



# Northumberland County Council

County Council

Wednesday, 21 February 2024

## Annual Portfolio Report - Public Health and Wellbeing

**Report of Councillor(s)** Veronica Jones, Cabinet Member for Improving Public Health and Wellbeing

**Responsible Officer(s):** Gill O'Neill, Executive Director for Public Health (DPH), Inequalities & Stronger Communities

### 1. **Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

This report highlights the significant work taking place to tackle inequalities across protected groups, socio economic disadvantage, geographical disparities and parts of our population who are sometimes less heard. All the work takes into consideration value for money and growing the economy from an inclusive perspective.

### 2. **Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to set out some of the key achievements for Public Health, Northumberland Communities Together and the work we have undertaken with the voluntary and community sector of Northumberland over the last 12 months. The report also highlights some key areas of focus for the year ahead.

### 3. **Recommendations**

3.1 Council to Note the Cabinet Member for Improving Health and Wellbeing Annual Portfolio Report.

#### • **Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable**

6<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The report is to note and does not require key decisions.

### 4. **Background**

- The Annual Portfolio reports from each of the Council's Cabinet Members provide a valuable opportunity for Council to consider and comment on the work of each Portfolio. This strengthens the important link and accountability between

key decisions taken by the Cabinet and achievement of the three priorities of the Council as set out in the Corporate Plan.

- The Council adopted the Corporate Plan at its Annual General Meeting on 17th May 2023. The Plan establishes three priorities for the Council, underpinned by our approach to tackling Climate Change. The Annual Council Achievements Report sets out overall progress against the three priorities whilst this Portfolio report provides an opportunity for Members to drill down further into the work of Public Health and tackling inequalities.

### **Achievements - Tackling Inequalities: Overarching strategic direction**

- In response to concerns about inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Northumberland's Inequalities Plan was adopted by The Health and Wellbeing Board and endorsed by Council in September 2022. This plan focuses on immediate actions to reshape our collective approach to reducing inequalities by improving our understanding of inequalities at a neighbourhood level, changing the way we work as organisations, how we work together and how we work WITH communities and build on the strengths of communities to support them to take meaningful local actions. Throughout this report there are examples of how we are working with others to:
  - Ensure our residents voice is valued and equal to data.
  - Maximise our civic responsibilities, such as policy, strategy, regulation, financial responsibilities, partnership and coordination and community participation.
  - Develop and coordinate our workforce as a shared asset to maximise impact on reducing inequalities.
  - Develop, deliver and commission services differently
- The Inequalities Plan has significantly informed the refresh of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for its remaining five years and has guided the development of the future facing County Partnership Mission of changing generational outcomes over the next twenty years to enable people to live their best life. This is within the context of Northumberland being *a land of great opportunities*.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Budget prioritisation**

- We have led a budget prioritisation exercise to inform future decisions on resource allocation to ensure a balanced public health budget that delivers value for money and also maximises our impact on reducing inequalities.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Starting and growing up well**

- Ensuring that children and young people have the best start in life and grow up well has lifelong impacts for health and wellbeing and helps tackle inequalities. We work in close partnership with Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust to provide the Growing Healthy Northumberland 0-19 (health visiting and school nursing) service. We have worked together to develop the service to best support children and families from birth to adulthood, with additional help for those families with most need. An extensive training programme has been delivered within the 0-19 service improving quality. A strengthened emotional

health and resilience offer has increased access to support for children with low level mental health needs.

- The Growing Healthy Northumberland 0-19 service is a key partner in Northumberland Family Hubs and is contributing to strengthened perinatal mental health support.
- We lead a range of partnership work including topics such as improving nutrition and healthy weight, increasing breastfeeding uptake and reducing health inequalities through support for vulnerable families managing cost of living challenges. There has been a year on year increase in the prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from 36.6% in 2018/19 to 42.0% in 2021/22. Although this exceeds regional prevalence (35.7%) it remains below the England average (49.2%), though the gap between Northumberland and England has reduced since 2019/20. The development and implementation of an integrated 2 year assessment between the Growing Healthy Northumberland 0-19 service and NCC Early Years is an example of effective partnership working which will help identify and support children with additional needs at an early stage.
- The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) measures the height and weight of children in reception (aged 4 to 5 years) and year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years) to assess overweight and obesity levels in children within primary schools. The prevalence of overweight including obesity in 2022/23 for both reception (25.6%, 735 children) and year 6 (38.3 %, 1235 children) was greater than the England average (21.3% and 36.6% respectively) and an increase on the previous year (21.3% and 36.2% respectively). We continue to offer support to children and their families and this year the Public Health team are offering an improved digital programme to encourage a wider reach as well as a more staggered approach to measuring children by locality making the programme and the support offer a more seamless process.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Capacity Building/Making Every Contact Count**

