



Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents

Public health strategy 2022– 2027



Hertfordshire



Foreword



Welcome to the public health strategy 2022-27. This describes how Hertfordshire County Council's Public Health Service contributes to achieving Hertfordshire County Council's vision - to create a cleaner, greener and healthier Hertfordshire.

Public health aims to help the people of Hertfordshire recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, become healthier and go on to live longer lives with less preventable ill-health and disability.

This strategy shows how public health can deliver positive change through all of the council's priority themes:

- A cleaner and greener environment
- Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents
- Excellent council services for all
- Sustainable, responsible growth in our county

I look forward to working with partners and residents to create a county in which everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible, and to have fulfilling and happy lives.

Morris Bright, MBE
Executive Member, Public Health
and Community Safety





01

Introduction

Public health has a major role in fulfilling the county council's strategic priority: Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents.



We will deliver a wide range of positive health outcomes for Hertfordshire residents throughout life.

This strategy describes our role, principles, ambitions and priorities and provides links to additional information about public health in Hertfordshire.

While health in Hertfordshire is generally better than the national average, there are areas where it could be improved. The pandemic has highlighted and widened health inequalities with certain groups and communities experiencing significantly poorer health and care outcomes than others. New health challenges have arisen including long Covid, as well as an increase in mental health needs, more widespread misuse of drugs and alcohol and increased numbers

of overweight and obese adults and children. All of these impact the health of residents and may increase demand on healthcare and other services.

In addition to reducing preventable disease by addressing underlying causes of poor health we are active participants in the creation of healthy places through well-designed sustainable growth, cleaner air for all, and accessible, biodiverse green spaces. With effective planning our resilience is stronger against extreme weather events such as heatwaves and cold snaps which can adversely affect some people more than others.

Our leadership role is supported by our business intelligence, epidemiology, analytics, evaluation functions and strong partnerships.

We also have a significant role as a commissioner of public health services, spending £34m a year on contracted services which include health visiting, drug and alcohol services and sexual health services. We also commission research and provide services directly.

The strategy is based on sound data, recent consultation, and good practice. Although it currently reflects the impact of the pandemic we plan to review and update it annually.





