

# Building Healthier, Fairer and Protected Lives



Building blocks for good health

## Contents

	Page
Foreword.....	4
Health and wellbeing across County Durham .....	6
Living with COVID-19 .....	14
Making smoking history .....	18
Priorities .....	24
Update on recommendations from 2021 .....	28
Conclusion .....	30

## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to

Michelle Baldwin – Public Health Strategic Manager  
Julia Bates – Consultant in Public Health  
Katie Bewick – Public Health Advanced Practitioner  
Sean Barry – Public Health Advanced Practitioner  
Julie Bradbrook – Partnerships Team Manager  
Katie Dunstan-Smith – Public Health Intelligence Specialist  
Joy Evans – Public Health Strategic Manager  
Michael Fleming – Strategic Manager, Research and Intelligence  
Diane Foster – Public Health Practitioner  
Thelma Lambert – Regional Support Officer  
Lisa Lynch – Public Health Programme Manager  
Michelle Marley – Public Health Advanced Practitioner  
Bryn Morris-Hale – Public Health Intelligence Specialist  
Hannah Murray-Leslie - Wellbeing Approach Implementation Officer  
Helen Riddell – Public Health Advanced Practitioner  
Catherine Scott – Public Health Advanced Practitioner  
Jane Sunter – Public Health Strategic Manager  
Rebecca Turner – Business Partner, Communications and Marketing  
Marie Urwin – Public Health Practitioner  
Kirsty Wilkinson – Public Health Strategic Manager  
Lucy Wilkins – Public Health Practitioner  
Glen Wilson – Consultant in Public Health  
Partner organisations and everyone who contributed to a case study  
Corporate Design Team, Durham County Council





Amanda Healy

## Foreword

Welcome to my Annual Report for 2022, my fifth report as Director of Public Health for County Durham. It is my role as Director of Public Health to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people in County Durham, with this at the forefront of public health practice and the wider systems we lead and support on.

2022 has been a year of transition as we began to move from responding to COVID-19 to living with COVID-19 as safely as possible, take stock of the impact of the pandemic and re-focus the public health priorities. These are all covered in the report with examples of how our local residents and staff across all agencies have carried out this transition.

My annual report this year, as always, provides insight to the health and wellbeing of our residents and reflects the work we are doing to support people in living longer, healthier lives. This includes a focus on tobacco and the need to focus our efforts on making smoking history in County Durham.

We are living longer than ever before however this is not the same for everyone. The social and environmental conditions in which we are born, grow up and live with do not give us all an equal chance. 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 all impact on our chances of living a long and healthy life. These are the 'building blocks' of good health.

Data, intelligence, and the reported lived experiences of our County Durham residents have highlighted the stark differences in health between some of our communities across the county, many of which existed even before the pandemic. We use the term 'inequalities' to talk about these differences. Some inequalities have worsened since the pandemic and, in this report, we also begin to highlight the wider impact the pandemic has had on widening inequalities. For example, in County Durham, children and young people may have been less likely than adults to contract the COVID-19 infection but have lost around 30% of school sessions. During the pandemic, the numbers of those children eligible for free school meals increased by 5.4%. Due to inequalities like these and others, we know it will be harder for some children to catch up.

In some parts of County Durham, these inequalities also mean that some people are dying much earlier than they should, from things that could be prevented. Even in those shortened lives, people are spending more time living with illness and disability which affect their quality of lives. This is unfair and unjust. In refocussing on the building blocks for good health we can seek to address these inequalities.

People want to live for as long as they can, with the best quality of life that they can. Good health is a foundation for living long and independent lives. In aiming to protect people's health and wellbeing so they can live for as long as they can, support people to be healthier so they can live their years in the best health possible and work to make systems fairer so everyone, no matter who they are or where they live, has an equal chance of living a long and healthy life.

By working together to increase opportunity and choice for people, we can improve health, reduce inequalities and ensure no-one is left behind. Reducing inequalities is not easy and it requires sustained focus and a fundamental rethink on how we allocate our resources, funding, workforce and services. It needs the building blocks for good health.

No work to improve public health can be achieved without working with others, our partners and most importantly our local communities. My role as Director of Public Health is about working on behalf of local communities and the elected members who represent those communities. The report has many examples of the work that is being carried out to make lives healthier, fairer and protected and I hope you find the report informative and a reminder of how health and wellbeing underpins everyone's life.

**Amanda Healy**

Director of Public Health

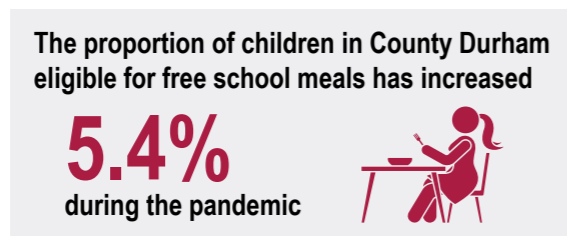
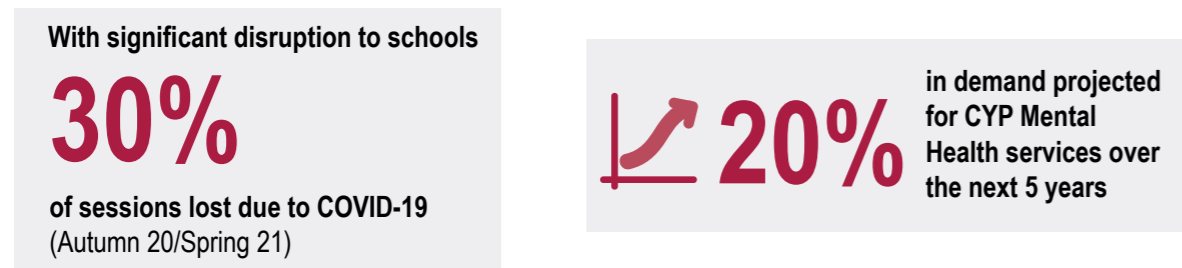


## Health and wellbeing across County Durham

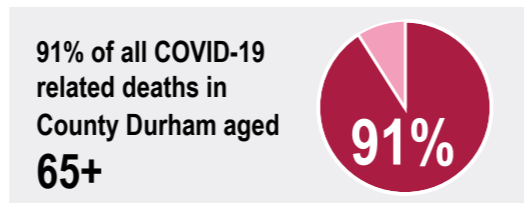
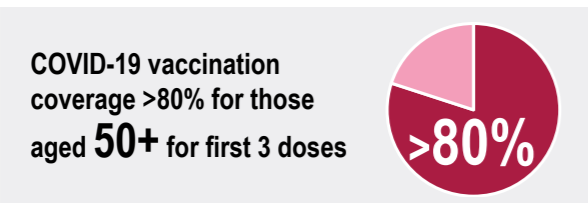
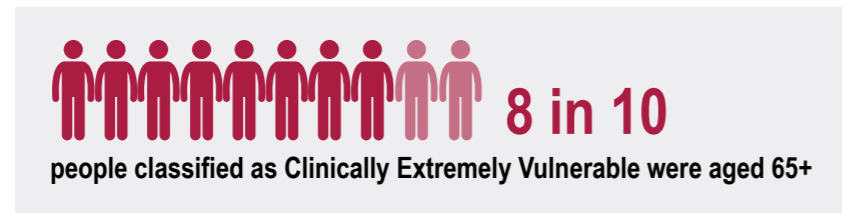
### The impact of COVID-19 on our population

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had, and continues to have, a profound impact on the health and wellbeing of residents of County Durham. This year has, however, seen us move to the next phase of the pandemic to 'Living Safely with COVID-19'. Over the last year and beyond, the detailed direct and indirect effects of the pandemic on the situation for our communities in County Durham have continually been examined and developed into a comprehensive knowledge base.

Children and young people have been less affected than other age groups by coronavirus infection itself, but have been disproportionately impacted by the social, educational and economic impacts of the pandemic



Older people are more likely to experience severe COVID-19 infection, hospitalisation and mortality



## Developing insight and intelligence for County Durham

Public Health projects and interventions are evidence-led. This means we use health data, health intelligence and wider partner data to inform and underpin our understanding of our local communities to help us plan and work with communities to improve health. This data and information is collated into a series of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA). Where we can, we share this information publicly through Durham Insight (<https://www.durhaminsight.info/covid-19/>) and it includes;

- the current and future health and wellbeing needs of local people
- the inequalities in our communities
- what is strong and good in our communities

Partners and communities also used this information to help strategic planning across the council and partnerships which helps informs the development and improvement of local services.

