For more information about public health and the services mentioned in this report, go to: www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/publichealth

A report by the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing Northamptonshire, 2013/14.

Just how well are we?
What really matters in leading healthy and fulfilling lives.
Welcome to my first Public Health Annual Report since the transfer of public health responsibilities to Northamptonshire County Council in April 2013.

This kick-starts our ambitious journey to improve the overall wellbeing of our communities – a key strategic outcome in the new Council Plan published in April 2014.

Public health is now fully integrated into county council operations, with the new Public Health and Wellbeing directorate encompassing adult learning, voluntary sector support, outdoor learning, customer services, culture, heritage, libraries, country parks, and registration services plus the mandated and directed public health services under the Health and Social Care Act.

This is a strong platform from which to launch our common pursuit of wellbeing and together we have identified and agreed key preventative activities which could be joined-up and delivered once and to scale, to get better outcomes.

Traditionally, this report includes detailed facts and figures on various healthcare indicators. To keep this year’s edition succinct you can explore the statistical data and analysis by visiting www.northamptonshireanalysis.co.uk where you will find previous and the latest versions of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Finally – you will find a list of top 20 actions we can take as individuals, communities and organisations to improve health and wellbeing. Our collective role is to ensure that the opportunities to take these actions are available and easier for everyone.

Try out as many as you can and let me know how you get on; I welcome your feedback.

Thank you for taking the time to read the report.

Dr Akeem Ali
Director of Public Health

The movement of public health back to local government has seen Northamptonshire County Council put wellbeing and safeguarding at the heart of our new Council Plan, and create the role of Director of Public Health and Wellbeing which has the statutory public health role, and also many services that can help improve the health and wellbeing of the county. This wholesale restructuring together with this year’s public health report shows how committed we are to making a real difference to improving the health and wellbeing of the county in an integrated way, whilst at the core, helping people to help themselves and taking charge of their lives.

By combining public health expertise with the resources available, the council now has great opportunities to address the underlying causes of ill health and to further improve local services.

We all recognise that prevention is better than cure and that turning good intentions into action is never easy, particularly during difficult financial times. To help get you started, this report includes the top 20 actions to improve wellbeing that people can take that will make the biggest improvement to their health and wellbeing and reduce the risk of future problems.

We commend this report to you.

Cllr Jim Harker OBE
Leader of Northamptonshire County Council

Cllr Robin Brown
Cabinet member for Public Health & Wellbeing
and Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board

Dr Paul Blantern
Chief Executive

How health is provided for in the UK is changing rapidly. Responsibilities and resources are shifting as we make care systems more efficient and shift our focus to keeping people healthier rather than treating them once they’re ill.

Public Health became the responsibility of local government on the 1st April 2013. This means that Northamptonshire County Council is now responsible for improving the health of the county as a whole. As if that wasn’t a big enough job, we see it as more than that.

We believe our job for this county is to improve all aspects of life. Health isn’t just about physical wellness. It’s about developing an ongoing state of ‘wellbeing’.

What does wellbeing mean?

Wellbeing is a subjective judgement of how we feel about and experience our lives. When we talk about wellbeing, we mean it in its widest possible sense; having a sense of wellbeing in all aspects of life – in your health, in your community, in your home life, in your work life and in your social life.

Wellbeing is how you feel, whether you’re happy or anxious; it’s how you function, your sense of ability or being connected to those around you; it’s how you evaluate your life as a whole, how satisfied you feel.

Increasing wellbeing and making sure Northamptonshire residents feel in charge of their lives are now our main goals.

Why is wellbeing important?

There is a wealth of research that gives clear direction to the factors which have the most impact on people’s wellbeing and therefore their lives. Individuals and communities with better wellbeing will ultimately have better health, lower need for services and longer lives.

Enabling people to think positively about the place in which they live or work and challenging individuals to recognise how other people see and experience the same community can improve health and wellbeing.

This is an annual update on the state of health and wellbeing in Northamptonshire, and our plans for improvement for the year to come.
What do we need to work on?

A key to understanding where we need to make improvements comes from our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Every area must create a JSNA, analysing local population data to determine which key issues cause the greatest burden of disease and death.

These are Northamptonshire’s key issues:

Cardiovascular Disease

Drugs use

4.8%
of young adults in Northamptonshire have used a class A drug.

