selbie; Commission chair and chief executive of public health.*

This report will discuss how work impacts upon health and how we can stay in employment and maximise our health.



# Contents

- 1 Foreword
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Background
- 8 This Is Durham Place of Light
- 10 Health and wellbeing at work
- 11 Mid-life - One You
- 13 Strategies for regional growth and raising productivity
- 14 Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012
- 15 Creating healthy workplaces
  - 16 - obesity
  - 18 - physical activity
  - 20 - stress
  - 22 - musculoskeletal disorders
  - 23 - mental health
- 25 The Better Health at Work Award
- 26 Healthy living pharmacy
- 27 NHS Health Checks
- 29 Campaign Summary
- 31 Recommendations

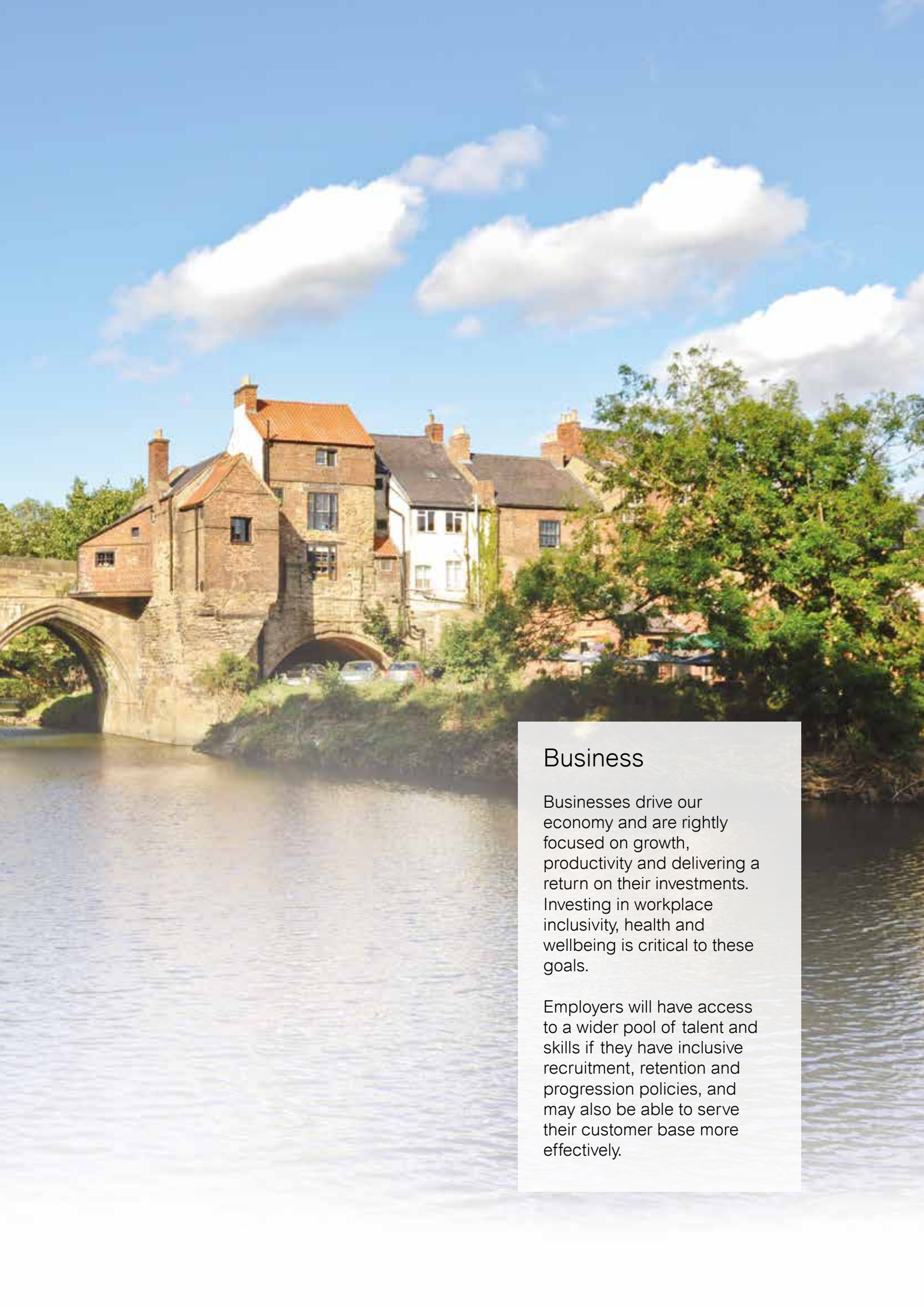
## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Graeme Greig - Senior Public Health Specialist, Graham Wood - Economic Development Manager, Kevin Lough - Occupational Health and Safety Manager, Simon Goon - Managing Director of Business Durham, Michael Fleming - Public Health Epidemiologist, Chris Woodcock - Public Health Portfolio Lead, Darren Knowd - Chief Procurement Officer, Karen Stewart - Multimedia Officer and Lynsey Walker - Executive Support Officer.

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## Business

Businesses drive our economy and are rightly focused on growth, productivity and delivering a return on their investments. Investing in workplace inclusivity, health and wellbeing is critical to these goals.

Employers will have access to a wider pool of talent and skills if they have inclusive recruitment, retention and progression policies, and may also be able to serve their customer base more effectively.

## Foreword

The old adage of ‘a healthy workforce is a productive workforce’ is as pertinent today as it ever was.

But the demands of work, home and family can put extreme pressure on our staff and mean they’re not producing their best. It’s vital that we create healthy workplaces given how much time we spend at work and that we help our staff achieve a balance between these demands.

Employers have a huge part to play in helping their staff look after their own wellbeing and happiness. Support can range from giving genuinely flexible work options and offering workplace savings schemes to having a workplace gym membership or setting up a crèche. It’s also about creating healthy environments in which people can follow their own self-development paths and thrive in their workplace.

At Business Durham, we’ve launched a programme, Smart County, to work with businesses and help them create products and services to tackle some of the health conditions associated with social isolation. So businesses have enormous potential to contribute to the health of people who work for them and in return, all of this is good for business. It’s also good for our communities. We therefore welcome the publication of this report.

**Dr Simon Goon**  
Managing Director  
Business Durham





## Introduction

The annual report of the Director of Public Health is the professional statement about the health of people in the county. It is an independent decision to determine which aspect of health to draw attention to. Through the report this year I am reaching out to the business sector across County Durham with a specific focus on small to medium enterprises (SMEs). At a time of prolonged austerity with no immediate sign of the situation altering, good employment opportunities are critical to population health and wellbeing.

It is well documented that there is an aging population across the UK and that is the case for County Durham. Healthy life expectancy (how long we live in good health) shows significant inequalities across County Durham with an 18 year gap for men (70 years in Langley Moor and 51 years in Horden) see Appendix 1. If someone is diagnosed with a long term health condition at the age of 51 years there is still on average 15 years of working life before state pension eligibility. Many people, with the right support, can continue to work productively with a long term health

condition. The primary goal is to prevent a health condition from developing in the first place but there is much benefit in maintaining a person's health beyond a diagnosis.



There are many opportunities to work jointly with the business sector to identify ways in which the health of employees can be considered which can improve productivity of the work force. This report targets advice and recommendations to improve the health of the population from the point of mid-life with the intention of reducing the gap in healthy life expectancy. The content of this report has been brought together using the latest health intelligence and evidence. Through discussion with business sector leaders the report is designed to be easy to read with clear signposting for further information and guidance. I hope you are motivated reading the report to look after your own health as well as those who work for you.

**Gill O'Neill**, *Interim Director of Public Health*



Approximately  
**5 million**  
people of working age  
receive out-of-work benefits  
- about half of this group  
receive incapacity benefits.  
Health-related benefits  
cost the state  
**£13 billion**  
a year

## Background

### Employment and health

The performance of the economy provides a good indication of the levels of employment and prosperity in the general population. In particular, levels of employment provide an indication of the health of the working age population. A review of evidence-based research over a substantial time period has served to demonstrate that unemployment plays a significant role in increasing poverty, social isolation and loss of self-esteem. These issues also decrease psychological wellbeing, physical health and mental health and wellbeing.



### Ageing Population

By 2020 one third of the workforce will be over 50. As the UK workforce continues to age and stay in work longer and more workers develop long-term health conditions, policymakers, employers, clinicians and older workers themselves will need to work together to improve both their health and employment outcomes. Between 2014 and 2024 the UK will have 200,000 fewer people aged 16 to 49, but 3.2 million more people aged 50 to State Pension age.

