



Sunderland Healthy City Delivery Plan 2026/27

**Sunderland
City Council**

Sunderland Healthy City Plan 2020–2035

Our ways of working are



Prevention focused



Intelligence led and technology enabled



Focused on inequalities and people who need extra support



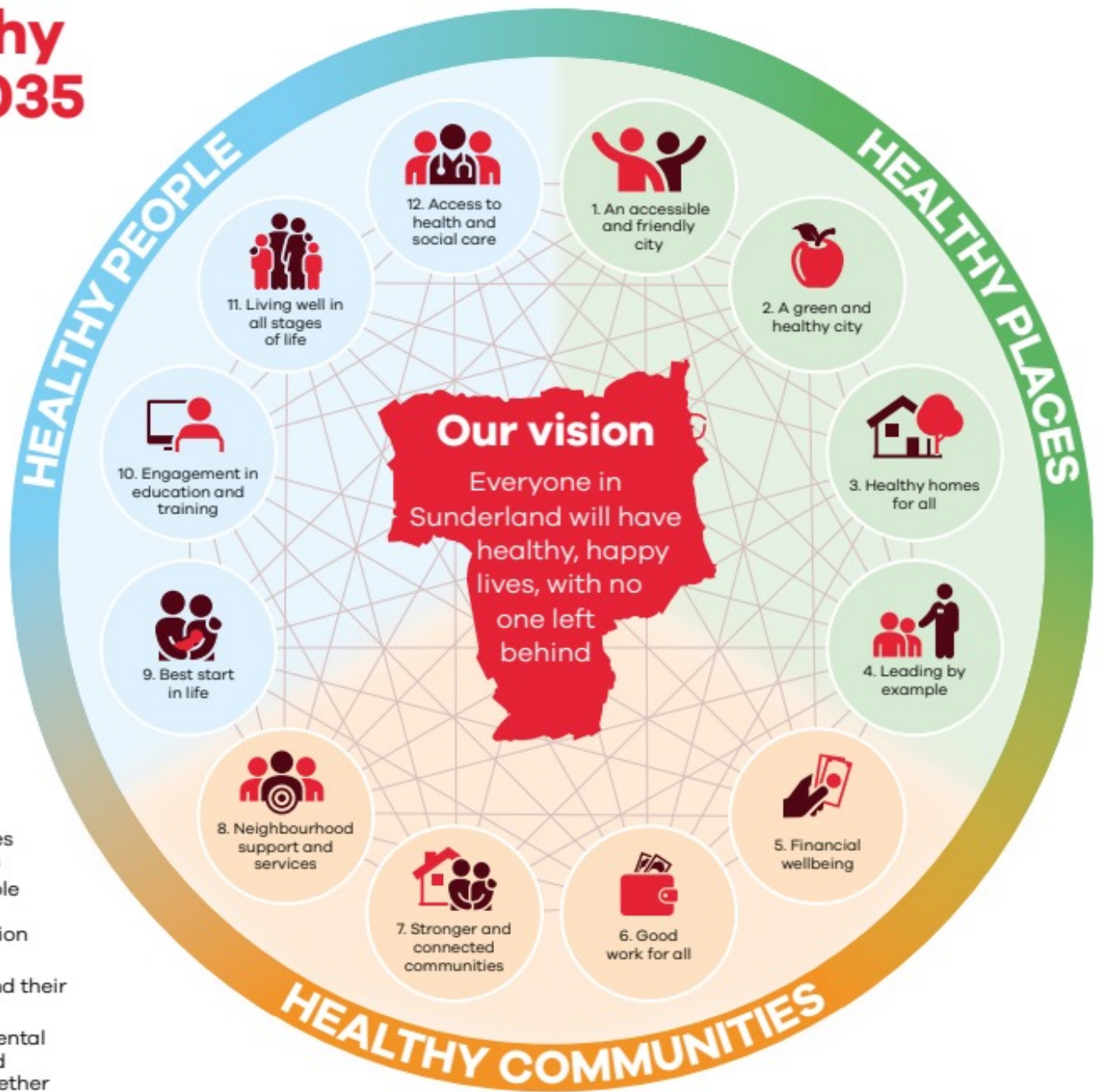
Strengths based and community focused



Equitable

Addressing the eight Marmot policy objectives

1. Give every child the best start in life
2. Children, young people and families maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
3. Fair employment and good work for all
4. A healthy standard of living for all
5. Healthy and sustainable places and communities
6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention
7. Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes
8. Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together



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Healthy places

Priority 1. An accessible and friendly city

Delivering a child friendly and age friendly inclusive environment where people have the best start, can live a healthy life and age well.

1

Why this matters

The places we live in shape our health. They help us to live well, stay connected, and feel part of our community. When our city is accessible, it supports everyone - from babies to older adults.

But not everyone experiences the city in the same way. Children need safe places to play and explore. Older people may find it harder to get around or feel lonely. People living with dementia, disabilities, or who are neurodiverse, blind or partially sighted may find public spaces hard to use. These challenges can make people feel stressed, less independent, and lower their quality of life. An accessible and age-friendly city removes these barriers.

When we get this right, we:

- Help people feel valued and connected to their neighbourhood
- Help children and young people grow up active and confident
- Support older people to stay independent, active and in touch with others
- Support people living with dementia, sensory needs or mobility issues to move around the city with dignity
- Reduce the risk of loneliness, isolation and accidents
- Build stronger, more inclusive communities

Healthy places

Priority 1. An accessible and friendly city

1

What we know in Sunderland

Age



1 in 5

people are under 18



2 in 5

people are aged 50 and over



By 2038
1 in 4

people will be aged 65 or older

Digital skills⁴



Many older people do not use the **internet**



Some people over 40 do not know how to use a **laptop or computer**



Nationally, nearly half of people aged 75 or older do not know how to use the **internet**

Older people are more likely to feel lonely if they⁵



Are **female**



Are part of a **minority or ethnic community**



Live alone



Have **poor health**

Healthy places

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Starting Well Delivery Board** will:

- Increase the number of **Breastfeeding Friendly venues**, where breastfeeding is supported.

The **Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board** will:

- Be assured of the **Active Sunderland Board** leading the Sport England Place Based programme.
 - The programme will focus on 21 neighbourhoods with the highest levels of physical inactivity.⁶
 - The aim is to improve the local environment, so it is easier for people to be active in their everyday lives.
- Refresh the **Sunderland Suicide Prevention action plan**. Identify actions needed to aim to reduce the prevalence of suicides in Sunderland.
- Be assured of progress in delivering the **Sunderland Digital Inclusion Plan**, helping people be digitally connected as they age.

The **Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board** will:

- **Pilot intergenerational approaches** that create opportunities for people of all ages to connect.
- Use the dementia research findings to support the development of a **local action plan on dementia**.
- Identify the action we need to take to create an **environment that supports people to age well physically and mentally**.



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Breastfeeding Friendly Sunderland – Supporting mams to breastfeed across the city.

The number of mams breastfeeding in the city (at 6-8 weeks) is gradually going up. We want mams to feel confident to feed their babies in public. 'Breastfeeding Friendly Sunderland' is encouraging places to provide clean and comfortable spaces to breastfeed in through a clear pledge and visible signage.

One mam said, "When babies are hungry, they need to be fed. So, to have places where you can see the sticker and know that's a welcome and safe space, is just really helpful."

[Find out more about Breastfeeding Friendly Sunderland.](#)

[Access infant feeding support from your Family Hub.](#)



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Everyone can help prevent suicide - more lives can be saved.

Washington Mind engaged people with lived experience to co-produce 'A LIFE Worth Living' suicide prevention training. This community-based training helps people recognise and challenge attitudes that hinder suicide prevention. It also gives people the skills to spot warning signs and support others in getting the help they need. One participant shared: "Your training supported me through a difficult and emotive situation...you gave me the confidence to respond calmly and appropriately." "You are saving lives - this is a fact - and cascading confidence to allow people like me to be able to respond appropriately."

[Book training.](#)



Healthy places

Priority 2. A green and healthy city

Creating vibrant places that support health and build resilient communities.

2

Why this matters

Our surroundings - the air we breathe, the food we can buy, and the green spaces nearby - all shape our health. A green and healthy city helps us live longer, healthier lives. We can put health front and centre into how we plan, build and care for our environment.

Not all neighbourhoods have the same quality of surroundings. Some neighbourhoods have higher air pollution and more unhealthy food shops and takeaways.

Built up areas, with few trees, make hot weather worse due to a lack of shade. They also worsen flooding, as there are no green spaces to soak up the rain. Children, older people and people living with poor health are more impacted by extreme weather like heat.

Some of us don't have safe, clean, green spaces to play and be active in nearby. Some of us don't have local shops selling affordable, healthy food. These differences in our neighbourhoods lead to poorer health and shorter lives.

A green and healthy city can change this. We can shape neighbourhoods to reduce harm and increase access to things like trees, green space, clean air, and public transport. We can also influence businesses' role in shaping our health, from the clustering of fast-food outlets to the lack of affordable, healthy food in some areas.

When we get this right, we:

- Reduce the risk of long-term conditions like heart disease, diabetes and respiratory illness
- Support people to be active in their daily lives
- Improve mental wellbeing by reducing stress and increasing access to nature
- Help us respond to climate change, reducing the impact of extreme temperatures, flooding and poor air quality on people's lives
- Create fairer, more sustainable communities for future generations

Healthy places

Priority 2. A green and healthy city

2

What we know in Sunderland



There are great green spaces, parks and coastline



8

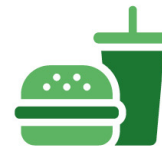
Nearly 3 in 10 reception year children are **living with overweight, including obesity.**

This increases to 4 in 10 year 6 children.



9

7 in 10 adults are **living with overweight, including obesity.**



10

Sunderland has the highest concentration of hot food takeaways in the North East (11th highest in the country).



11

There is a higher concentration of gambling premises than in the region and England.



7

Babies, older people and households with less money face more climate risks.

These people typically face greater risks to health and wellbeing from extreme temperatures.



12

There is a high concentration of venues

that have permission to sell alcohol and people dependent on alcohol.

Healthy places

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board** will:

- Identify opportunities for health, wellbeing and climate adaptation considerations to be reflected in the **new Local Plan**.
- Support the delivery of **climate adaptation**. This includes ensuring planning and adaptation for climate resilience, identifying associated health risks and ensuring appropriate and timely action taken.
- Deliver year one actions in the new **Sunderland Healthy Weight Strategy**, with a specific focus on how the environment shapes health.
- Enable activity to ensure greenspaces, parks, walking and cycling routes, the coastline and riverbanks are **accessible to all**.
- Deliver the **Sunderland Alcohol Strategy** (Calling Time: It's time to rethink drink).



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Climate Friendly Schools - leading the way in sustainability.

Helping children connect with nature is key to building greener communities. Sunderland City Council has worked with Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists (OASES) to support 15 local schools in becoming Climate Friendly Schools. Pupils and staff have formed climate teams. They have created action plans and taken steps to reduce their environmental impact. Activities have included growing vegetables, swapping uniforms, saving rainwater and planting trees. One school installed water butts and ran an energy-saving campaign. This shows how small actions can make a big difference.