We have refreshed our JSNA work programme in 2022 and the Durham Insight website continues to be developed and improved. In the coming year, we will be looking specifically at publishing assessments and recommendations on Healthy Ageing and Veterans Health and Wellbeing.

### Where we live, our services and our communities

There are many challenges to health and wellbeing especially as we move towards living with COVID-19. County Durham has many assets that can support and protect the health of our 530,000 residents. Moreover, throughout the pandemic communities have worked together and alongside us to both strengthen existing assets and develop new ones. Some of these are set out below:

<p><b>Where we live:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14,565 businesses</li> <li>• 12 green flags for parks and open spaces</li> <li>• 2 in 5 residents living in rural areas</li> <li>• 12 miles of coastline</li> <li>• 150 miles or former railway path</li> <li>• Durham world heritage site</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 223 early years and primary schools, 31 secondary schools, 4 colleges</li> <li>• 9 enhanced mainstream schools and 11 special schools</li> <li>• 1 university</li> <li>• 15 council owned leisure centres</li> <li>• 63 GP practices</li> <li>• 124 pharmacies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Our Communities supporting each other:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 411 sports clubs accessing support</li> <li>• 59 active community champions</li> <li>• Almost 2,000 expressions of interest to host Ukrainian refugees</li> <li>• Around 115 active volunteer leaders in walking, running and cycling</li> <li>• 600 people attending sessions ran by the Cree* network last year</li> <li>• Over 3,000 VCS* organisations</li> </ul>
---	--	---

\*A Cree is County Durham's version of Australia's Men's Shed. Crees aim to engage with those at risk of suicide by tackling social isolation and self-harm through skill-sharing and informal learning to promote social interaction. Although Crees were originally aimed at men, some have developed for women and young people.

\* VCS voluntary and community sector organisation.



## The health and wellbeing of our residents

Public Health aims to protect people's health and wellbeing so they can live for as long as they can, and to support people to be healthier so they can live their years in the best health possible. So, how are we currently doing?

The health and wellbeing of the people in County Durham has improved over recent years but remains worse than the England average. Health inequalities remain persistent and pervasive. Levels of deprivation are higher and life expectancy is lower than the England average. There is also inequality within County Durham for many measures (including life expectancy, childhood obesity and premature mortality for example).

## We want all people to have the best length of life and quality of life that they can

Girls and boys born in County Durham today can expect to live 81.2 years and 77.7 years respectively. This is significantly worse than the average life expectancy for England which is 83.1 years for girls and 79.4 years for boys. However, people are spending years living with illness and disability which affects the quality of their lives. We want all people to have the best length of life and the best quality of life that they can. In County Durham healthy life expectancy is significantly shorter than the England average. Healthy life expectancy is the number of years an individual can expect to live in good health, rather than with a disability or in poor health. Locally for girls it is 59.9 years compared to 63.9 years for England. For boys the figures are 58.8 years locally and 63.1 years for England.

### Life Expectancy and Healthy Life Expectancy 2018-20



## We want all people to live as long as they can

In County Durham the life expectancy for some girls and boys born today is much less than others. There are unfair and unjust inequalities which shorten life in some of our communities.

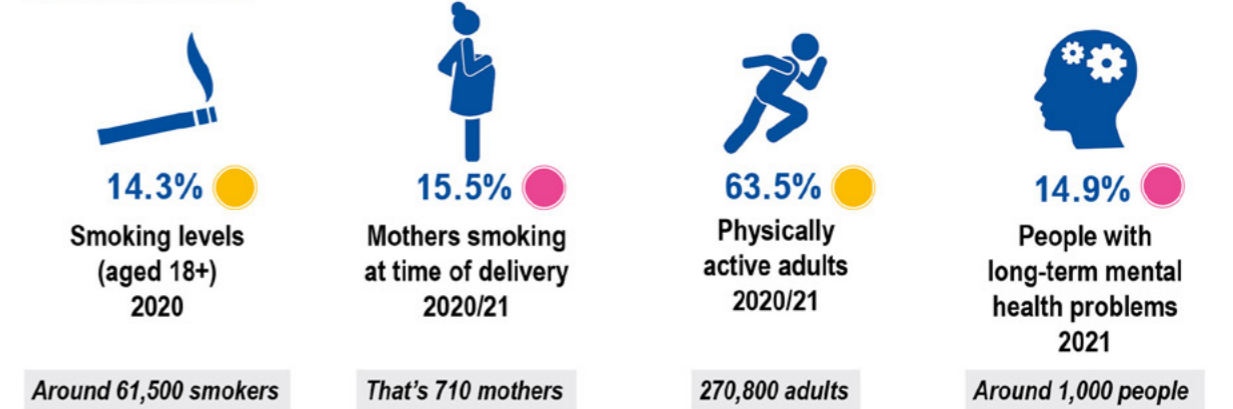
### Inequality in Life Expectancy 2018-20



## How we contribute to good health and wellbeing and improving life expectancy

Working together, there are things we can do to help address inequalities and increase the years people spend in good health. In line with our Public Health Strategic Plan, we have broken these things into three areas of our work, Healthier, Fairer and Protected lives. As examples of how we are doing in County Durham, we have chosen some health-related topics from each area and shown how our figures in County Durham compare with the England average (where that figure is Nationally available).

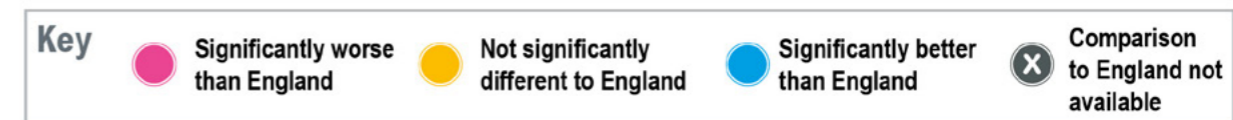
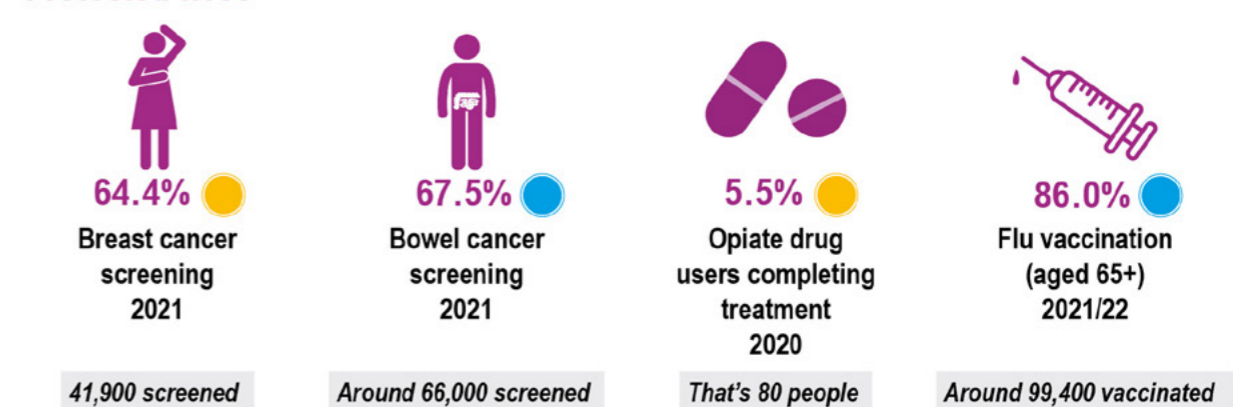
### Healthier lives



### Fairer lives



### Protected lives



## Developing our Approach to Wellbeing

The County Durham Approach to Wellbeing as outlined in last year's DPH report, is how we work together to put communities at the heart of local decision making. The Approach to Wellbeing has developed over a period of years. To help us build on the best elements of this work, the approach was evaluated over three years by Teesside University and the findings published in April 2022. Key recommendations include:

- Building on the Community Champions model, as an effective vehicle for implementing the Approach to Wellbeing
- Developing a combination of training and other measures to place the approach at the heart of our work
- Developing practical ways to support a clear understanding of how Approach to Wellbeing can support better outcomes for communities
- Creating consistent and standardised monitoring of wellbeing within County Durham, piloting the use of established measures of wellbeing (e.g., the 'ONS4')\*.