- To ensure that public health is 'everybody's business' we support a comprehensive workforce development offer that enables our communities to value health and to improve and protect the health of all our residents. This includes training and accredited learning for volunteer community health champions, topic-based professional courses and Level 3 and Level 6 public health apprenticeship schemes.
- The Health Improvement Training Programme provides support and training to local organisations and individuals with over 86 short courses offered throughout the year. To date we have received 524 applications for the 2023/24 programme. Health Improvement Practitioner and Specialists who facilitate the courses have many years' experience of working within public health and are qualified educators and accredited training providers for the Royal Society of Public Health and Mental Health First AID England qualifications. The team have 5 members of staff undertaking the Level 3 Community Wellbeing Worker Apprenticeship and 2 on the Level 6 Public Health Degree Apprenticeship programme.
- Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is an approach to behaviour change that uses the millions of day-to-day interactions that organisations and individuals

have with other people to support them in making positive changes to their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Over 1000 frontline staff, volunteers and residents in Northumberland have been trained in MECC and over 100 have been trained as MECC trainers. Those trained have been from the NHS, the Council (including the Fire and Rescue Service), Citizens Advice, Primary Care Networks, Rise (the sports partnership), social housing providers, residents' associations, and numerous voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. There is a MECC Strategic Partnership which is overseeing work to understand the impact of training, in particular the 'train the trainer' approaches. We have also recruited a health improvement practitioner to focus on supporting system partners to deliver MECC for financial wellbeing.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Health Protection**

- Health protection is described as preventing or reducing the harm caused by communicable or infectious diseases and minimising the health impact of environmental hazards. We have effective long-standing relationships with key partners involved in health protection and have developed the multiagency Northumberland Health Protection Assurance and Development Partnership to better understand how we can further protect the health of residents and reduce inequalities. This is overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Mental Health**

- We facilitate the well-established multiagency Crisis Care, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Strategic Partnership and operational group which supports this. We are working with partners to deliver our agreed action plan for promoting good mental health.
- We provide a comprehensive county-wide training offer to support suicide prevention and better mental health. This includes Adult Mental Health Awareness, Adult Mental Health First Aid, Basic Suicide Awareness, Youth Mental Health Awareness, Youth Mental Health First Aid and bespoke training such as Mental Health Awareness (including Suicide Awareness) for Elected Members, Wellness sessions for Carers and GP Surgery Staff.
- We coordinate partnership support for a range of mental health campaigns throughout the year including: Time to Talk, Stress Awareness Month, Mental Health Awareness Week, Loneliness Week, World Suicide Prevention Day, Silver Sunday and World Mental Health Day.
- We have very close working relationships with Place Based ICB colleagues and support the NHS Community Mental Health Transformation (CMHT) programme which aims to improve identification and early intervention for those at highest risk encouraging use of self-help resources and community assets to their best advantage. This includes a 'no wrong door' approach with one trusted assessment, and an improved community offer of holistic physical and mental health care. Work is underway to develop a Crisis Cafe/Safe haven in Ashington.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Oral health**

- Our multiagency Oral Health Strategic Implementation Group continues to meet with a wide range of partners. The Northumberland Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan has been updated and agreed at Health and Wellbeing Board for the period 2022-2025 with a stronger emphasis on reducing inequalities and supporting vulnerable groups. In Northumberland, as part of the oral health strategy we are supportive of the expansion of the Community Water Fluoridation scheme.
- Achievements include establishing an oral health referral pathway for cared for children, so they are now routinely referred to the community dental service at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. There is ongoing work to strengthen oral health support for these young people including training for foster carers.
- The Growing Healthy Northumberland 0-19 service oral health offer for children aged under 5 years has been refreshed, including comprehensive provision of training for staff. Family Hubs are working with NHS England to introduce an oral health champion in every family hub to strengthen health promotion activities.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Tobacco**

- Sustained local action in partnership, coordinated by the Northumberland Tobacco Control Partnership, alongside and complementing our commissioned regional programme and national activities, has resulted in Northumberland's latest reported adult smoking prevalence rate (2022) at 9.6%, making us lower than the England average and lowest in the region.
- NCC Public Health and Stop Smoking Service (SSS) working with NENC ICB Northumberland and Northumberland Community Outreach team as an Early Implementer Site to test a partnership approach to helping serious mental illness (SMI) patients to reduce and stop smoking, as part of their physical health check. Outcomes for this group are encouraging - up to October 2023, 74 patients have been referred, 61 engaged (83% engagement) and 14 quit (23% quit rate).
- NCC Trading Standards (TS) and Public Health have worked together to augment illicit tobacco and alcohol work and engage in prevention by appointing a Fair Trading Officer with this focussed remit. Outcomes are impressive with the TS team conducting investigations and enforcement on a bigger scale, resulting in the seizure of over 33,000 sticks of illicit cigarettes between October 2022 and October 2023, and the closure of premises found to be selling illicit products.
- NCC Public Health, Housing, and SSS participation in a national 'Swap to Stop' opportunity. Social housing tenants offered a bespoke stop smoking support programme, access to the SSS digital webpage, and a free vape starter-kit. 10 tenants from social houses in Blyth and Cramlington engaged with the programme, 6 set quit dates and from these, two people quit, two people reduced consumption and two are continuing with the programme.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Drugs and Alcohol**