[Read more about OASES.](#)

[Learn about Climate Friendly Schools.](#)



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Sunderland Low Carbon Charter Mark - supporting climate education in our communities.

Giving young people the tools they need to look after the planet contributes towards a greener Sunderland. The Low Carbon Charter Mark was launched at the [Sunderland School Climate Conference](#), with a climate-conscious mascot, 'Sunny Bee', inspired by children's artwork. Children and young people from 22 schools took part in fun climate-themed activities and shared ideas with organisations working to build greener communities.

While schools were able to share best practice and network with climate education organisations.

[Find out more about the Charter Mark.](#)



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Planting trees - helping us adapt to climate change.

Leaf canopies help cool down built-up areas and clean the air. Trees also soak up carbon dioxide (a key cause of the long-term warming of the planet) and support wildlife. Since the launch of The North East Community Forest initiative, 33,500 trees have been planted across 48 sites in Sunderland. This has created 66 hectares of tree cover and hedgerows. An extra 11 hectares of wildflowers and over 190,000 bulbs have also been planted. School grounds are now greener, offering future shade for children. Meanwhile, trees planted along streets and roadside planting are helping to reduce pollution, manage excess water, and reduce flooding. [Learn more.](#)



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Healthy Plates, Thriving Places.

What surrounds us shapes our health. When people live in an area with numerous junk food shops and takeaways, and fewer shops selling affordable, healthy food, it is harder to access healthy food. The “Healthy Plates Partnership Pilot” provides hospitality businesses in Sunderland with a unique chance to help to improve people’s health through food options. Businesses will also get promotional support from Sunderland BID and Sunderland City Council. By considering menu make-overs, smart swaps, local sourcing and food waste reduction, the Pilot is supporting a shift towards a healthier future.



**Sunderland
Good Food
Partnership**

Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Connecting through nature

Greenspaces offer a retreat from urban life. They offer a place to relax, play and connect with nature. A new project led by Sunderland City Council, with Durham Wildlife Trust and community groups, is making nature accessible to all. Using £490,000 awarded from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project links greenspaces, parks, walking routes, and the coastline and riverbanks. The project includes volunteering opportunities, training, outdoor activities, and nature-based support to improve wellbeing. This will help people build pride in the local environment and protect it for future generations.

More projects are being planned. [Find out more about the Links with Nature project in the Coalfields.](#)



Healthy places

Priority 3. Healthy homes for all

Enabling safe, sustainable and well-maintained homes that meet people's needs and support good health.

3

Why this matters

A safe, secure and good-quality home is one of the most vital building blocks of health. Decent, warm and reasonably priced homes help people stay well. They also help people recover from illness, feel in control and maintain independence. In contrast, homes can worsen health if they are cold, damp, overcrowded, poorly insulated, or people have an insecure tenancy. Poor housing can cause respiratory conditions, stress and accidents., and can also lead to social isolation.

Poor housing can affect children's sleep, learning, and development. This can have a long-term effect on their education, confidence and health. The home also plays a critical role in health and wellbeing for older people. Homes that are poorly adapted, unsafe or isolating can lead to falls, hospital stays, and a loss of confidence.

When we invest in healthy housing, we:

- Lower the risk of respiratory illness, injury and poor mental health
- Support children to grow up in safe, stable environments
- Enable people to remain independent and age well in their own homes
- Reduce delays in hospital discharges, prevent readmissions, and promote recovery
- Improve energy use and future-proof homes

Everyone deserves a home that supports their wellbeing, meets their needs, and gives them the stability to thrive. A good home helps people live well at every age.

Healthy places

Priority 3. Healthy homes for all

3

What we know in Sunderland



Housing has a big impact on our health.

Living in a warm, energy-efficient home that's free from damp and mould helps us stay well.



13

1 in 10 households are classed as being 'in housing need'.

This increases to 1 in 4 in the private rented sector.



14

Adult Social Care supports 500 tenants,

with a learning disability, mental health need or physical disability, across 127 Supported Living schemes.



The Council's Core Strategy and Development Plan

require at least 10% of new homes on larger sites to meet enhanced accessible and adaptable homes standards.

Healthy places

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Health and Wellbeing Board** will:

- Identify the opportunities for **health and wellbeing to be reflected in the emerging Housing Strategy** for Sunderland.
 - The Board will respond to the needs of people who have experienced homelessness and victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
 - The Board will also support an ageing population to maintain independence.

The **Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board** will:

- **Expand the use of Technology Enabled Care** to support people to live independently at home.



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) - Talking Damp and Mould

Everyone deserves a warm, secure, and decent home. Yet some people live with damp and mould, which can impact their physical and mental health. Groundwork North East and Cumbria, and Sunderland City Council are delivering MECC training to help workers confidently talk with people at risk of experiencing damp and mould issues in their home. The goal is to make sure everyone has the warm, dry home they deserve. By increasing awareness and making connections between services, these conversations are helping people in Sunderland become more knowledgeable and prepared.

[Learn more or book a course.](#)



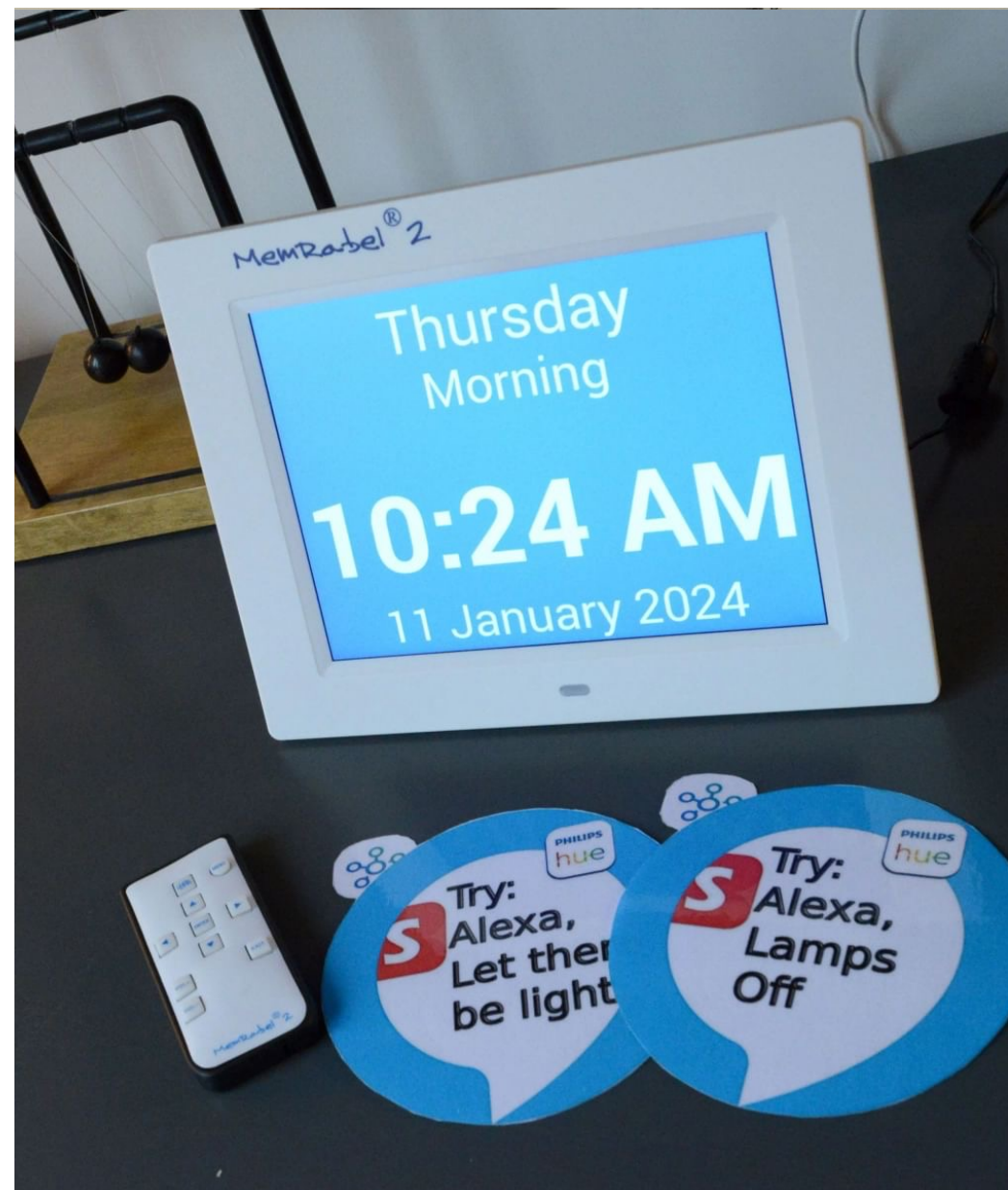
Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Smart Home Technology is helping us to stay independent

As people age or develop care needs, staying independent at home can become a challenge. Sunderland's SMART Home shows how new technology - like voice controls, sensors, and safety devices - can help people stay safe, confident, and independent in their own homes. Health and care experts use the home to assess new ideas and train staff. Plans are underway to make the Smart Home experience available online, so more people can see what's possible.

[Find out more about the Smart Home.](#)



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Specially adapted housing that supports those most in need

Accessible, supportive housing is vital for people with disabilities to live independently and with dignity. A number of new homes have been designed with physical and learning disabilities in mind. The bungalows and houses have features such as digitally enabled care solutions, accessible open-plan layouts, and ramped entrances. These developments are empowering people to enjoy a higher quality of life. This fosters independence and inclusion within welcoming communities.



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

The Home Improvement Agency - Helping people stay in their own homes

Being independent gives us a strong sense of control - doing the things we want to do when we want to do them. The Home Improvement Agency helps people who are ageing well, people who need extra support, and people who live with a disability, to remain independent in their homes. A handyperson/ the minor alteration service is there to make small changes. Bigger changes - like stairlifts or hoists – may be funded through a Disabled Facilities Grant. These changes are planned to suit people's needs. The Agency also gives practical advice and helps people find other services that support independent living.

[Find out more.](#)



Healthy places

Priority 4. Leading by example

Pro-actively role modelling change, demonstrating in practice how health is everyone's responsibility.

4

Why this matters

As community leaders Health and Wellbeing Board partner organisations have a responsibility to role model the change we want to see. The choices we make about how we plan, commission, communicate and operate shape people's health. They can either help or cause harm.

Everyone in Sunderland should have the same opportunities to thrive and be healthy, no matter where they live or what they earn. We all have a role to play in making that happen. By demonstrating that health is everyone's business, we can create the conditions for healthier lives across Sunderland. This means using all the opportunities to strengthen the building blocks of health. This includes planning, licensing, procurement, estates, communications and workforce policies.

Working together we can reduce factors that harm health like air pollution or junk food. We can increase access to the building blocks of health like warm homes and secure jobs. This means considering health in all our decision making through tools like Integrated Impact Assessment It means ensuring our actions reflect the needs of our communities.

