

# Making Staffordshire HEALTHIER



NHS North Staffordshire  
South Staffordshire PCT



*The Annual Report of The Director of Public Health for Staffordshire 2012*



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for Staffordshire Dr Aliko Ahmed*

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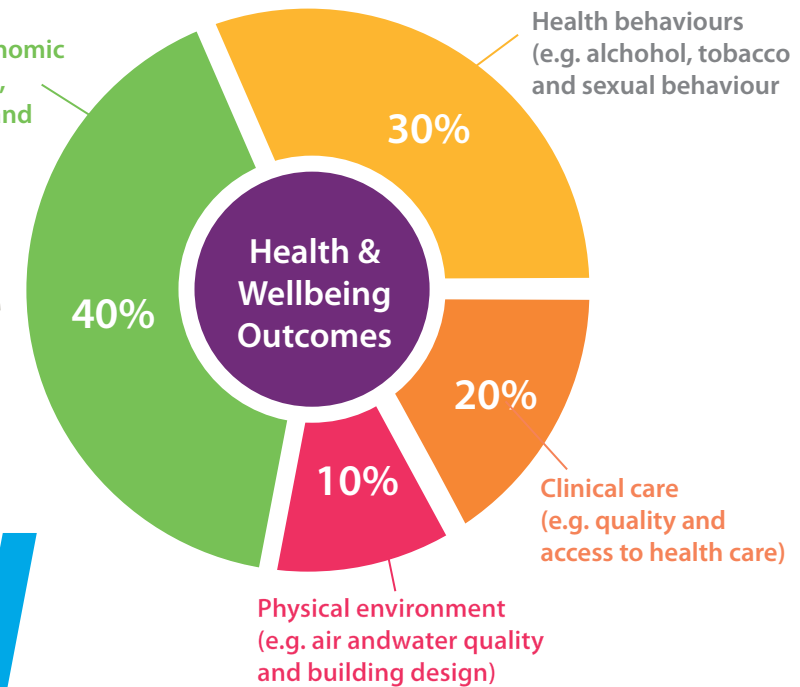
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## Wellbeing - What Makes a Difference?

The contribution of factors influencing population health and wellbeing<sup>1</sup>

Social and economic  
(e.g. education,  
employment, and  
violent crime)



# Foreword

I am pleased to present my Annual Public Health Report for 2012, which this year brings a focus to improving the health and wellbeing of people in Staffordshire. The report has two objectives. Firstly, it looks to examine the practical ways in which communities and individuals within Staffordshire have been working towards improving their wellbeing. Secondly, the report intends to promote and facilitate wider discussion amongst partners, organisations, communities and individuals in relation to the roles we each play in improving wellbeing. Some of this work has already begun and indeed this report itself has been co-produced, with many of our key partners across the county contributing to its content. This shared learning along with other sources of local insight has helped shape a number of future recommendations and actions, which are outlined at the end of the report.



Dr Aliko Ahmed  
Director  
of Public Health

# Why Wellbeing?

Whilst I am not intending to rehearse the academic debate of what wellbeing means in the context of this report, we all understand intuitively that our own personal and community's wellbeing is central to our quality of life, our health and our sense of fulfilment. The challenge for us all has been how to act upon this intuition in a broader sense and place wellbeing at the core of everything we do in our respective organisations and communities in order to improve public health outcomes. At the core of this challenge are the difficulties in defining, describing and measuring wellbeing. Unlike health, which tends to be defined and measured in the negative e.g. number of deaths or ill-health in a community, wellbeing on the other hand has positive associations and tends to be seen as subjective.

However, despite these perceived difficulties, there is now a growing body of evidence, insight and momentum on how communities can work together to improve their health and wellbeing outcomes<sup>1</sup>. A recent study by the University of Wisconsin into population health and wellbeing outcomes has qualified the contribution of various factors towards wellbeing. Surprisingly to most people, the factors that are commonly considered as vital to better health and wellbeing in society - clinical delivery services (encompassing quality of healthcare and access) - was not the major factor in determining best outcomes for a population, as it only influences 20 per cent of these outcomes. Greater impacts on the overall outcomes are influenced by social, economic and environmental factors, which account for

50 percent, and people's individual health behaviours, which account for the remaining 30 per cent.

In our efforts to ensure the best health and wellbeing outcomes for our population, we clearly need to alter our current dominant approach of designing clinical pathways which exist without a focus on wellness. That means a shift of focus to the non-biomedical interventions, including population empowerment and engagement of communities in a drive to improve wellbeing.

## How do we do that?

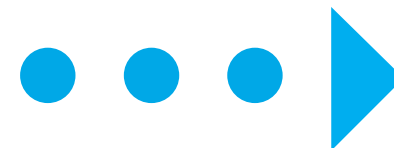
There are a number of ways and means to make health and wellbeing programmes personal and societal enough to achieve the integrated outcomes we have not yet managed to achieve.

The transfer of public health responsibilities to Staffordshire County Council provides the opportunity to embed a health and wellbeing focus into the priorities and functions across the organisation and to increase action on the wider social, economic and environmental influences on health and wellbeing. Several of the most important factors - such as learning and education, regeneration, planning, transport, social care and community safety - are core responsibilities of the County Council. Over the last twelve months huge progress has been made in the development of Staffordshire Public Health and embedding these new roles

and responsibilities into the County Council. Staffordshire has kept itself at the forefront of these national developments and the County Council has quickly brought its new strategic health and wellbeing responsibilities to the heart of the organisation.

The opportunities to influence the wider determinants of health and wellbeing are further extended by the establishment of the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, which will be the strategic body bringing together partners from across the County with a statutory duty to improve both health and wellbeing outcomes. As well as considering the 'traditional' physical health outcomes and services for treatment and disease, the Health and Wellbeing Board will place a greater emphasis on responsibility for understanding and improving the wellbeing of people and communities.