Diabetes

There are over 32,000 diagnosed diabetics in the county, a number on the rise.

Cancer

The most significant cause of cancer is smoking

Alcohol and obesity also play a significant role in causing cancer.

Obesity

Almost one in ten children in Northamptonshire is obese when they start school.

Sexual health, including teenage pregnancy

The prevalence on Northampton is 30.8 per 1000 females 15–17 years higher than the England average of 27.7.

Respiratory disease

There are 12,205 patients in the county with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Mental health, including dementia and issues related to social isolation

The estimated annual cost of dementia in Northamptonshire is £179 million

Smoking

1 in 5

Just under 10% of adults smoke.

About 1000 northamptonshire residents a year die from smoking.

Lifestyle

80% of heart disease, stroke and type-2 diabetes and 33% of cancers could be prevented by living a healthy lifestyle.

Harmful alcohol use and binge drinking

Alcohol costs Northamptonshire’s economy nearly £13.9 million annually. This includes costs to the NHS, socio-economic and alcohol-related crime.

Better wellbeing

In 2018, the wellbeing score for Northampton was 77.7

What do we have done to enhance and improve health and wellbeing over the last year? Here are some highlights:

- Just how well are we?
What really matters in leading healthy and fulfilling lives?

Northamptonshire’s health and social care organisations are facing bigger challenges than ever before as we strive to improve health and wellbeing and improve outcomes at a time of increasing demand and limited resources.

We have already done many of these things everyday. The next few sections will help highlight the services we already contribute and demonstrate how we already contribute to improve health and wellbeing, a set of evidence-based actions to improve wellbeing in everyday life. 

Connecting with people around you can be a cornerstone of your life and time should be invested in developing these connections.

Evidence shows us that health and wellbeing can be adversely affected by a lack of aspiration and lack of exposure to a diversity of experiences and opportunities.

Great Dream

Action for Happiness is on a mission to get us to focus on the things that really matter in our lives. Surveys in Britain and the US show that people are no happier now than in the 1950s—despite massive economic growth. Their review of recent research has found 10 keys to Happier Living that consistently tend to make people’s lives happier and more fulfilling. Together they spell "GREAT DREAM".

Giving: For each of the ten keys you’ll find ideas, questions, resources and a range of suggested activities to help you apply them in your daily life at www.actionforhappiness.org

Be inspired

The registration service holds civil wedding ceremonies. In 2017/18 held over 2,000 existing ceremonies in the county. Plan your day at www.yourdaynorthants.com

Who’s responsible for delivering health and wellbeing in Northamptonshire?

Northamptonshire’s health and social care organisations are facing bigger challenges than ever before as we strive to improve health and wellbeing and improve outcomes at a time of increasing demand and limited resources.

Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board

Decisions on all health and wellbeing matters, with representatives from each group.

Northamptonshire County Council

Public health and wellbeing strategy, policy, and accountability.

County Council Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing

Elected representative responsible for overseeing county council policy and service delivery for health and wellbeing.

District and Borough Councils

Supporting public health and wellbeing at a local level.

Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Foundation Trust

Delivering commissioned health and social care.

Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Commissioning (or buying) health and care services for Northamptonshire, Reforming Northampton, South Northamptonshire and Wellingborough areas.

Corby Clinical Commissioning Group

Commissioning (or buying) health and care services for the Corby area.

Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

Delivering commissioned health and social care.

Northamptonshire NHS Trust

Delivering services for patients with acute, emergency and acute care needs.

General Practitioners

Delivering primary care.

Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Representing views of the public to get the best out of health and wellbeing services.

How do we achieve and measure wellbeing? The 5 ways

The New Economic Foundation has developed the 5 ways to wellbeing, a set of evidence-based actions to improve wellbeing in everyday life.

Connect

Feeling close to and valued by other people is a fundamental human need. Social relationships are vital to our sense of wellbeing and help protect us against the stresses of everyday life.

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How we’re helping Northamptonshire

We have ambitions to facilitate our residents to connect more easily.

People should have easy access to information and a choice of ways to help themselves. You can connect with the council through our website, customer service helpline, social media, and in person through our libraries and public locations.

Northamptonshire councillors connect policy decisions to their constituencies. Vote, speak to your local councillor, and take part in our consultations to have your say.