When we lead by example, we show what's possible. We build trust. We shift culture. We make improving health and reducing inequalities a shared goal across Sunderland.

This is about doing what's right.

Together, we can create a city where everyone, regardless of age, background or circumstance, can live a healthy, connected and fulfilling life.

Healthy places

Priority 4. Leading by example

4

By making sure our internal practices match the goals of our Healthy City Plan, we can set a good example and show that health is everyone's responsibility.

What we know



How we talk about health matters

because it shapes understanding of what drives it. By focusing on the wider conditions - like housing, jobs, and our surroundings, we can help people see the importance of creating fair opportunities for everyone to thrive.



Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

help make sure our decisions are fair, inclusive, and good for health.



Councils can use planning, licensing and regulatory powers

to create healthier environments by increasing access to things that support wellbeing and limiting those things that cause harm - tobacco, alcohol, and junk food.



Our policies and practices

should promote good health and help to reduce harmful activities, such as limiting advertising and sponsorship around unhealthy food and gambling.



Social value clauses

can be used in contracts to ask suppliers to do more than just deliver a service. They can also help the community. They can be used to create local jobs, protect the environment, and support community wellbeing.

Healthy places

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Health and Wellbeing Board** will hold a development session.

The Board will explore how individual organisations can lead by example. This may involve:

- **Creating community benefits** through procurement, volunteering, apprenticeships, and inclusive recruitment
- **Using our buildings and spaces** to support community health and wellbeing
- **Using planning, licensing, commissioning, and communications** to improve health and wellbeing
- **Connecting people to trusted local support**, such as Links for Life and Family Hubs
- **Taking a Health Literacy approach** and simplifying communications.



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Making health information easier to understand

Health information is often full of long words and confusing terms. This can make it hard for us to know what we need to do. South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust has rewritten over 800 health leaflets to be clearer and easier to read. Patients say the new leaflets are “straight to the point” and make them feel more confident. Understanding care better makes us feel less embarrassed when asking questions.

[Learn more about improving health literacy in the NHS.](#)



Healthy places

Spotlight on good practice

Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA)- Planning with people in mind

When local decisions are made - about services, buildings, or spending - they can affect different people in different ways. Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) help the council think ahead and plan fairly. With data used to understand how changes might affect different groups. This means services are more likely to meet our needs, reduce inequality (the unfair differences in opportunities experienced by different people), and make the best use of public money.

[Read about the Councils approach to equality.](#)



Healthy communities

Priority 5. Financial wellbeing

Supporting people to increase financial wellbeing.

5

Why this matters

Financial wellbeing is a key building block of good health. When people have enough money to get by, they feel safer, less stressed, and more in control.

Without enough money, everyday decisions become harder. When we are struggling to afford heating, rent, or food, it can lead to chronic stress, poor nutrition, and isolation. This harms both our physical and mental health. Children in poorer households may go hungry. They may lack things like warm clothing or a bed of their own. When we don't have the things we need, it can have serious and lasting health impacts.

Growing up in poverty is linked to worse health in adulthood. This includes a higher risk of diabetes, heart disease, and early death. People on lower incomes face more barriers to healthy living. This is because it's harder to pay for the things we all need for good health. Food poverty is made worse by a lack of affordable, healthy options in some neighbourhoods. In the poorest areas, rates of smoking, drinking alcohol and gambling harm are generally higher. This is often driven by stress, limited options, and targeted marketing.

When we have financial wellbeing, we are more likely to:

- Work in decent and secure jobs
- Live in safe and stable housing
- Afford nutritious food
- Experience better mental health
- Maintain strong social relationships and participate in community life

Healthy communities

Priority 5. Financial wellbeing

5

Poverty is not experienced in the same way by everyone. Lone parents, disabled people, care experienced, people from minority ethnic communities, and unpaid carers may face discrimination and struggle to access services.

What we know in Sunderland



3 in 10 children in the UK are in **'material deprivation'** ¹⁵



Nearly 1 in 3 children in Sunderland **live in low-income households** ¹⁶



Over 7,500 children are affected by the **two-child benefit limit** ¹⁷



1 in 4 **older people live in poverty** ¹⁸



Work is not always enough to lift families out of poverty.

65% of children and working-age adults in poverty live in families where at least one adult is working part-time or more. ¹⁹



Many families face insecure employment, limited hours and few progression opportunities



Food insecurity is rising:

1 in 5 people report ²⁰ problems affording food



2 in 3 local gambling premises

are in our poorest neighbourhoods ²¹

Healthy communities

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Starting Well Delivery Board** will support families to improve their standard of living.

The Board will:

- Deliver the **Child Poverty Strategy 2025-28** and its goals to:
 - Prevent and reduce child poverty through early intervention and preventative action
 - Mitigate the impact of poverty on children's health, wellbeing and opportunities
 - Strengthen city-wide and regional partnership working, recognising child poverty is everyone's business
 - Increase uptake of the funded early education offer.
- **Ensure families can access their benefits entitlement in full**, including the Healthy Start Programme.
- Maintain a **comprehensive, accessible Family Hub offer**, which provides a 'front door' into a wide range of neighbourhood support services for families (from conception to age 19 (25 for SEND)).
- Implement **auto-enrolment of Free School Meals**.

The **Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board** will support everyone to have financial wellbeing.

The Board will:

- Deliver the **Financial Wellbeing Strategy** (2023–2026).
- Increase people's use of **self-serve financial wellbeing tools**.
- Support people to access the **warm homes local grant**, where available, and help people connect to advice and support to reduce their energy bills.
- Support people to have financial security by **accessing benefits**. For example, child and family benefits and pension credits.
- Develop a strategic approach to **welfare rights, financial wellbeing, and food insecurity**.
- Increase sign-up to the **Good Food Charter Action Plan** and **Affordable Food Clubs**.
- Administer council **support schemes** for households who need extra support
- Increase engagement with local support services through **Links for Life**. With a focus on gambling related harm, drug and alcohol services, stop smoking and healthy eating.
- Increase access to **stop smoking services** in workplaces.

Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

“Advice at the School Gate” - Friendly, accessible support for families

All children deserve access to enough food, safe housing, warm clothing, education, and healthcare. “Advice at the School Gate” is funded by The North East Combined Authority. The service offers free, confidential, and impartial support to families in Sunderland. Topics include benefits, housing, debt, employment and consumer rights, and relationship concerns.

The project makes it easier for families to get help without needing to book formal appointments.



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

The Child Poverty Strategy (2025-28) - Ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Childhood poverty can limit children's opportunities and create long-term challenges for communities. In 2025, Sunderland City Council partnered with Resolve Poverty. They listened to the local voices of families affected by poverty and gathered feedback from local organisations. The Strategy sets clear priorities to help break down barriers and improve lives across Sunderland.



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Lightning Reach – Connecting people with financial support

The path to claiming support can be repetitive, confusing and unclear. Lightning Reach is a free, secure online portal that helps people in Sunderland connect to over a thousand funding schemes, benefits, and grants - all in one place. This includes support for energy bills, home improvements, disability aids and funding distributed by the Council. By offering users a personalised list of support options tailored to their circumstances. Hundreds of people have already claimed the help to which they are entitled.

[Explore extra support.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Tackling Gambling Harm - Identifying risks to reduce the health harms gambling can cause.

The North East has the highest rate of at-risk gambling in the country. Gambling can lead to debt, poor mental health and family breakdown. Sunderland's Gambling Prevention Network unites local services to raise awareness, and support those affected.

More local groups are now involved in spotting the signs of gambling harm and signposting help. As the network grows, people are getting support earlier.



Healthy communities

Priority 6. Good work for all

Providing good work where local people have decent pay, inclusive work practices and can gain skills.

6

Why this matters

Good work is a building block of good health. A good job should pay fairly. A good job helps you learn new skills and makes you feel valued and in control. A good job provides purpose and stability. It gives you the means to afford essentials like food, housing, and transport - other building blocks of health.

In contrast, poor-quality or insecure work can harm health. Worrying about job security, low pay, or unfair treatment can lead to continuing stress and anxiety. People in unstable jobs often struggle to afford healthy food, heat their homes, or cover transport costs.

Poor health can make it harder to work. This is particularly true for people with long-term conditions, disabilities, or caring responsibilities. When people don't have flexible and inclusive work they may struggle to stay in work. This can further worsen their health.

Many families have jobs that don't provide enough income or stability. Children may experience stress at home, lack of resources, or limited time with parents due to long or unpredictable hours. This can affect children's wellbeing. Over time, poor work can lead to poor health, including heart disease, mental illness, and people dying earlier than they should.

When we have good work, we are more likely to:

- Earn a stable income to support our families
- Feel a sense of purpose and connection
- Access opportunities for learning, skills and growth

Healthy communities

Priority 6. Good work for all

6

What we know in Sunderland



Just over 7 in 10 adults have a job.

This is similar to national levels. ²²



3 in 10 people are qualified to at least RQF4 ²³

(equivalent to a HNC, NVQ level 4 or the first year of a bachelor's degree). This is below regional and national levels.



Just over 1 in 10 people of working-age (16-24) have no formal qualifications. ²⁴





This remains above national levels.



Over 40,000 people are not working ²⁶

and not actively looking for work.

This includes:

-  Students (6,300)
-  those with caring responsibilities (9,600)
-  long-term sickness (14,100)
-  and those who are retired (4,800)



Average weekly income is 5% lower than ²⁵

the North East, and 15% lower than England.



Musculoskeletal conditions ²⁷

(muscles, bones, and joints), depression and anxiety are the main health conditions causing people to be economically inactive due to poor health.



People receiving secondary mental health care ²⁸

are less likely to have a job. People living with a learning disability are also less likely to have a job.

Healthy communities

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board** will:

- Deliver key actions in the **Sunderland Workplace Health Strategy**, linked to 4 key objectives:
 - Provide good work for all
 - Support the needs of the working population
 - Create opportunities for greater influence on policy and strategic development
 - Use an evidence-based approach and share best practice
- Actively encourage and support participation in the **Better Health at Work Award** through the **Workplace Health Alliance**.
- **Promote 'Shine'** - the North East's employer accreditation scheme - to city employers.
- Maximise opportunities in the **'Get Britain Working'** programmes and workstreams.
 - Provide tailored support to help older people, people with long-term sickness, disabilities, and poor mental health enter and sustain work. Subsequently addressing the economic inactivity gap.

- Increase the number of people with learning disabilities in **permanent employment**.
- Ensure health is considered in the emerging **Sunderland Adult Skills & Employability Strategy**.
- Support the work of the new **Skills, and Employment Board**, focusing on connecting people to the jobs being created in the city and region.
- Create tailored **Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services** for people who need extra support to enter and sustain work.

The **Making Sunderland a Living Wage City Group** will:

- Be assured that more organisations become **Real Living Wage Employers**

Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

The Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) celebrates employers in Sunderland who support staff health and wellbeing. It's open to all employers and helps organisations improve in a structured and supported way. Currently, 69 businesses are involved, with 42 holding awards. One business in Sunderland said the award has helped in improving communication and developing relationships with staff on all levels.