In response to the evaluation feedback, we have created a Self-Assessment Framework (SAF) to help us reflect and develop; developed a suite of resources and case studies demonstrating practical ways to use the Approach to Wellbeing (which will be available on the County Durham Partnership website soon) and continued to embed the Approach to Wellbeing into local work.

Over 2021/22 we have continued to develop our work together with communities, known as co-producing. Next steps include looking at how we continue to develop the Community Champions roles, developing our co-production approaches further and exploring how we can measure the wellbeing of our residents more effectively.

Here are some examples of how our co-production work and our Approach to Wellbeing are helping put communities at the heart of local decision-making.

\* [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/methodologies/personalwellbeingsurveyuserguide](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/methodologies/personalwellbeingsurveyuserguide)

## County Durham Together

From the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the County Durham Together (CDT) community hub was established to provide support to vulnerable people during the pandemic, particularly those who were shielding or self-isolating. The hub also provided residents with vital information, support and advice throughout the pandemic. CDT has since supported over 10,000 people in County Durham.



In moving to living with COVID-19, we recognised that many of these positive support systems and ways of working were a good model for providing services, especially as local communities were so involved in shaping delivery.

The 2021 Director of Public Health (DPH) annual report recognised this good work, and reflected that working together in a co-production, community-centred way puts communities at the heart of decision making; 'working with' residents and communities rather than 'doing to' them. We also recognised that working together as a whole system is also more effective for partners, enabling the best use of resources and avoiding duplication.

CDT has become central to our partnership work with statutory organisations, working hand in hand with the voluntary and community sector and mutual aid groups to deliver services and support. CDT now builds on this existing good practice and community assets in local areas.

To further shape the service to enable improved opportunities and better outcomes for our communities, the 2021 DPH annual report recommended that we implement the 'County Durham Together transformation programme', which is now underway. We'll continue this work as part of our recommendations for the forthcoming year.



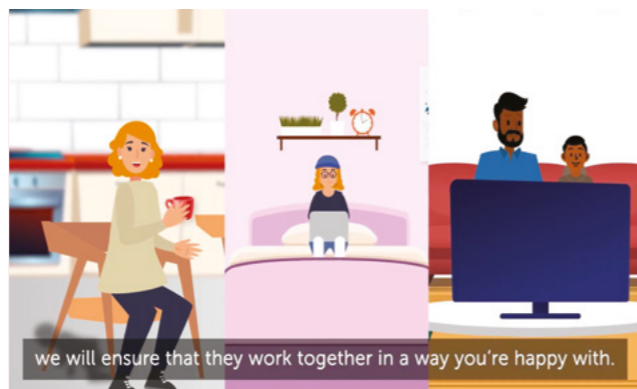


## Early Help Assessment Review

The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) through the national Supporting Families Programme placed a requirement on local authorities and their partners to capture the volume and quality of early help that is taking place across the system.

In response, the Prevention and Early Help Partnership worked with partners, children and young people, parents and carers to develop a new Early Help Assessment, with a range of supporting guidance. A group of children and young people, parents and carers came together to co-produce a family friendly animation explaining Early Help in County Durham <https://youtu.be/j6qkmpdBfJk>.

The establishment of project task and finish groups also enabled close links with the Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership and other stakeholders, to help make sure this work is joined up.



## Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance

In April 2021, Durham County Council commissioned a new collaborative approach to commissioning support services for people experiencing mental ill-health. The new County Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance (the Alliance) includes a range of mental health providers, including small charities and larger national organisations, and its structure enables members to work together to shape the development and delivery of contracts based on knowledge of local need.

By pooling skills, knowledge and resources; making the most of existing assets and joining up provision, the Alliance aims to make sure people don't 'fall through the gaps'. To support with this, there is now one point of contact for people looking for help around their mental wellbeing, where residents can access a wide range of services, with referrals taking place either by telephone or via the website. A real benefit of this single point of service is that people don't have to repeat their story to multiple providers.

The Alliance offers a range of support, for example around hospital discharge, welfare rights, group-based activities and suicide bereavement. More information can be found on the Alliance's website:-

<https://www.durhammentalwellbeingalliance.org>



## Relationships Matter Community Engagement

A partnership group was established to embed the national Reducing Parental Conflict programme across County Durham. The group commissioned a piece of community engagement work to help identify priorities and design programme delivery through a co-created action plan. Listening to the views of parents and carers led to the re-branding of the programme from 'Reducing Parental Conflict' to 'Relationships Matter'. Communities told us they wanted self-help tools they could access digitally, and this led to the creation of a public-facing website, with children involved in the design process and content co-designed with families

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

The site will be regularly reviewed with parents and carers to ensure it continues to meet their needs.



## Community Engagement to build a new school in Belmont

Working closely with the local community during phase one of this project helped build strong social value points into the tender for a new school build in Belmont, and make sure they reflected local needs and aspirations. Working closely with the Area Action Partnership, a co-production group was established to highlight existing assets and identify priorities. We continue to support this group to make new connections and find ways to meet the needs in their own communities.



A local councillor has been involved in the co-production group:

"We've seen that people have come and really shared their knowledge of what's going on in the community. We've found out a lot more about what's happening, we've learned a lot more about who is benefitting from the activities, and we've heard a lot about the needs of venues, projects and services in the community...I think the discussion has been realistic but also aspirational".

## Living with COVID-19

The pandemic has been one of the biggest public health challenges in living memory. COVID-19 has affected every part of our society throughout 2020, 2021 and into 2022.

During the many waves and variants we experienced, we saw incredible and sustained efforts from communities and organisations working together in helping to make sure people were as protected as possible. Across the county local people, health, social care, council staff and wider partners showed us some extraordinary examples of positive partnership working.

This partnership approach has continued through new and rapidly changing environments, while keeping systems running and supporting community resilience. To support these positive actions, we have contributed to both national and regional programmes and are heavily involved in the regional LA7 Leaders\* work, providing consistent advice and guidance across the North East region. We have also been proactive in advocating for greater national support on behalf of our communities.

The 2020 and 2021 Director of Public Health annual reports give detailed information on the extensive COVID-19 response and recovery actions that Public Health have led and worked collaboratively with others to deliver.

During 2022, in line with national guidance, we have moved from our enhanced response to a position of 'living safely with COVID-19', aligning the management of COVID-19 to other respiratory infections and diseases which can spread between people. However, we must remember that the virus remains a highly infectious illness which continues to require ongoing partnership work to protect people's health.

The learning from our COVID-19 response and recovery work, along with other elements such as the Local Tracing Partnership (NHS Test and Trace Service), the County Durham Together Community Hub, the Targeted Community Testing programme and the successful rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme has been brought together. Together, they form the basis of many of the 'Protected' actions in our refreshed Public Health Strategic Plan.

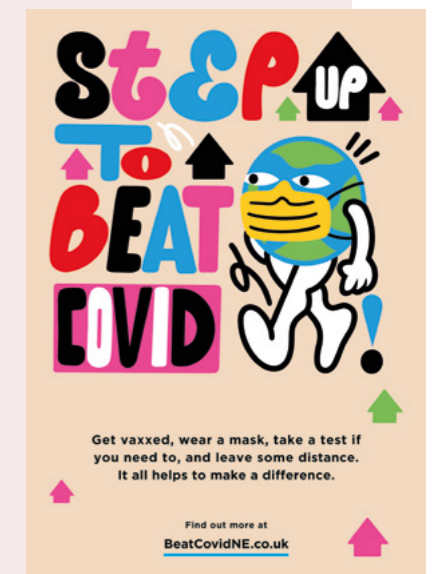
**During the pandemic we have ...**

- Recognised over **400** COVID-19 heroes
- Delivered over **1,152,536** doses of COVID-19 vaccinations
- Supplied over **1.5 million** LFD Tests through the targeted community testing programme
- Dealt with over **4,700** COVID-19 reports in schools, further education and early years settings.
- Delivered over **800** COVID-19 compliance and enforcement visits.
- Published over **400** 'live' COVID-19 dashboards social media posts with figures for local rates, age bands, vaccinations hospital admissions, to inform the public.
- Supported over **10,000** individuals through the County Durham Together Community Hub.
- Managed over **76** bids through various COVID-19 funding totalling over **£23 million**.