This shift in focus presents us with the challenge of revealing what factors support and improve people's wellbeing, and then trying to analyse and measure these things. However, despite it being difficult to measure it is not impossible, and some of the local insight we have already captured from our communities can be found in this report and this begins to build a picture of what wellbeing means to people in Staffordshire.



In order to share this emerging picture, this report uses two complementary themes which are explored extensively throughout the document:

1. Adopting a positive and practical approach to wellbeing by focusing on the things that make us 'well', and sharing this insight with communities through the use of the evidence-based 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' approach.
2. The opportunity to identify and utilise some of the 'assets' in Staffordshire which can enable people and communities to adopt the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing', with examples of the many assets, strengths, opportunities and networks which enable Staffordshire to be a healthier place.

The report is intended to be user-friendly and simple in style to:

- Show how Staffordshire organisations, partnerships, communities and people are working to improve the health and wellbeing of local people
- Promote further usage and uptake of the existing assets we have in the communities of Staffordshire
- Provide information, advice and guidance around wellbeing to enable individuals and communities to take a proactive approach to their own wellbeing

- Be a catalyst in transforming our thinking and policy on health and wellbeing – as a shift away from services for treatments for disease and illness to all of us thinking about prevention and wellbeing in the community.

As the new public health landscape continues to develop during this year of transition, we are presented with a fantastic opportunity to take a proactive approach to the wellbeing of our communities and to capitalise on the broader strategic roles of the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, the new County Council public health function and our many partners. This report aims to reflect this broad shift in focus and turns the spotlight onto wellbeing and wider social, community, economic and environmental influences we can develop in partnership to ensure 2013 is a 'Year of Wellbeing' for Staffordshire.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation and gratitude to all partners and contributors, including the editorial team, who have co-produced this report. At the end you are invited to put forward your views and comment, and I would welcome any input you may have.

*Alike*





# *Introduction*

## *Wellbeing - A shift in thinking*

**It is generally recognised that our wellbeing is central to our quality of life. The wellbeing of individuals and collective communities is interdependent with their economic success, education, training and employment outcomes and crucial in relation to tackling some of the persistent problems that scar our society, from homelessness, violence and abuse, to drug use and crime. The increased emphasis on 'Wellbeing' in central government policy is highlighted in:**

- Recent legislation within the Health and Social Care Act 2012<sup>2</sup> which makes 'the establishment of 'Health and Wellbeing Boards' by local authorities a statutory duty by April 2013, and each board must begin by publishing a 'Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy'.
- The Public Health White Paper 2010<sup>3</sup> and the recent 'No Health without Mental Health' Strategy 2011<sup>4</sup> both places a more equal emphasis on promoting mental wellbeing as much as physical health and improving mental health and wellbeing for the whole population, rather than focusing solely on the treatment of mental illness.

The traditional approach to improving health has been to identify physical health problems in our communities and direct resources and services towards tackling them. This established way of working has the practical advantage of using widely accepted national and local measures of health and disease, for example, the numbers of people dying of heart disease. This 'deficit' based approach encourages continued measurement of disease and illness - and hence a tendency to respond to specific problems or illnesses. However in order to understand what makes people well and to improve 'wellbeing' there needs to be a fundamental shift in approach, which looks beyond these traditional deficit-based measures.



# The challenges and opportunities

Improving Wellbeing presents both challenges and opportunities. Some of these challenges are related to describing, defining and measuring 'wellbeing'. The wellbeing of an individual is difficult to measure as it is in many ways subjective and comparisons across people and populations are hard to make. Measuring the wellbeing of whole communities also represents a challenge, requiring much broader and far-reaching parameters of measurement, beyond identifying prevalence of disease and illness.

These challenges have been recognised by policy-makers, research and academic institutions along with the Coalition government, who in 2010 asked the Office for National Statistics (ONS 2011)<sup>5</sup> to develop some national measures of wellbeing and progress. The findings from the ONS work highlight some of the challenges and opportunities in measuring and quantifying 'Wellbeing':

- 'National Wellbeing'- this is influenced by many factors such as economic performance, quality of life, social and economic factors and the environment which can be measured by using existing data and information
- 'Individual Wellbeing' – much less information is known and available to measure on what is important to individuals and how this can be assessed and then extrapolated to measure national progress
- Overall, well-being – measured at both national and individual level– is a complex, multi-dimensional issue. This reinforces other national studies, such as those conducted by DEFRA which concludes that there is no clear definition of wellbeing.



Staffordshire Rural  
Community Volunteer Project



## Identifying what 'wellbeing' means to people

The overall conclusions of the programme of work and national debate carried out by the ONS highlighted that while different things matter to different people, and vary at different stages of life, there are some common themes which people identify as important to their wellbeing. These include:

- The importance of our health to our wellbeing
- The importance of having adequate income or wealth to cover basic needs
- The environment around us, and the need to connect with other people whether partners, children, wider family, the community (local, national, faith and online), or work colleagues
- How we spend our time, including the balance we achieve between our work and home lives
- The time we spend outdoors (and the availability of green spaces for us to use)
- The extent to which we participate in cultural or creative activities
- The quality and availability of government-provided services such as healthcare, education, and the transport network
- A greater sense of fairness and equality, for the sake of our national wellbeing

These common themes which people have identified on a national basis indicate that improving wellbeing can only be achieved by understanding what makes people and communities well – rather than what makes them ill. Many of the themes above have subsequently been developed in to a practical model that can be applied here in Staffordshire called the Five Ways to Wellbeing<sup>6</sup>.