02

Vision

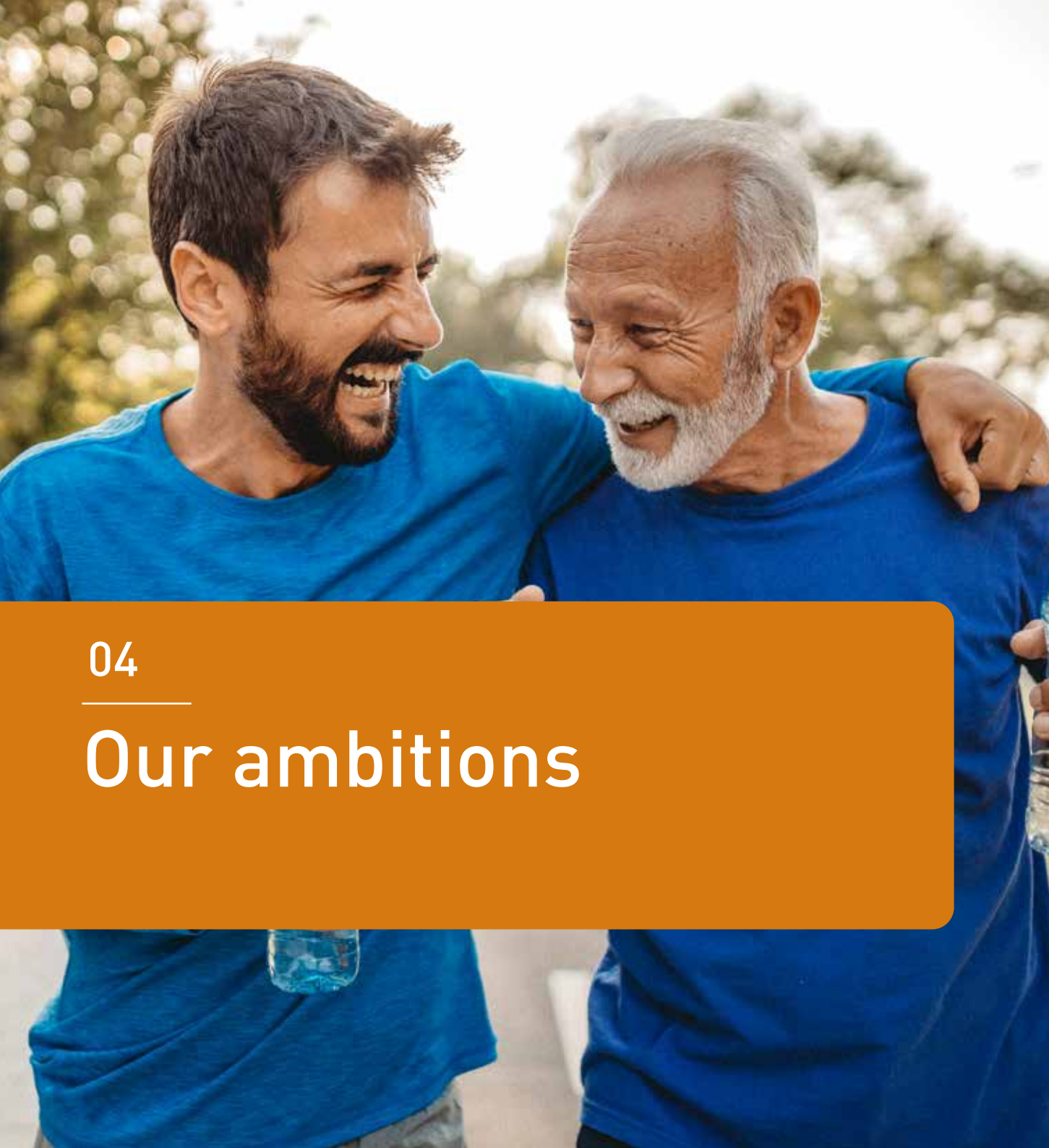
Everyone in our county is born as healthy as possible, and lives a full, healthy and happy life.

03

Mission statement

Our mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Hertfordshire.

Informed by best practice and evidence, we will work with our colleagues, partners and communities to reduce health inequalities and support happy and healthy lives for all.



04

Our ambitions

A reduction in the gap in life expectancy and years spent in poor health by better outcomes for everyone.

Our population understands how to be healthy and puts this into practice.

Prevention is at the heart of everything we and our partners do, including community, voluntary, and faith groups, social and private enterprises, primary care services and public services like education, housing and access to employment.

We will actively pursue our ambitions through the priority themes in the county council's corporate plan.

This page shows the Corporate Plan ambitions and priority themes, and the Public Health contributions to them.

A cleaner and greener environment

- Environmental leadership – our health protection role
- Accessible and biodiverse green spaces – we influence for better health outcomes
- Inspire a sustainable county – clean air for all, promoting physically active travel
- Minimise waste – reducing public health hazards

Sustainable responsible growth in our county

- Well-designed communities – our influence is evident in appropriate planning decisions
- Strong economy – that reduce health inequalities for a healthier workforce
- Infrastructure that meets the needs of our communities – physically active travel, access to outdoor space
- Employment opportunities – fair and transparent commissioning opportunities for local businesses

Healthy and fulfilling lives for our residents

- Opportunity to live well – public health service provision
- Support to live independently – we support residents to live healthy lives
- Every child to have the best start in life – our healthy child programme
- Everyone kept safe from harm – health protection, drug, alcohol and sexual health services
- Inclusive and safe communities – health protection, drug, alcohol and sexual health services

Excellent council services for all

- Citizen focus - research & consultation to ensure we meet our communities' needs based on evidence
- Collaborative leadership – the best possible health outcomes can be achieved through partnership
- Modern and innovative – Public Health's business intelligence and analytics function to drive improvement
- Embrace diversity – we will ensure our services are person-centred and accessible to all
- Investing in our staff – professional development and a workforce that meets national best standards



05

Our principles

Public Health is guided by principles which inform our ideas and the planning, delivery and evaluation of our work.