- The drug and alcohol treatment service was successfully re-procured in 2023/24 and the new contract commenced on 01/10/23. The service model has been updated to reflect changes in the sector and drug/alcohol using trends, and additional investment has increased service quality and capacity, ensuring we can offer an effective service to some of our most vulnerable residents.
- Data for Sep 2023 demonstrates that 56% of people accessing our treatment services are making significant progress in either reducing or stopping their problematic use of substances. This is an increase from 52% for the same period last year and is above the 47% England figure.
- In line with Home Office requirements, we have co-developed the Northumbria Combating Drugs Partnership, with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Northumbria Police and the other five Tyne/Wear Local Authorities, to oversee local delivery of the National Drug Strategy.
- In 2023/24, almost £1m of additional funding was secured via the Government's Drug Strategy Grant and the ICS Healthy Inequality Fund, and invested in our local drug and alcohol systems, increasing resource and improving outcomes.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Sexual Health**

- The re-procurement of our sexual health service was successfully completed in early 2023, and the new contract commenced on 01/04/23. The service helps address inequality and protects the sexual health of our residents by providing targeted, needs led treatment. The new service model has been improved, creating more capacity and providing a variety of on-line and digital interventions. We have enhanced local contract reporting arrangements between NCC and the service provider, ensuring a better and more timely exchange of information. We are working with the service provider and GP partners to expand the provision and long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) to increase patient choice and access.
- The service provides a young person clinic and access to contraception, and we are seeing a steady decline in the number of teenage pregnancies, with current figures below regional averages – 13.8 per 1,000 population for Northumberland, compared to 19.8 for the North East. Availability of HIV testing is also worth noting, as although providing widespread coverage across Northumberland can be challenging, we continue to improve. In 2021 (most recent data), the percentage of eligible people who received an HIV test was 60.5%, representing a 79% increase since 2020, and a 28% increase since 2016.

### **Achievements – Public Health: NHS Health Checks**

- Heart disease and stroke are 80% preventable, and people living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to die early because of these conditions compared to people living in less deprived areas. All people aged 40-74 years without existing conditions are eligible for a free check-up to help understand their risk of developing heart disease, stroke and diabetes, and put in place actions to reduce their risk of developing these conditions as well as dementia.

- Up until recently, NHS Health Checks were delivered only in GP surgeries. However, a health equity audit found that uptake is disproportionately low among 40-60 year olds, men and in more deprived areas. As a result, the NCC Public Health team has implemented a community outreach programme in which health trainers are visiting workplaces, social venues, VCS organisations, and other agencies and locations to offer NHS Health Checks to people who would not otherwise attend their GP for the check. This is alongside work to improve uptake, quality and equity of NHS Health Checks delivered in GP surgeries.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Healthcare public health**

- We have updated against the achievements the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy theme of 'Adopting a whole system approach to health and care' over the past 5 years, and refreshed the actions and indicators or evidence of progress for the next 5 years.
- We have supported Primary Care Networks to develop and implement health inequalities and population health management plans.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Building blocks for good health**

- The NHS was never meant to be the only institution working to improve health, it was always intended to be part of a broader system of support addressing jobs, housing, education, and infrastructure. A healthy and thriving community needs all the right building blocks in place, for instance stable, high-quality jobs, high-quality housing and good education. For some of our residents these building blocks are missing, weak or need replacing. Over the last 12 months we have invested additional capacity into working with Council departments with civic responsibilities such as policy, strategy, intelligence, housing, inclusive economy and planning to increase the impact that the Council and our partners has collectively on reducing inequalities. This has included the Health and Wellbeing Board refreshing the 'Building Blocks of a good health' theme of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Healthy housing and planning**

- The Northumberland Local Plan was adopted in 2022 which included a range of new policies to improve health and wellbeing, these include the requirement for developers to complete Health Impact Assessments (HIA) on certain developments and a Hot Food Takeaway to limit new takeaways in certain areas. An audit of the HIA policy identified low levels of understanding of this policy. Joint training was delivered by Planning Policy and the Public Health team to the Planning Service and the guidance has been reviewed. Since then, rapid HIAs and Full HIAs have been either undertaken by developers or are in the process which should contain recommendations of how the developers will mitigate any negative impact or maximise positive impacts to health through their development. These recommendations can be built into planning conditions.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Financial wellbeing**