## Using the Five Ways to Wellbeing

The centre for wellbeing at nef (the New Economics Foundation) was commissioned by Foresight, the UK government's futures think-tank, as part of the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing<sup>7</sup>. The aim was to develop a set of evidence-based actions to improve personal wellbeing. The initial phase of the project focused on the development of a list of actions for enhancing wellbeing based on evidence in the Foresight Challenge Reports and emerging literature in positive psychology.

The long list of actions was reduced to a set of five messages on the evidence around social relationships, physical activity, awareness, learning and giving. In order to effectively communicate the main influencers of wellbeing, the messages have been organised into five key actions, each offering examples of more specific behaviours that enhance wellbeing. The key actions defined are as follows:





The evidence indicates each action positively enhances personal wellbeing. It is suggested that following the advice of these interventions enhances personal well-being by making a person feel good and by strengthening his/her mental capital. The interventions may not be sufficient to imply 'good functioning' in its entirety but, according to the evidence base to date, they play an essential role in satisfying needs for positive relationships, autonomy, competency and security.

The action themes are designed to promote their own positive feedback loops so they reinforce similar and more frequent wellbeing-promoting behaviours. For example, 'giving' by doing something nice for someone will, in most cases, provoke a thank you, which increases a feeling of satisfaction and the likelihood of doing something nice for someone again. The feedback loop between wellbeing and mental capital operates in both directions and represents a multitude of possible relationships between the two. For example, it makes sense that feeling happy can lead to greater resilience or that higher self-esteem leads to greater feelings of satisfaction<sup>8</sup>. As Huppert summarises, 'positive emotions can lead to positive cognitions which in turn contribute to further positive emotions'.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing model focuses on the positive actions people can undertake to improve and maintain good wellbeing. To enable these positive actions we also need to identify what assets exist in Staffordshire that support them. Identifying and capitalising on our assets offers the potential to enhance both the quality and longevity of life through focusing on the resources that promote the self-esteem and coping abilities of individuals and communities<sup>9</sup>.





## So what is an asset?

Assets can be described as the collective resources which individuals and communities have at their disposal, which protect against negative health outcomes and promote positive health status. These assets can be social, financial, physical, environmental, or human resources, for example employment, education, and supportive social networks.



***“A health asset is any factor or resource which enhances the ability of individuals, communities and populations to maintain and sustain health and wellbeing. These assets can operate at the level of the individual, family or community as protective and promoting factors to buffer against life’s stresses.”***

*Antony Morgan, Associate Director, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2009*

## Practically speaking assets can be:

- The practical skills, capacity and knowledge of local residents
- The passions and interests of local people that give the energy to change
- The networks and connections in a community
- The effectiveness of local community and voluntary associations
- The resources of public, private and third sector organisations that are available to support a community
- The physical and economic resources of a place that enhance wellbeing
- Individual level: resilience, self-esteem and sense of purpose, commitment to learning
- Community level: family and friendships or supportive network, intergenerational solidarity, community cohesion, religious tolerance and harmony
- Organisational level: environmental resources necessary for promoting physical, mental or social health, employment security and opportunity for voluntary service, religious tolerance and harmony, safe and pleasant housing, political democracy and social justice

# Taking an Asset-based Approach

## – A New Way of Working with Communities

The 'asset-based approach' can be effective in improving health and wellbeing by building on the assets and strengths of specific communities and engaging citizens in taking action. It helps to bring together and capitalise on the resources of citizens, charities or social enterprises to complement the work of local service providers. The asset approach is a set of values and principles and a way of thinking about the world. It:

- Identifies the health-enhancing assets in a community
- Sees citizens and communities as the co-producers of health and wellbeing, rather than the recipients of services
- Promotes community networks, relationships and friendships that can provide caring, mutual help and empowerment
- Values what works well in an area
- Identifies what has the potential to improve health and wellbeing
- Supports individuals' health and wellbeing through self-esteem, coping strategies, resilience skills, relationships, friendships, knowledge and personal resources
- Designs services to fill the gaps and fix the problems
- Empowers communities to control their futures and create tangible resources such as services, funds and buildings

While these principles will lead to new kinds of community-based working, they could also be used to refocus many existing council and health service programmes. The approach requires a new mindset and a paradigm shift away from focusing on our deficits, toward a positive method for describing, understanding and building on the existing strengths, skills and resources of people, communities and organisations.

However it should be noted that an asset-based approach does not remove the need for structural interventions and targeted health services, rather it complements them by working to reduce the pressure on these services and supporting the continuous improvement of their delivery.

### Assets

*Any resources, skills or knowledge which enhance the ability of individuals, families and neighbourhoods to sustain health and wellbeing.*

### Versus

### Deficits

*Problems and needs of populations requiring professional resources, resulting in high levels of dependence on hospital and welfare services (Risk factors and disease)*



# Taking an asset-based approach in Staffordshire

This approach requires organisations to work with communities in a different way and begin asking a different set of questions. Rather than continually asking what it is that makes people in Staffordshire ill, the first step has been to find out what things are supporting people's wellbeing. To begin adopting this new way of working in Staffordshire, rather than assume what our local health assets may be, Staffordshire Public Health has asked local people to describe to us the things they feel support their wellbeing. By combining this local insight with some of the theory behind the asset-based approach, a picture of the health assets in Staffordshire starts to take shape.