[Learn about the Award.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Sunderland's Workplace Health Offer

brings training into the workplace to support staff wellbeing. Topics include neurodiversity, menopause, healthy eating, and gambling. Learning about health helps staff feel more confident and supported. One employee shared how mental health and resilience training helped them feel more in control.

The training reminded them they could “make small, realistic changes to support my own wellbeing at work.”

[Read the Workplace Health Strategy.](#)



Healthy communities

Priority 7. Stronger and connected communities

Where everyone can thrive and there are good relationships between communities.

7

Why this matters

Strong and connected communities are a building block of health. When people feel safe, supported and part of something bigger, they are more likely to thrive. Social connection reduces loneliness, builds strength (resilience), and helps people get the support they need. It also gives us a sense of belonging and pride in our area. This helps us feel good and take action.

But not everyone experiences this equally. Some people feel isolated, unsafe or excluded from decision-making. This can be due to trauma, unfair treatment (discrimination), or not being heard. People from minoritised groups, those with complex needs, and those living in poorer areas often face more barriers to connection and support.

Building stronger communities addresses these inequalities. We build strong communities by creating welcoming spaces, listening to diverse voices, and enabling people to shape local services and places. Local community organisations, volunteers and local champions also play a key role. They help build trust, deliver activities and provide support.

When we invest in connected communities, we:

- Help people feel less lonely and isolated
- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Strengthen local networks of care and support
- Build trust in services
- Make neighbourhoods safer and more inclusive
- Help people feel proud of where they live and involved in their local area

Healthy communities

Priority 7. Stronger and connected communities

7

What we know in Sunderland



Local voluntary and community organisations

are at the heart of communities. They play a vital role in building trust, delivering support, and connecting people. However, many face funding and capacity challenges.



Loneliness and isolation are rising.

1 in 14 adults feel lonely some or all of the time.²⁹



People who feel unsafe

in their neighbourhood are more likely to experience stress, anxiety and poor mental health.³⁰



Community voices are not always heard.

People who are most affected by inequality are often the least likely to be involved in shaping services or decisions.



Designing and delivering services with communities

builds trust and helps create solutions that reflect local priorities.



People with complex needs

often fall through the gaps in services and face multiple barriers to support. This often includes those experiencing homelessness, addiction, or trauma.



Discrimination and stigma can take many forms.

For example, race, disability, poor mental health, or body image can prevent people from accessing services and feeling part of their community.



A new Domestic Abuse & Violence Against Women and Girls strategy

was launched in May 2025.

Healthy communities

What we will do in 2026/27

We will all **'Make Every Contact Count' (MECC)** using everyday interactions to promote healthier lives.

We will be assured of the delivery of key strategies that support healthy and happy lives:

- **Stronger Communities Strategy.** (Stronger Communities Forum and delivery boards)
- **No More: Our strategy to end Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls.** (Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Executive Board)
- **Safer Sunderland Strategy** - supporting survivors of crime, particularly those with complex needs. (Safer Sunderland Partnership)

The **Tackling Racism and Discrimination Task Group** will:

- Lead the **delivery of an action plan** to tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes in health and social care.

The **Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board** will:

- Lead the delivery of the **Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023-28**, with a focus on prevention.
- Develop a **good local offer** for people who have multiple and complex needs in housing, offending, addiction and mental health

The **Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board** will:

- Increase take-up of the **Links for Life** offer.
- Work with targeted communities to create more opportunities for **people to be more physically active** closer to their home. This will address the physical activity inequality gap.
- Understand the **reach of our champions** and develop an action plan to increase coverage. Including Health Champions and Ageing Well Ambassadors.

Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Sunderland's Voluntary Sector – When local organisations thrive, our communities do too

There is a wealth of voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations across Sunderland. The Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance supports these organisations. They offer training, events, one-to-one support, and opportunities to build sustainability. This support helps VCSE organisations to grow, secure funding, and deliver lasting impact. The experienced Alliance team understands the challenges VCSE organisations face and provides practical help that makes a real difference. Individual organisations say they value the time, energy, and support in strengthening their services and their future.

[Find out More.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Sunderland Health Champions - Helping People Understand Health.

Sunderland Health Champions are local volunteers who share helpful health and wellbeing advice with friends, family, colleagues, customers and neighbours. This builds trust and connects people to the support they need. A network of over 500 people are part of the Health Champion programme - receiving information to help others.

Champions also have the opportunity to learn about topics, ranging from domestic abuse and violence to healthy eating. This makes it easier for many to make positive changes in their lives. [Become a Health Champion.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

We'ar Shining the Light – Amplifying the voices of older adults

Thinking negatively about ageing and older people has been accepted and ignored for too long. We'ar Shining the Light is a vibrant community news team of reporters aged 50+. The news team are committed to capturing and sharing stories that challenge ageing stereotypes, celebrate the richness of later life and promote inclusivity. By reporting on arts, culture, sport, and nostalgia, highlighting positive ageing through real-life stories, and sharing the challenges faced by older people, the reporters have encouraged a deeper understanding of ageing well in Sunderland.

[Follow their updates](#) / [Read their stories](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Active Sunderland aims to get more people active and support local communities

Being active helps prevent and manage health issues like heart disease and high blood pressure, while also improving mental wellbeing. The Active Sunderland Strategy creates opportunities for physical activity closer to home. It also promotes active education to children and young people, while supporting people who are less active due to barriers such as cost or lack of transport. With more support and ways to be active, fewer adults in Sunderland are inactive now compared with 10 years ago.

[Read the Active Sunderland Strategy.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

No More: Sunderland's mission to end Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Domestic abuse and VAWG causes harm to individuals, families, and communities across Sunderland. The "No More" Strategy is a 10-year commitment to end domestic abuse and VAWG, guided by the voices of victims/survivors. It brings together local organisations to improve support, raise awareness, and make services easier to access. By working together, we are creating a place where people feel safe, supported, and free from fear. "No More" is a promise to build a future where everyone can live with dignity and respect. [Read the Strategy.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

The Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) – Providing homes and enhancing lives

Many issues effect our ability to maintain a home. People may experience problems such as high rents, low wages, inadequate support and major life changes. The pressure can build, with many pushed into homelessness, forced to sofa surf, or live in unsuitable accommodation. The RSAP provides people who have a history of sleeping rough with a new home and individual support. Many people have been enabled to ‘get back on their feet’ and in some cases move forward with their lives and gain employment or regain custody of their children. Others have been supported with simple things, such as help to open a bank account to receive welfare benefits. [Read the Strategy.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Community support to quit - helping more people move towards a smokefree future.

Many people want to quit smoking. The right support can make a lasting difference for people in their first step towards quitting. Sunderland City Council have supported voluntary and community organisations to help people who might not typically access Stop Smoking Services directly. With the help of the Specialist Stop Smoking service, organisations have undertaken training and are delivering various projects in their communities to help people quit smoking.

Using shared experiences and trusted face-to-face conversations, this community-led offer has already resulted in over 180 individuals engaging across the projects and increased referrals to the Specialist Service.

[Find out more with Sunderland Stop Smoking Service.](#)



Healthy communities

Priority 8. Neighbourhood support and services

A determined shift to provide integrated, preventative and equitable delivery of services closer to home.

8

Why this matters

Neighbourhood support means providing help closer to home. Neighbourhood support and services are essential building blocks of health. They shape our everyday experiences and determine whether we can access the right help, in the right place, at the right time. When services are joined up, easy to reach, and tailored to local needs, they support people to stay healthy, independent, and connected to their communities.

Too often, people face fragmented care, long waits, or services that don't reflect their circumstances. This can lead to avoidable illness, hospital admissions, and frustration for both people and professionals. For older people, this might mean spending unnecessary time in hospital. For families, it could mean struggling to find support close to home. For people with complex needs, it can mean falling through the gaps in services.

The **NHS has a 10-Year Plan**. It sets out an ambition to move from a focus only on hospitals and health care to also thinking about the building blocks of health. It talks about a focus on preventative care in community settings. The aim is to stop illness before it starts. This means investing in local services across health, social care, housing, and the voluntary sector - to support people.

In Sunderland, we are already seeing the benefits of this approach. Links for Life and Family Hubs connect people to trusted local support. But we need to go further. We need to connect people to their community to access early help.

By strengthening neighbourhood services, we can:

- Prevent ill health and reduce inequalities
- Support people to live independently for longer
- Reduce pressure on hospitals and emergency services
- Build trust and relationships within communities
- Help more people by using public money, time, and services in a smart way

Healthy communities

Priority 8. Neighbourhood support and services

8

What we know in Sunderland



Attendance of 0-4-year-olds at A & E

has decreased.
This is still very high.³¹



Hospital admissions - from unintentional and deliberate injuries - in children aged 0-14

has increased.³²



Uptake of childhood immunisations

is generally high.³³



Referrals of children and young people

into community paediatrics, therapies and mental health services continue to increase.



Under 19 hospital admissions for asthma

are increasing.³⁴



Hospital admissions for conditions like diabetes remain high. Some conditions could be better managed in the community. Emergency admissions due to falls

(aged 65+) are reducing.³⁵
These are still high.



People who experience social exclusion and face unfair differences in health

are more likely to face discrimination and violence. They are also less likely to have access to healthcare services.

Healthy communities

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Health and Wellbeing Board** will:

- Develop a **neighbourhood health plan** that looks across the life course and focuses on preventing illness and tackling health inequalities together.

The **Starting Well Delivery Board** will:

- Roll out a phased implementation of the **Families First Programme**, providing multi-agency support for children and families at a neighbourhood-level.

The **Links for Life Senior Stakeholder Group** will:

- Increase take-up of the **Links for Life offer**. Add Family Hub information to the platform and ensure all early help and prevention services are included.

The **Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board** will:

- Increase the provision of **'community detox' placements**, for people to receive vital treatment and support close to home.

The **Health Protection Board** will:

- Be assured that the **Health Protection action plan** is improving the equity of uptake of childhood immunisations.

The **Sunderland Place Team** will:

- Starting with frailty, develop a **neighbourhood health approach** that reflects the individual needs. Embed mental health, neurodevelopment and learning disability support in neighbourhood hubs and services.

The **Sunderland Place Committee** will:

- Develop a refreshed approach to the **Better Care Fund** to provide strong, fair, and effective health and care services in every neighbourhood. Shift health spending out of hospital and into communities with a clear **focus on prevention and tackling inequalities**.

Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

A Strong Start Through Immunisation

Childhood immunisations are a quick, safe, and effective way to protect children from serious diseases like measles, polio, and whooping cough. In Sunderland, health services work together to make sure every child - regardless of their circumstances - can access these important vaccines. By helping children build strong immunity early in childhood, vaccines not only protect individuals, but also strengthen community protection. Sunderland continues to do very well, with vaccination rates higher than the national average. [See the data.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Falls Prevention - Building Strength and Confidence

Falls are one of the biggest risks to the health and independence of older people. Sunderland's Otago Strength and Balance Programme uses gentle, guided exercise to help people over 50 improve muscle strength and balance. The sessions are particularly helpful for people who've fallen before or are afraid of falling. People report feeling more confident, steady on their feet, and ready to stay active for longer.