Our Alliance with BT will deliver connected communities broadband to all residents by 2017 so everyone can have a fast and reliable internet connection.

We’re helping communities get connected by teaching them to set up their own community websites. Connecting via the community portal can make our website easier to access.

We’re constantly monitoring and improving our highway network. The broad new A45 ferry link across the town will reduce the pressure on our town centres and help keep us connected.

Planning and development guidelines used by Northamptonshire councils prioritize good infrastructure links to help keep us connected to the rest of the country, and to provide social spaces in our towns like open green spaces or public buildings for the future.

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Any activity that expends calories and raises your heart rate is good for you. It doesn’t have to be exercise for exercise’s sake. Activities of daily living such as walking around town doing errands or household chores all count.

Even gentle exercise can release endorphins which improve physical health and can give a sense of achievement. Physical activity develops and maintains muscles and bones, increases cardiovascular fitness, improves mental health and helps prevent conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and Type 2 Diabetes. Throughout your lifetime, regular physical activity is associated with an increased sense of wellbeing, self-confidence, social interaction, and positive self-perception.

How we’re helping Northamptonshire be active

Northamptonshire Sport (NSport) have provided nearly 8,000 hours of sports coaching in schools. They hold the Winter and Summer Sainsbury’s School Games every year, in which over 2,000 children take part. They also support local sports clubs to get started, recruit volunteers, or find funding. The mission for the team is for Northamptonshire to become a fitter, more active and successful sporting county by 2020. Find out more at www.northamptonshiresport.org

There are six country parks and two outdoor learning centres around the county open to the public providing miles of trails and all sorts of family activities.

Get outside and explore our 3,100 kilometres of public footpaths, bridleways, and byways. All across the county, book an active adult learning course, or join one of the leisure centres run by your district or borough council.

The places where we live have a significant influence on our physical activity. Our planning and development strategies emphasise the importance of designing the layout of our towns and communities to encourage physical activity and provide ready access to green space.
Be curious, take notice, be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

Taking notice of what is around you and how you are feeling gives you increased awareness, promotes a positive mood, improves quality of life and self-esteem, can calm your mind and helps you to know and understand yourself better. Be aware of the moment and how you are feeling.

There are so many ways to enjoy what Northamptonshire has to offer; from a stroll along the canals, a walk in the country parks, watching our local sports teams in action, or taking part in one of the county’s many festivals and events.

It is important to catch sight of what is around you, whether that is noticing the changing seasons and your surrounding environment, travelling to work, chatting to others or eating lunch. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances wellbeing.

How we’re helping Northamptonshire takenotice

We’ve recruited over 100 health champions in the public, private and voluntary sectors. They have influenced their corporate environments to minimise health risks and maximise health gains.

Our public health and library teams worked with the University of Leicester to raise awareness about bowel cancer to increase early detection rates. The project involved training a group of volunteers as ‘DETECT’ champions who are available in three of the larger libraries to speak to anyone with concerns about bowel cancer and direct them to further resources – including how to obtain a free NHS early detection kit.

Across Northamptonshire we maintain 24 historic buildings and monuments, which are open to the public. Chester Farm is the county’s heritage jewel which will provide somewhere you can learn more about Northamptonshire’s fascinating history and heritage.

An attractive environment not only supports wellbeing, it is also important for inward investment. Good design and architecture can have a positive impact on people’s lives and as a council we will be focusing on developing a series of places in our communities and ensure all development and infrastructure work in the county makes a positive impact on community safety, wellbeing and prosperity.

Helping people to take notice of their health is an essential part of improving wellbeing. Our Health Check Programme asks 40–74 year olds screening questions, takes their blood pressure and measures cholesterol to help identify people at greater risk of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

Taking notice can help you enjoy the little things in life, but also spot when something’s wrong. Contact us if you’re concerned for the wellbeing of anyone you know – safeguarding is everyone’s business.

Be inspired

As my retirement began at the start of summer I committed myself to continue getting up early and walking around Sywell County Park. In the peace and quiet of the morning I could hear nothing but the birds, the wind and water lapping along the dam. Although the place was the same, each day I would notice something different, changes in the colour of the sky, the blossoming undergrowth or the movement of the birds.