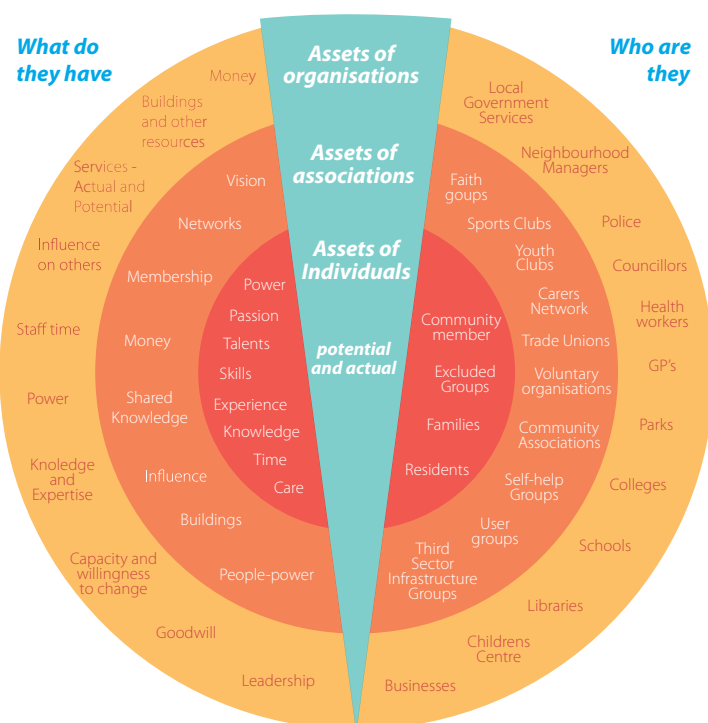
Focus groups were held to examine in-depth the issues and assets affecting wellbeing of residents in varying areas of South Staffordshire (see local insight below). The table on the left below is taken from the Glass Half Full report (2010)<sup>10</sup> demonstrates the broad range of forms assets can take. Staffordshire has a wealth of diverse assets, ranging from its natural environment to its various employers, universities, sports clubs, societies and countless community groups. The second table on the right highlights a few examples that can be found locally.

As the tables below demonstrate, assets can take many different forms and be found in a variety of places. By cross referencing some of our assets identified by our partners across the county against each of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, the following pages highlight many of the things that can already be found in Staffordshire which are supporting the wellbeing of people in our communities.

## ASSETS -THE THEORY

## LOCAL INSIGHT

## SOME ASSETS IN STAFFORDSHIRE



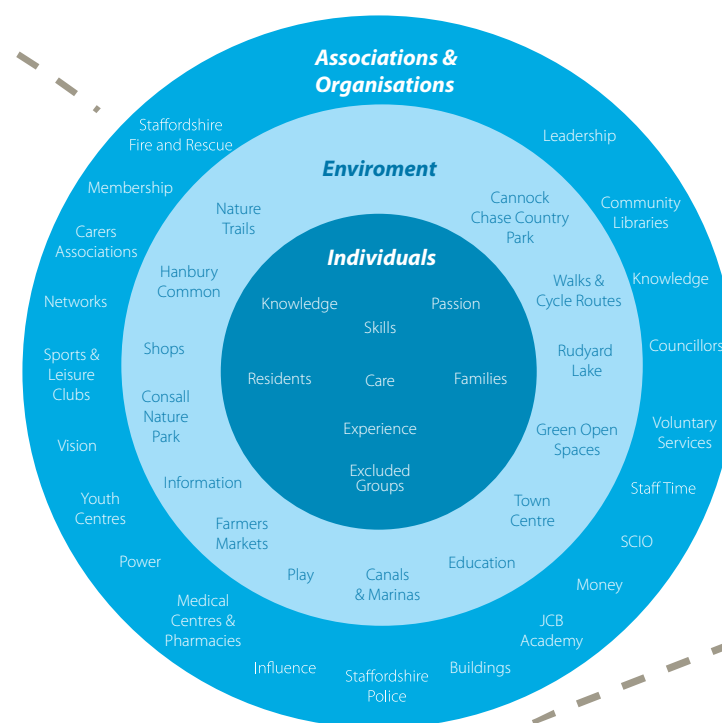
*"It is pushing back the loneliness for people that matters...I do think contact with people is so important."*

*"It's very important for somebody who is caring [for somebody else]...to have time to yourself to do what you want to do so you can just recharge your batteries to help you cope with your caring"*

*"My husband and I go out walking and we find that we are constantly just feeling what a wonderful world it is that we live in."*

*"Doing a degree is a self motivating thing because you achieve, you feel good, you want to do it again so you work hard, you achieve"*

*"I help at a youth club so I have about 40 kids on a Wednesday night playing games...it makes me feel good, I feel totally relaxed doing it."*







# Connecting in Staffordshire

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages. Organisations can support people to make connections with colleagues, family, friends and neighbours at home, work, and in the local community.

## Moorlands Connect & South Staffs Connect

These two local bookable bus services have recently been launched to meet the needs of people living in rural areas of both Leek Moorlands and South Staffordshire. The two flexible transport services support both older and younger residents of remote communities to live independently, access a range of services and connect with friends and family in other parts of the county.

Both projects are jointly funded by a range of partners including the County Council, district councils, local housing associations and local CCGs.



## The Village Agent Scheme

Managed by the Community Council, the aim of the Village Agent programme is to help regenerate a specified area, sustain existing resources and explore ways to address real issues, with a particular emphasis on isolated individuals within rural communities.

Each Village Agent is employed part-time, approximately 10 hours per week to work within local communities to tackle highlighted issues. The key objectives of each Village Agent are to develop sustainable local community groups and targeted programmes, maximising the use of local community volunteer training opportunities, improve communication between the local community and service providers to increase access and to raise awareness of local opportunities. This scheme was developed in South Staffordshire by the Local Strategic Partnership which includes the local Primary Care Trust, police, fire and rescue, Staffordshire County Council, Housing Plus and South Staffordshire District Council.

### Local Insight

What people have told us is important

"It is important to have friends or acquaintances. You haven't got to be best buddies but you've got to know that if you're stuck they're at the other end of the phone."