- **embrace diversity and inclusion**, demonstrating it in everything we do, with a focus on reducing health inequalities and on consulting and engaging with residents, service users and service providers; we will continue to identify and engage with vulnerable and under-served groups in our communities
- **develop and sustain strong partnerships** to increase access to better quality services such as supporting districts and community groups to improve public health, including mental health, in the community
- **provide system leadership** as the expert voice on population health, inequalities, and prevention
- **provide expert advice** that is behaviourally informed, driven by data and evidence with a holistic view of health and wellbeing
- **provide targeted support** focusing on places, communities and individuals most affected by ill health and premature death
- **respond to the climate emergency** by joining up with partners and communities to improve health and wellbeing in ways that will also enable delivery of net-zero by 2030
- **be conscious of our resource and capacity**, achieving best value for money and focusing on carefully prioritised projects and programmes, all based on good practice, sound evidence and achievable outcomes



06

Leading prevention through partnership working

Public Health is well placed to present clear offers of health and wellbeing to Hertfordshire residents and enable them to get the support they need.



We have designed our approach with the strategic ambitions of our partners and colleagues in mind.

They include the NHS, district and borough councils, a wide range of voluntary, community and faith groups, social enterprises, private sector services and universities. Our work supports the statutory strategy created by the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board where Public Health works with partners to set the overarching health and care aims for the county.

Public Health is a leading partner within the emerging Hertfordshire

and West Essex Integrated Care System (ICS). We support the development of the ICS by providing expert advice for health improvement, prevention and health inequalities. We work with all ICS partners including Health and Care Partnerships, Primary Care Networks and NHS trusts.

We look forward to working closely with the Integrated Care Partnership on long term action to improve health outcomes.



We contribute to prevention through partnership in many ways, for example:

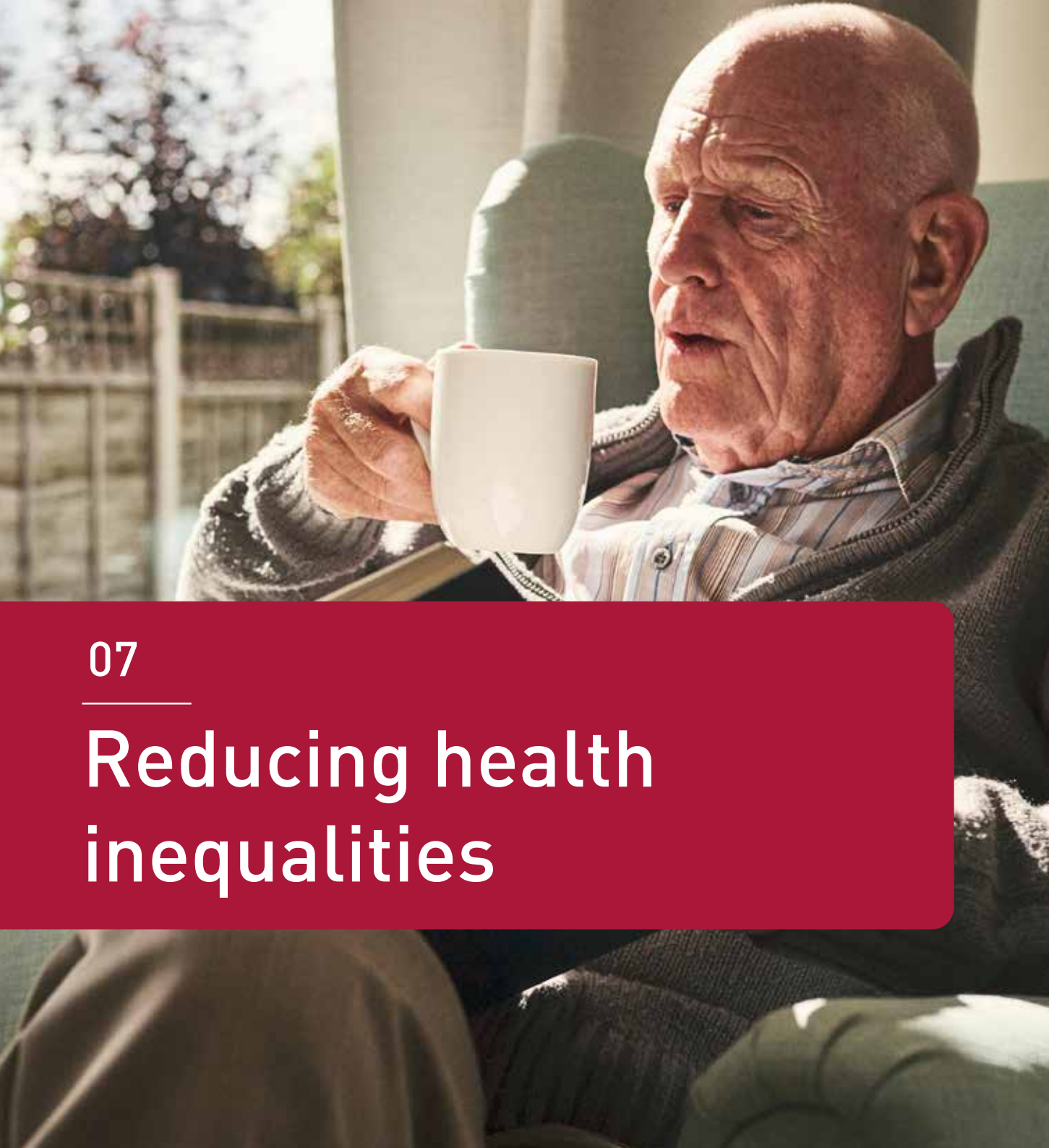
Applying Behavioural Science to support positive change