[Find out more about activities in Sunderland.](#)



Healthy communities

Spotlight on good practice

Neighbourhood Frailty Teams - Promoting independence and wellbeing

Frailty is a term used to describe the loss of body resilience. If people living with frailty experience an accident or other stressful event, they will often not bounce back quickly. Organisations across the city are working together to ensure people living with frailty receive the all-around help they need. Care planning is developed with people and their families/carers. This ensures that people are kept safe, supported, and they get the medical, social and psychological care they need.



Healthy people

Priority 9. Best start in life

Providing the right support to help children and families to thrive.

9

Why this matters

The early years shape a child's future. This starts from pregnancy to age two. Stable, secure relationships and stimulating environments help young children to thrive.

Some families in Sunderland face big pressures. They are overloaded by things like job loss, money worries, poor housing or illness. These problems can make it harder to provide the care children need. But the right support and services can help. They can take away some of the pressure. This makes it easier for families to meet children's needs and help children to thrive.

To support healthy pregnancies and child development, families need access to the building blocks of health. This includes secure housing, nutritious food, supportive relationships, quality early education and care, and easy-to-reach health and family services. While progress is being made, unfair differences (inequalities) persist.

Supporting families early, before problems grow, means:

- Promoting healthy pregnancies and the wellbeing of mams
- Supporting parents and carers to feel confident and connected
- Creating safe, nurturing homes and communities
- Making sure families can access early years services, childcare and education
- Tackling inequalities that affect children's development

When we get this right, we help children to:

- Start school ready to learn
- Reach key milestones in their development
- Stay healthy in body and mind
- Build relationships and emotional strength
- Access better opportunities as adults, including jobs and income

Putting money and effort in the early years is one of the best ways to close unfair gaps and improve health for life. It helps build a healthier, fairer Sunderland for the future.

Healthy people

Priority 9. Best start in life

9

What we know in Sunderland



Access to early help and support

through Family Hubs and Health Visiting services is helping to improve the lives of children and families.



We are raising awareness

of the dangers of alcohol during pregnancy.



Smoking at the time of delivery rates

are reducing but still above the national average.

36



Breastfeeding rates

have risen to 1 in 3 infants at 6-8 weeks. However, rates remain significantly below the national rate of 1 in 2.

37



Tooth decay

remains one of the leading causes of hospital admissions for young children.

38



A good level of health development

is achieved by 8 out of 10 2-2.5 year olds (2-2.5 year review).

39



A good level of educational development

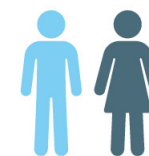
is achieved by almost 7 in 10 5-year-olds (end of reception year review).

40, 41



Nearly 3 in 10 reception year children are living with overweight, including obesity.

42



4 in 10 year 6 children are living with overweight, including obesity.

43



Parental mental health

and wider family wellbeing are key influences on child development.

Healthy people

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Starting Well Delivery Board** will:

- Develop a **Best Start Plan** to meet the 2028 national milestone for child development.
- Identify the action required to deliver **safe and equitable maternal health services**. This includes but is not limited to: mental health support services; smoking cessation; alcohol free pregnancy pathways; infant feeding and nutrition; parenting; and women's health.
- Deliver the **new Early Years Speech and Language Pathway** through the Sunderland Communicates Together partnership.
- Maintain a **comprehensive, accessible Family Hub offer**, which provides a 'front door' into a wide range of neighbourhood support services for families. (From pregnancy right through to age 19, or 25 for young people with additional needs.)
- Apply the **Active Sunderland Healthy Lifestyle Programme** to support school children and their families.



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Family Hubs in Sunderland - ensuring that families can access the right support, at the right time, in the right place, with the right people

Family Hubs act as a one stop shop. Supporting families from pregnancy right through to age 19 (or 25 for young people with additional needs). Many families face challenges with health, childcare, and money. Hubs bring services together in one place, so support is simple, friendly, and accessible. Parents and carers can attend free activities. They can also get help with infant feeding support, speech and language, mental health, and parenting classes. One mam has been visiting her local family hub since her daughter was about 8 weeks old. She said “the hubs are amazing spaces, not only for first time mums... My daughter has absolutely thrived, and my confidence has thrived. I’d highly recommended anybody coming.”

[Find out more about your local Hub.](#)



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

The Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) is helping younger mams to have a healthy pregnancy and develop parenting skills and confidence to nurture their child's development. One mam said: "Me and my children are a story of success. We are not another statistic. I know without a doubt, that my children's successes are a testament to the work of this programme."

Another mam said: "I stand here today, feeling incredibly lucky and overwhelmingly grateful. The Family Nurse Partnership didn't just support me through difficult times... it empowered me to build a future, to raise thriving children, and to believe in myself when I had no one else. The work you do is life changing".

The Family Nurse Partnership is run by Growing Healthy 0-19 Sunderland.



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Help to have a smoke-free home for when baby arrives

Pregnant women and their families can get lots of support to help them to stop smoking during pregnancy, and after their baby is born. Support is provided by the Hospital alongside midwife appointments in Family Hubs by trained stop smoking advisors - families can get shopping vouchers along the way too. Once the baby is born, help is always at hand in Family Hubs and from Health Visitors. This has helped many families create a smoke-free pregnancy and a smoke-free home. Bringing a range of health benefits to mams and their families.

[Speak to a Midwife or Health Visitor for more information.](#)



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Protecting Babies from Whooping Cough

Whooping cough can be easily spread from one person to another. It can be life threatening for infants under 3 months old. Despite the vaccines 91% proven success and safety, not enough people are getting it during pregnancy. To help protect babies, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust ran a 6-month project to boost vaccinations. They introduced a new vaccination training flow chart for midwives and facilitated training sessions. They explored reasons for vaccine hesitancy. They also gave mams clear information after their 20-week scan and raised awareness through local advertising. Thanks to these efforts, the number of pregnant women getting the vaccine has more than doubled since 2024.



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Free breast pump loan scheme - helping support mam's breastfeeding journey

Expressing milk means you can store milk and feed it to your baby later. Mams might want to express milk for all sorts of reasons. Growing Healthy Sunderland and Family Hubs have loaned breast pumps approximately 200 times in total, with each loan varying from a few days to three months. The scheme has supported continued breastfeeding when babies are in special care and when babies have not been able to latch well, but mams still want to give them breast milk.

[Ask about loaning a pump - call weekdays on 03000 031 552.](#)



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Sunderland Communicates Together: Supporting Early Communication

The ability to communicate is fundamental to all of us. Whilst children develop at different paces, missing key speech, language and communication (SLC) milestones may signal the need for extra support. In Sunderland, we work together to support children's communication. This work is led by Sunderland Communicates Together. Additional support is provided by a range of services across Health, Education and Social Care. This gives families and professionals access to resources, learning and tools, which help children grow strong communication skills. By investing in education, social connections, and community support, we're helping give every child the best start in life.

[Find out more \(families\)](#)

[Find out more \(professionals\)](#)



Sunderland
**Communicates
Together**

Healthy people

Priority 10. Engagement in education and training

Providing an inclusive and supportive educational experience that meets children and young people's needs.

10

Why this matters

Education is one of the most powerful building blocks of health. It shapes our life chances, influences our income, and affects how well we understand and manage our health. A good education helps us get decent jobs, secure housing, and money to live well. It also builds confidence, strength (resilience), and helps us feel connected to others.

Missing education can harm our health. It can happen through absence, exclusion, or lack of support. This can limit our future opportunities. When this happens, our health can get worse.

In Sunderland, too many of our children and young people are missing education. Persistent absence, suspensions, and exclusions are affecting how well children and young people do and how they feel. This is worse for those with special educational needs, mental health challenges, or who live in poverty.

When children and young people get the right support, they are more likely to stay in education. This helps them live healthier, longer, and happier lives.

By supporting engagement in education, we can:

- Help our children go to school, enjoy learning and do well
- Support our young people to build their skills and confidence
- Create welcoming, accessible and inclusive learning environments
- Tackle wider barriers like poverty and poor housing
- Make sure learning supports wellbeing, not just achievement

When we get this right, we improve health and reduce inequalities (unfair gaps). We help every child and young person thrive. We also build a stronger and more skilled city.

Healthy people

Priority 10. Engagement in education and training

10

What we know in Sunderland



School readiness is gradually improving overall.

However, half of children who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) are not likely to be school-ready, and reach a good level of educational development by the end of Reception.

45



Disadvantaged pupils are less likely to achieve a good level of educational development

by the end of Reception. These children are also less likely to succeed at secondary school.

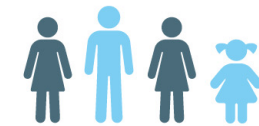
46



Attainment at Key Stage 4 (GCSE)

is below the national average.

47



Suspensions and permanent exclusions

remain high. This is particularly high for pupils with special educational needs and those facing wider vulnerabilities. This limits their future opportunities.

48



The percentage of pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs

is slightly above the national average, and rising.

49



Young people with SEND, care experience or mental health needs

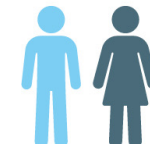
are more likely to be 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET). This limits their future opportunities.

50



Lower educational attainment

is linked to lower income, poorer health literacy, and reduced access to good work. This further reinforces unfair differences in health at every stage of life.



Adult qualification levels

remain below regional and national averages. Over 3 in 10 of the working-age population are qualified to Level 4 or above.

51

Healthy people

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Starting Well Delivery Board** will:

- Be assured of a focus on children and young people not engaging in education through the implementation of the **multi-agency Disrupted Education Strategy**.
- Work with **educational settings to integrate health and wellbeing topics** across all levels of education, and encouraging schools to include active lifestyles, nutrition, and stress management in the curriculum.
- Establish a **needs led pathway** offering tailored support and training for educators, families, and caregivers to **improve outcomes for neurodivergent children**.
- Support young people - including those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and care experience - to be **work-ready** and achieve positive employment outcomes.
- Ensure an **education offer** that delivers good outcomes for all - collaborating with schools and academies to ensure delivery of high-quality education for all



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Sunderland Healthy Schools Award is supporting children to reach their full potential. A positive, healthy environment helps pupils, staff and the wider community to enjoy coming into school. It also helps pupils feel ready to learn. The Award recognises schools that show support to the health and wellbeing of their whole school community. The Award focuses on achieving six charter marks. These include Food & Nutrition, Great Active, and Mental Health. At the 2025 celebration event, 54 schools received awards for their progress in creating healthier places to learn and grow.

[Find out more about the Award.](#)



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Talk for Work - Building confidence and communication skills in young people

Young people with speech, language and communication needs can face barriers to employment when their needs go unrecognised. Talk for Work helps 13–18-year-olds in Sunderland. Trained staff lead structured sessions to build communication skills. Young people gain confidence and self-esteem, by practicing skills such as teamwork, time management and problem-solving. This programme helps young people prepare for the workplace and builds brighter futures.