\*The LA7 Leaders are the leaders of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council.

## Over the pandemic we have...

- Maintained the interactive public-facing COVID-19 dashboard on Durham Insight and promoted it through social media platforms
- Developed the 'spike detector' tool to highlight local areas seeing a rise in cases. This helped us to quickly implement appropriate infection control measures from a range of key partners locally
- Produced and maintained a range of COVID-19 dashboards (schools, care homes, health settings, age bands, testing and vaccinations), to inform partners and to focus their actions and delivery
- Overseen and supported the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination and booster programmes, including vulnerable groups
- Delivered a proactive 'Leaving no-one behind' vaccination programme in communities with low vaccine uptake
- Developed, implemented and delivered Local Plans, including plans to deal with any surge in case rates or new variants of concern
- Maintained and adapted essential public health services to continue to deliver support throughout the pandemic
- Introduced many new partnership groups to coordinate and deliver support where needed
- Developed and supported our COVID-19 Champions
- Talked with young people to better understand how we could support them through the pandemic
- Continued to build strong relationships with national and regional partners to better support our communities
- Delivered communication plans to support our communities with COVID-19 secure messages (Hands, Face, Space, Fresh Air)
- Supported regional 'BeatCovidNE' campaigns such as, 'Thank you County Durham', 'Acts of Kindness Awards' and 'Step up to beat Covid'



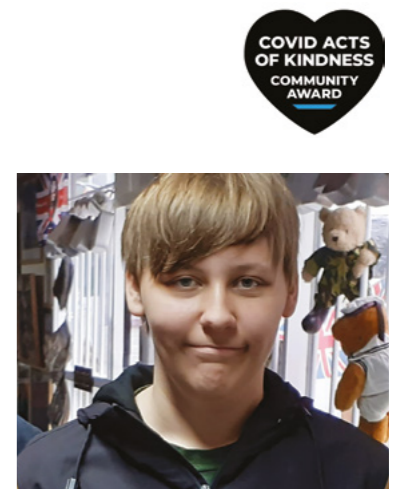
## Covid-19 Acts of Kindness

County Durham's Winner

### Alfie Dixon-Clark

During lockdown, Alfie used money that he'd saved for his birthday to buy supplies to create coronavirus "survival packs" - filled with treats, colouring pages and other helpful items which he delivered to youngsters across County Durham.

Known locally as 'Alf the Kid', he handed out over 1,000 packs during the pandemic by using his weekly pocket money to keep the project going, and thanks to donations from the local community. The Academy at Shotton Hall pupil also created special VE Day bags for care home residents and to this day is continuing to do all he can to support others. Through his many acts of kindness, Alfie has shown that no matter what your age, you can make a difference.





We have retained elements of the temporary Outbreak Control Team set up to respond to COVID-19. From this, we have established a new Protecting Health Team within public health, which has seen us extend our health protection work to support the response and capacity including:-

- Working with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and wider colleagues to detect and prevent onward transmission of infectious diseases; such as Avian Flu and Monkeypox.
- Creating frameworks and pathways to help identify, control and treat these diseases, including the development of the County Durham Avian Influenza Framework, Anti-viral pathways for Seasonal Flu, Avian Flu and Monkeypox. Emergency planning and surge response for infectious diseases.
- Plans to mitigate the health impacts of severe weather and climate change.
- Identifying and addressing variations in uptake in screening vaccination, and immunisation.
- We have reviewed the health protection arrangements and continue to work closely with our local and regional partners, as health protection is a joint responsibility across various bodies including the Local Authority, UKHSA, NHS England and Integrated Care Board.



Grab a Job for 5-11 year-olds



## Recognising heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic



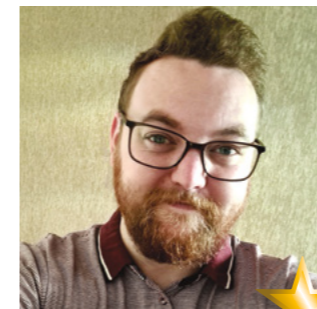
More than 400 COVID-19 heroes have been nominated for an award recognising the contribution of County Durham residents during the pandemic.

### How to thank someone

If you would like to nominate someone who has been a shining light during the pandemic, email [PublicHealth@durham.gov.uk](mailto:PublicHealth@durham.gov.uk) with the title Public Health Award. Include details of the person you are nominating, the reasons for your nomination and an example of their contribution. A letter and certificate will then be shared with you to present to the nominee.

The hundreds of heart-warming nominations for the Recognition of Contribution award include stories from a wide range of people who have received support from friends, neighbours, local businesses and community groups. They feature people who have organised social activities and befriending services or have collected shopping and prescriptions as well as NHS, GP and care staff and those who have volunteered at testing and vaccination sites.

Here are a few examples of the people who have been recognised so far.



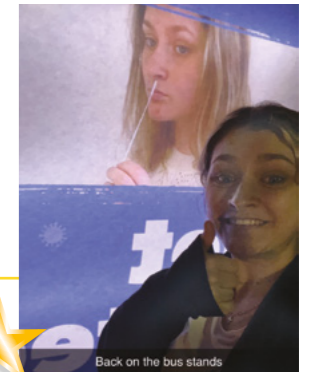
### Tom

Tom Howe, from Bishop Auckland, raised more than £8,000 for local hospitals by entertaining the community with his crazy bingo and singing sessions. The 25-year-old hosted a variety of online events from his dining room during the COVID-19 lockdowns, including a virtual VE day celebration to help raise people's spirits and promote positive mental wellbeing during the pandemic. He also took on the challenge of running his own pub so he could continue looking after the community.



### Pat

Pat Clarey worked tirelessly during the first lockdown, baking much appreciated cakes and scones for staff at Bishop Auckland hospital. She also delivered shopping for people unable to leave their homes and regularly walked an elderly neighbour's dog. When COVID-19 restrictions began to ease, Pat helped people keep active and connected by organising a socially distanced sequence dance three times a week in Leeholme Community Hall, providing refreshments and sourcing music CDs at her own expense.



### Chloe

Chloe Fairclough played a key role in our Get Tested COVID Safe County marketing campaign. The 17-year-old from Bishop Auckland kindly let us use an image of her taking a COVID-19 test, to help us promote regular testing to young people across County Durham. Chloe's contribution is an important one, making the decision to put the importance of promoting testing ahead of any concerns or embarrassment about being judged by her peer group.



Recognition of Contribution to Public Health Award

## Making smoking history

### Background

Smoking remains the single largest cause of preventable deaths and one of the largest causes of health inequalities. In England, despite reductions in the numbers of people smoking, there are still approximately 7.3 million adult smokers and more than 200 people a day die from smoking-related illness, which could have been prevented.

Across County Durham, the difference in life expectancy between the poorest and most affluent groups can be over nine years. Some of this reduced life span is directly due to people smoking. Smoking, and the harms linked to smoking, continue to fall hardest on some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society.