- NCC increased its financial contribution to Citizen's Advice Bureau in 2022 and has seen an increase in capacity building as a direct result of this increase. We have since established a financial well-being network (including the likes of Northumberland Community Bank, faith groups, CAB, Northumbria Health Care Trust and NCC) to help build financial resilience across the county. We have prioritised three themes of the government's financial well-being.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Health and inclusive growth**

- Since the pandemic, awareness has grown that our populations health is an asset which should be protected and nurtured, and the strong connection between health and the economy. Over the last 18 months closer relationships have developed between public health, economy and regeneration teams, the Combined Authority, and the Integrated Care Board culminating in the development of a North of Tyne Work and Health Strategy during 2023. This strategy has short and long-term aspirations focussed on strengthening strategic partnerships and seizing opportunities from devolution, integrating frontline health and employment support through commissioning pilots and strengthening referral pathways and finally creating and promoting good work in the local public and private sector. The Health and Wellbeing Board has also updated the Work and Health Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JSNAA).
- The Public Health team continues to support the North East Better Health at Work award, a regional award scheme which promotes and motivates businesses and their employees in developing and embedding a sustainable, positive culture around staff health and wellbeing. There are currently 32 active businesses who have achieved some level of the award and last estimates indicate this is equivalent to an employee reach of over 27,000.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Policy and strategy**

- In response to the call in our Northumberland Inequalities Plan to 'look at everything through an inequalities' lens, which includes developing a shared understanding of the 4 domains of inequalities (protected characteristics, geographical, socio economic factors and inclusion groups), a cross council working group led by Public Health was established to review our approach to impact assessment. This included learning from our current assessment processes for Equalities and Carbon Impact and from other areas who have incorporated a focus on socio-economic inequalities. This review identified the need to bring together the triple impact of the Equality Duty, the environment, and inequalities into a single Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process and for impact to be considered earlier in the decision-making process so that negative impacts can be minimised, and positive impacts maximised where possible. Also, there is a workforce development need to ensure this process is embedded across the Council rather than the responsibility of a few key individuals.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Intelligence**

- The Data Intelligence Team has supported several projects and workstreams including the Strategic Needs Assessment for Community Safety, the



Communities First Workstream and Northumberland Communities Together data collection and reporting project. Additionally, the JSNAA has been refreshed and published on the NCC website. The Ageing Well chapter is currently being updated, following a workshop in April 2023, topics include Employment and Civic Participation and Falls Prevention. Other topics are still being finalised for publication. A workshop is being arranged in February 2024 to refresh the Long-Term Conditions chapter. The team supports the Emergency Preparedness work across the council to ensure an appropriate response to emergencies.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Health Trainers**

- Following re-organisation, Health Trainers and the Community Health Champions programme moved to the Policy and Strategy portfolio of the directorate. A short programme of Team development sessions have supported this change and shaped future programme development. Achievements include development of the new NHS Health Checks model as outlined at (paragraph 5.20). This model went live October 2023 and to date 19 eligible people have accessed a health check. With support through the NHS Health Check steering group we have a robust delivery plan targeting areas with high CVD risk, areas of deprivation and areas and groups where uptake is low. The health trainer team continue to support residents to implement lifestyle behaviour changes and a new website (<https://www.livingwellnorthumberland.co.uk>) supporting the programme has been developed.
- The Community Health Champions programme is being reshaped as part of this transition. The programme co-ordinator is leading the refresh of comms and engagement across the Champions and Health Trainer programmes to ensure our residents voice informs and influences the information we share and shapes the way we share this. Key theme areas will include; alcohol, healthy weight, physical activity, mental health awareness and suicide prevention.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Asset Based Community Development**

- Skills and workforce development is a key theme in Northumberland Inequalities Plan to support system wide culture shift to create and enable the conditions necessary to foster 'at scale' transformation and meaningful change. To take this forward, 5 cohorts of Discover Asset Based Community development training were planned with Nurture Development. To date 4 cohorts (total 75 people) have been completed with cohort 5 planned January 2024. Cohort 1 involved participants from key teams across the system, whilst cohorts 2-4 were place based; Blyth, Hirst Ashington and Alnwick. Cohort 5 will be people (20) drawn from key frontline community-based teams across the Northumberland system. Early evaluation highlights strong system commitment, increased confidence and collaboration and an early shift in thinking, behaviour and language. This indicates that Northumberland has made significant progress in embracing ABCD as a community development approach in a relatively short space of time and that the commitment to continuous learning and fostering trust bodes well for future aspirations.
- As part of Heart of Blyth and the Blyth Better Together Partnership, a multi-agency group completed the ABCD training early in 2023, this included council staff, the Town Council, the Police and voluntary sector partners. A recent

evaluation has indicated that this has shifted practitioners' mindsets about the value that residents can bring – and, in some cases, stakeholders identified that this was impacting on how they now interact with residents.