Although age by itself does not have to be a barrier to a healthy working life, older workers continue to face employment challenges. The physical and mental assets they possess are often under-used and under-valued. The potential of older people should not be ignored and adopting an active ageing approach optimises opportunities for health, participation and security and enhances quality of life as people age.

The workplace itself is an environment where 'healthy behaviours' can be fostered. In some cases, changes in health habits may be 'nudged' by making the healthier option the easier choice. With more evidence-based prevention throughout life, and focused interventions, there is no reason why good work and good health should not be within the grasp of most people aged 50 to 70 and beyond.

**By 2020  
one third of the  
workforce will  
be over 50**





County Durham has an ageing population and with fewer young people entering employment there is an increasing need for employers to:

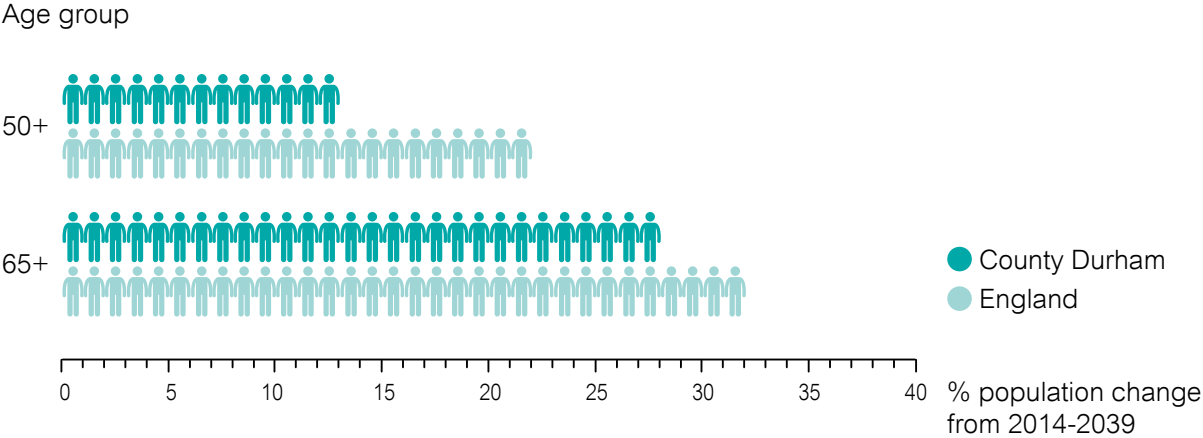
**Retain** - keep older workers and their skills in the workplace through for example flexible working.

**Retrain** - provide ongoing workplace training irrespective of age, and opportunities for mid-life career reviews.

**Recruit** - stamp out age discrimination from the recruitment process.

Employment is varied in County Durham with the majority of businesses being small to medium. With an ageing population it is vitally important that County Durham has a vibrant economy and job opportunities for those in mid-life and into older life. As we are expected to work for longer before retirement good health is a basic requirement. There are many ways we can improve our own health as well as actions employers can take. This report will discuss how work impacts upon health and how we can stay in employment and maximise our health. A joint agreement between yourself and your employer can ensure mid-life is a new beginning and not the beginning of the end.

**County Durham’s estimated aging population**







There are

## **11,760 micro businesses**

employing less than **10 people** in County Durham (**88%**), and **1,585** small to medium enterprises employing between **10 to 249 people (11.9%)**. Around **22,000 people** are self-employed.

## **There are 30 large employers**

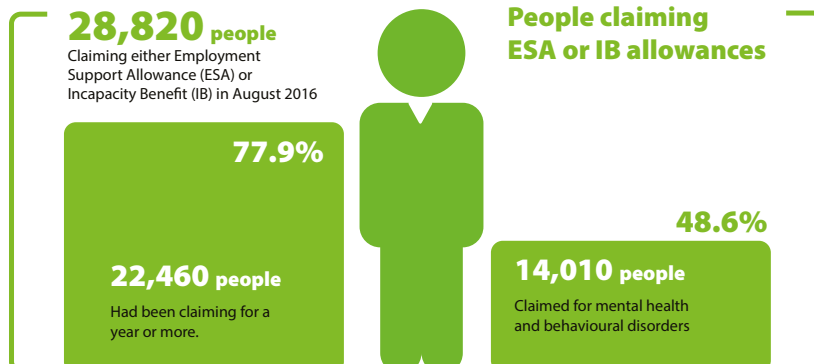
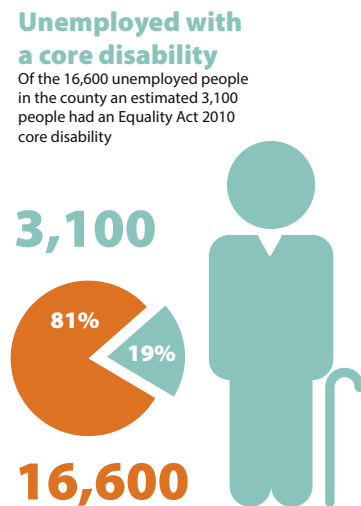
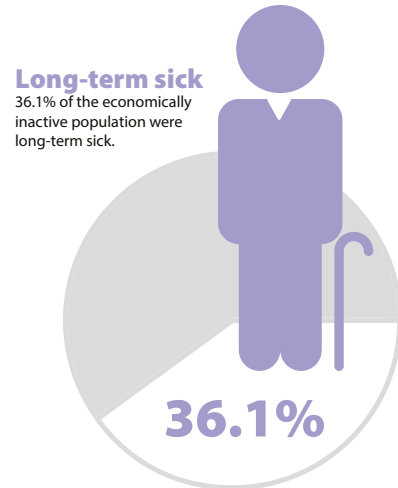
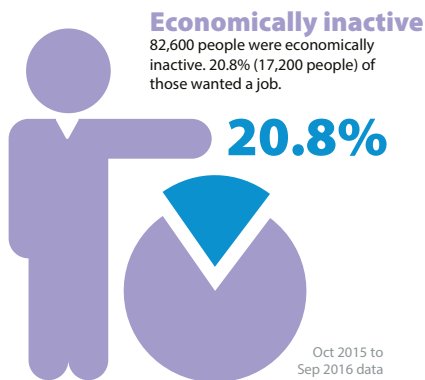
in County Durham with over **250 employees (0.2%)**



# County Durham's working age population (2015 data)

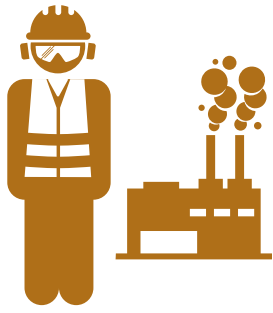


**69.5%** **Employed** 226,400 people **6.8%** **Unemployed** 16,600 people **23.7%** **Others** not registered as unemployed i.e. those in full time education





## Type of employment in County Durham



**Manufacturing industry**  
14.5% of County Durham's total employees are employed in this sector (25,000 people)  
**14.5%**



**Wholesale and retail**  
14.5% of County Durham's total employees are employed in this sector (25,000 people)  
**14.5%**



**Health and social work**  
14.5% of County Durham's total employees are employed in this sector (25,000 people)  
**14.5%**

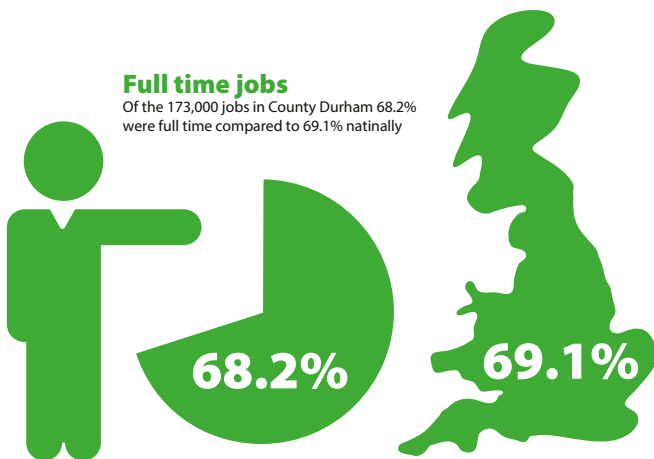
### Workforce education

In 2015, 33.6% of County Durham's workforce had at least a degree-level qualification (NVQ level 4+) compared to the national average of 41%