As the year wore on the birds migrated and the leaves changed colour and fell. As winter approached my visits started later in the morning and I would meet many more people who also made a regular pilgrimage around the park. Our country parks offer us a place to exercise, to connect with nature and friendship if we choose it, but also for me a reason to get up and out in the morning.

There are over 65,000 monuments in our Historic Environment including parks, gardens and battlefields.

More than 40% of people diagnosed with cancer today will still be alive in 10 years’ time. Survival rates are improving and catching symptoms early helps.

Last year we received 11,250 referrals to our social care teams where concerns were raised over someone’s wellbeing.
Learning happens every day. Learning is not only for the young or something that takes place in school. Skills and knowledge are developed over a lifetime and are then passed on to family and friends.

Learning helps individuals build self-esteem and increase confidence. Learning involves interaction with others and helps to increase social networks and combat isolation as well as being enjoyable.

Engagement in work or educational activities can help to alleviate symptoms of depression and keeping mentally active can help to reduce the impact of dementia.

How we’re helping Northamptonshire keep learning

We provide lifelong learning with provision for babies and early years right through school to adult learning. Learning is a key element of wellbeing as it increases both aspirations and opportunities. We need to ensure that people within Northamptonshire have the skills and ambition to achieve their potential, which is essential to economic prosperity.

A great place to learn is in one of our libraries. They are open seven days a week and have an average of 55,000 people using the services each week. They are not just a place where you can take out a book, our libraries offer a wide range of support and learning opportunities, from parenting to job-seeking.

You can also volunteer to help out. Northamptonshire libraries are supported by 600 volunteers totalling 23,000 hours a year. Volunteering will also enable you to gain new experience and learn new skills.

50 children’s centres across the county provide families with a wealth of activities, information and advice.

Why not take up a new course? Our adult learning service provides a range of courses from Beginner French to Cake Decoration, or take a study break at the beautiful Knuston Hall, renowned for its excellent catering!

To help people’s wellbeing, Learn2b provides a range of courses including Stress Management, Anger to Assertiveness, Sleep Management and Creative Expression courses.

Be inspired

Meet Chloe… Winner of the Young Apprentice of the Year Youth Ambition award.

19 year old Chloe’s commitment to making progress is a real example to other young people. After having a baby, Chloe returned to education to take her A levels and get other qualifications, as well as beginning an apprenticeship in the demanding world of care provision.

She is determined to provide a positive role model for her young daughter and works hard to combine her role as a young mother with her studies and her responsibilities at work. Her employers cannot speak highly enough of her.

Find out about apprenticeships and other opportunities, www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/youthambition

56%

Only 56% of young people in England achieve 5 A-C GCSEs (including English and Maths).

87%

87% of 16-17 year olds are in education or work based learning.

700

Our Enterprise Hubs have helped over 700 people since April 2012. This has lead to the creation of 70 new businesses.
Our wellbeing is enhanced when we are able to achieve a sense of purpose in society and contribute to our local community. Helping, sharing, giving and team-oriented behaviours are associated with an increased sense of self-worth and positive feelings. Giving takes different forms, from giving donations to voluntary work.

Encouraging civic participation and promoting face-to-face community networks builds wellbeing into communities. Time given to help others is a reward in itself and can be for many reasons i.e. giving something back, repaying support, responding to challenges, social interaction, learning new skills and sense of feeling needed.

What are we doing to help Northamptonshire give?

Our libraries are community hubs and would be thrilled to help you find the perfect volunteering role for you. Over 600 dedicated volunteers help our library service, and we’re always looking for more. You can find more than library volunteering roles in your library though. Ask about roles in country parks, with the archive and heritage service, in schools, with sport, and with the emergency services. Whether you’re interested in a regular role or are just willing to be called on when you’re needed, your library can help you connect with local organisations, charities, and the volunteering centres in Northamptonshire.

We commission Northampton Volunteering Centre as the countywide voluntary sector development and support agency. It provides leadership to the sector as a whole and helps identify the gaps in the sector. It helps voluntary and charity organisations to fill those gaps, and helps new organisations to get set up. The full network, including local support and development agencies across the county, support over 2000 organisations and over 120,000 volunteers.

We also manage grant and funding support for the voluntary and community organisations directly. Look at our website to find out what’s currently available and how to apply.

Approximately 1 in 10 people in the county are unpaid carers of a family member or friend. We have a joint carers strategy produced with partners as well as carers themselves to ensure these carers are recognised and supported. Search for the ‘The Who Looks After You?’ campaign for information and support for caring roles.