- Ensuring our residents voice is equal to other data and is key to shaping our future direction is a key theme within Northumberland Inequalities Plan. Public Health, in partnership with colleagues in NCC Regeneration and Northumberland Communities Together, have been hosting community conversations using the [Place Standard Tool](#). To date we have hosted conversations in Hirst Ashington, Bedlington and Cramlington speaking with 722 residents aged 11-78. All conversations to date have directly influenced locality Place Plans and Hirst Master Plan, ensuring these are underpinned by a strengths-based, community centred approach. We have developed Place Standard Tool to incorporate a digital offer and cascaded training to some key community teams and continue development to enable broader reach and scale.
- Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) training, of both NCC staff and partners such as the police and VCS organisations helps us to support growth, building on the assets that exist in all our communities across the county.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Physical Activity**

- Physical Activity Strategy Refresh – North-East Directors of Public Health (DsPH) and Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) North-East centre have initiated a pilot for a Sector Led Improvement (SLI) process for physical activity. The process aims to provide assurance to both internal and external stakeholders and the public, as well as demonstrate continuous improvement to Public Health Practice. The bespoke assessment tool used for this approach is based on the International Society for Physical Activity and Health (ISPAH) publication, *Eight Investments That Work for Physical Activity*. The ISPAH publication adopts a whole system approach to physical activity and focuses on a number of key areas that are all informed by international evidence on what works for physical activity. NCC have begun to deliver a series of 8 workshops which will gain insight regarding key issues such as active travel, active environments, active school settings and sport and recreation for all. 2 workshops have been conducted with a further 6 to be facilitated before April 2024. The information gathered will be used to update Northumberland's Physical Activity Strategy '*Everyone More Active for Life*'.

### **Achievements – Public Health: Healthy Weight**

- NCC, alongside Northumbria FT and many other North-East Local Authorities have signed, Food Actives, Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight. The aim of the declaration is to achieve a local authority commitment to promoting healthy weight across all policy areas with a view to improving the health and well-being of the local population. The Declaration will provide a mechanism for NCC to take leadership at a strategic level, promoting healthy weight whilst influencing the thinking and commitment of departments and agencies outside of public health who can make a direct impact and support Northumberland's vision to support residents to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Progress to date includes:

Healthy Weight Declaration Commitment	Action
1. Implementing the Local Authority HWD as part of a 'systems wide approach' to obesity	Within the management contract for community leisure and wellbeing services, our Leisure operator is required to consider vending provision, ensuring healthy food and drink provision in line with the Healthy Weight Declaration.
9. Consider supplementary guidance for hot food takeaways, specifically in areas around schools, parks and where access to healthier alternatives are limited.	<p>Policy TCS (Town Centres and Central Services) 6: Hot Food Takeaways has been included within the Local Plan.</p> <p>The Policy looks to protect CYP from the harmful effects of Hot Food Takeaways. New takeaways will not be supported if they are not - over 400 metres walk from any entrance gate of any existing or proposed school or college with students under the age of 18 years</p>
15. Promote the health and well-being of local authority staff by creating a culture and ethos that promotes understanding of healthy weight, supporting staff to eat well and move more	Northumberland County Councils Health Trainer Team have piloted Health Check roadshows in various NCC depots, targeting support for frontline staff. Health Check Measurements included height, weight and Body Mass Index. Health Trainer staff provide health information based on the health check measurements results in addition to signposting appropriately to programmes such as the National Diabetes Prevention Programme, The NHS Digital Weight Management Programme and The Health Trainer Service for 1-2-1 support.

- Establishment of Northumberland Healthy Weight Alliance (HWA) – Aiming to make healthy weight everybody’s business. The goal is to ensure consideration and support for healthy weight is included in all our policies and practices. Earlier in 2023, the council’s Public Health Team coordinated the first HWA workshop. Delegates from various organisations with a range of strategic roles attended. The aim of the workshop was to revisit the positive work which had been progressed pre covid pandemic. Formal adoption of the HWA was ratified by H&WBB in September with the HWA planned to meet on a regular basis in 2024.