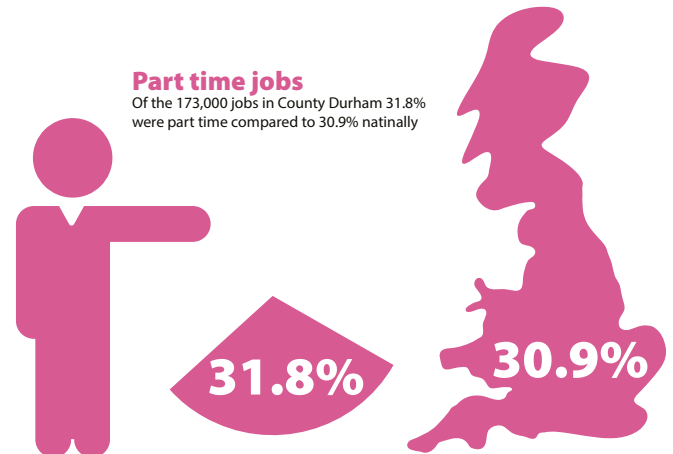
### Full time jobs

Of the 173,000 jobs in County Durham 68.2% were full time compared to 69.1% nationally



### Part time jobs

Of the 173,000 jobs in County Durham 31.8% were part time compared to 30.9% nationally





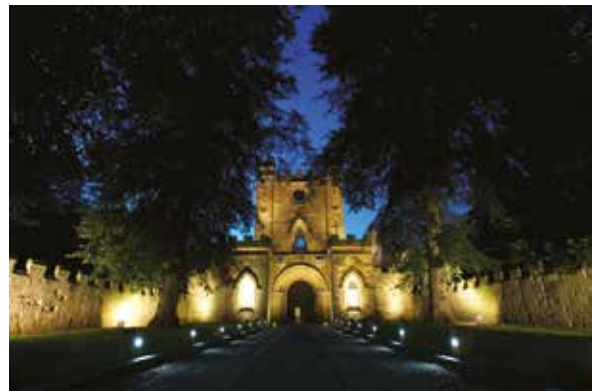


## This is Durham, Place of Light

Durham County Council (DCC) is working to showcase the county as a thriving area to live, work, study and invest as part of a campaign to raise the profile of the county. The campaign utilises the county's place brand, Durham Place of Light, which was developed by Visit County Durham, and shines a light on the outstanding offer the county makes to visitors and residents alike, including the rich and diverse landscape from dales to coast brimming with history and vitality, the plentiful housing options, excellent schools and the vibrant cultural scene, all of which make Durham an exceptional county in which to live and work.

Through an innovative and uniquely supportive approach, which has been widely praised by business leaders, the council is looking to create a better future for those living in the area and working with Business Durham, it is launching a number of innovative projects, which aim to create high volume jobs, generate economic growth and stability for the county.

Through this campaign, the council aims to shine the spotlight on our wonderful county as a place we should all be proud of; building on what is already an exciting and rewarding place for businesses to grow, expand or relocate to and a wonderful place for us all to call home - This is Durham, Place of Light.



*This is*  
**durham**  
*place of light*

Supported by



Shining a light on Durham

## Health and wellbeing at work

Employers in County Durham can and should have an important part to play in helping their workers achieve a good quality of life.

It is essential that employers and employees work together to promote health and wellbeing so that this can have a positive impact in the workplace and help them prepare for future business needs. Proactive employers can create supportive and productive environments to encourage employees to improve health and wellbeing, which in turn brings individual, organisational and wider community benefits.

Being out of work is associated with a range of poor health outcomes.

**The workplace can support health and wellbeing and the health system can actively support people into work in a virtuous circle. Or the workplace can be unsupportive and health and work systems can work against each other.**



On average, employers lose **9.1 working days** per employee per year in the public sector, **8.8 days** in the non-profit sector and **5.7 days** in the private sector to sickness absence.

## Inequalities

Access to work or staying in work is not equal across all groups. 80% of non-disabled people are employed yet only 48% of disabled people and this is one of the most significant inequalities in the UK today. We also know that disabled people from more disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be out of work. For example, while employment rates can be as low as 16% for people with mental health conditions who live in social housing, for disabled people who live in a mortgaged house and who have 1 or 2 health conditions, the employment rate is as high as 80%.

## Workplace wellbeing charter

The workplace wellbeing charter ([www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk](http://www.wellbeingcharter.org.uk)) is an opportunity for employers to demonstrate their commitment to the health and wellbeing of their workforce. The positive impact that employment can have on health and wellbeing is now well documented. There is also strong evidence to show how having a healthy workforce can reduce sickness absence, lower staff turnover and boost productivity.

Organisations of all sizes can use the charter standards. The entry level has been developed as a baseline for all businesses to achieve and acts as a useful checklist for smaller organisations to ensure legal obligations are met. The criterion for small businesses does not involve significant financial investment, and there are lots of free resources and guidance as well as support from local providers.



## Mid-life - One You

Ageing is a normal biological process. It has an effect on many body tissues and organs which reduces your ability to do things. The other consequence of the ageing process is the loss of resilience: not just the loss of ability to do things, but the loss of ability to bounce back and respond when things go wrong.

Broadly speaking, mid-life is between 40-60 years old. Mid-life is a period of physical and mental change for us as individuals. Crisis can occur at any significant life changing event; an illness, a death in the family, or a career setback therefore mid-life should not be defined by the term crisis.

**Mid-life is not the beginning of the end, it's the end of the beginning. But making better choices today can have a huge influence on our health.**

We know that people are able to change, no matter how difficult the environment.

Mid-life is a stage of development not just something that we should cope with.



**One You** ([www.nhs.uk/oneyou](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou)) is an online programme which offers you the opportunity to review your health risks through its How are You quiz. It gives you personalised information and links to services and online apps, that can help you to reduce those risks.

Therefore whether employed in a large organisation or a micro business, the **One You** programme provides advice and guidance about personal health and wellbeing which in turn will impact on health of the workforce.

**BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY ONE YOU**

Mid-lifers have priorities at work, younger children, older parents, mortgages, pensions. Mid-life can be tough, but consideration should be given to what life will look like in 5, 10, 20 years. For many people these challenges lead to loss in looking after themselves, at a point in their lives where actually looking after themselves can help them live longer and healthier and feeling better within weeks.

Older workers (aged 50 - 64) may notice increases in work/health limitations, caring or domestic responsibilities with age. Older workers generally look for flexibility and work/life balance, before trust, recognition and freedom which are a higher priority for younger workers.

Just over one in five workers over 50 years of age are able to stay at work because of flexible working arrangements, such as flexible working hours (flexitime), job sharing or nine-day fortnights. As part of an active ageing approach, flexible working practices, together with consideration of workplace ergonomics, have been shown to promote age diversity in workplaces.

In terms of physical fitness for work, although there are physical changes with age, age itself is a very poor predictor of ability. Yet, individuals still need to take care of their physical and mental health to maintain their capability as they age.



The Strategic Economic Plan for the North East highlights the opportunities to raise productivity through a mixture of skills and training support as well as targeted measures to actively engage as many working age residents in the labour market as possible.





## Strategies for regional growth and raising productivity

While current rates of employment and self-employment for County Durham and the North East are broadly in line with national figures, our ambitions for more and better jobs mean there is a need to ensure we develop comprehensive plans to support the health of the existing workforce while redoubling our efforts to assist those currently inactive or continuing to work whilst managing a health condition.

Balancing the issues of an aging workforce and a complex mix of health conditions, the approach for County Durham and the wider North East is to provide targeted interventions to assist residents to access appropriate labour market opportunities.

Across the North East Combined Authority, councils have secured European and central government funding to provide a mental health trailblazer programme, enhancing the support available with the Talking Changes Service through the provision of specialist mental health employability workers.

Further support for inactive residents to help them access employment has been provided by a European funded programme delivered in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Additional targeted support for those residents wanting to overcome health barriers and move towards work is available through the Reaching Out Across Durham Programme, ([www.disc-vol.org.uk/projects/reaching-across-durham](http://www.disc-vol.org.uk/projects/reaching-across-durham)) jointly funded by Big Lottery and European Structural funds.

The main employment support programme under the existing work programme and work choices is set to end during 2017. The new work and health programme being commissioned by DWP aims to provide comprehensive employment support services for long term unemployed residents with long standing or complex health conditions. With its range of services and delivery outlets the council and its partners will be seeking to extend the service offer to residents across the county.

With such a focus, we will help to deliver prosperity to both individuals and employers, and promote social and financial inclusion.

A national, regional and local ambition to improve employment opportunities and support people back to work and stay in work demonstrates collective working.