Be inspired

The local hospitals are an ideal place for people to contribute to their community. They provide a broad range of opportunities from assisting patients with mealtimes, helping those with mobility difficulties get around the hospitals, to providing emotional support and social interaction.

In 2014 the volunteer service in Northampton General Hospital will be celebrating its 25th anniversary, currently they have 204 volunteers. www.friendsofngh.org
Top 20 actions to improve wellbeing in Northamptonshire

These are the top 20 actions that will make the biggest improvement to health and wellbeing in Northamptonshire.

How many of these do you already do or have access to out of 20? Could you commit to trying any new actions?

### Actions for individuals

1. Take time, even if only 5 minutes, to talk to your family, friends, colleagues or neighbours every day.

2. Review your eating and drinking habits. Even making one small swap everyday will have a big impact.

3. Make a conscious effort to become more active. Considering you have 24 hours in a day, think about limiting your inactive time to just 23.5 of the hours.

4. Learn something new. Try a new recipe, read a new book, or enrol on a course.

5. Take notice of how you feel, how things affect you and of any changes to your body. If you’re 40+, get your free NHS health check. Speak to your GP about anything out of the ordinary that concerns you.

6. Learn about common risks to your and your family’s health and how best to prevent problems happening. Take up vaccinations, particularly flu, and make use of screening programmes.

7. Get involved! There are thousands of varied opportunities to volunteer, donate, or contribute in some way across the county. Volunteering will give you an enormous sense of wellbeing, can help you make new friends, and you’ll gain new skills and experiences.

8. Give every child the best start in life. Breastfeeding, if you can, provides the best nutrition and helps create a strong bond. Early years education and activities help children connect with others their own age and develop social skills.

9. As you get older you are at a greater risk of having a fall. Simple regular exercises will improve your mobility, and you can get help fitting your own or a relative’s home with simple measures to help prevent a fall.

10. Give what you can. Donations don’t have to be money! Recycle or reuse and give to charity shops, donate blood, and drop off non-perishables at a food bank.

### Actions for communities

11. Talk with your neighbours about what you’d like to improve in your neighbourhood. Are you concerned about the environment, safety, or do you wish there were more social events? Communities working together can change issues that affect your improving your wellbeing.

12. Learn more about our county’s heritage by visiting a local historic site. Appreciating our past helps us feel connected to where we live.

13. Join Northamptonshire’s timebank. Use your skills to help someone and they’ll repay the favour later.

14. Use public space to get active together. Start a parent and pushchair walking group or a community garden.

15. Look out for those that might need help. Whether little things like offering to check a smoke alarm or providing a bit of company over a cup of tea, to picking up on safeguarding concerns.

### Actions for organisations

16. Take notice of how your organisation affects the community it operates in, does it support employee wellbeing, use local suppliers, and operate sustainably?

17. Offer your staff time to support activities in the community. Strong local connections can be great marketing.

18. Support your employees to be more active by encouraging staff to walk or cycle to and from work, to take the stairs instead of the lift, or provide corporate opportunities for staff to be members of local leisure centres.

19. Offer staff the opportunity to keep learning. This promotes personal as well as job satisfaction which in turn supports increased productivity.

20. Champion a local cause or charity. You’ll be able to make a real difference to your local community, increase your organisation’s reputation, improve team working and build morale.
How we are going to measure our improvements?

Public Health action is now measured by the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF). The framework concentrates on two overarching outcomes, healthy life expectancy and differences in life expectancy between communities. Four groups of indicators cover the full spectrum of public health: wider determinants of health, health improvement, health protection and healthcare. We are concentrating our efforts and investment in those areas where we are currently behind the England average.

We will keep you updated throughout the year and report back again next April. In the meantime, you can access all of our statistics and reports online at Northamptonshire Analysis.

We'd love to hear from you

To comment on the subjects of this report or to ask us about our plans, email us publichealth@northamptonshire.gov.uk

References

Datasets used for the infographics in this report are hosted at www.northamptonshireanalysis.co.uk

i. Read about our new responsibilities, the Public Health Outcomes Framework, Northamptonshire’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and our Health and Wellbeing Strategy at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/publichealth

ii. Read the Council Plan on our website.