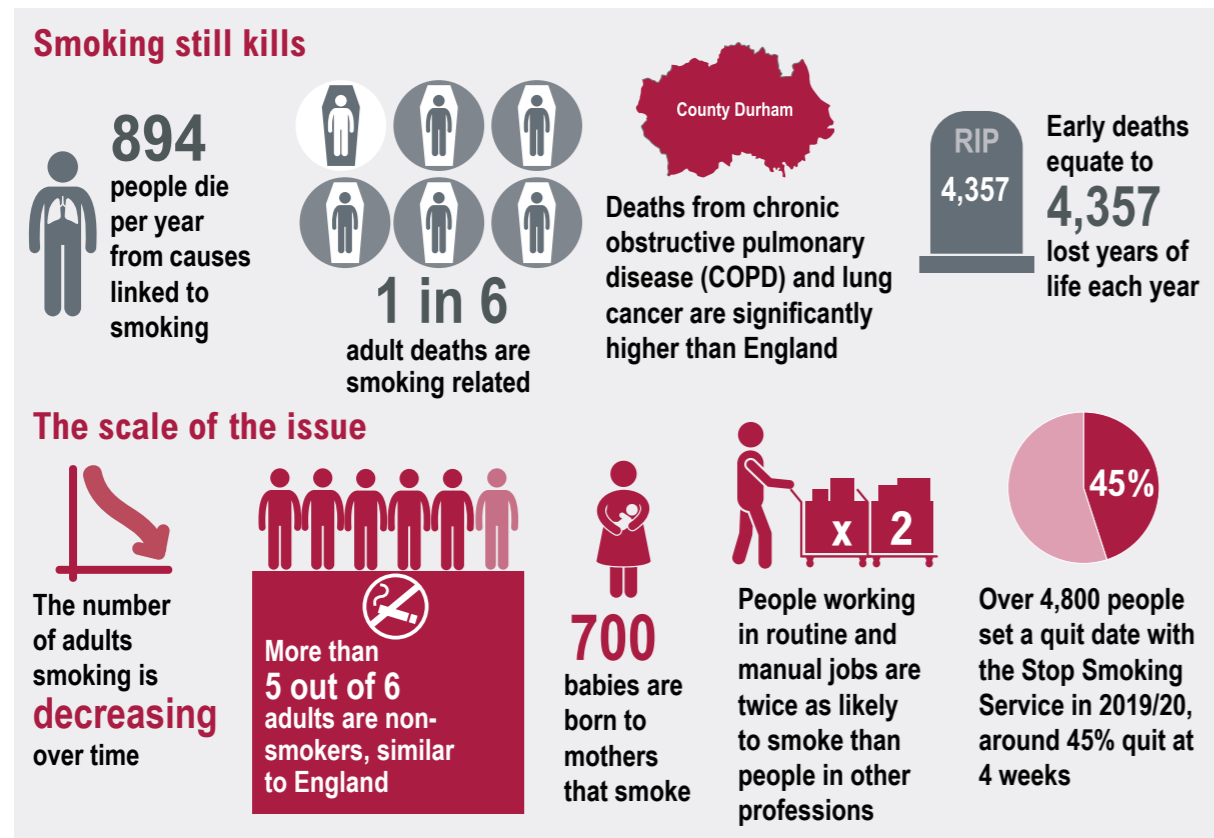
Smoking impacts on so many facets of an individual's life. As well as dying earlier than non-smokers, smokers also suffer from poorer quality of life. Many of the conditions caused by smoking are chronic (long-term) illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and respiratory disease. There are also huge implications for those who live with smokers, as breathing in second-hand smoke also has detrimental impacts on health for babies, children, and other family members.

Surveys have shown that 75% of smokers regret ever starting smoking and 69% of adult smokers in England want to quit. It takes, on average, 30 attempts before a smoker successfully quits, showing the real addiction and grip that tobacco has on people.

For all these reasons, tobacco is a key public health priority, and this report aims to refocus our efforts on reducing the number of people smoking in County Durham. In this section, we will also give updates from the key areas of previous reports and make further recommendations for change. With the new findings from the Khan Review\*, this is the right time to refocus on smoking.

\*[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-making-smoking-obsolete](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-khan-review-making-smoking-obsolete)

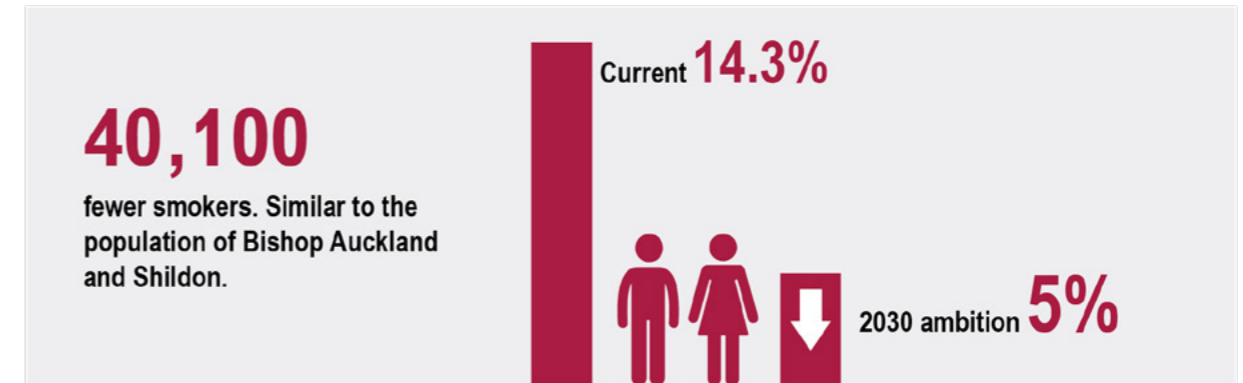
### Smoking in County Durham – Our challenges



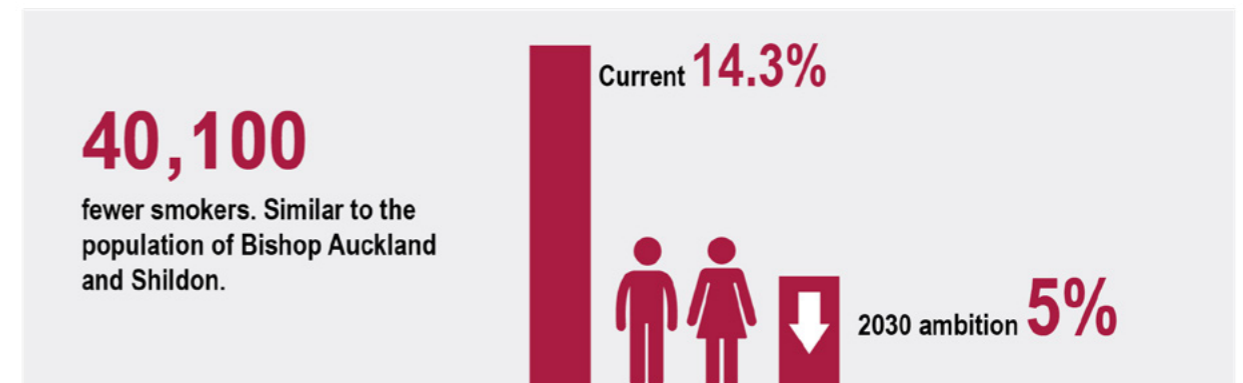
### Smoking levels in County Durham

The percentage of the population who smoke is called the 'smoking prevalence'. Over time the prevalence is generally reducing within County Durham. However, it is still higher than the North East and England averages. Due to the pandemic, the way in which we collect data has changed. The 2020 Local Tobacco Control Profile shows the prevalence at 14.3%, but as the method has changed, we cannot directly compare this to previous years.

In County Durham we want to achieve a prevalence of 5% by 2030. To get to this figure, we would need 40,100 fewer smokers.