**Our  
ambition  
is for more  
and better  
jobs**

## Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

Social value is a way of thinking about how scarce resources are allocated and used. It involves looking beyond the price of each individual contract and looking at what the collective benefit to a community is when a public body chooses to award a contract. Social value asks the question: 'If £1 is spent on the delivery of services, can that same £1 be used to also produce a wider benefit to the community?'

Going forward it is possible for businesses to consider how the social value act could be used to demonstrate how a business wishes to grow and look after their staff's wellbeing which if employing local people is good for County Durham residents.

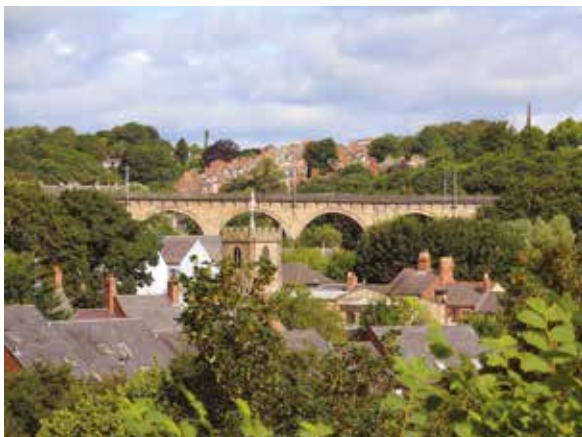
### What Durham County Council are doing

DCC are fully committed to the pursuit of the economic, social benefits and the environmental wellbeing of County Durham and have fully embraced the duties set out in the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. Indeed DCC have applied the duties wider than the legal requirements set out in the act and also consider opportunities for social value via the specification, specific clauses or evaluation criteria for all commissioning and procurement opportunities including goods and works above a spend threshold of £50,000.

The corporate procurement team in DCC has won the national Social Value Leadership Award in recognition of the council's drive to ensure local businesses benefit from its spending, keeping money in the local economy and helping the county's businesses grow.

The procurement planning process for all contracts with a likely value over £50,000 must include a social value appraisal, linked to the core social, environmental and economic topics highlighted in a social value policy statement which is made public so that suppliers can understand the council's priorities and the areas of social value which particularly matter to us. The appraisal allows particular contract-specific social value opportunities to be identified.

In addition, DCC's procurement process is designed to be as fair and accessible as possible to all types of organisation with the intention that SMEs, local suppliers, third sector organisations and social enterprises, as well as groups of small organisations working on a consortium basis, are encouraged to participate.





## Creating healthy workplaces

Good work is good for your health, yet unemployment is bad for your health. A priority must be to reduce long term sickness absence and prevent the downward spiral which can lead to the loss of a valuable skill set to an employer and the risk of worsening health for the individual and in some cases large parts of the community.

There is a known correlation between an ageing population and an increasing prevalence of long-term chronic conditions and multiple health issues. The impact of poor health on work is not inevitable for people at any age. And while many conditions are not preventable, the evidence is clear that the way we live our lives can influence health outcomes.

Currently, 6 out of 10 adults are overweight or obese, nearly 1 in 5 adults still smoke and more than 10 million adults drink alcohol at levels that pose a risk to their health. Public health interventions form a vital part of the health and work agenda to help reduce the prevalence of conditions that can lead to people leaving the labour market due to ill health. The workplace can play an important role in promoting health and minimising risks to health, for example through encouraging staff to take action on obesity.

**6 out of 10 adults are overweight or obese**

**1 in 5 adults still smoke**

**10 million adults drink alcohol excessively**

Reducing levels of smoking among workers will help reduce cardiorespiratory diseases - one of the largest causes of sickness absence.

**On average, a person who smokes will have 33 more hours off sick per year than a non-smoker.**

For an organisation of **1000**, in which **25%** smoke and are paid the national average hourly wage of **£15.52**, this absence equates to a loss of more than **£128,000** a year.

Where an individual experiences health issues, such as a sudden health event or a long-term condition, there is the potential for earlier action to support individuals better to remain active in society and participate in work to retain their financial independence and the health benefits of employment.



## Obesity in the workplace

We consume a third of our daily calories at work, so businesses have an opportunity to create an environment that supports healthier food and drink choices and a healthier workforce.

- **On average, obese workers take four extra sick days per year.**
- There is a relationship between obesity and increased absenteeism from work for health reasons including frequent medical appointments.
- Obesity is also linked with decreased productivity.
- Employees in good health can be three times more productive.



PHE recommend that business implement Government Buying Standards for food and catering services (GBSF) across a range of public settings and facilitate the uptake of nutrition policy tools. The local NHS and local authorities could require providers to do this and promote consistency across hospital and health settings and local businesses.

## The impact of obesity on the workplace

There are physical and mental health impacts including increased risk of:

- Lower back and joint pain (in 2013 more days of sickness absence were attributed to back, neck and muscular pain).
- **Depression. An obese person has a 55% increased risk of developing depression (in 2014/2015 9.9m days were lost to work related stress, depression or anxiety).**
- As well as other conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

By improving the food environment and the opportunities to be physically active, businesses can help their productivity and the health of their workforce.

Public Health England encourages public sector partners to tackle the unhealthy weight environment. Public sector workplaces should support healthier food and drink choices, increase physical activity opportunities and reduce sedentary behaviour and access to energy dense food and drinks.

SME businesses can encourage their local food offer in the high street to be healthy as a two way relationship and community effort to tackle obesity.



## Ways to support and encourage healthier eating in your workplace

To establish a workplace culture which promotes, encourages and supports good nutrition in the workplace, you can:

- Encourage healthier options during the working day.
- Provide choices that are lower in saturated fat, sugar and salt and higher in fibre, fruit and vegetables.
- Put in place a healthy eating policy/ statement to maximise opportunities for staff to make healthier options before, during and after the working day.
- Encourage staff to take regular breaks during the working day so they have opportunities to eat well.
- Bring and share lunch and eat healthier together e.g. soup and share.



Whether the goal is to lose weight or to reduce the risk of disease, the approaches are virtually the same for both.

**ONE  
YOU**

- An easy place to start is to eat less salt and sugar. The sugar smart app from Public Health England is a good way of checking the content of our foodstuffs.
- Eat less saturated fat. Avoid 'trans fat' or hydrogenated fat. It's always on the label.

NHS Choices has a 12 week plan to help you make changes to your diet.

Be aware of your alcohol consumption. Alcohol is high in calories and Dry January could be a useful place to start making changes. Age means we are less resilient and the effects of alcohol are more powerful.

Time pressures, the physical surroundings and the general challenge of work, may make it difficult to eat well at lunchtime. But it is possible to eat well at home and take those tips to work.

- Pay attention to what you eat.
- Don't read or browse the internet whilst eating.
- Eat slowly.
- Use smaller plates.



## Physically active workplaces

Workplaces could encourage employees to be more active as this has significant business benefits.

Physically active employees are:

- **less likely to take sick leave (for example being active can reduce chances of depression by 30% and back pain by 25%).**
- less likely to have an accident at work
- more productive
- less likely to suffer from major health problems



## The impact of inactivity on the workplace

The cost of physical inactivity in England has been estimated at £7.4 billion a year, including the direct costs of treatment for major lifestyle-related diseases and the indirect costs caused through sickness absence. The main cost though is losses to business productivity!

## Physical activity and mental health

Physical activity is also beneficial for mental wellbeing. Benefits include:

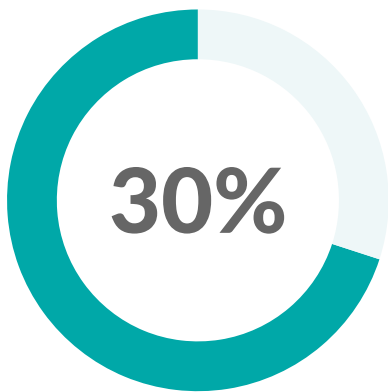
- Reduced feelings of stress.
- Reduced anxiety and happier moods.
- Reduced risk of depression.

## Ways to promote physical activity at work

Getting people more physically active at work can be free or a low cost approach to supporting more active lives.

- Put in place a physical activity policy or statement in order to maximise opportunities for staff to be active during, before and after the working day.
- Encourage physical activity during the working day such as use of stairs and by recommending employees move away from their workstations at least once per hour.
- Explore and implement:
  - Physical activity opportunities in the workplace. Free initiatives could include walking or running groups delivered by volunteers from the workplace or by local clubs.
  - An organisation travel plan which includes physical activity. This may include a cycle to work scheme.
- Encourage all staff to take at least the minimum legally required breaks during their working day.