### Our Connecting Assets

- Staffordshire has countless community groups, most of which run independent of any statutory body. Around 3,600 of these community groups are registered with 'Communities Together' in Staffordshire. Groups include:

Parental Support • Befriending • Counselling • Lifelong Learning • Healthy Living Sport & Leisure • Training & Skills • Volunteering • Arts & Culture

- Staffordshire has free bus travel for older and disabled people, currently benefiting 120,000 residents. 11 to 19 year olds can make any bus journey for £1
- Staffordshire has 54 Healthy Living Pharmacies, with 110 specially trained staff providing advice locally on healthy-eating, staying active, maintaining a healthy body weight and stopping smoking

## *Let's Work Together*

Let's Work Together is a growing multi-agency initiative to ensure that people receive the support they need to live healthy, safe and independent lives, supported by a team which is centred on them and well-connected with each other. Let's Work Together gives home visitors the tools, training and skills to be the 'eyes and ears' for partner organisations, identifying risks and signposting or referring to services. Partners include the fire & rescue Service, the police, NHS, district and county councils, the local voluntary sector and Bromford Housing.



## *Biddulph Community Garden*

A community garden and allotment plots have been created in Biddulph and aims to reduce stress, anxiety and social exclusion by drawing local people in to this community space to try something new. The project employs a part-time gardener to support local people to develop new skills in food-growing and allotment care. Volunteers have also been enlisted from the more experienced gardeners/plot holders to pass on their knowledge to new members, community groups and schools. This is partnership project between the NHS, the district council, MIND, Rethink, The Food Trust and some local schools and community groups and to date over 1000 people have taken part in either an event, workshop or community garden activity.



## *Staffordshire Community Fire Stations*

15 fire stations across the county are being used free of charge to assist many community groups that support health, wellbeing and care. The number is set to increase over the next few years. The Community Fire Stations are well-located accessible venues that increase the delivery of local services, increase the take-up of services, reduce the costs incurred by self-funded groups and increase access to information and education for local people. Examples of current usage include:

- Healthy Kid5 – child weight management
- Smoking cessation clinics
- Changes – Health & Wellbeing Lifestyle Counsellors
- Gentle keep fit for over 50s
- Memory clinics
- The MS Society
- The Stroke Association
- Close to Home walks





# Being Active in Staffordshire

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for promoting wellbeing but it doesn't need to be particularly intense to feel good. Slower-paced activities, such as walking and chair-based exercises can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise. Access to local parks, cycle paths, leisure centres and community activities is essential for increasing the opportunities people have to be more physically active.

## Inspire: Disability Multi-Sports Club

The Inspire Multi-Sports clubs for disabled children and young people and their families. The clubs represent an opportunity for disabled children and young people (aged 5-18) to try out a range of activities in a safe and supportive environment. Staffordshire County Council, Sport Across Staffordshire & Stoke (SASSOT), Inspired Coaching, all our district and borough councils and the Able Too Forum have worked together to ensure this project:



- Offers opportunities for families with a disabled child to take part in something together.
- Provides opportunity to try new sports and activities possibly leading to further involvement.
- Is confidence-building.
- Reduces isolation for disabled children, siblings, parents and carers.
- Raises confidence to use universal services leading to families accessing provision they previously would not access.

## Walk North Staffordshire

A project to develop and co-ordinate a network of health, progressive and workplace walks across Newcastle-under-Lyme and the Staffordshire Moorlands with the overarching aim being to encourage people to be more physically active. Specialist activities are also delivered such as bat spotting and history walks. The project involves recruiting and training up volunteers to lead the health walks and the project co-ordinator oversees a library loan scheme which gives community access to self-led walking maps which encourages use of local green spaces. Funded by Public Health, project partners include the voluntary and community sector, Wildlife Trust, MIND and Rethink.

### Local Insight

What people have told us is important

**"Exercise your brain like you exercise your body, doing jigsaws or crosswords. It keeps your mind active."**

### Our Activity Assets

- 320 registered sports clubs
- 29 Public Leisure Centres
- Over 4000km of public footpaths and bridleways
- 130 miles of canal towpaths

## *The Family Grow Allotment Project*

This project aims to encourage physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, communication and team-building skills. It also supports improvement in mental wellbeing by helping people to connect more with nature and the environment by encouraging families to grow their own crops with support from a gardening mentor. All tools, equipment and seeds are provided for the selected families and everything grown is theirs to keep.

The County Council and Stafford Borough worked with Stafford and Rural Homes, two local primary schools, Grounds for Conservation and the local community. The project is underway on three sites in Stafford, with the fourth site under development. A community clean-up day was held, which saw officers from partnership agencies working alongside community members to clear up a disused allotment site, making it a permanent, secure, sustainable site for residents for years to come.



## *Community Games Grant Fund*

This project has been successful in attracting a significant number of people who do not normally participate in sport or physical activity to do so, and there is also good evidence to suggest these individuals have been fed through into ongoing physical activity and/or healthy lifestyle programmes in the local area. South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust and Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (SASSOT) aimed to support up to 12 community focused events in 2011, with a grant of a maximum of £500 each that allowed communities to come together to organise a local sporting and cultural event inspired by the Olympic and Paralympic Games. 13 events have been funded and successfully held, involving over 6000 participants.



## *Keele University: Healthy Campus Initiative*

This project aims to get people active and increase the participation levels of those doing some exercise but not enough to see obvious benefits. The aim was to encourage people to achieve thirty minutes of exercise three times a week. The programme offered some free sessions and reduced cost initiatives across all areas of sport and gym use at Keele Sports Centre. The programme has brought students, staff and the local community together and has helped increased activity levels. Keele University have been working alongside Sport England, and this programme of physical activity is open to the whole community.







