

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2021-2025



Better for everyone

Easy read version

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What is the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy includes the most important health, social and wellbeing needs in County Durham for the next 4 years, and more importantly, how we plan to make County Durham a healthy place to live, so people live well for longer.

The council and other organisations such as those who buy or provide health services, social care and other services for people, work together to prepare the Strategy. This group is called the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Health and Wellbeing Board collects lots of information about people's health in County Durham. This information is then compared with the rest of the North East of England and then all of England.

That tells us if we have worse or better health than other parts of England, so we can see where we need to do extra work. When we know where we need to do extra work, it is prioritised and included in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

What do we know about health in County Durham?

We know:

- That people are healthier if they live in some parts of County Durham rather than in others
- That some people are not as healthy as people living in other parts of England
- That lots of things can help to make people healthy or unhealthy such as; where they live, their education, their home,

the food they eat, money they have, family, friends, communities and jobs.

This was getting better, less people were smoking, more schools were helping children to be fitter by doing the 'Active 30' exercises, there were more 'Dementia Friendly Communities', and more people were going to appointments to check for cancers.

Unfortunately, the Coronavirus Pandemic, called Covid-19 has meant that some of these things have got worse for some people because of the virus itself, and also because of the lockdown restrictions, making it harder for people to get out and about and be with family and friends.

It is important for us to work with people in our communities (patients, service users, carers and the public) to make sure that what we put in place works for them, and that they can help to support each other.

We also need people and communities to know how important it is to take care of their own health and wellbeing and where they can go for help or activities, such as local community centres, leisure centres, parks and open spaces.

So, it is important that we continue to work with everyone who can help, including schools, housing providers and local communities so that people in County Durham are healthier in the future.

Our approach to wellbeing

People's wellbeing is very important and is often measured by 'how well we are doing' or 'how satisfied we are with our lives'.

As well as our health, the things that affect our wellbeing include; our relationships; our work and finances; taking part in sport, culture and

community events; where we live; how safe we feel; and the services we can access.

We feel that people's wellbeing is so important to their lives that we want to measure this in the same way as we measure how strong the economy is in County Durham.

We know that there are lots of good things in communities (assets) which can help people and their communities to be strong, build their spirits, help make them ready for change, and protect them against challenges to their health or wellbeing.

Since 2009, we have been engaging communities and sharing decision making through Area Action Partnerships to give people a voice in how local services are provided. We know that this can make a difference. We want to build on this approach to do more work with local communities to improve the wellbeing of residents.

We will use this approach to wellbeing and by working with communities, turn our County Durham Vision into a reality. We plan to:

- Designed and produce solutions with service users
- Work with communities, support their development and give them a voice
- Acknowledge that the needs of our communities might be different across County Durham, and build on their potential strengths
- Target our work to make the biggest difference to people who are most vulnerable and help to build strength (resilience)
- Deliver services and support to meet the person's needs, and help to make them stronger
- Help agencies work together efficiently to get the best results for our communities.

Main areas of work

We think it's important to help people throughout their whole lives and support them to help themselves. So, we will look at three parts of people's lives, which are:

- Starting Well
- Living Well
- Ageing well.

See below for how we will do this over the next five years.

Starting Well

Starting well in life begins with a baby's mother being healthy before the baby is born. We know that what happens in the early years of a child's life, can have a good or bad effect on their health and happiness as they grow older, such as, being a healthy weight.

Some children and their families may need extra help, so we will give support to those who need it most.

We will work with, and listen to what young people, their carers and their families tell us to make our services better.

We will work to:

- Support women not to smoke when they are pregnant
- Develop a Health and Wellbeing Framework for schools to improve the health of children
- Make it easier for children to eat healthily, starting with mothers being supported to breastfeed.
- Encourage young people to be physically active
- Use technology to help young people access services

Living Well

We know that good jobs, healthy environments, good housing and being able to help others, helps to make people healthier and happier.

In some parts of County Durham, where people have less chances of having good jobs, good housing or healthy places around them, more people may become ill or die than in other places in the County. We want to stop that happening and we want people to want to have long and healthy lives.

We know that where people live, their family, where they work or socialise can have a powerful influence on their health. So, it is important that the places people go, like work, schools, community centres and doctors surgeries are very positive about good health.

When people make healthy choices, like not smoking, it can also help to make their friends, families and people in their communities lives better.

Having a health condition can make it more difficult for people to find a suitable job, so we will offer extra help where necessary.

We will work to:

- Make it easier and safer for people to cycle, walk or use public transport
- Make peoples homes dry and warm so that they have less breathing problems and are happier
- Support people to stop smoking
- Help people make healthy choices, like '5 a day' around eating fruit and vegetables, and exercising more
- Help people to manage their own health conditions as appropriate, and understand where the best place to find support is.

Ageing Well

The number of older people living in County Durham is growing every year.

As people get older, they are more likely to become ill, sometimes with more than one thing. So, we will help people to make changes that help them to stay healthy from conditions such as cancer, heart disease and respiratory conditions.

Older people are more likely to have dementia and many suffer from depression and can become lonely or not feel part of their community.

The good news is that many of these conditions are preventable or at least can be delayed, with the right care and support.

We will help our older people to stay independent and to lead lives with meaning and purpose and when the time comes, we will provide good quality end of life care.

We will make sure that our health and social care services work well together to benefit older people.

We will work to:

- Help people to live at home for longer
- Identify dementia as early as possible
- Make sure people have choices at the end of their life and have a good death
- Help communities come together to reduce social isolation and loneliness

We want to make sure that by 2025:

- More people living in County Durham are living healthier lives for longer, like in other parts of England.
- We have a smoke free environment with over 95% of our residents not smoking and pregnant women and mothers will avoid smoking.
- More people with long-term health conditions, learning disabilities or mental health issues are able to get a job they want.
- 9 in every 10 children aged 4-5 years and 8 in every 10 children aged 10-11 are a healthy weight.
- More residents will be telling us they feel well and we will have less suicides.
- More employers help their staff to be healthier by doing what the Better Health at Work Award says.

What will be in place to make this happen

- Make health and wellbeing everyone's business
- Promote key health messages
- Agencies working together efficiently to get the best results for our communities
- Provide high quality and safe health and wellbeing services
- Excellent communications and information sharing across partners and communities
- Use resources to help people remain as independent as possible
- Work with the whole family including carers and not just the person who needs help (Think Family)

- Use the best information and evidence when deciding what is a priority
- Target resources to improve health and wellbeing for those who are most in need
- Work with local communities, patients, service users, carers and the public to plan how health and wellbeing services should be delivered
- Encourage people and communities to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing
- Use local services and buildings where possible
- Train staff so they have the right knowledge, skills and competencies
- Everyone has the same opportunities to access health and social care services

When the Health and Wellbeing Board developed the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25, we thought about the impact Covid-19 had on communities and services.

The strategy says how we will work together to recover from the pandemic.