Being active can reduce chances of depression by 30% and back pain by 25%



## ONE YOU

Many of us could be inactive/ sedentary for 6-8 hours a day. Moving less, increases your risk of many chronic conditions.

Sitting uses one calorie per minute, standing uses two, and that difference can soon add up. An hour a day of sitting rather than standing is 420 calories less used every week.

There are numerous simple ways you can improve your fitness whilst at work.

- Leave your desk at lunchtime for at least 10 minutes of walking.
- Use the stairs rather than the lift. (Seven minutes stair climbing a day can halve the risk of heart attack over 10 years. Just two minutes extra stair climbing a day is enough to stop average middle age weight gain).
- Stand and stretch every hour (if you work at a keyboard).

These can be actioned in any size business and do not detract but adds value to the working day.

Being more active is important at any age. Mid-life is a perfect time to set new goals and ambitions.



## Stress

The stresses of mid-life are not always clear. It can be described as being under too much social or emotional pressure. Modern stress is long term, chronic and can have harmful effects on your mind and body. Compared to women, in general men appear to find discussing these issues more difficult. Mid-life crises can often focus on work related anxieties.

Feeling stress is not a sign of weakness. It is caused by the environment in which we live and there are two aspects of modern life which are particularly harmful: one is pressure under which people live, the other is the fact that many face stress when we are immobile, sitting at a desk.



## The impact of stress in the workplace

Work related stress is a major issue for the UK workforce. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), using information from the Labour Force Survey (LSF), estimates that:

- 35% of all work related ill health cases were attributable to work-related stress and 43% of all ill health working days lost.
- There were 234,000 new cases of work related stress reported in 2014/15 and the total number of work days lost was 9.9 million.
- In 2014-15 around 80% of new work-related conditions were either musculoskeletal disorders or stress, depression or anxiety.

The Health and Safety Executive states that there are strong links between stress and physical effects such as heart disease, back pain, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances or various minor illnesses; and psychological effects such as anxiety and depression, loss of concentration and poor decision making.

Short term acute stress or what might also be described as pressure, can be helpful in coping with new challenges, deadlines or experiences. Chronic stress on the other hand is a serious condition that lasts for weeks or months and, left unmanaged, may cause significant health problems and short and long employee absences.

There are other types of absence which can also be stress related such as chest/respiratory problems, blood pressure, circulatory, colds and flu, neurological issues, anxiety disorders, depression, insomnia and nervous debility. Appreciating and acknowledging the broader range of stress and mental health related conditions provides a more accurate position and understanding of the challenges.



## Smoking and stress

A common misconception is that smoking helps to reduce stress, smokers confuse the desire for nicotine as stress, therefore smoking actually **increases** the physical stress on the body.

Nationally 96,271 days of lost productivity every year due to smoking related sick days, at a cost of £8.6million.

### Ways to reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing

There are a number of ways to improve mental wellbeing and reduce the risk of stress in the workplace. These are:

- Undertake an organisational stress risk assessment.
- Compare the organisation's performance with the 'good management practice' of the Health and Safety Executives Management Standards.
- Focus on risk factors specific to the organisation and its activities.
- Focus on prevention and managing the root causes of work-related stress.
- Develop a stress policy.
- Gather information and data from the organisation such as sickness absence, training records, grievances, civil claims, retention rates, job task analysis etc.
- Consult employees via surveys, focus groups and interviews to explore problems and confirm or challenge initial findings.

**ONE  
YOU**

If you change how you think, you will change how you feel. Thoughts, feelings and physical sensations are all interconnected and negative thoughts can trap a person in a vicious cycle. By breaking problems down into manageable parts it may make them easier to deal with.

Mindfulness is a way of encouraging your mind to spend less time with negative thoughts and more time with positive ones. Some easy to do tips:

- Take a couple of minutes to notice your breathing. Take long, deep breaths for five minutes a day to relax your thoughts.
- Try something new.
- Name your thoughts and feelings when they appear, as this will develop your awareness.

Some people will need some extra help to take things less seriously and worry less about the past and the future. Often speaking to someone may help and the Moodzone on the NHS Choices website keep up to date list of mental health helplines such as:

- Mental Health Foundation - the foundation provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.
- CALM - is the Campaign Against Living Miserably, for men aged between 15 and 35.
- Samaritans - the Samaritans provide confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

### Smokefreelife County Durham

If you smoke and you would like to quit, then smokefreelife County Durham is the free stop smoking service that supports County Durham residents to give up the habit and lead a healthier smokefree life.

For more information visit [www.smokefreelifecountydurham.co.uk](http://www.smokefreelifecountydurham.co.uk)

## Musculoskeletal disorders: the impact in the workplace

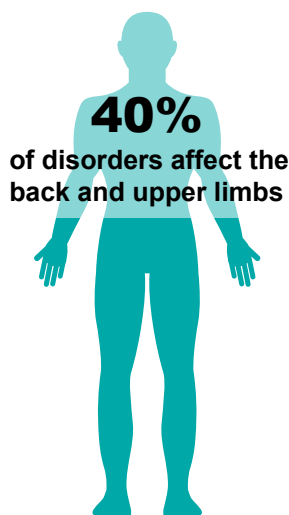
Despite the fact that information and training on preventing chronic injuries is readily accessible nowadays, year after year there is still a rise in cases of work related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs).

Both episodic and chronic cases significantly reduce a person's quality of life and currently affect a sizeable portion of the population.

High rates of WRMSD's relate to workers aged over 45, which is particularly relevant to the ageing workforce of County Durham. Approximately 40% of disorders affect the back and 40% affect the upper limbs.

Transportation and storage, health and social care, agriculture and construction industries have the highest rates of work-related musculoskeletal disorders, but less obvious industries such as cleaning and office work are also at risk.

WRMSD's remain one of the main causes of sickness absence in DCC along with stress. These are particularly prevalent given the manual work related activities and services across County Durham.



# ONE YOU

- Middle aged people are on average weaker than younger people but this loss of strength is more than just aging, it is inactivity.
- Many of the aches and pains in your neck, back, shoulders and hips can be improved by simple stretching exercises. The NHS Choices Strength and Flex Plan is a five week plan designed to build your strength and flexibility without the need for equipment.



## Ways to help and prevent work-related musculoskeletal disorders

In order to prevent or help those suffering from work-related musculoskeletal disorders, you can:

- Undertake a risk assessment and identify where WRMSD's exist.
- Reduce task repetition, force required, duration.
- Find the right working position.
- Introduce short frequent breaks in the more risky activities.
- Train workers so that they feel able to do the task.
- Ensure equipment is maintained and fit for work purposes.
- Provide personal protective equipment.

## Mental wellbeing in the workplace

Of course not all health conditions are static. Many, such as some mental health conditions, fluctuate over time, and affect people differently at different times.

Good employers understand that their organisations are only as good as the staff that work for them. Productive and healthy organisations depend on mentally healthy staff.

## Leadership

Effective leadership and line management training can also contribute to better working environments, reducing stress and improving mental health at work. These aspects are leading causes of sickness absence and will typically be important for improving workplace health.

**With about 1 in 6 employees at any one time experiencing a common mental health problem, being able to appropriately identify and support employees is key to ensuring:**

- An ability to identify people with health conditions (especially to recognise the early signs of mental health problems).
- An ability to support people with health conditions; an understanding that the health and wellbeing of employees is the manager's responsibility.
- Appropriate action to adapt working practices or job roles where necessary.

## Engage and understand your staff

Businesses with high levels of employee engagement have greater staff commitment and are more profitable and productive. This results in improved outcomes in terms of service quality and customer satisfaction.

Involvement and participation at work brings positive benefits including improved mental wellbeing and reduced sickness absence. These types of approaches can include surveys, focus groups and other forms of employee engagement.

## The impact may not be equal

Lower paid workers with fewer skills or qualifications are more likely to experience poorer working conditions and worse health. Measures to improve the quality of work that focus more attention on workers in semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupational groups may help to reduce inequalities in work-related health problems.

Low paid workers with less access to resources at work and at home, often have the lowest levels of control which can impact negatively on their health and wellbeing. Research shows that programmes that aim to increase employees control at work produce positive mental wellbeing and reductions in sickness absence.