[Find out more about the programme.](#)



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Sunderland Youth Hub - building foundations for a healthier future

Many young people face barriers to employment that also affects their health and wellbeing. The Sunderland Youth Hub is helping to change that. Delivered in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and located in the [Beacon of Light](#). The Hub supports 18-24-year-olds to build skills, confidence, and experience. Young people are connected to tailored coaching, job opportunities, and services like the National Careers Service and local colleges. The Hub's partnership with Sunderland Football Club has boosted engagement, reduced isolation, and improved mental and physical health. Creating fairer chances for young people to thrive.

[Call the Job Centre Plus helpline on 0800 328 5644 to make an appointment.](#)



Healthy people

Priority 11. Living well in all stages of life

Living well throughout life, from childhood to adolescence, to working age and older age.

11

Why this matters

Living well from childhood to older age is essential for a fairer, healthier Sunderland. Our health is influenced at every stage of life. It is shaped by the support we receive, the places we live, and the opportunities we have to stay active, connected, and in control. But not everyone has the same chance to live well.

Living well involves having the building blocks in place to thrive. This includes decent housing, good work, strong relationships, and access to the right support at the right time. It also means knowing the importance of life transitions and being supported through them. For example, becoming a parent, starting work, or retiring.

When we get this right, we:

- Help young people grow up with confidence
- Support young people to feel strong and sure of themselves
- Support carers to balance their caring role with their own wellbeing and aspirations
- Enable older adults to live independently, stay connected and age well
- Prevent avoidable illness and crisis, therefore reducing pressure on health and care services
- Build stronger, more inclusive communities where everyone feels they belong

Living well in all stages of life is a shared ambition across services, sectors and communities. It's how we create a Sunderland where everyone can live a healthy life, for as long as possible.

Healthy people

Priority 11. Living well in all stages of life

11

What we know in Sunderland



Living well as a young person:



1 in 14 people are aged 13-18⁵²

- Many young people are exposed to conditions or experiences that make a person more likely to struggle with mental health challenges, emotional distress, or difficulty handling stress.
- These include school exclusions, domestic abuse, and parental substance misuse.

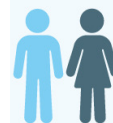


1 in 5 Year 8 & Year 10 pupils say they have tried a vape⁵³



Young people who access drug and alcohol treatment often present with multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities which are higher than national averages.⁵⁴

- These include mental health needs, self-harm, and exposure to others' substance use.



There has been a rise in 16-17-year-old victims / survivors of domestic abuse.⁵⁵

- Early prevention and healthy relationships are being promoted in schools.



Under-16 conceptions are the same as the North East average, but above England.⁵⁶

- Under-18 conceptions have reduced significantly in 2022, though improvement is still needed to bring Sunderland closer to the national average.⁵⁷

Healthy people

Priority 11. Living well in all stages of life

11

What we know in Sunderland



Living well to age well:



Half of the population are aged 25-64⁵⁸

- Transitions between life stages - such as leaving school, becoming a parent, or retiring - can be vulnerable times. Especially if people lack support or connection.
- Physical inactivity is responsible for 1 in 6 UK deaths.⁵⁹



1 in 5 people are aged 65⁶⁰

- Older people contribute in many different ways to their community. For example, they often provide unpaid care for loved ones.
- Alcohol consumption patterns have shifted. Older adults drink more alcohol and experience more alcohol-related harms.
- Older adults are more likely to experience loneliness, long-term conditions, or dementia. This can lead to a loss of confidence and reduced independence. As well as an increased demand on health and care services.

⁶¹



Living well as a carer:



Over 29,200 people are identified as unpaid carers⁶²

- Carers often juggle multiple responsibilities without enough support. Many are at risk of burnout, poor mental health, and financial strain, especially if they are not recognised or not supported early.
- Three quarters of carers report that they have been included or consulted in discussion about the person they care for.⁶³



Living well with dementia:



7 in 10 of those who have dementia have been diagnosed.⁶⁴

- Families often describe a “cliff edge” after diagnosis. They may experience inconsistent follow-up and unclear routes into support groups, community resources, or social care.⁶⁵
- Local views on dementia awareness, risks, and support needs are being explored through a Sunderland study. This will help inform a Dementia Delivery Plan.

Healthy people

What we will do in 2026/27

Living well as a young person

The **Starting Well Delivery Board** will:

- **Engage young people to understand their priorities.** Identify the action needed to make Sunderland a safe place to be a young person.
- **Coproduce a workplan with Sunderland Youth Council.** Involve children and young people in improving their general health and wellbeing - celebrating their achievements.
- Strengthen **support for schools** through further development of the Healthy Places approach.
- Identify **key actions that will promote and support healthy relationships** and informed choices. Including education and support around risk-taking behaviours.
- Deliver **Sunderland's Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategic Plan 2025 – 2027** through progression of a finalised action plan.
- Provide **targeted family support** to enable families to thrive.
- Identify the action needed to **support smooth transitions through all key life stages.** Including helping young people to prepare for adulthood, develop life skills, and develop readiness for employment.

Living well to age well

The **Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board** will:

- Deliver the **Sunderland Alcohol Strategy** (Calling Time: It's time to rethink drink).
- Deliver the **Sunderland Smokefree action plan:** help more people to stop smoking, reduce smoking rates and prevent young people taking it up.
- Develop an approach to support **prevention-focused** public mental health improvement.
- Understand the **diverse needs and cultural aspects of healthy ageing** across all communities.
- Protect the health of people as they age through good information and access to **vaccinations and screening programmes.**

Living well as a carer

The **Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board** will:

- Deliver the **Sunderland Carers Strategy** and take action to make Sunderland a Carer Friendly City, where:
 - Carers are supported to live well and pursue their own goals, alongside their caring responsibilities
 - Health and social care services are easy to access when needed
 - Technology is used to support carers

Living well with dementia

The **Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board** will:

- Use **research findings** to support the development of a **Dementia Delivery Plan for Sunderland.**

Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Young Voices Leading the Way

It is critical to engage with and involve children and young people in shaping the approach to their health. Information from the Health- Related Behaviour Survey guides local health services. In addition, Sunderland Youth Council enables young people to raise issues that matter to them via the State of the City Debate. More recently a pilot Youth Health Summit successfully held workshops for year 9 pupils to gain information and feed-back. Pupils who took part said the event helped them learn more about their health. [See Survey results.](#)



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Pharmacy Support for Substance Use – Lifesaving Help Close to Home

Pharmacies play a key role in supporting the recovery journey of people in drug and alcohol treatment. But they need the right training and support too. The Community Pharmacy Liaison Lead works across Sunderland to strengthen pharmacy services. This includes giving access to medicines that support people in drug treatment and supporting access to needle exchange programmes. This helps save lives and prevent harm, whilst building trust between pharmacists and those who need support.



Healthy people

Priority 12. Access to health and social care when we need it

Targeted action to reduce health care inequalities.

12

Why this matters

It's important to get health and care help quickly. This helps people stay well. It also helps people get better faster and helps people live on their own for longer. If care is slow or confusing, people may get more ill. This can lead to unfair health gaps. It can also mean more people are admitted to hospital when they might not have needed to be. Some people may even die too soon.

People living with long term conditions, disabilities or mental illness can face particular barriers to accessing care. For some, the health and care system feels confusing and does not meet their needs. Other people face additional barriers. For example, communication and language needs, transport and physical barriers, and discrimination and racism.

The [NHS has a 10-Year Plan](#) sets out an ambition to move from a focus only on hospitals and health care to also thinking about the building blocks of health. It talks about a focus on preventative care in community settings. The aim is to stop illness before it starts. This means investing in local services across health, social care, housing, and the voluntary sector - to support people.

When we get this right, we:

- Prevent illness, identify disease early and avoid hospital admissions
- Help people and communities shape services that work for them
- Support people and families to manage their own health
- Build trust and improve experiences of care
- Work together to make care better and use money and time wisely
- Tackle racism and discrimination and their impact on health

Healthy people

Priority 12. Access to health and social care when we need it

12

What we know in Sunderland

People live shorter lives and spend more time in poor health compared to the England average.⁶⁶

The main causes of early death:



Women:⁶⁷
respiratory and
heart disease



Men:⁶⁸
heart disease, cancer,
and liver disease

Long-term conditions are more common in Sunderland:



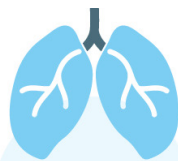
Diabetes⁶⁹



Heart
disease⁷⁰



Cancer⁷¹



Lung
disease⁷²



Health inequalities (unfair differences in opportunities experienced) affect many groups:⁷³

- Almost half of people (46%) live in the 20% most deprived areas⁷³
- People under 75 with severe mental illness (SMI) are nearly 4 times more likely to die early⁷⁴
- People from minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to use screening and vaccination services⁷⁵



Barriers to accessing services include:⁷⁶

- Long waits
- Transport
- Unsuitable appointment times
- Lack of awareness
- Language and literacy issues
- Discrimination
- Limited digital access

Healthy people

What we will do in 2026/27

The **Sunderland Place Committee** will improve access to health and social care when we need it.

The Place Committee will:

- Identify the **year one actions for our local Neighbourhood Health Plan:**
 - Ensuring everyone can get fair, high-quality healthcare where different services work together smoothly
 - Focusing on stopping health problems before they start, with extra support for those who need it most
 - Making services easier to access by moving them from hospitals into local communities
- Make sure everyone can **use services as they move online**. Including help with tech skills, accessibility, and cost.
- **Tailor health information** so it meets the needs of people from different backgrounds. Including meeting health literacy standards, framing health messages and cultural awareness.
- Review and improve **dementia pathways** to increase access to timely, needs led assessment and support.
- Make it **easier for people of all ages**, with mental health needs, learning disabilities, or neurodiversity, to **get the support they need** through their local primary care services.
- Ensure implementation of the **Modern General Practice Access Model** - those who need to will be able to access a GP practice health professional in a way that best suits their needs.
- Support plans such as **Pharmacy First** - this will help people get help faster and closer to home from a wider range of providers.
- Support the implementation of the **ICB's Oral Health and Dental Strategy (2025-27)** - this will improve the dental health of people in Sunderland and support plans to improve access to dentistry.
- **Target Best Start services to families who need extra help:**
 - Improving access to those in greatest need by reaching out more to these families
 - Making sure families can use new online services
 - Providing improved access to expert help for children with additional needs

Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

The Outreach Health Bus – Bringing Compassionate Care Closer to Home

Barriers such as transport or appointment times mean some people need support to access healthcare services. The Health Bus is a travelling, drop-in health clinic designed to meet people where they are. Care is provided directly in the community by clinical staff alongside relational support workers, who have knowledge and experience. From prescriptions and wound care to holistic support, the bus is helping people access services. The bus is building trust and removing barriers.



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Women's Health Hub – Making a difference to lives in Sunderland

Many women experience healthcare barriers. From struggling with menstrual pain, to struggling to get information on contraception. The Sunderland Women's Health Hub aims to provide a better experience for women and timely access to healthcare closer to home. With more seamless connections between services, women can seek support around a variety of health issues. Such as menopause care (both hormonal and non-hormonal treatments), Long-Acting reversible contraception (for heavy bleeding, menopause or contraception) and management of bleeding whilst on Hormone Replacement Therapy. [Click to read more.](#)



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

The Health Equity Academy – making healthcare work for everyone

When all of us have what we need to be healthy, our communities thrive. The South Tyneside and Sunderland Health Equity Academy brings together local NHS, Council, and community staff, to learn how to make sure everyone benefits from healthcare locally. Academy members take part in training with the University of Sunderland. They hear new evidence from experts. Members also share exciting ideas and support each other. This local network helps organisations build the skills and knowledge needed to help people feel better and live healthier lives - so no one is left behind.