Behavioural factors are increasingly important at all levels of prevention. Our Behavioural Change Unit aims to enhance the contribution of behavioural sciences when we address holistically the range of complex challenges such as the climate change emergency, rising levels of health and social issues such as obesity and loneliness, and other issues that worsened during the pandemic.

We aim to create a range of research opportunities with the University of Hertfordshire and other academic partners for specific public health projects.

Hertfordshire's Healthy Hubs

This partnership of ten district and borough councils and the county council, delivers free one stop-shops for health and wellbeing information, advice and support. The Healthy Hubs work with over 130 organisations. People are helped to access the right services to meet their physical, emotional and social needs. The most frequent reasons for people visiting their local Healthy Hub include mental health support, loneliness, weight management, debt management and to get more active.

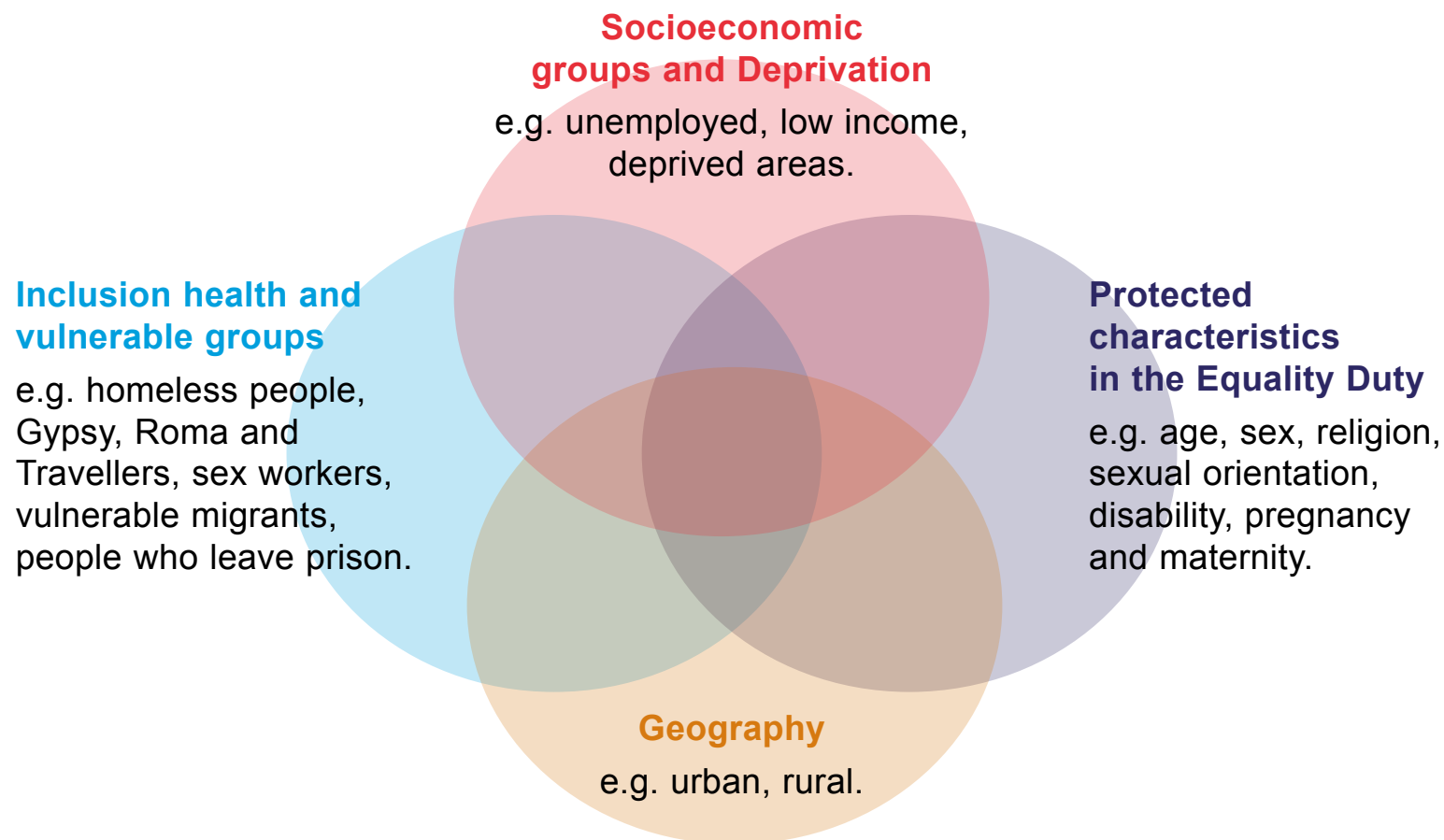


07

Reducing health inequalities

The unequal distribution of the social determinants of health, such as education, housing and employment, drives inequalities in physical and mental health, and reduces an individual's ability to prevent sickness, or to access treatment when ill health occurs.

Over-lapping dimensions of health inequalities



Although this diagram does not name all protected characteristics it illustrates their relationship with other types of inequality.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-equity-assessment-tool-heat/health-equity-assessment-tool-heat-executive-summary>

While Hertfordshire's health statistics are mostly favourable when compared with the national picture, we know that there are persistent health inequalities, especially in areas of deprivation.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and widened health inequalities and led to many more people experiencing those inequalities through changed economic, employment or health circumstances.

The leading causes of death among both men and women in Hertfordshire are also responsible for the largest gap in life expectancy and impact on the number of years people live in good health. They include heart cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancer, and diabetes.



We will continue to develop and deliver a range of preventative services which promote health and wellbeing for all residents, particularly those at highest risk of ill health and premature mortality.

This will be done by working with under-served groups and wider communities to understand the impact of a range of factors on their health and how best to address them.

We will

- Ensure that when we commission public health services we target people who are most in need
- Support partners with their plans for health inequalities
- Map existing health inequalities work across Hertfordshire to advise on gaps and duplication and develop a cohesive action plan for ourselves and partners
- Promote clear and consistent messaging about health inequalities and how to include health in all policies, both internally and externally with partners
- Provide joint leadership with Adult Care Services for the ICS health inequalities workstream, coordination for HCC health inequalities initiatives and work with other health inequalities groups

We work with families and partner agencies to ensure that children and young people are as healthy as possible.