# Take Notice in Staffordshire

Being aware of the surrounding environment enhances self-understanding and allows people to make positive choices based on their values and motivations. Having access to green open spaces also increases knowledge and practical skills for everyone. An understanding of the impact of certain health behaviours on health and wellbeing allows people to make positive informed choices.

## Forest of Mercia - Twiglets & Survive!

Twiglets is an environmental stay-and-play project which promotes family learning, encourages and supports positive access to the local environment and involves food growing and healthy eating. Survive! offers children, young people and adults the opportunity for hands-on experience with survival techniques and skills, such as fire-lighting, water filtration, shelter-building, mapping and orienteering. Both schemes encourage people to see the world from a different perspective and promote:

- Being more physically active
- Confidence and self-esteem
- Being risk-aware not risk-averse when accessing the natural environment
- Skill development
- Team-building
- Independent working
- Creative thinking

Chasewater Visitor Centre, Cannock Chase District Council, Staffordshire County Council, Norton Canes Children's Centre, local schools and local volunteers have worked together to create these opportunities for local people and over 500 people accessed the projects last year.

## Stafford College & Loudmouth Theatre

This project used drama and theatrical workshops to allow young people to take notice of their own health and safely explore sensitive issues around their behaviours, relationships with others and overall wellbeing. The process aimed to equip the students with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to develop positive and healthy lifestyles. Themes included: contraception, STIs, unplanned teen pregnancy, transition to adulthood, alcohol awareness, peer pressure, bullying, domestic violence and abusive relationships. Students from right across the college participated with 72% of them stating the activity encouraged them to reflect on the way they lead their life, decisions they make and actions they take in terms of health and wellbeing.

### Local Insight

What people have told us is important

**"I love gardening; I just like to see the flowers budding and growing, and different seasons."**

### Assets worth Noticing

- 6000 acres of country parks, open spaces and greenways
- 26 nature reserves, 11 local Wildlife Trust volunteer groups and two Wildlife Trust visitor centres
- Staffordshire has 13 sites of natural international importance, 65 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and over 800 local sites of valued biological diversity
- 35% of Staffordshire's land area is designated as Green Belt and 2.5% of the county is covered with ancient woodland



## ***South Staffordshire Network for Mental Health***

This project provides a programme of activities for adults with mental health and wellbeing needs at National Forest Llama Treks.

The activities have been carefully designed to reduce social isolation, increased access to green open spaces, raise awareness of local rural / community assets and subsequently improve mental health and wellbeing. Supported by the County Council's Community Wellbeing Fund, activities include:

- Walking and caring for llamas
- Caring for other animals
- Building a clay oven
- Brush art and other art activities
- Gardening and growing vegetables
- Healthy cookery



## ***Aiming High Short Break Programme & Staffordshire Wildlife Trust***

This initiative aims to provide activities for disabled children and their families. Activities encourage exploring of the natural environment and active play which includes shelter-building, pond-dipping, bug hunts, a range of active games, outdoor cooking and orienteering. Children and young people are able to learn about nature and use arts and crafts to explore the environment. There are also family events at weekends or school holidays including activities that can be continued at home, as well as face-painting and willow-weaving.

Aiming High Capital Funding has also funded the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust outdoor 'Wildplay' area at Wolseley Bridge, which includes sensory play and other aspects designed to meet the needs of disabled children and young people. In its first nine months, this project has delivered 776 hours of activities to 92 disabled children, young people and their families, providing them with:

- Opportunities to be physically active and explore the outdoors.
- Opportunities for families with a disabled child to take part in activities as a family.
- Opportunity to try new activities and learn how to replicate these at home.
- Confidence-building.
- A reduction in isolation for disabled children, siblings, parents and carers.
- Increased confidence in accessing activities together as a family.

## ***Healthy FE Learner Conference***

South Staffordshire College recently hosted this regional conference at their campus in Rodbaston, in partnership with the Learning & Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), West Midlands Regional Healthy FE Group.

The event gave young people the opportunity to voice their opinions in relation to health and wellbeing and what they felt their respective colleges could do to support them. The top five health concerns for local 16-19 years olds were captured during the conference and will now be fed back to colleges in the West Midlands area and used to provide the basis for the 2012-2013 college tutorial programmes.

This insight will improve college tutorial programmes by ensuring information delivered is learner-focused, dealing with issues identified by the young people themselves.

## ***Alcohol Awareness***

Newcastle-under-Lyme College have been working with the local borough council's Harm Reduction Officer to implement some targeted workshops aimed at students across the college. Using a specialised DVD and other visual aids as part of an alcohol awareness-raising workshop, the scheme has assisted over 200 learners to take notice of their own risk-taking behaviours.

By engaging with students the scheme has allowed the college to identify learners who are more vulnerable in relation to alcohol and risk-taking behaviours and signpost them to relevant services.



# Keep Learning in Staffordshire

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Local evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression. Organisations have a vital role in providing opportunities and access for people to learn new skills, be physically active, improve mental wellbeing and make a positive contribution to society.

## Staffordshire Libraries

Across its extensive network, Staffordshire libraries facilitate a vast array of community groups, clubs and activities which support people to connect with each other, make friends, volunteer and keep learning throughout their lives. Here are some examples:

**Knit and Natter Groups** – 13 libraries across 7 Districts hold groups. Most of these are weekly, with the least frequent being monthly. These groups enable people to remain mentally and socially active in their own communities.

**Reminiscence Sessions** - In 2011-12, 6 Districts ran a total of 62 sessions, 53 of these to groups visiting a library and 9 outreach sessions to demonstrate what is on offer. The sessions aimed to improve mental health and wellbeing by enabling intergenerational social activity.