NICE estimated that mental ill health costs UK employers almost **£1 million** per year. For an organisation with **1000 employees**, the annual cost of mental ill health was estimated to be more than **£835,000**. Identifying problems early - or preventing them in the first place, could result in cost savings of **30%**. This is equivalent to cost savings of more than **£250,000 per year.**



## Reducing stigma and discrimination around mental health

One in four people will experience a mental health problem in any given year, with one in six people having a significant mental health issue. The Time to Change campaign, which is a national campaign funded by the Department of Health and led by Mind and Rethink, confirmed that stigma and discrimination is all-pervasive, with close to 9 out of 10 service users (87%) reporting its negative impact on their lives (Stigma Shout Survey). Stigma also has other effects, these include:

**Stigma stops people getting and keeping jobs.** People with mental health problems have the highest 'want to work' rate of any disability group - but have the lowest in-work rate. One third report having been dismissed or forced to resign from their job and 70% have been put off applying for jobs, fearing unfair treatment.

**Stigma has a negative impact on physical health.** We know that in general individuals with mental health problems tend to have poorer than average physical health and their physical health problems are often misdiagnosed. As a result, individuals with the most severe mental health problems die on average ten years younger.



Creating an organisational culture that challenges stigma and discrimination and encourages employees to talk openly about mental health in a supportive environment is key to creating a workplace where employees feel comfortable and safe to discuss and raise mental health issues.

### Strategies to achieving this include:

- Signing the Time for Change workplace pledge - any size of organisation can do this.
- Creating employee champions who are essential in challenging stigma and increasing understanding of mental health in their workplaces.
- Developing mental health awareness training for managers and staff to equip them to be able to have helpful and appropriate conversations.
- Sign up as a high street or as a trading estate. There is power and influence by joining forces.

## The Better Health at Work Award

The Better Health at Work Award recognises the efforts of local businesses in addressing health issues within the workplace. The award scheme is available to all businesses/employers in County Durham regardless of size, location or type of business. Reflecting the makeup of organisations in County Durham about two thirds of achievers of the award can be classified as small to medium sized enterprises.

Many businesses already promote healthy lifestyles and consider the health of their employees. This award recognises the achievements of these businesses and helps them to move forward in a structured and supported way. For those businesses who have not considered promoting health at work, taking part in this award helps them reap the rewards of encouraging a healthy workforce.

There are four levels to the award - bronze, silver, gold and continuing excellence, with appropriate criteria at each stage to build into an award portfolio which is assessed annually so that businesses move through a level each year.

There is an active network of employers/businesses participating in the award across County Durham. Employees benefit from increased access to health information and interventions through campaigns designed to engage employees, improve staff morale, reduce sickness levels and maximise productivity in the workplace.



North East  
Better Health  
at Work Award

Financial wellbeing and resilience impacts on the lives of everyone. Being able to survive a financial shock, unexpected bills, and having a financial safety net supports mental and physical wellbeing.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's survey on financial wellbeing found that 19% of respondents are losing sleep at night because they are worried about money. That translates into a negative impact on their ability to concentrate at work and their productivity.

Andrew James LTD, a local County Durham business, recently joined the Better Health at Work Award and embedded an employee salary savings scheme, with NEfirst Credit Union, to encourage staff to save regularly and borrow sensibly and avoid high cost payday lenders, to create a healthier wealthier workforce.

## Healthy living pharmacy

A healthy living pharmacy (HLP) delivers a broad range of high quality services through community pharmacies to meet local need, improving the health and wellbeing of the local population and helping to reduce health inequalities.

Since the beginning of 2015, the better health at work award team and the healthy living pharmacy award team have been working together to share ideas, resources, and encourage joint working between businesses and HLPs in a local area. Joint working between local HLPs and businesses can include pharmacy staff visiting the business in order to support a health promotion campaign e.g. Stoptober or Dry January.

HLPs have so far engaged with businesses to attend health roadshows (e.g. with Derwentside Homes, the HMRC, and Deerbolt prison), advise on specific health issues (e.g. stop smoking support or flu vaccination), and make active ongoing links (e.g. with Hitachi).



**Visit your local healthy living pharmacy and discuss support options for a workplace health campaign.**

## What is a Healthy living pharmacy?







## NHS Health Check

NHS Health Check is a national programme that aims to prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease, and raise awareness of dementia both across the population age 40 - 74 and within high risk and vulnerable groups.

The risk level varies from person to person, but everyone is at risk of developing heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, kidney disease and some types of dementia.


While a NHS Health Check is usually done in GP surgeries, they may also be offered at other suitable and accessible places in your neighbourhood.

They may be able to be delivered within or near offices, trading estates or business parks and provide an opportunity for measuring the risk of developing certain health problems, and importantly the advice on how to prevent them.



Sickness absence in Britain costs the economy an estimated **£15 billion per year**. This includes lost productivity/output, time spent on sickness absence management and healthcare.





**“Small changes to improve the health of smaller businesses employees make huge differences in the workplace. Making these small step changes in every day working will help improve the productivity of the workforce and reduce absenteeism.**

**“We’re recommending that all smaller businesses across County Durham take on board some of the simple ways workplace health can be improved.**

**“We’ll be working with federation of small business members, smaller businesses and Durham County Council to ensure we achieve the ambitions in the report.”**

Ted Salmon, Federation of Small Business North East Regional Chairman

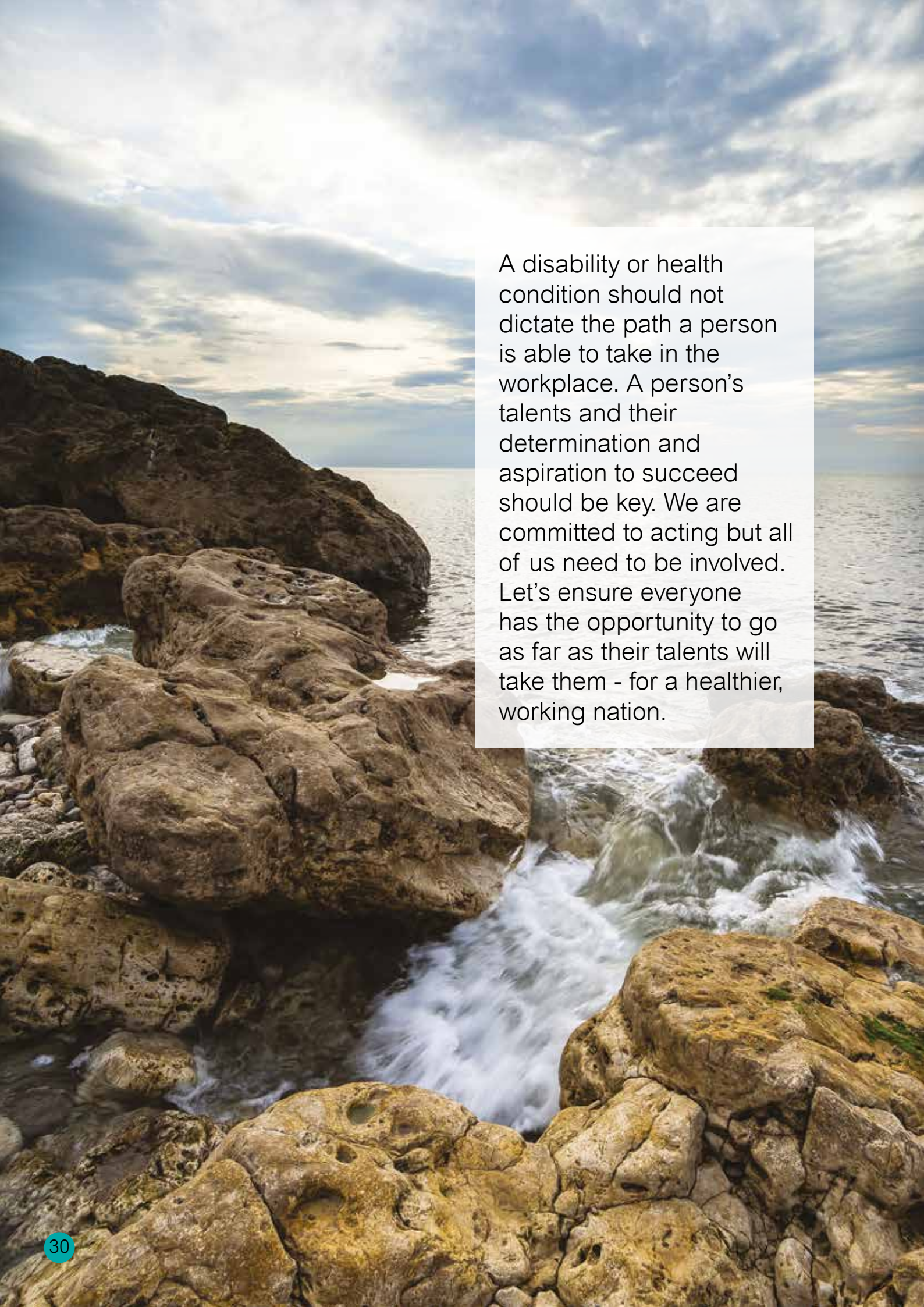


## Campaign calendar

Why not help motivate and support your workforce to make and sustain changes that improve their health by participating in these national campaigns?