### Key Areas of Focus for Public Health

- A huge amount of work has been done in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic to create the conditions for people to live healthier lives and to reduce inequalities. The past year has seen some fantastic achievements across the breadth of Public Health and NCT. This is testament to the close and positive working between the Council and all its partners, striving to achieve the very best for our residents. As we move forward our key areas of focus are:
- **Starting and Growing up Well**

- Maintain the focus on emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children, young people and their families
- Review our intervention for children and young people identified by the National Child Measurement Programme as overweight and obese
- Develop and introduce a breastfeeding friendly scheme for businesses and other organisations
- Develop and implement an integrated multiagency enhanced parenting pathway for parents who need the most support
- **Health Protection**
  - Embed the Northumberland Health Protection Assurance and Development Partnership
  - Undertake collaborative work to understand the association between inequalities and health protection impacts for residents
- **Public Mental Health**
  - Continue collaborative work through established groups to promote better mental health
  - Develop a Promoting Better Mental Health Strategy for Northumberland
- **Oral Health**
  - Support the community water fluoridation consultation process as required
  - Continue the implementation of the oral health strategy, identifying priorities for a refreshed strategy in 2025
- **Drugs and alcohol**
  - Increasing numbers accessing structured treatment.
  - Development of an alcohol prevention strategy.
  - Local implementation of an Individual Placement Support programme to create employment opportunities for recovering drug and alcohol users.
- **Sexual health**
  - Development of a system wide sexual health strategy.
  - Work with the service to deliver a health equity audit and implement the findings.
  - Work with GP partners to continue the expansion of LARC provision.
- **Tobacco control**
  - Continue to provide public health leadership for a county-wide collaborative approach to tobacco control.
  - Provision of a specialist stop smoking service, including planning for new additional funding as part of the national drive to create a smokefree generation.

- **NHS Health Checks**

- Continue to increase quality, equity and uptake of NHS Health Checks, and evaluate the new community outreach project.

- **MECC**

- Continue to support partners to adapt, embed, cascade and deliver MECC in Northumberland with an additional focus on MECC for financial wellbeing.

- **Healthcare public health**

- Integrated neighbourhood teams: Support the ICB and others in Northumberland to develop integrated neighbourhood teams across the county.
- Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy theme of 'Adopting a whole system approach to health & care': Progress and monitor the implementation of the refreshed actions through the Northumberland ICB Place Sub-Committee / System Transformation Board.

- **Building Blocks of a Healthy Life**

- Increase quality and quantity of Health Impact Assessments and bring full Health Impact Assessments to Health and Wellbeing Board for consideration.
- Complete implementation of the Integrated Impact Assessment Process so that it is fully rolled out by November 2024.
- Work with Regeneration and Place Directorate to ensure Northumberland partners actively contribute to the delivery of the ICB and Combined Authorities Work and Health Strategy.
- Work with Housing directorate to develop a new Housing Strategy for the council, underpinned by improving health outcomes for our residents.
- Implement a 'Housing Pathway' through the use of Frontline, allowing face to face practitioners to refer housing concerns directly to housing providers and other VCS support organisations.
- Respond to the recent Levelling Up and Regeneration Act with the development of enforceable health-based design codes for the county.

### **Key achievement – Northumberland Communities Together**

- Northumberland Communities Together (NCT) continues to make sure residents are kept safe and well and provides coordination to support individual volunteers, voluntary groups and communities across our county.
- One of the key responsibilities of NCT is to assist in identifying and developing social value practices and asset-based community development approaches in collaboration with Thriving Together and other statutory and non-statutory partners.

### **Achievements**

- **Welfare Support & Assistance**

Northumberland's local welfare support scheme has been located within NCT to connect with a wider welfare support arrangement. Working in partnership with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE), NCT has developed a policy and approach which looks at a range of in-kind and voluntary support with links to advice and advocacy exploring a full range of delivery models

- **Poverty & Hardship Plan**

£1million has been set aside from the Public Health Grant to support with an ambitious plan to tackle inequalities and address hardship within communities. The plan brings together a range of proactively targeted strategies and actions along with grant funding opportunities for innovative and entrepreneurial approaches which tackle poverty and hardship at a hyper local level.

- **Northumberland Emergency Transition Support (NETs)**

NCT has processed the discretionary elements of the scheme which consists of the purchase of items or living expenses to help meet expenses that have arisen because of an emergency or a disaster and must also be the only way of preventing serious damage or serious risk to the health or safety of a person or their family. During the past 12 month period the NET's team have processed emergency and transitional claims totalling £80,964 of financial support.

- **DWP Grant Determination – Local Support Grants**

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has provided funding to Northumberland County Council, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer a series of schemes which aim to help households most in need. Authorities were given the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food or goods, or issuing grants to third parties. Since December 2020 NCT has been provided over £14million of welfare support to distribute to vulnerable households across Northumberland. Over 275,241 awards have been made to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills and/or other essentials linked to those items.