**Reading, Writing and Poetry Groups** - Staffordshire Libraries host 66 groups, and support about another 50 reading groups with their books. Most of these take place on a monthly basis and are run by community volunteers. The groups offer valuable social activities in the community, enabling people to develop new skills, be creative and socially active.



### Local Insight

What people have told us is important

"I didn't go to university when I was young and I had a burning desire then to prove to myself that I could do it, so I did a Bachelor's degree and I'm just finishing my Master's now. That's given me a real buzz, a sense of yes, I can do it."

### Our Learning Assets

- Staffordshire has 4 further education colleges and 2 universities
- Staffordshire has 43 libraries, 2 travelling libraries and 6 mobile libraries
- Last year 9000 adult learners used our colleges and Universities to access further education
- Last year the Adult Community Learning Service funded 14 providers to deliver community learning to 15,662 adults

## Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities

The programme supports voluntary community organisations in developing their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for the residents of disadvantaged areas. The programme is managed by a multi-agency steering group include Staffordshire and Stoke councils, SCIO, Job Centre Plus. The group invites applications from voluntary community organisations under two themes: the development of new skills and the up-skilling of volunteers. In 2010/11 700 learners took part in Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities programmes. By delivering support to increase self-esteem and guide people into employment, this scheme helps to improve the local environment through social renewal and active citizenship.

## Community Learning

This major project covers a wide range of activity funded and delivered in various ways for the benefit of adult learners and for families in local community venues to promote lifelong learning. The programmes include a broad range of learning that brings together adults, often of different ages and backgrounds, to pursue an interest, address a need, acquire a new skill, become healthier or learn how to better support their children. In Staffordshire this is achieved via four programme elements:

- Personal and Community Development Learning
- Family English, Maths and Language
- Wider Family Learning
- Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities

There are several partners involved, including the County Council, libraries, local colleges, voluntary groups and housing associations. In 2010/11 14,500 learners enrolled on Staffordshire County Council community learning programmes at over 350 venues across Staffordshire, 90% of these learners agreed that the respective programmes had improved their health and wellbeing.



## Apprenticeships - Supporting Progression into Work

The ability to progress into work is a critical factor in achieving improved health and wellbeing. This partnership between referral agencies and training providers aims to bring together people who engage with young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs) and deliver funded training opportunities that offer bespoke packages helping young people to continue learning and progress into work.

The learning packages prepare young people for the world of work and apprenticeships, with an aim to reduce the number of young people that enter jobs without training and with little prospects for development. There are focus groups for each district that look to ensure needs of the young people are continually met, focusing on the progression to sustainable employment and continuous learning via an apprenticeship where appropriate. In 2011 there were 2330 apprenticeship starts for young people in Staffordshire compared to 1885 in 2010.





# Giving in Staffordshire

Active participation in social and community life strengthens communities and increases social capital. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to be happy themselves. Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing. Volunteering or joining community groups is very rewarding and helps create connections with other people.

## Community Wellbeing Fund: Featherstone Youth for Change

A community based intergenerational project that provides an emergency shopping support and assistance service through a free helpline number. The project targets older vulnerable people who may be unwell, or recovering from an operation or illness and their carers. The initiative aims to increase volunteering opportunities for young people, increase access to local services and shopping for vulnerable older people, reduce the risk of falls due to cold, wet, icy weather and reduce the risk of malnutrition through access to food shopping.



## Early Detection of Cancer

Based in Newcastle under Lyme and Leek Moorlands, this project looks to increase local people's awareness of the signs and symptoms of breast, bowel and lung cancer. The project works by recruiting and training local people in the signs and symptoms of these three largest cancer killers and asking them to pass this knowledge on to their communities.

This heightened awareness within the community can then facilitate earlier diagnosis within primary care. The trained volunteers deliver messages to local people via information stands and presentations within workplaces, health events, community events and community groups.

Funded by NHS North Staffordshire and supported by various partners including district councils, Age UK, The Beth Johnson Foundation and the local voluntary sector, this project not only develops new skills and confidence in the volunteers but locally GP data is showing a positive change in the number of two-week referrals. In addition a cancer awareness measure survey was conducted suggesting that awareness levels of the signs and symptoms of breast, bowel and lung cancer have increased.

### Local Insight

What people have told us is important

*"If you've got employment to get up for, whether it's caring for somebody or a job, or if you've got at least a dog or a cat to feed, it helps to actually have a purpose in life. Having nothing to get up for is actually soul-destroying."*

### Our Giving Assets

- There are 8 Volunteer Centres in Staffordshire promoting over 2000 different volunteering opportunities in over 1200 volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs)
- In 2010-11 the Volunteer Centres worked with more than 7,000 new and existing volunteers
- 14 % of Staffordshire residents have given unpaid help to groups, clubs or organisations in the last 12 months
- The top 5 things Staffordshire residents feel they gain from volunteering are satisfaction from helping others, enjoyment, friendship experience and confidence



## Community First Panels

This initiative gives local residents a direct role in decision making that affects the future of their neighbourhood and communities. East Staffordshire has panels in Eton Park, Horninglow and Anglesey, and 15 Community First panel projects were funded in the first year, and match funding for these projects has exceeded target by 100%. East Staffordshire Borough Council along with the County Council and the local voluntary sector are working in partnership, supporting communities to identify the strengths and local priorities to plan for their futures and become more resilient.