January	February	March	April
<p><b>Dry January</b> Bid booze goodbye, keep January dry.</p> <p>Take the 31 day challenge - find out more at <a href="http://www.DryJanuary.org.uk">www.DryJanuary.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>One You - healthy eating</b> What you eat, and how much, is so important for your health and your waistline. Choosing healthier foods is easier than you might think.</p> <p>Find out more by searching One You.</p>	<p><b>Stroke Act F.A.S.T.</b> Can you recognise the symptoms of a stroke?</p> <p>Even if you are not sure, act FAST, make the call, dial 999.</p>	<p><b>Stress and you</b> There's no quick-fix cure for stress, but there are simple things you can do to help you stress less. These include relaxing, exercise, eating a healthy and balanced diet, and talking to someone.</p> <p>Find out more by searching One you/stress.</p>
May	June	July	August
<p><b>One You - physical activity</b> Fitting some physical activity into your day is easier than you think. Being active is really good for your body, mind and health - and there are lots of easy ways you and your family can get moving! Find out more by searching One you/moving</p>	<p><b>Be clear on cancer</b> Aim to improve early diagnosis of cancer by raising awareness of signs and/or symptoms of cancer, and to encourage people to see their GP without delay.</p>	<p><b>Couch to 5k</b> The Couch to 5K plan is designed to get just about anyone off the couch and running 5km in nine weeks.</p> <p>Find out more at <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell">www.nhs.uk/Livewell</a></p>	<p><b>Be clear on cancer</b> Aim to improve early diagnosis of cancer by raising awareness of signs and/or symptoms of cancer, and to encourage people to see their GP without delay.</p>
September	October	November	December
<p><b>Time for change</b> 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in any given year.</p> <p>Let's change the way we all think and act about mental health. Search Time to change.</p>	<p><b>Stoptober</b> Research shows that smokers who make it to 28 days smokefree are 5 times more likely to stay quit for good. Search 'Stoptober' online to find out about a range of free and proven support available to help you start your quitting journey for 28 days and beyond.</p>	<p><b>Get your flu jab</b> Don't put off getting the flu vaccination. If you're eligible get it now. It's free because you need it. Visit <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/staywell">www.nhs.uk/staywell</a> for more information.</p>	<p><b>Stay well this winter</b> If you start to feel unwell, even if it is just a cough or cold, don't wait until it gets more serious, get help from your pharmacist. The sooner you get advice the better - pharmacists are here to help you stay well this winter. Visit <a href="http://www.nhs.uk/staywell">www.nhs.uk/staywell</a> for more information.</p>



A scenic view of a rocky coastline. The foreground is dominated by large, rugged, brownish-yellow rocks. In the middle ground, waves are crashing against the rocks, creating white foam. The background shows a calm sea meeting a cloudy sky at the horizon. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, suggesting an overcast day.

A disability or health condition should not dictate the path a person is able to take in the workplace. A person's talents and their determination and aspiration to succeed should be key. We are committed to acting but all of us need to be involved. Let's ensure everyone has the opportunity to go as far as their talents will take them - for a healthier, working nation.

There will be many initiatives and activities taking place across County Durham and being progressed by a whole range of partners. The recommendations below hopefully build on your local business priorities and provide some new ideas for you to explore.

## Recommendations

- Mid-life is a place to start not stop. Complete the One You quiz and take it from there.
- If you are a large employer then sign up for the Better Health at Work Award today. All 30 employers in County Durham with 250+ staff should be leading the way to improve the health of their staff. Showcase your work and celebrate your achievements.
- Any small/medium business can also sign up for the Better Health at Work Award either as a cluster of work places or individually.
- Follow the monthly health promoting tips and advice on on the Federation of Small Businesses twitter feed and tell us if it is making a difference. Add to the Work and You story for County Durham.
- Go to your local healthy living pharmacy and ask if they will support you with some health campaigns this year for your staff. They will say yes!

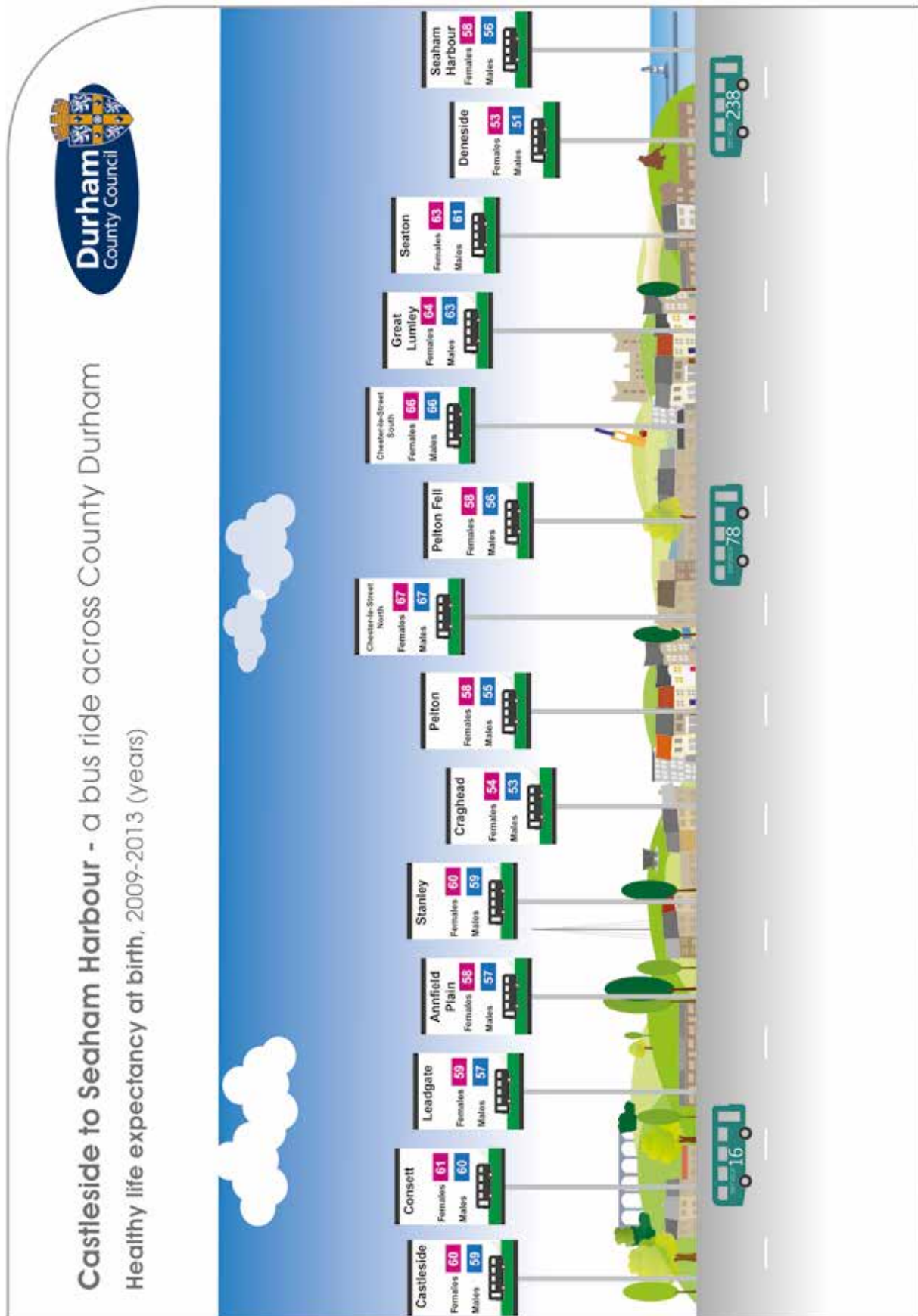
## You could also consider these approaches:

- Micro business, think about 'Work and You', what could improve your own health and wellbeing?
- Considering putting a tender in for a contract? How could you best utilise the social values section to improve the health and wellbeing of residents in County Durham. Remember small businesses are likely to employ local people.
- Think community - you don't have to do this as a stand-alone business. Work as a high street to improve the food and activity offer for your staff. It will benefit the local community too.
- Time to Change. We would all benefit from looking after our mental health. Pledge to time for change and eradicate stigma.
- Talk to your staff and find out what good health means to them. Take a moment to pause and talk to each other. Work is so important for social connections.
- Primary care colleagues could consider how the impact of work can be brought into consultation conversations. Keeping people in work will help the NHS and social care. It will save the local economy money.
- Consider flexible working arrangements for staff and try to retain, retrain and recruit.
- Lead by example and take care of your own health.