08

Children & young people



Our focus is on children and young people from 0-18 years and up to 25 years for young people who are care leavers or who have special educational needs.

The first years of life and particularly from conception to age two significantly impact health and wellbeing.

During this period the foundations are laid for each child's social, emotional and physical health affecting their whole life. Where there are concerns about the health of a child or young person, evidence shows that intervening early and/or prevention makes a significant difference to health outcomes.

We will continue with our programme of work with partners to offer universal support and to identify and respond to emerging need, targeting advice, supporting and delivering services to individuals and groups at higher risk of poor health outcomes.

Our programme covers

- Pre-conception and pregnancy
- Early years – including breastfeeding, oral health, speech and language
- Children and Young People – including vision and hearing screening, healthy weight, physical activity, emotional health and wellbeing
- Young People – relationships and sexual health
- Young people – substance misuse
- Engagement with children and young people and their families

We will:

- Work with our partner organisations to ensure a whole system approach to restore and adapt our children's health services and interventions as we recover from the pandemic
- Ensure that addressing health inequalities is central to our work
- Address the emerging mental health needs of children, young people and families by enhancing the Just Talk programme, working with partners to improve mental health services, and improving access to services for anxiety, low level depression, eating disorders and suicide prevention work
- Ensure that safeguarding of children and young people is paramount in all that we do
- Work closely with Children's Services to ensure that the health needs of vulnerable young people including Children Looked After and young people in the youth justice system are addressed
- Ensure there is a joined-up pathway for tackling excess weight in children and young people
- Support the public health nursing service, to deliver the Healthy Child Programme
- Work with partners to ensure there are services in place that address young people's health such as substance misuse and sexual health
- Work with partners to ensure that there is an effective and joined up response to early years and emerging need, including transitioning family centres to the Family Hub model
- Support the Local Maternity System (LMS) to embed prevention to improve maternal and neonatal outcomes particularly for teenage mothers and mothers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds





09

Adults

Encouraging and supporting people to adopt healthy behaviours is important for health and wellbeing – both physically and mentally.

Physical activity and a healthy diet can help people recover from becoming overweight and avoid or manage health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis and depression.

Healthy behaviours can support individuals to live longer and more independently.

Healthier behaviours are essential for an affordable NHS and social care system in Hertfordshire.

Our prevention programme includes a range of services, including some statutory responsibilities. We will continue to use data and evidence, work with our partners, enable community mobilisation and use digital opportunities across our programme of work which includes:

- Delivery of NHS health checks
- Sexual health services
- Drug and alcohol treatment
- Physical activity
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Workplace health
- Mental health

Through this programme we will:

- Work with our partner organisations to restore and adapt our public health services and interventions as we recover from the pandemic
- Ensure that addressing health inequalities is central to our work, in particular improving accessibility to our services for people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions and people from ethnic minority groups
- Work with our district and borough councils to develop a core Healthy Hub offer so residents and professionals understand what every Healthy Hub offers as a minimum
- Deliver health checks (40–74 year-olds) and explore alternative innovative delivery methods
- Reprocurer the sexual health service with an increased emphasis on digital and prevention elements (e.g. online STI testing and contraception) and community-based preventative services to reduce health inequalities and encourage self-managed care
- Have oversight of treatment provision for dependent drug and alcohol users and non-dependent drinkers/drug users
- Ensure Hertfordshire has an alcohol early help offer, ensuring individuals come forward for the right help at the right time
- Review the physical activity programme offer across Hertfordshire in 2022
- Review Hertfordshire's Healthy Weight pathway, including commissioned weight management services as a universal offer
- Develop a place-based approach to preventing obesity with district and borough councils
- Continue to reduce harm from tobacco through our smoking cessation services
- Develop a workplace programme offer for the ICS, including a digital wellbeing check
- Develop a Herts Healthy Workplace accreditation scheme to encourage local businesses to support their employees' health and wellbeing
- Work with key organisations to develop a countywide approach to mental health which promotes mental wellbeing and resilience, prevents ill health, and supports recovery, including work to support people with learning disabilities
- Continue to lead on suicide prevention across the county including the roll out of suicide prevention for professionals and others who work directly with young people and adults



Older People

We want older people to have the best quality of life and health possible, and thrive into older age.