STSFT
**Health
Equity**
Academy

Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

International Student Support – supporting people’s transition to the UK and onwards

Many people move to Sunderland to study. The University of Sunderland has a dedicated service to help international students settle in their new environment. Before arrival, students receive dedicated support, including access to a [welcome guide](#).

This helps students to understand healthcare in the UK. It also explains how to register for a GP (doctor) and how to access support for physical and mental health. Once in Sunderland, students can access support designed for the unique challenges they face - like adjusting to a new culture, accommodation, financial guidance, and managing study stress. This helps students to feel more confident and supported during their time in the UK. [See Welfare support](#).



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Partnership working in Sunderland - empowering people who may need extra support

People seeking safety - those seeking asylum (protection from danger), displaced individuals and those who are refugees – bring valuable skills, experience, and want to contribute to society. Organisations including the Council, NHS, and Police, work together to help refugees arriving through resettlement schemes to rebuild their lives. Specialist help includes a home, healthcare (like registering with a GP), job opportunities, translation services, and emotional support. Each family is different, and staff adapt to meet individual needs. The aim is to help people overcome challenges, build skills, and feel at home in their new community.



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Supporting access to health and social care for new communities

Sunderland's population is becoming more diverse, with people arriving from different countries and backgrounds. It takes time to learn a new language, find your way around local systems, and build social connections. The community and voluntary sector plays a vital role. Friends of the Drop-In (FODI) offers English classes, social activities, and emotional support to help people feel confident and included. The International Community Organisation of Sunderland (ICOS) provides vital links to services. The impact is clear: one woman shared, "being part of the women's group gives me energy and keeps me going. Without it, I'd feel alone."



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Direct Payment Grants – Helping People Stay Independent

Some people need extra support to live independently, especially after leaving hospital or when facing health challenges. In Sunderland, direct payments (also called personal budgets) give people more choice and control over their care. People can use the money to buy support that suits their individually assessed needs, with flexibility around the delivery of their care and/or support. Many people have purchased one-off items like a gym membership or an electric scooter. Others have been helped during a short-term crisis. These grants are helping people live more independently and improving their wellbeing.

[Find out more or get an assessment.](#)



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Automated calls - Helping People Stay Safe at Home

Adult Social Care teams in Sunderland need to stay connected with a wide range of people, to make sure they are safe, managing well, and to provide/arrange help quickly if needed. An automated calling system allows teams to contact more people, more often, and spend more time with those who need extra help. This has enabled teams to spend more time with people who require complex assistance. Feedback from people helps improve the service, making it more responsive and supportive for everyone.



Healthy people

Spotlight on good practice

Adult Services Front Door Offer - Supporting independence in Sunderland

Everyone should have the chance to live well and stay independent. The Front Door Offer helps people access the right support by starting with what matters most to them. People can get joined-up help from Adult Social Care, occupational therapists, and local partners like Sunderland Carers Centre and Age UK Sunderland. Whether someone is living with a long-term condition, disability or the effects of ageing, this makes it easier to stay connected and in control. By making it easier to get care, housing, and community support, we're creating fairer systems. This helps people live fulfilling lives.

[Call the health and wellbeing helpline on 0191 520 5552](tel:01915205552) or [complete the online self-assessment to get support.](#)



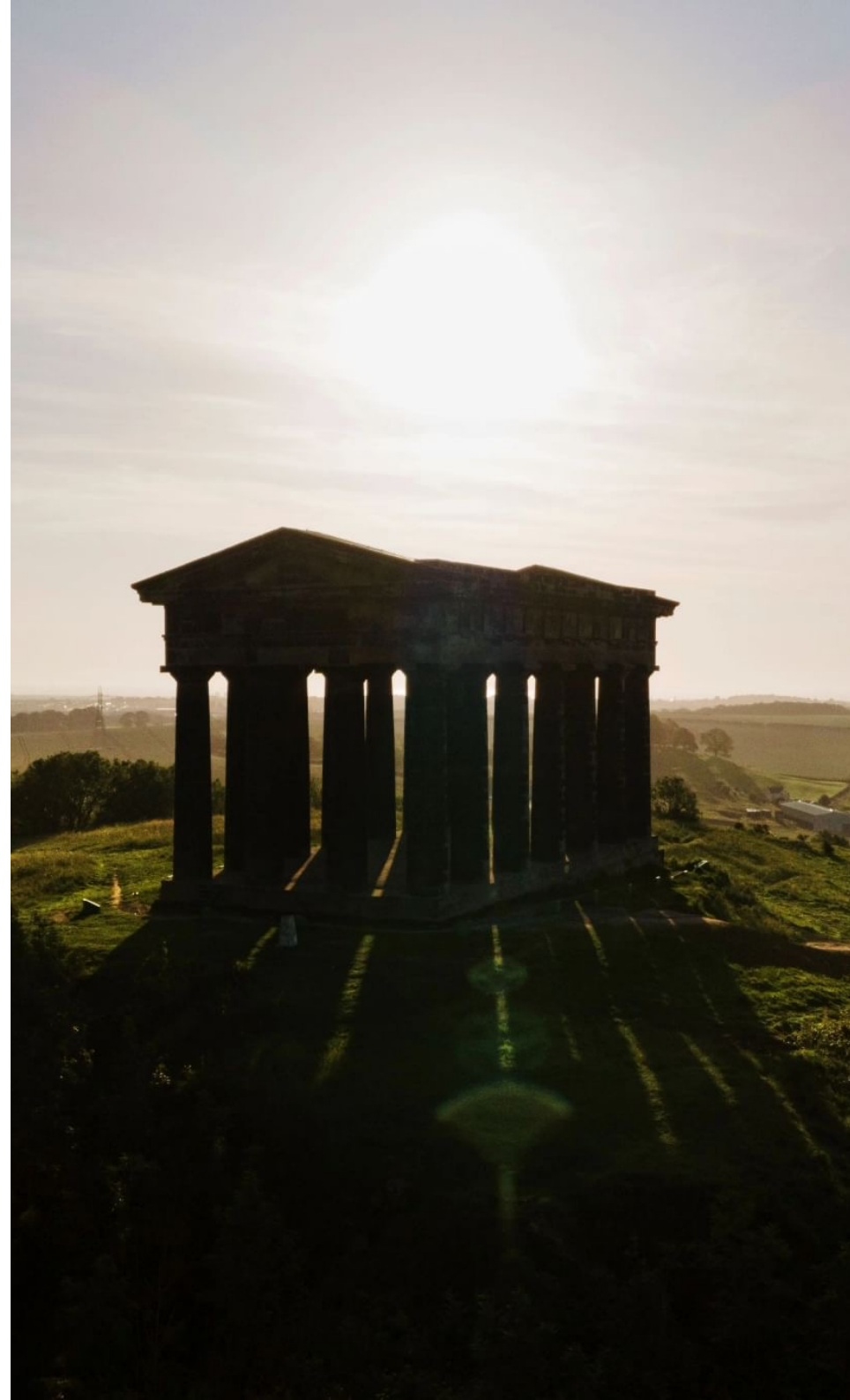
Key plans and strategies

- [Active Sunderland Strategy 2024-2027](#)
- Better Care Fund 2025/2026
- Community Mental Health Transformation Programme
- [Families First \(National approach\)](#)
- [Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England](#)
- Get Britain Working programmes and workstreams
- Health Protection action plan
- Healthy Weight Strategy (under development)
- [Links for Life Sunderland digital platform](#)
- Local Neighbourhood Health Plan (under development)
- Multi-Agency Disrupted Education Strategy
- Neighbourhood Health Transition Group (formal sub-group of the Sunderland Place Committee)
- [No More: Our strategy to end Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls](#)
- [ICB Oral Health and Dental Strategy 2025 - 2027](#)
- Pharmacy First
- Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health (revised approach)
- [Riverside Sunderland Masterplan](#)
- Safer Sunderland Strategy ([Community Safety Plan](#))
- Stronger Communities Strategy (under development)
- Sunderland Accident Prevention Action Plan 2025/26
- Sunderland Adult Skills & Employability Strategy (under development)
- [Sunderland Alcohol Strategy. Calling time: It's time to rethink drink](#)
- [Sunderland Carers Strategy 2022-2027](#)
- Sunderland City Council Child Poverty Strategy 2025-28 (under development)
- [Sunderland Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033](#)
- Sunderland Dementia action plan (under development)



Key plans and strategies

- [Sunderland Digital Inclusion Plan](#) (Strategy 2026 onwards)
- [Sunderland Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022-2023](#)
- [Sunderland Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023-2024](#)
- [Sunderland Falls Strategy 2023-26](#)
- [Sunderland Financial Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2026](#)
- Sunderland Gambling Health Needs Assessment
- Sunderland Good Food Partnership action plan
- [Sunderland Healthy City Plan 2020-2035](#) (refreshed July 2025)
- Sunderland Healthy Weight Declaration and action plan
- Sunderland Healthy Weight Strategy (under development)
- [Sunderland Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023-2028](#)
- Sunderland Housing Strategy (under development)
- Sunderland Local Nature Recovery Strategy (under development)
- [Sunderland Low Carbon Framework](#)
- [Sunderland Oral Health Strategy](#)
- [Sunderland Prevention and Early Help Strategy 2024–2028](#)
- Sunderland Smoke-free action plan
- Sunderland Suicide Prevention action plan 2023-26 (to be refreshed)
- Sunderland Teenage Pregnancy Action Group
- Sunderland Water Safety Policy
- [Sunderland Workplace Health Strategy](#)
- Sunderland's Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategic Plan 2025 – 2027 (under development)
- Tackling racism and discrimination in health and social care action plan



What Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 3: Health Homes for all

- Identify the opportunities for **health and wellbeing to be reflected in the emerging Housing Strategy** for Sunderland.
 - The Board will respond to the needs of people who have experienced homelessness and victims/survivors of domestic abuse.
 - The Board will also support an ageing population to maintain independence.

Priority 4: Leading by example

- The **Health and Wellbeing Board** will hold a development session. The Board will explore how individual organisations can lead by example. This may involve:
 - **Creating community benefits** through procurement, volunteering, apprenticeships, and inclusive recruitment
 - **Using our buildings and spaces** to support community health and wellbeing
 - **Using planning, licensing, commissioning, and communications** to improve health and wellbeing
 - **Connecting people to trusted local support**, such as Links for Life and Family Hubs
 - **Taking a Health Literacy approach** and simplifying communications.

What Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 7: Stronger and connected communities

- **We will all 'Make Every Contact Count' (MECC)** using everyday interactions to promote healthier lives.

Priority 8: Neighbourhood support and services

- Develop a **neighbourhood health plan** that looks across the life course and focuses on preventing illness and tackling health inequalities together.