*References available on request.*



# Appendix 1

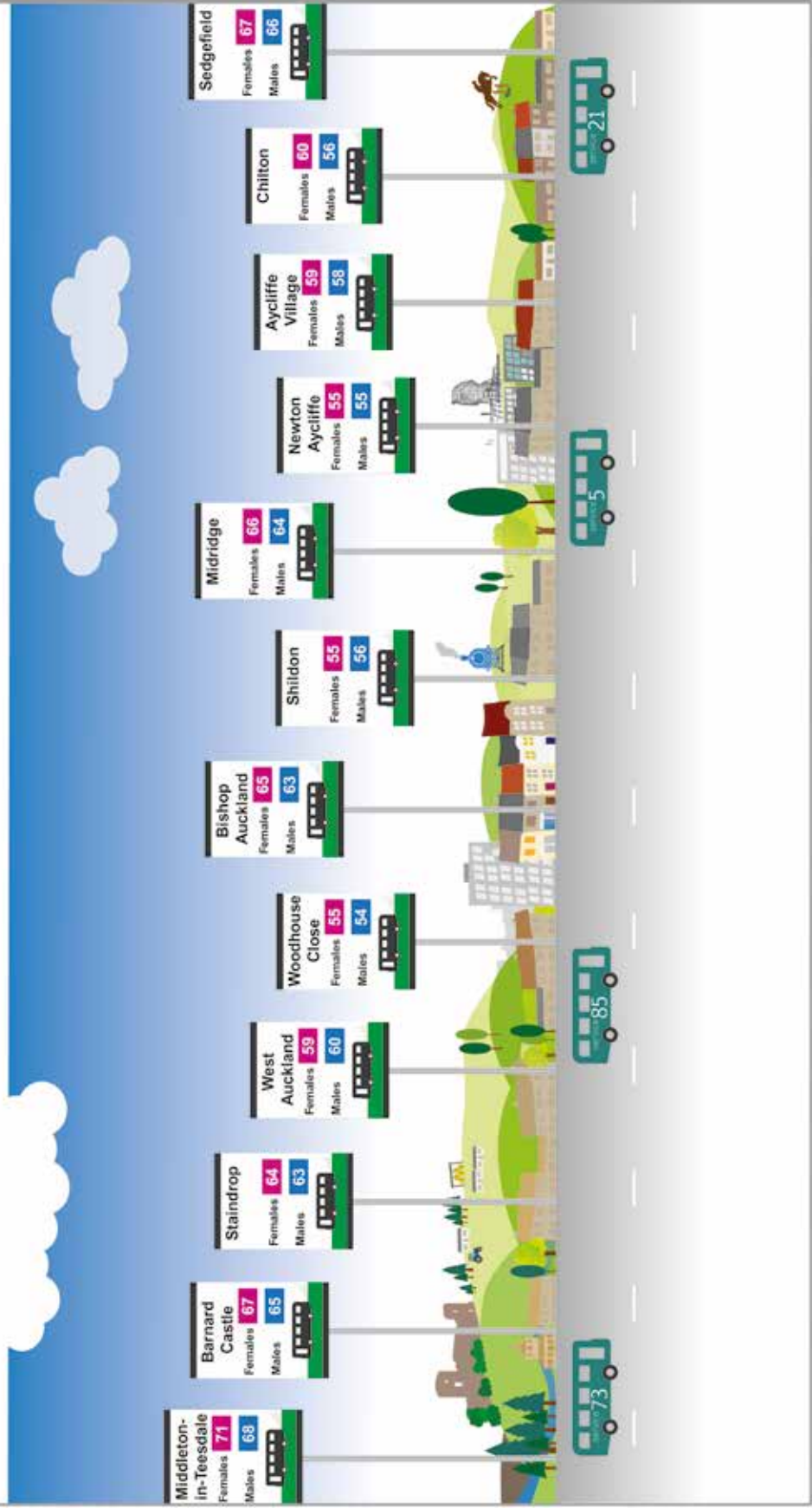






# Middleton-in-Teesdale to Sedgefield - a bus ride across County Durham

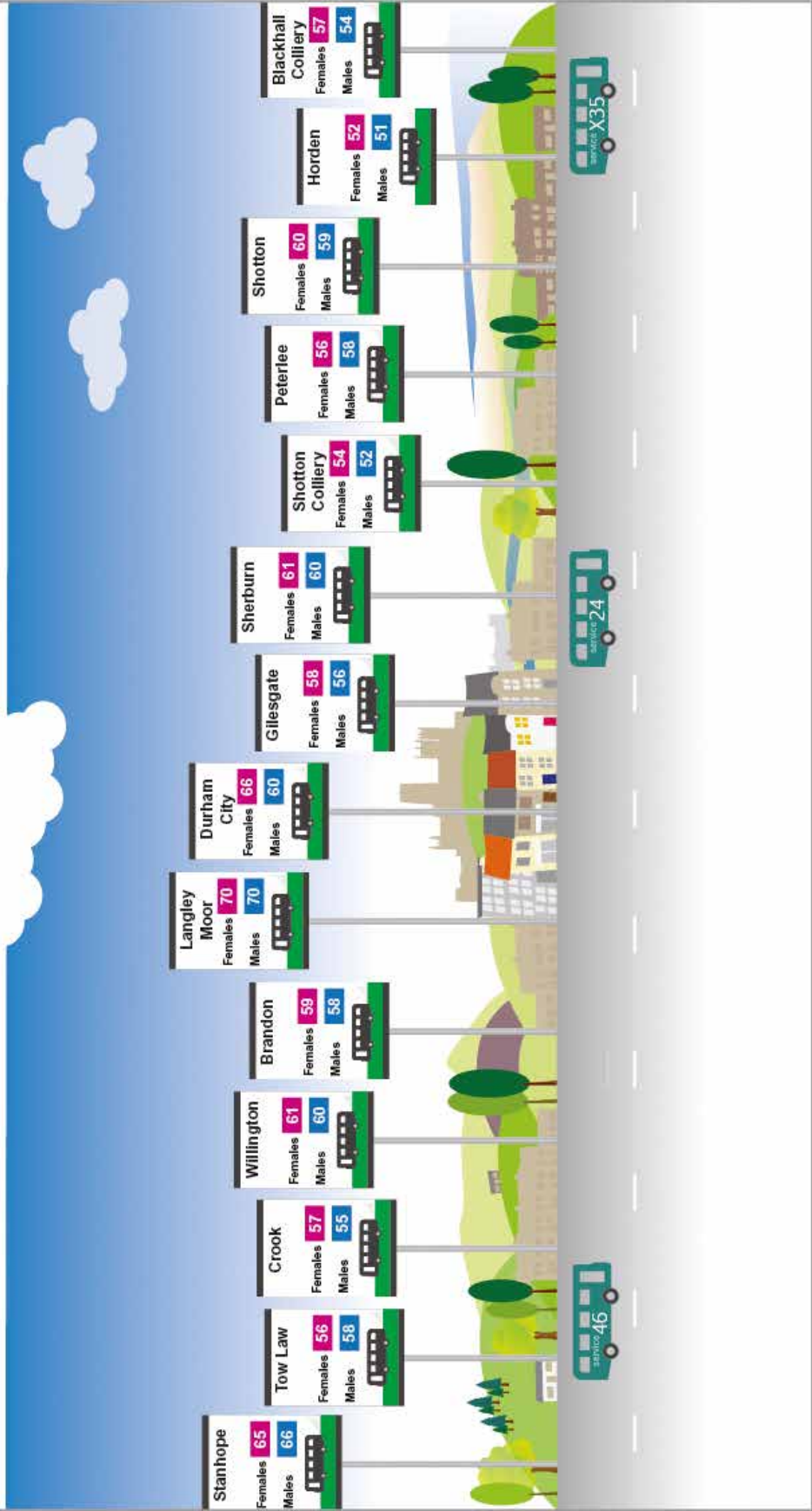
Healthy life expectancy at birth, 2009-2013 (years)





# Stanhope to Blackhall Colliery - a bus ride across County Durham

Healthy life expectancy at birth, 2009-2013 (years)



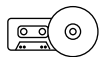




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