As people increasingly live longer, actively ageing well for as long as possible is important. We want to promote and empower older residents to be healthy, active and socially connected. This will help their health and wellbeing (better mental health, more years free of disease, better mobility, fewer falls and increased companionship) and keep older people safe and well at home for longer. This reduces hospital admission and additional care, which has financial benefits to the NHS and adult care services. Encouraging older people to be healthy not only improves their own quality of life but adds value to the lives of those around them by the contributions they make to their families and communities.

Residents living into older age, but with complex health and care needs such as frailty and or dementia, need additional support from a range of services and community resources. Proactively identifying people living with frailty and or dementia is the first step to helping them, followed by introducing them to local community services to help them enjoy the best possible quality of life and remain safe and well at home.

Similarly, we need to ensure that carers receive the support they need to manage their own health. With an increasingly ageing population, more people in Hertfordshire are carers for the elderly and the number of elderly people who are carers themselves is increasing.



We will work with our partners to develop and deliver a healthy ageing programme which will:

- Ensure older people and carers are supported to have a healthy lifestyle and they are aware of and have access to appropriate health and wellbeing offers e.g. Never too late campaign which encourages older Hertfordshire residents to take up physical activity
- Review our physical activity and mobility/strength-based exercise offer as part of maintaining strength and mobility and preventing falls
- Ensure services are tailored to older people as appropriate and includes identifying and addressing cultural preferences, frailty, dementia and social isolation
- Support the development of a broad offer of community-based support and activities, which addresses social isolation and loneliness
- Encourage older residents to understand the importance of keeping warm in winter and cool in summer, making sure they eat properly and are physically active. This is particularly important for extreme weather events such as freezing conditions and heat waves which are becoming more frequent due to climate change



A holistic approach to health and wellbeing

Many factors influence and affect people's health and having access to a range of locally based information can play an important part in supporting people to be healthy. We want to improve access to health and wellbeing information and services so that an individual's care is streamlined, co-ordinated and person-centred.

We will:

- Improve self-care information and access to information on health and wellbeing offers
- Improve integration across health and non-health organisations, through referral processes supported by holistic assessment tools and easier access to services (eg healthy hubs, social prescribing, workplace health checks)
- Develop ways to support people with complex or multiple behaviour lifestyle issues
- Develop a public health training offer designed to support the wider health and wellbeing system to upskill staff on the role of prevention and behaviour change
- Deliver Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training to the NHS to enable delivery of consistent health and wellbeing information and encourage people to talk about their health



Healthy places

Creating healthy places can positively influence over 50% of the factors that affect a person's health. How we behave is also important. Positive results become possible when people change their behaviour. For example, health benefits are obtained from walking and cycling more, on better designed, safer routes and taking fewer car journeys.

We will:

- Work with partners and communities to encourage and enable the development of joined-up quality communities enabling local action to deliver clean air for all and other outcomes to protect human health
- Influence planning by advocating and supporting health impact assessments and using our health and wellbeing planning guidance to design sustainable neighbourhoods which support health and wellbeing



10

Health protection

Health protection seeks to prevent and control infectious diseases and other threats to the health of the population.

The Director of Public Health has a statutory responsibility to be assured that adequate arrangements are in place to protect the health of residents and to work closely with the Local Resilience Forum and other agencies to prepare for future health protection emergencies.