What the Starting Well Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 1: An accessible and friendly city

- Increase the number of **Breastfeeding Friendly venues**, where breastfeeding is supported

Priority 5: Financial wellbeing

- Deliver the **Child Poverty Strategy 2025-28** and its goals to:
 - Prevent and reduce child poverty through early intervention and preventative action
 - Mitigate the impact of poverty on children's health, wellbeing and opportunities
 - Strengthen city-wide and regional partnership working, recognising child poverty is everyone's business
 - Increase **uptake of the funded early education offer**.
- **Ensure families can access their benefits entitlement in full**, including the Healthy Start Programme.
- Maintain a **comprehensive, accessible Family Hub offer**, which provides a 'front door' into a wide range of neighbourhood support services for families (from conception to age 19 (25 for SEND)).
- Implement **auto-enrolment of Free School Meals**.

What the Starting Well Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 8: Neighbourhood support and services

- Roll out a phased implementation of the **Families First Programme**, providing multi-agency support for children and families at a neighbourhood-level.

Priority 9: Best start in life

- Develop a **Best Start Plan** to meet the 2028 national milestone for child development.
- Identify the action required to deliver **safe and equitable maternal health services**. This includes but is not limited to: mental health support services; smoking cessation; alcohol free pregnancy pathways; infant feeding and nutrition; parenting; and women's health.
- Deliver the **new Early Years Speech and Language Pathway** through the Sunderland Communicates Together partnership.
- Maintain a **comprehensive, accessible Family Hub offer**, which provides a 'front door' into a wide range of neighbourhood support services for families. (From pregnancy right through to age 19, or 25 for young people with additional needs.)
- Apply the **Active Sunderland Healthy Lifestyle Programme** to support school children and their families.

What the Starting Well Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 10: Engagement in education and training

- Be assured of a focus on children and young people not engaging in education through the implementation of the **multi-agency Disrupted Education Strategy**.
- Work with **educational settings to integrate health and wellbeing topics** across all levels of education, and encouraging schools to include active lifestyles, nutrition, and stress management in the curriculum.
- Establish a **needs led pathway** offering tailored support and training for educators, families, and caregivers to **improve outcomes for neurodivergent children**.
- Support young people - including those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and care experience - to be **work-ready** and achieve positive employment outcomes.
- Ensure an **education offer** that delivers good outcomes for all - collaborating with schools and academies to ensure delivery of high-quality education for all

What the Starting Well Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 11: Living well in all stages of life

- **Engage young people to understand their priorities.** Identify the action needed to make Sunderland a safe place to be a young person.
- **Coproduce a workplan with Sunderland Youth Council.** Involve children and young people in improving their general health and wellbeing - celebrating their achievements.
- Strengthen **support for schools** through further development of the Healthy Places approach.
- Identify **key actions that will promote and support healthy relationships** and informed choices. Including education and support around risk-taking behaviours.
- Deliver **Sunderland's Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategic Plan 2025 – 2027** through progression of a finalised action plan.
- Provide **targeted family support** to enable families to thrive.
- Identify the action needed to **support smooth transitions through all key life stages.** Including helping young people to prepare for adulthood, develop life skills, and develop readiness for employment.

What the Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 1: An accessible and friendly city

- Be assured of the **Active Sunderland Board** leading the Sport England Place Based programme.
 - The programme will focus on 21 neighbourhoods with the highest levels of physical inactivity.
 - The aim is to improve the local environment, so it is easier for people to be active in their everyday lives.
- Refresh the **Sunderland Suicide Prevention action plan**. Identify actions needed to aim to reduce the prevalence of suicides in Sunderland.
- Be assured of progress in delivering the **Sunderland Digital Inclusion Plan**, helping people be digitally connected as they age.

What the Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 2: A green and healthy city

- Identify opportunities for health, wellbeing and climate adaptation considerations to be reflected in the **new Local Plan**.
- Support the delivery of **climate adaptation**. This includes ensuring planning and adaptation for climate resilience, identifying associated health risks and ensuring appropriate and timely action taken.
- Deliver year one actions in the new **Sunderland Healthy Weight Strategy**, with a specific focus on how the environment shapes health.
- Enable activity to ensure greenspaces, parks, walking and cycling routes, the coastline and riverbanks are **accessible to all**.
- Deliver the **Sunderland Alcohol Strategy** (Calling Time: It's time to rethink drink).

What the Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 5: Financial wellbeing

- Deliver the **Financial Wellbeing Strategy** (2023–2026).
- Increase people's use of **self-serve financial wellbeing tools**.
- Support people to access the **warm homes local grant**, where available, and help people connect to advice and support to reduce their energy bills.
- Support people to have financial security by **accessing benefits**. For example, child and family benefits and pension credits.
- Develop a strategic approach to **welfare rights, financial wellbeing, and food insecurity**.
- Increase sign-up to the **Good Food Charter Action Plan** and **Affordable Food Clubs**.
- Administer council **support schemes** for households who need extra support
- Increase engagement with local support services through **Links for Life**. With a focus on gambling related harm, drug and alcohol services, stop smoking and healthy eating.
- Increase access to **stop smoking services** in workplaces.

What the Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 6: Good work for all

- Deliver key actions in the **Sunderland Workplace Health Strategy**, linked to 4 key objectives:
 - Provide good work for all
 - Support the needs of the working population
 - Create opportunities for greater influence on policy and strategic development
 - Use an evidence-based approach and share best practice
- Actively encourage and support participation in the **Better Health at Work Award** through the **Workplace Health Alliance**.
- **Promote 'Shine'** - the North East's employer accreditation scheme - to city employers.
- Maximise opportunities in the **'Get Britain Working'** programmes and workstreams.
 - Provide tailored support to help older people, people with long-term sickness, disabilities, and poor mental health enter and sustain work. Subsequently addressing the economic inactivity gap.
- Increase the number of people with learning disabilities in **permanent employment**.
- Ensure health is considered in the emerging **Sunderland Adult Skills & Employability Strategy**.
- Support the work of the new **Skills, and Employment Board**, focusing on connecting people to the jobs being created in the city and region.
- Create tailored **Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services** for people who need extra support to enter and sustain work.

What the Building Blocks of Health Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 7: Stronger and connected communities

- Lead the delivery of the **Homelessness Reduction and Sleeping Rough Strategy 2023-28**, with a focus on prevention.
- Develop a **good local offer** for people who have multiple and complex needs in housing, offending, addiction and mental health

We will be assured of the delivery of key strategies that support healthy and happy lives:

- **Stronger Communities Strategy.** (Stronger Communities Forum and delivery boards)
- **No More: Our strategy to end Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls.** (Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls Executive Board)
- **Safer Sunderland Strategy** - supporting survivors of crime, particularly those with complex needs. (Safer Sunderland Partnership)

Priority 8: Neighbourhood support and services

- Increase the provision of **'community detox' placements**, for people to receive vital treatment and support close to home.

What the Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 1: An accessible and friendly city

- **Pilot intergenerational approaches** that create opportunities for people of all ages to connect.
- Use the dementia research findings to support the development of a **local action plan on dementia**.
- Identify the action we need to take to create an **environment that supports people to age well physically and mentally**.

Priority 3: Healthy homes for all

- **Expand the use of Technology Enabled Care** to support people to live independently at home.

What the Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 7: Stronger and connected communities

- Increase take-up of the **Links for Life** offer.
- Work with targeted communities to create more opportunities for **people to be more physically active** closer to their home. This will address the physical activity inequality gap.
- Understand the **reach of our champions** and develop an action plan to increase coverage. Including Health Champions and Ageing Well Ambassadors.

Priority 11: Living well in all stages of life

Living well to age well

- Deliver the **Sunderland Alcohol Strategy** (Calling Time: It's time to rethink drink).
- Deliver the **Sunderland Smokefree action plan**: help more people to stop smoking, reduce smoking rates and prevent young people taking it up.
- Develop an approach to support **prevention-focused** public mental health improvement.
- Understand the **diverse needs and cultural aspects of healthy ageing** across all communities.
- Protect the health of people as they age through good information and access to **vaccinations and screening programmes**.

What the Living and Ageing Well Delivery Board will do in 2026/27

Priority 11: Living well in all stages of life

Living well as a carer

- Deliver the **Sunderland Carers Strategy** and take action to make Sunderland a Carer Friendly City, where:
 - Carers are supported to live well and pursue their own goals, alongside their caring responsibilities
 - Health and social care services are easy to access when needed
 - Technology is used to support carers

Living well with dementia

- Use **research findings** to support the development of a **Dementia Delivery Plan for Sunderland**.

What the Place Committee will do in 2026/27

Priority 8: Neighbourhood support and services

- Develop a refreshed approach to the **Better Care Fund** to provide strong, fair, and effective health and care services in every neighbourhood. Shift health spending out of hospital and into communities with a clear **focus on prevention and tackling inequalities**.

Priority 12: Access to health and social care when we need it

- Identify the **year one actions for our local Neighbourhood Health Plan**:
 - Ensuring everyone can get fair, high-quality healthcare where different services work together smoothly
 - Focusing on stopping health problems before they start, with extra support for those who need it most
 - Making services easier to access by moving them from hospitals into local communities
- Make sure everyone can **use services as they move online**. Including help with tech skills, accessibility, and cost.
- **Tailor health information** so it meets the needs of people from different backgrounds. Including meeting health literacy standards, framing health messages and cultural awareness.
- Review and improve **dementia pathways** to increase access to timely, needs led assessment and support.
- Make it **easier for people of all ages**, with mental health needs, learning disabilities, or neurodiversity, to **get the support they need** through their local primary care services.

What the Place Committee will do in 2026/27

Priority 12: Access to health and social care when we need it

The Place Committee will:

- Ensure implementation of the [Modern General Practice Access Model](#) - those who need to will be able to access a GP practice health professional in a way that best suits their needs.
- Support plans such as **Pharmacy First** - this will help people get help faster and closer to home from a wider range of providers.
- Support the implementation of the [ICB's Oral Health and Dental Strategy \(2025-27\)](#) - this will improve the dental health of people in Sunderland and support plans to improve access to dentistry.
- **Target Best Start services to families who need extra help:**
 - Improving access to those in greatest need by reaching out more to these families
 - Making sure families can use new online services
 - Providing improved access to expert help for children with additional needs

What other partnerships will do in 2026/27

The **Making Sunderland a Living Wage City Group** will:

- Be assured that more organisations become **Real Living Wage Employers**

The **Tackling Racism and Discrimination Task Group** will:

- Lead the **delivery of an action plan** to tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes in health and social care.

The **Health Protection Board** will:

- Be assured that the **Health Protection action plan** is improving the equity of uptake of childhood immunisations.

The **Sunderland Place Team** will:

- Starting with frailty, develop a **neighbourhood health approach** that reflects the individual needs. Embed mental health, neurodevelopment and learning disability support in neighbourhood hubs and services

The **Links for Life Senior Stakeholder Group** will:

- Increase take-up of the **Links for Life offer**. Add Family Hub information to the platform and ensure all early help and prevention services are included.

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[Indicator Sources](#)

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