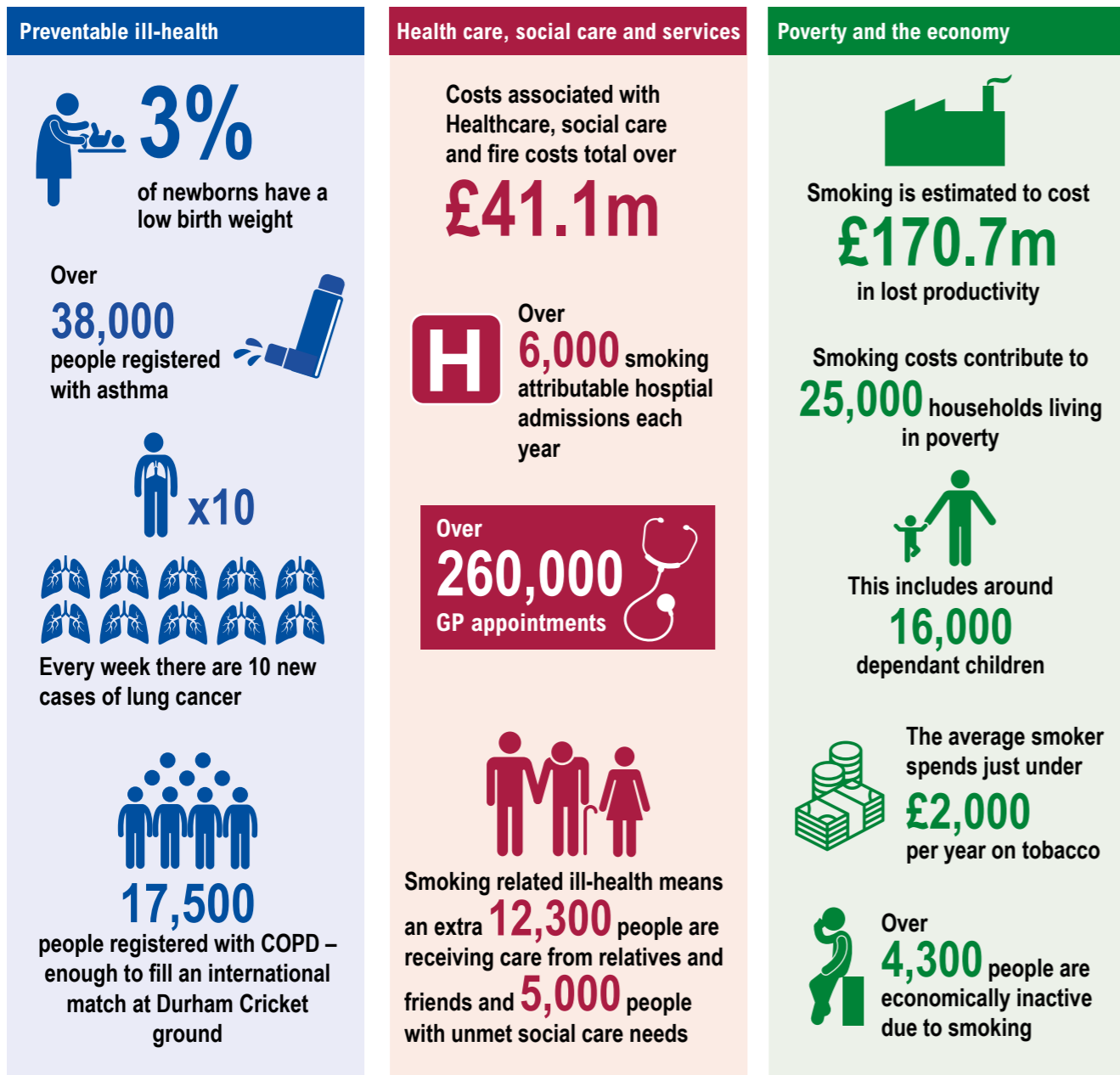
We also want to reduce the number of mothers smoking at time of delivery of their babies to 0% by 2025. The latest data suggested that to meet this target, we would need 700 fewer mothers smoking at time of delivery.



Whilst smoking overall across the county is decreasing, smoking amongst some groups of people is going up. The 'routine and manual' workforce are smoking more than before, including labourers, bar staff, lorry drivers and care workers. The numbers of smokers in this category of people has increased from 25.1% in 2018 to 27.3% in 2019. This is a concern, as nationally and within other areas of the North East the rates have decreased. We need to understand why this is the case, and to support, we will engage with businesses through our connections with Business Durham. This will help us to better understand how we support these people to stop smoking.



## Within County Durham, smoking impacts on...



### Costs

The average smoker spends around £2,000 a year on tobacco, meaning £141.70 million is spent in County Durham on tobacco each year. When income and smoking costs are taken into account, 25,003 households are driven into poverty. These are real residents of households within County Durham which includes 34,165 adults below pension age, 6,252 pension age adults and around 16,163 dependent children.

Smokers' employment chances and average earnings are also damaged by smoking. In County Durham 4,326 people are economically inactive due to smoking, with smokers earning 6.8% less than non-smokers which creates further disadvantage for smokers.

### Carol's experience

"I knew that if I didn't quit, I would end up dead from COPD. Thinking back, I have pushed my luck since the age of 15 and the effects of smoking were starting to catch up with me. I was rushed into hospital with breathing difficulties one Sunday and as soon as I got out, I rang my GP for help to stop and they gave me the stop smoking service number. Whilst quitting, I found it helpful to clean my whole house and decorate to remove the stale smell of smoke. It was like starting a new life without cigarettes. Decorating also made me want to keep my house smelling nice so was another reason not to smoke".

### Our local plans

The Tobacco Control Alliance is a group with many different agencies who work together to reduce the County Durham smoking prevalence. During COVID-19 this group still met, as we continued to prioritise tobacco control as an important public health priority.

The plan to reduce smoking to 5% by 2030 is focussed around seven key areas of work below. We have several partners working together within this agenda to ensure that we reach this target:

- 1 Use of an integrated evidence-based strategic approach to reducing smoking prevalence in County Durham**
  - Undertake proactive and reactive work to influence policy and legislation
  - Work together to achieve the 5% by 2030
- 2 Reducing Exposure to Second-hand Smoke**
  - Providing training and information on the harms that are linked to second-hand smoke
  - Working with local housing providers to see how we can support them to reduce exposure to second hand smoke, e.g. offering vapes as options
  - Working with partners in education and children's services to reduce the exposure that children have to second-hand smoke
- 3 Motivating and supporting smokers to stop and stay stopped**
  - Providing our local stop smoking service
  - Targeted provision at key groups— routine and manual workers, pregnant women, people with serious mental illness
- 4 Media, communications and engagement**
  - Share communications about the harms associated with tobacco
  - Providing training about how to have a conversation with someone who would like to stop smoking
- 5 Reducing the demand and supply of illegal tobacco products, increasing price and addressing the supply of tobacco to children**
  - Tackling underage sales
  - Advocating for the age of sale to be increased
- 6 Tobacco Regulation and reducing tobacco promotion**
  - Enforcement around illicit tobacco
- 7 Research, monitoring and evaluation**
  - Review data and responding to local needs



### Mark's experience

"I really believed that if I didn't contact the stop smoking service then I would end up dead. My breathing difficulties started with hay fever, which turned into asthma and then COPD. I was getting infections and antibiotics; this was a regular thing and I noticed I couldn't walk upstairs without being breathless. I started smoking when I was 14 and at school. I just wanted to fit in. Dealing with cravings at first was the hardest thing. I used a patch and a nasal spray to quit, it took some getting used to but I was really surprised how quick it worked. My advisor from the stop smoking service helped me with weekly calls, it really helped knowing that someone was going to ask me how I was doing and check up on my progress".



### Alan's experience

"I have smoked for 41 years and now I'm really looking forward to telling my friends and family that I have quit. My health has improved, I am saving money and people are telling me I look well. My motivation was to save money and my health. I coughed a lot. I found that patches and an E Cig worked well. If I do now ever think about smoking, I do something that takes my mind off it like make myself a cup of tea".



### What more needs to be done

Whilst lots of great work is ongoing, it is key that we need to work together to continue to reduce our smoking prevalence rates. This is vitally important across our entire population, but in particular in targeting key priority groups to reduce health inequalities associated with smoking. To make this happen, we will enhance the work that we are doing with our key partners such as the NHS, Social Care and Housing Providers.

The Khan Review has implications across the country. Locally, we need to champion and endorse these recommendations to support our local population. We also need to ensure that we continue to engage with elected members, MPs and Health and Wellbeing Board, to gain their support to endorse the recommendations.

### What have we done in 2022

Durham County Council is the lead local authority who commission Fresh to support seven local authorities within the North East by:



- Providing a wealth of knowledge and information to support our local plans
- Delivering mass media campaigns on the harms associated with smoking, such as 'Don't wait' to encourage people to quit smoking, which we have localised across County Durham
- Championing and advocating for change within government policies, to make a difference nationally which will improve lives for local people
- Having active involvement in research and national consultations to better understand the needs and opinions of the public

One important component within our approach to tobacco control is our local stop smoking service, delivered by ABL Health, which is there to provide free support and guidance to those who want to stop smoking. The service offers an individual quit programme for up to 12 weeks, alongside a choice of stop smoking medications and Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). This year, the service has begun piloting e-cigarettes as a stop smoking method to provide an alternative product to cigarettes. This year our local stop smoking service has helped 1,776 people to stop smoking and live healthier lives.