- **Holiday Activity & Food Programme**

NCT has been managing the delivery of the DfE Holiday Activity and Food Programme known locally as The Northumberland Holiday Provision. Our Northumberland approach focusses heavily on using fantastic local assets to deliver a high-quality offer for young people in Northumberland. This includes a range of enriching activities, lots of fun and a good nutritious meal during the school holidays (Easter, Summer and Christmas). Since 2021/22 over 24,000 spaces have been provided. During the summer 2023 alone 5,300 young people attended, and the efficacy rate for attendance was 98.6% (no show rate was less than 2%) demonstrating the value of our relational and place based working.

- **Cost of Living Support**

In response to the 'Cost of Living Crisis', NCT has created a dedicated Cost of Living Support Hub online presence, providing a single point of access for information and support. NCT has also delivered over 60 'Here to Help' community placed based events to support residents, with a total of 110 scheduled by April 2024.

- NCT has dealt with 11,194 referrals between 1st November 2022 - 15 November 2023.
- NCT continues to manage the distribution of DfE Holiday Activity & Food programme (HAF) £1,128,130.
- NCT continues to manage the distribution and delivery of DWP Household Support Fund (HSF) £4,044,597 period 2022/2023.
- NCT continues to provide access to Northumberland Emergency Transition Support (NETs) welfare support service distributing £80,964 of financial assistance between 1st November 2022 - 15 November 2023.

- **Community Coordination & Place Based Support**

Local area co-ordination is an approach to supporting people who are vulnerable through economic circumstance, age, frailty, disability, or mental health issues achieve their vision for a good life, to support people to contribute to their communities and to strengthen the capacity of communities to welcome and include people. Built on the assumption that people who may be vulnerable due to age, disability or mental health needs are not just 'passive recipients' of public services such as social and health care, but have expertise, gifts, strengths that can help them achieve their vision for a good life, contribute to their local communities and maximise the impact of resources. Locality coordination promotes cultural change and contributes to, and drives reform of, the existing service system, making services more personal, flexible, accountable and efficient.

Locality coordinators within NCT have and continue to lead local partnerships, with primary care networks, health services, council services and VCS partners, with the aims to move the front end of the service system/primary source of support from assessment, money and services to prevention, helping people to stay strong and supporting practical solutions such as.

- Secured funding through Partnership for People and Place (PfPP) programme with the aim of piloting a new approach to cross-government working to improve local outcomes and efficiency of policy and programmes designed and delivered in place. Hello Hirst was established to support families, children and young people to increase school readiness and work together to develop impactful support provision.
- Establishment of 160 Warm Welcome Spaces including the digital mapping of 105 spaces on the new interactive map.
- Mapping and registration of 90 Community Resilience Hubs to support societal resilience and civil contingencies.
- Appointment of Hirst Community Coordinator securing funding from Police & Crime Commissioner, Northumbria Police and Heritage Lottery to advance ABCD approaches across Hirst.
- Secured Hotspot and Transport Network Safety funding and completed the recruitment and appointment of 4 x Community Support Officers.

- **Frontline**

Working with our VCS commission and Thriving Together partnership NCT is helping to facilitate the continued expansion and rollout of our social prescribing referral platform and mobile application for Northumberland, commonly known as Frontline. We believe our solution is a truly effective whole community support for health, wellbeing and independence, and can provide everyone with the ability to identify and contact local services quickly. That is why we are encouraging the systematic take up amongst all our partners and across all neighbourhoods and communities.

In support of our asset-based approaches to community development the Frontline platform provides the ability to map services easily and generate data on partnership working, search behaviour and identify gaps in services and/or resources.

#### ○ **Community Hubs & Programme Delivery**

The hub model was developed with residents and local partners through a co-design process, involving a range of organisations. The hub sets out to bring different organisations together and to facilitate new interactions between people and organisations, in response to local needs. The hub offers a physical space enabling a range of local organisations to work together under one roof and provide a well-being offer to stimulate, better connections and new relationships, healthier lives.

- Launch of Alnwick Community Hub bringing a newly refurbished community asset back into operation.
- Continued operation and increased delivery through Cramlington Hub, Newbiggin Hub, Haltwhistle Hub; 1117 Hub booking forms have been processed since January and 27,802 people have attended sessions either one off or as part of regular attendance at the hubs.
- Introduction of new Skills Hub operating from Cramlington and the engagement and coproduction by over 20 partners.
- Secured commitment and future investment for the delivery of a new Newcastle United Foundation Family Zone at the Hirst Welfare, Ashington, delivering a suite of employability, welfare and physical activity programmes from January 2024.