We will:

- **COVID-19 response** - continue to give advice and support to organisations and communities to reduce the risk of infection, illness and death with support targeted towards vulnerable residents
- **Health protection and emergency planning** - strengthen preparedness for future health protection threats including acting on the recommendations from the Local Government Association's (LGA) review of Hertfordshire's response to COVID-19
- **Vaccination and immunisation** - ensure we keep population vaccination and immunisation levels at the highest we can, and work with communities to reduce inequalities
- **Communicable disease control** - work closely with district and borough environmental health officers on outbreaks of communicable disease
- **Infection control** - reduce infections in high-risk settings focussing on health and social care settings
- **A healthy environment** - protect from diseases humans can catch from animals to contaminated land – applying health protection to planning sustainable growth
- **Hazards** - ensure that environmental, chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats and hazards are understood, and the health protection issues are addressed
- **Foresight** - scanning for emerging threats and hazards to future biosecurity, health and safety
- **Assurance** - through the Hertfordshire Health Protection Board ensure that the health protection system in Hertfordshire is robust and able to respond quickly and flexibly to any incident or emergency; for example the PH team responds when necessary to meet priorities in the county such as supporting asylum seekers and refugees by working with other lead partners to ensure health needs are met and health protection measures are implemented.



11

Achieving best value for money

We will meet the statutory duty to achieve best value for money and seek to continuously improve how we commission and deliver our services.

We will ensure that all the activities commissioned or delivered by Public Health will be underpinned by a commitment to achieving best value for money, working with both private and voluntary and community sector providers.

To do this, we will apply principles for developing new ideas and for procuring and managing contracts.

We will:

- Ensure that we combine financial information and health economics when looking at new opportunities and interventions
- Actively seek the views of potential providers and other stakeholders about our ideas for developing new services and delivery models
- Use digital and online services to support and achieve our priorities
- Continually learn from previous experiences and local and national projects and services including cost comparisons
- Work with other organisations to develop co-commissioning arrangements so that we can commission services at scale, pooling our resources where appropriate
- Develop arrangements for recovering our costs where appropriate
- Develop new approaches for distributing funding to local community organisations
- Ensure that our contracting methods enable us to be assured that contracted providers and suppliers take the health and well-being of their workforces seriously
- Ensure that contracted service providers and suppliers demonstrate how they will contribute to the wider health and care system, and support our sustainability and diversity ambitions and groups
- Ensure that we use the national Quality Improvement frameworks for Public Health Services as part of continuing improvement



12

Providing strategic business intelligence and analytics

Our aim is to continue delivering a joined-up evidence and intelligence function which facilitates evidence-based working across decision-makers, commissioners and providers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of a strong public health intelligence function for effective systemwide strategy-setting and delivery of an agile response to unexpected public health crises.

We will:

- Work with partners and a wide range of stakeholders to support public sector and wider partnership transformation through establishing improved data collection and availability, facilitating access to systems and technology to support collaboration, and working to develop analytical skills across the sector
- Provide through our Decision Support Programme, specialist input to specific areas of work focussed on health inequalities
- Provide the best quality of information possible through epidemiology and needs assessments to support decision makers
- Provide rigorous evaluation of health initiatives to ensure they are evidence based and cost-effective from start to finish and can show how improvements have made a positive difference to local people
- Drive change and improvement by embedding the use of population health analytics throughout Hertfordshire

13

Decision-making and review

This strategy will be delivered through a wide range of public health activities and we will show that we deliver the best possible public health service for the people of Hertfordshire.

We will measure our progress using public health outcomes indicators and feedback from residents, partners and other stakeholders. We plan to review it and publish updates annually.

We will continuously use the national public health framework for quality improvement and Sector Led Improvement methodologies to assure our services and continuously improve them.





Contact Us

To find out more about our Public Health Service:

Visit: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthinherts

Email: publichealth@hertfordshire.gov.uk

For deaf customers or those with hearing loss:

Contact us using SignVideo, our live BSL video interpreting service, text **07507 306911**, or Textphone/Minicom **01992 555506**.

Write to us at:

Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DQ

Get email updates from Update Me: Visit: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/updates to sign up to Update Me. Select the 'Your Health and Wellbeing' topic for the latest news from Public Health, email updates from other services across the county council available too.

Follow us on social media:

 [@hertscountycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/hertscountycouncil)

 [@healthinherts](https://www.facebook.com/healthinherts)

 [@hertscc](https://twitter.com/hertscc)

 [@hertscc](https://www.instagram.com/hertscc)

This publication can be made available in alternative formats by emailing publichealth@hertfordshire.gov.uk or calling **0300 123 4040**