In County Durham we have identified that the cost of NRT is often a barrier to people who are wanting to quit smoking. Therefore, we have ensured that there is no cost for those receiving NRT through our local stop smoking service.

We have also recently been successful in gaining funding from Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) to work with individuals with serious mental illness who smoke and may wish to stop. We will do some targeted work within Chester-Le-Street as a pilot to look at how we support people with serious mental illness to quit smoking.

### Cathy's experience

Cathy lost one of her lungs to cancer through smoking and has been urging others to quit and not wait until it is too late...

"I smoked and smoked, I was aware of the risks, but you think it is never going to happen to you. Then two days before my 50th birthday I found out I had a tumour on my lung. It was terrifying and the impact on my girls was the hardest thing. You hear the word cancer and the first thing I thought was how do I tell my girls? As a single parent it was a horrendous thought that I might not be there for them."

Seven years after her cancer and now two years cancer free, Cathy can reflect on the benefits she sees from quitting...

"The biggest benefit is the money. When you smoke you find a way to buy cigarettes. You eat cheaper food and deny yourself things so you can smoke. Also, I can see the difference in how I look. Smoking ages you and my skin is so much better now. I feel the benefits every day and thank God I am alive and there with my girls."

"My advice would be to never think that poor health or cancer won't happen to you and if you're trying to quit then ring your local stop smoking service and get their advice on avoiding smoking. They will advise you on quitting aids to take away cravings."



If you are a current smoker living or working within County Durham and interested in learning about the support available for you to quit please contact 0800 772 0565 to arrange an appointment. Or visit the Smokefree County Durham website at [www.smokefreecountydurham.co.uk](http://www.smokefreecountydurham.co.uk) for more information.

## Priorities

Over the last year we have reviewed and reshaped our County Durham Public Health Strategic Plan to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of the county and to reduce health inequalities. Our actions strive, not only to increase life expectancy but to extend the length of time individuals live in good health.

We are working on the following priorities within the Strategic Plan which will focus on reducing health inequalities. Our actions are aligned to our wellbeing principles and the following three themed areas:

- **Healthier:** Having and promoting a healthier population (both physical health and mental wellbeing). For example.
  - Improve mental health and emotional wellbeing
  - Improve levels of physical activity and healthy weight
- **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. For example.
  - Work with partners to help reduce poverty and the impact of poverty and the cost of living crisis
  - Work with partners to contribute to inclusive economic growth
- **Protected:** Protecting the health of our communities against communicable disease, domestic abuse, tobacco, drugs and alcohol that cause severe harm and plan for future emergencies. For example.
  - Reduce the harm caused through alcohol and drugs within our local communities
  - Respond to seasonal risks to health and ensure County Durham's preparedness for winter

We have provided an update below of some work covered in our plan.

### Healthier: Supporting us to be mentally healthier - The 'Now You're Talking' campaign

In 2021, we recognised that many things, including the ongoing pandemic, could be negatively impacting people's thoughts and moods. In response, we created a supporting mental wellbeing campaign. The 'Now You're Talking' ('NYT') campaign encourages people to talk to someone they trust about anything that may be worrying or bothering them. The campaign doesn't directly mention 'mental health', as the campaign is for all of us. We all worry about things from time to time. When this happens, it's important to open up to someone about how we are feeling.

We created some draft images and messages for the proposed campaign, including things that many people in County Durham would say in everyday life. We asked a number of mental health groups and charities for their thoughts on the draft campaign, receiving some fantastic suggestions as to how to make it better, more inclusive and more relevant to the people of County Durham. These included:-

- Including more pictures of 'real' people, pictures and images from County Durham.
- Not using any gender references. Everyone should be involved, no matter how people gender-identify.
- Recognising that talking to someone can be hard, including messages encouraging someone to talk, and encouraging a person to talk to someone they might be worried about.

We included all the suggestions in the final campaign.



The campaign was originally scheduled to run across County Durham from March to June 2022, including posters on buses and some bus stops across County Durham. We also ran short adverts on local radio stations, and a TV advert showing local people walking on Seaham beach. You can see the TV advert at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qdeGwAZTto>

In Spring 2022 the campaign was extended, in recognition of some significant UK and world events, such as the news about Ukraine and the worries about the rising cost of fuel. The campaign will now run across County Durham until Summer 2023. We are extremely grateful to everyone who has helped shape the campaign.

Remember, if you need some support with your mental health information and support is available through <https://www.durham.gov.uk/adultmentalhealthsupport>



### Fairer: A fairer approach to supporting mental wellbeing in schools – the Young People's Health and Wellbeing Framework

The Young People's Health and Wellbeing Framework was developed through collaboration with schools, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion, Public Health and Education Durham to support schools and education settings in County Durham to improve the overall health and wellbeing of children and young people.



The framework uses the 'Thrive' model (<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/>) and supports partners in working together and taking a whole school approach to mental wellbeing. This helps schools by offering a positive, resilience-based approach, providing a structure and guidance considering the physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school setting. Resources and training are also provided in support.

Since April 2021 when the framework was launched, 106 education settings across primary, secondary, post 16, independent and special schools have pledged to adopt the framework. This means that each school setting has committed to completing a self-assessment, which helps them to identify areas of improvement.

#### Ox Close Primary School Case Study

"To decide the focus of any health and wellbeing improvements in school we surveyed staff and pupils then met and discussed our action plans and made the decision to roll out the project on a whole-school basis from early years to year 6. Our children now enjoy new playtimes with a range of focused activities, and we have noticed that teamwork has improved and playtime conflict is reduced. Our lunchtime supervisors have also been in full support and have noted a huge decline in behaviour incidents. Parents and ancillary staff are on board and have been supportive. Staff morale has increased so much during this project. Staff have mentioned that even the fact that staff wellbeing has been made a priority by the Senior Leadership Team has made them feel valued and more open to accessing resources to help improve their personal mental health and wellbeing."





### Burnside Primary School case study

“The aim of my project was to raise the profile of mental health and wellbeing in school and to focus on resilience to help address some of the needs that had been identified in the parents and child questionnaires.”

“During the lockdown remote learning took place and resilience needed to have a large focus. Therefore the idea of ‘Resilient Rex’ was born. This was a dinosaur who had resilient characteristics. He appeared in online lessons and the children discussed with Rex how he could remain resilient. In order to support children’s mental health week, we created mindfulness packs. These included tasks the children could use to help keep their minds calm during lockdown and Resilient Rex came to school to hand out the packs. It was vital I found ways to ensure that the profile of mental health and wellbeing remained a priority even though the children were learning remotely. The final assessment in the Summer term showed that the children’s resilience was slightly better compared to where it had been at the end of the Autumn term. Having looked at the resilience scales for the children from the beginning of the project to the end, it is clear that their awareness of resilience has improved with children moving up the scale.”

**Mrs Paula Renwick** (deputy Head and Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead)



### Case study - Kelly and Talia’s story

Kelly and her daughter Talia live in South Durham and are the first family to complete the Respect Young People’s Programme - a new programme designed to support families where Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) may be a concern.

Kelly’s daughter has complicated medical needs and at around the age of 13, she started rebelling against her disability, misbehaving at school, being aggressive at home and self-harming. Her behaviour got worse during lockdown until her mum decided to go to One Point, the council’s early help service for children and their families, for support. Here she was introduced to the Respect Young People’s Programme (RYPP) and shown how it could help the family.

During the 12 week RYPP programme, Kelly and her daughter each worked individually with their support workers, before coming together as a group to talk about the issues they were facing, triggers for behaviour and how those situations were dealt with.

Kelly has found the programme useful as it made her look at what she could do better as a mother to manage her daughter’s behaviour.

“The programme was good as it helped me see where I was going wrong. I suppose I parented in the same way my dad did, but I have come to understand that times have changed. I wouldn’t dare answer back but kids these days are not afraid to challenge parents and teachers.