#### ○ **Key areas of focus**

- Secure a sustainable long-term funding source to enable the re-tendering and commissioning of the VCSE infrastructure support contract for Northumberland.
- Continue to take a lead role and responsibility in the delivery of new 'Communities First' approaches to ensure residents and communities are empowered to help themselves through the BEST ways of working.
- Implementation of Policy in Practice Low Income Families Tracker (LIFT) to help proactively, target, prioritise and engage early with those most in need of support and assistance, to prevent crisis and escalation of need as part of our BEST ways of working and Communities First approach.



- Manage the safe transfer of Strategic Community Safety from NFRS to Stronger Communities, ensuring appropriate structures are in place to deliver on corporate priorities and mitigate corporate risk.
- Manage the mobilisation and support for transfer of Community Leisure Assets back to Stronger Communities by April 2024 and help establish new sustainable business delivery models which address strategic need and deliver improved outcomes.
- Continue to manage the strategic delivery of Government Grant Determination and Funding programmes including the DWP Household Support Fund and DFE Holiday Activity & Food programme ensuring that all aspects of programme delivery are compliant and sufficient to satisfy grant funding and monitoring requirements.

- **VCSE/Thriving Together**

In August 2021, Thriving Together was awarded the commission from Northumberland County Council to provide VCSE support. The underpinning ethos was to give all organisations within the sector the opportunity to thrive and achieve potential. The aim of the commission is to showcase the work of the sector through collaboration and partnership working to make a positive impact on the lives of Northumberland residents. Thriving Together enables a strategic partnership offering best fit representation, building sustainability through a highly visible presence. The Thriving Together approach is to be inclusive by offering non-membership support to all VCSE organisations throughout the county.

- **Achievements**

- 20% of the funding received from the Thriving Together commission was distributed to the networks to help develop local capability and capacity.
- 156 VCSE organisations have been supported under one of the three main aims of Thriving Together commission.
- 305 individuals have been given 1-2-1 support to take full advantage of the available resources and enable them to operate safely and legally.
- 15 Local Networks have been established offering an integrated means of fostering and linking thematic alliances, promoting the emergence of new leaders, and facilitating collaborative efforts to cultivate a supportive culture throughout the county, with the overall aim of improving the lives of Northumberland residents.
- Thriving Together has helped leverage an additional £2 Million of funding to VCSE organisations across Northumberland through collaborative and partnership approaches to funding bids.
- Thriving Together has developed a strong social media presence to engage in mixed dialogue and interaction, resulting in 77,351 impressions (the number of times content was displayed); 30,648 reach (number of people who see content) and 1,072 comments, reactions, shares (number of people who have directly commented and shared content).
- £425K secured through the Adult Education Budget to lead a VCS consortium to provide Community based training.

- Working with NCT to develop a new TT network for Veterans’ organisations.
- Commenced a project through VONNE focusing on Healthy Communities by working with Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLW’s) to identify gaps in provision and creating better links with the VCS organisations to build capacity. Supported by £10,000 secured from Assura to provide small grants for grassroots organizations in Cramlington.
- **Key areas of focus**
  - Establishment of new thematic networks including Faith Groups, Armed Forces & Veterans Groups, and VCSE Leaders Group.
  - Secure the necessary sustainable funding source to maintain delivery of Thriving Together the Northumberland VCSE infrastructure support contract
  - Support delivery of Northumberland Inequalities Event 2024 providing opportunity to Showcase the VCSE in Northumberland and their contribution to tackling inequalities.
  - Continue to develop the delivery model and platform for the Adult Education Budget.
  - Continue to maintain and strengthen Thriving Together networks with particular emphasis on connecting and aligning Churches and Community Faith Groups.

• **Options open to the Council and reasons for the recommendations**

- The report highlights the key achievements across Public Health, Northumberland Communities Together and the VCSE commission Thriving Together. Council is recommended to note the content of the report.

• **Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	This report highlights the policy work being undertaken and aligns to the Corporate Plan
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	The work within this report is funded by the Public Health Grant and also includes national grants such as the Household Support Fund
<b>Legal</b>	No implications to note
<b>Procurement</b>	Where there have been procurements undertaken over the last 12 months all have followed due process of NCC policy and procedures
<b>Human resources</b>	No implications
<b>Property</b>	No implications

<b>The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?</b>	No This report is a highlight summary of work over the last 12 months. All work is designed to ensure no populations are disadvantaged and targeted based on needs and evidence base
<b>Risk assessment</b>	All risks are managed as part of service level risk registers
<b>Crime and disorder</b>	No implications
<b>Customer considerations</b>	All outward facing services are designed to best meet the needs of residents and seeks feedback from residents where applicable
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	None identified
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	All work documented is designed to improve health and wellbeing
<b>Wards</b>	(All Wards);

- **Background papers**

Not applicable

- **Links to other key reports already published**

Not applicable

- **Author and Contact Details**

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