## Staffordshire Good Neighbour Scheme

The initiative enables local communities to set up volunteering schemes that give people the opportunity to provide social or practical support to others in the community. Activities include gardening, home maintenance, befriending, and transport to local amenities, shops, GP appointments, hospital appointments etc. This project is driven by a wide-ranging partnership group and delivered by the Carers' Association Southern Staffordshire. The key aims of the project are to:

- Increase access and opportunities for learning, training and employment
- Increase / improve health and wellbeing of older people and vulnerable adults
- Increase levels of independence for older people and vulnerable adults
- Reduce, prevent or delay dependency on social care and health services



## The Rural Counties Community Volunteer Project

This volunteer project based around the maintenance of public rights of way and country parks, whilst also establishing friendship groups and working parties based around user groups such as ramblers.

The project is inclusive, catering for all ages and abilities and also links with local schools and colleges to promote aspects of the environment and practical skills. The project has engaged over 500 people and has provided volunteering opportunities, improved public spaces, has helped increase physical activity, social inclusion and supported mental health and wellbeing.





# Moving Forward:

## Challenges and Opportunities

We have clearly come a long way in Staffordshire, but there remains significant room for continued improvements. The efforts required to address these areas is partly the reason why this report is written in the way that it is. The need for greater focus on strengthening and enhancing the assets of our communities for better health and wellbeing outcomes remains as important as ever, even more so now, with current fiscal and demographic changes. This report has hopefully helped to raise the importance of improving wellbeing by:

- Increasing local emphasis on what is now nationally a strategic public health priority
- Using local insight from people who have described what wellbeing means to them and what contributes to improving their wellbeing
- Using the evidenced-based 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' as a means of identifying some of the assets in Staffordshire communities which are contributing to improving wellbeing

In so doing, this annual public health report has taken a different approach than the traditional measurement of illness and disease in the population, indeed it has taken a positive 'Glass Half Full' approach<sup>10</sup>. This has helped to identify many of the good things happening in Staffordshire which contribute to improving wellbeing.

However, this approach has also highlighted some of the gaps and strategic challenges which are important to highlight in terms of moving forward:

- In identifying the positive contribution of assets to wellbeing – it could be considered that 'nothing more needs to be done'. This is not the case – health inequalities, income differentials and poor mental health are all issues still found in Staffordshire<sup>11</sup>. The asset-based approach should not be viewed as a substitute for strategic interventions and services and is by no means a cost-saving option. Improving health inequalities and fostering high levels of wellbeing in Staffordshire requires strategic intervention on the structural causes of inequalities, such as access to quality services, good housing standards, and addressing educational attainment, skills and employability. An asset-based approach cannot replace the need for structural interventions, but can complement and support these through active community co-production.

- Both the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' and the asset-based approach share the fundamental aim to improve health outcomes by combining the resources, skills and energy of citizens, communities and services. This highlights the need for a change in focus to what positively contributes to health and wellbeing in 'a healthy community' and how commissioning organisations and planners can look beyond traditional service provision and invest in community-based assets.



# Recommendations

**As this report demonstrates, improving wellbeing is everyone's business. As such, there are a number of recommendations emerging from this report:**

**1.** Politicians, commissioners, planners, providers and the community itself can each play a significant role in improving wellbeing in Staffordshire:



**2.** To make 2013 Staffordshire's 'Year of Wellbeing', and the Health and Wellbeing Board should champion this. This should further increase and mainstream the profile of 'wellbeing' and the asset-based approach in strategy development, policy, planning, commissioning and delivery.

**3.** The Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board should ensure that the cross-cutting nature of wellbeing is captured and embedded into its Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Staffordshire. This will need to be holistic and include measures which improve wellbeing, both across the life-course and aligned with policy to address the wider determinants of health. For example, the insight from local people and partners in this report which has raised the importance of assets such as access to open and green space, having sufficient income, skills and employability.

**4.** Commissioning should take an innovative approach and focus on securing outcomes through active community participation and engage communities with continued asset-building and the design of interventions and services.

**5.** The design, commissioning and provision of public health and wellbeing programmes needs to be built on a positive approach to health and wellbeing, rather than on the basis that to improve health something needs to be lost or 'given up'. We need to train our focus on what activities and behaviours are supporting the health of communities and support people to participate in activities they enjoy and that improve their health and wellbeing.

**6.** Relevant organisations should work more closely with the media to deliver a positive message and wider understanding that wellbeing is not about giving up the things we enjoy but in fact the opposite. Wellbeing is about leading a healthy life but it is also about leading an enjoyable and fulfilled life, celebrating ourselves and those around us, managing social isolation, treating each other with respect and compassion and participating in the communities of which we are part.

**7.** Communities, voluntary organisations and individuals in Staffordshire should be proactive and take responsibility in taking forward the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' as a key resource to support mental health, wellbeing and resilience.

**8.** This report has not focused specifically on assessing health inequalities related to mental health and wellbeing as there are a number of existing Strategic Needs Assessments that identify the significant health inequalities which remain in Staffordshire. We do know that the poorest communities have the longest periods of life lived with disability and the lowest life expectancy, and that existing income inequality, coupled with the impact of the global economic recession, may continue to have a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing. For this reason we need to: maximise skills, employability, job creation and income in Staffordshire, and to continue developing our insight and knowledge as to what builds and creates resilience in families and communities.

**9.** Agencies with planning responsibilities should continue to adopt and maximise the positive wellbeing assets highlighted in this report, in particular:

**9.1** That the physical assets of organisations which enable individuals and communities to better connect are maximised, e.g. accessible transport, increasing access to community buildings for community activities.

**9.2** That the known positive benefits of green and open space to the wellbeing of individuals and communities are built into the planning and design of housing, community areas and spaces, particularly in areas where there is little access to green and open space.

## Have Your Say

If you have any feedback on the contents of this report or suggestions please don't hesitate to get in touch, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

**Please direct all comments to:**  
**publichealth@staffordshire.gov.uk**

## Acknowledgements

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## Notes



*Making Staffordshire*  
**HEALTHIER**