Instead of just rewarding good behaviour, I now challenge poor behaviour too. Since going through the programme, she has been good at understanding and taking her punishment and while her behaviour is still not perfect, it has improved. She still displays typical teenage attitude, and things are still not perfect at school, but the aggressive outbursts have stopped, and she is generally a lot easier to handle.

I’m just happy that things have settled down at home. Home should be a haven, and its starting to feel like that for us now. Her six-year-old sister was frightened of her, but since going through the programme, this is no longer the case.

I would definitely recommend the programme, as I feel like the interventions have helped me get my life back and the house is now a much calmer place”.

Talia said, “before we did the RYPP programme mam and me had lots of arguments, this made me feel angry. Since doing the RYPP programme mam and me now communicate more to prevent further arguments. Rewards have been put in place. Things are better now, we don’t argue as much, we spend more time together.”



### A staff member working with Kelly’s family

“We are delighted to roll out the Respect Young People’s Programme to families across County Durham. CAPVA is becoming more and more common, and it isn’t just about violent behaviour, it can incorporate emotional, coercive, or controlling behaviour, sexual and economic abuse.”

The programme is designed to enable families to identify negative behaviour patterns and work towards positive outcomes, avoiding blame and instead working together with parents or carers and the young person, and seeing them all as part of the solution.



### Protected: Helping protect people from Domestic Abuse

It is estimated that over 2.4m people are affected by domestic abuse each year in England and Wales. To tackle this, in April 2021 the government introduced The Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Act aims to support victims, including children and young people, to live lives free from abuse, coercion, and control.

The Act highlights the challenges that families experiencing domestic abuse can face. This includes recognising Child/Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) as a form of abuse. Over 2021, early help services in County Durham were trained to deliver the Respect Young People’s Programme (RYPP), a 12 week course designed to help families experiencing CAPVA, using solution-focused interventions.

### White Ribbon Day

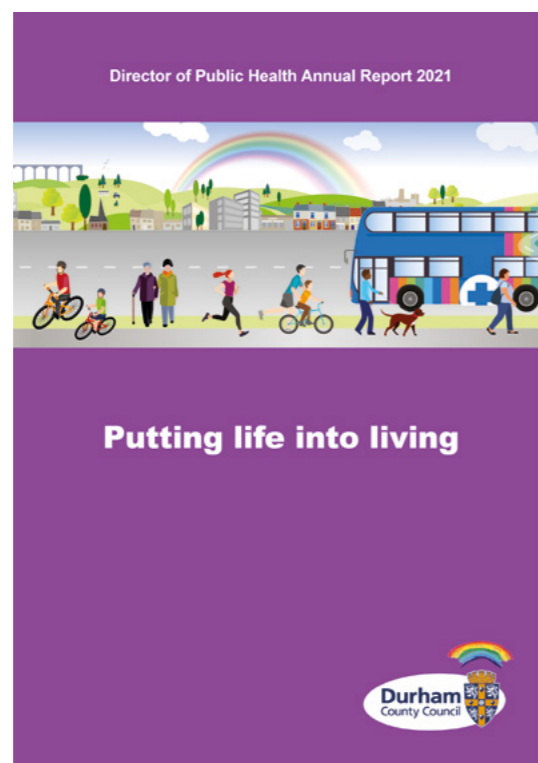
Durham County Council (DCC) has also strengthened our response to domestic abuse in the workplace. This included supporting the ‘16 days of International Action’ and ‘White Ribbon Day’ campaigns, with a number of staff members pledging to support the end of violence against women and girls.



For more information and links to support for Domestic Abuse visit: [www.durham.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.durham.gov.uk/domesticabuse)



## Update on recommendations from 2021



### Promoting positive behaviours

In the last year's report I said that we would:

- 1. Increase the number of schools signed up to 'Active 30' and target communities most impacted by COVID-19 to promote and embed daily physical activity habit**  
70 schools have signed up to the programme in the 2021/22 academic year. Additional government funding has provided greater opportunities to extend the project's reach, including embedding Active 30 across holiday 'fun and food' delivery with resources to support young people to be active during the holiday periods.
- 2. Implement measures with housing and other providers to reduce the risk from second-hand smoke in the home**  
We are now engaging with housing providers to reduce smoking rates of those who are living in social housing and to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke for children and other family members.
- 3. Produce a communications campaign to raise awareness of the health and social impacts of increased alcohol intake on individuals, families and the wider community**  
Two significant alcohol-related campaigns "Alcohol Causes Cancer" and "What's the Harm" were promoted throughout County Durham. A Drink Coach app was included in one campaign to provide information and on safe drinking levels and how to access additional support.

### Better quality of life through integrated health and care services

- 1. Shape and engage in the Integrated Care Partnership ensuring County Durham is at the forefront to benefit from any changes**  
The County Durham Care Partnership has continued to work to improve the public's health and provide input to reduce health inequalities.
- 2. Implement the County Durham Together (CDT) transformation programme**  
Since 2021, CDT has worked in partnership to begin embedding co-production into our decision making, policy and strategy development processes and service re-design. Please see page 11 for more details on CDT.
- 3. Build on the personalised care developments in cancer for other long-term conditions**  
We continue to work with partners using a co-production approach where we can, to make our interventions better and more tailored. This includes creating new pilot models to test how best tailored care may work for individual people, and continuing to support the roll out of Personalised Health Budgets.

### High quality drug and alcohol services

- 1. Increase co-production within drug and alcohol services to ensure delivery is inclusive**  
County Durham Together has supported the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (DARS) to develop a Co-production Board. The Board now includes service users, ex-service users and their carers, helping people impacted by substance misuse to have a voice in innovating service delivery.
- 2. Build on and improve the current working relationship with criminal justice partners to ensure a co-ordinated whole systems approach to drug harm reduction**  
We are working with partners on drug-related harm reduction, with the support of additional funding secured for the county. This includes a new workforce within the prison, police and court system and extended provision of 'Naloxone' (used as an antidote to overdoses) in police response vehicles.
- 3. Begin work towards implementing the recommendations in Dame Carol Black's Independent report, 'Review of drugs part two: prevention, treatment and recovery'**  
County Durham has secured significant new funding to implement the recommendations made by Dame Carol Black. This has supported more services within the criminal justice workstream, greater harm reduction, more outreach support and the provision of a new Alcohol Care Team (ACT). We now also have extra capacity for inpatient detoxification, mental health, families, women-only services and extra support for Rough Sleepers.

## Conclusion

My report this year has been one of transition from the pandemic to a re-focusing of priorities. It has provided an update of the health and wellbeing of our residents and where COVID-19 has had the greatest impact, both directly and indirectly.

It has also highlighted the work taking place to live safely with COVID-19 which has continued to be prominent and with our attention on those who are at greatest risk as well as reflecting on the last two years and how we worked so closely with our communities and how this can be taken forward.

Examples of this were evident on our approach to wellbeing, shifting the balance to working with our communities and not 'doing to'.

In the recommendations from 2021 tobacco was highlighted as a key priority to redouble our efforts to make smoking history in our county. This report has provided an update on some excellent work alongside local residents stories of how they have given up smoking which gives us a strong rationale to do everything possible to tackle levels of tobacco.

The building blocks for good health are a way of us now describing how health and wellbeing is impacted by a range of factors, including employment, housing, our environment and how much money our residents have to live on. The impact of COVID-19 and the cost-of-living increases make it even more important for us to embed health and wellbeing in the building blocks for good health. That means of course that the public health team will lead on some aspects such as tobacco, however, will also continue to work very closely in the coming year with others to reduce poverty and the impact of poverty and contribute to inclusive economic growth to ensure health and wellbeing is considered in the relevant strategies and action plans.

It is only by doing this will we collectively and most importantly with our communities have healthier, fairer and protected lives.



Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format:



Braille,



Audio,



Large print.

العربية Arabic, (中文(繁體字)) Chinese, اردو Urdu,  
polski Polish, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ Punjabi, Español Spanish,  
বাংলা Bengali, हिन्दी Hindi, Deutsch German,  
Français French, Türkçe Turkish, Melayu Malay.

**Telephone: 03000 264 109**

**Email: [PublicHealth@durham.gov.uk](mailto:PublicHealth@durham.gov.uk)**