



**Worcestershire  
Health and Wellbeing  
Strategy 2022-2032**

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# Foreword

**I am delighted to launch Worcestershire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2022-2032.**

This strategy is a call to action; to accelerate our efforts to improve mental health and wellbeing and prevent mental ill-health in Worcestershire.

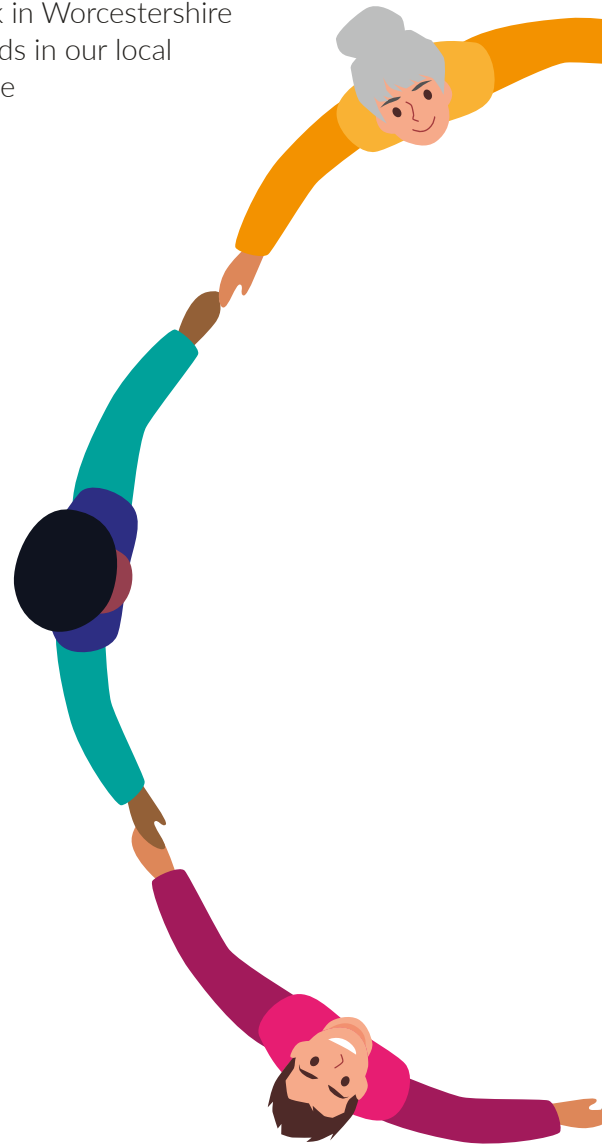
We will do this by taking collective action on the things we all need to have good mental health and wellbeing. We want our children to have the best start in life, our young people to have hope and aspiration for the future, and all of us to live longer, more independent lives in good health, with fewer people going on to need care and support.

Prevention is the key to these efforts. We need to prevent people becoming unwell in the first place, prevent the escalation of illness if it occurs, and ultimately prevent dependency on the health and social care system.

We know that the pandemic has affected all of us in different ways and has widened inequalities in health outcomes between the best and worst off in our county. We will maintain a relentless focus on addressing these disparities, enabling people to be socially and financially independent and able to meet the challenges that arise over the coming years.

My thanks go to every one of you who responded to our consultation and helped to shape this strategy. We will continue to engage with people who live and work in Worcestershire over the lifetime of the strategy to ensure we adapt to the changing needs in our local communities. We have a huge task ahead of us. Please join me and all the members of the Health and Wellbeing Board as we work together to make a difference to the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of everyone in Worcestershire.

**Councillor Karen May**, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Wellbeing and Chair of Worcestershire's Health and Wellbeing Board



# Section 1: Developing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

This section explains what the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Board are.

## What is the Health and Wellbeing board?

The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) brings together the organisations responsible for improving health and wellbeing in Worcestershire. Its members include elected councillors and officers from County and District Councils, representatives from Worcestershire Children First, local NHS organisations including Primary Care Networks, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, and Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, the local voluntary and community sector, Healthwatch Worcestershire, the Local Enterprise Partnership and West Mercia Police. It also has a range of sub-groups that focus on specific age groups or geographical areas such as the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the Being Well Strategic Group.

More information about the HWB can be found on the County Council website..

## What is the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is a document that outlines the health and wellbeing priorities for a local area. In this Strategy, we have set out what we need to focus on to improve the health and wellbeing of the people who live and work in Worcestershire. This is based upon the best available evidence as detailed in our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

The Strategy sets out a vision and key priorities for our partnership work to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities over the next 10 years. It is a 'living document' that will evolve and adapt to changing needs as it is implemented through shorter term action plans. The detailed action plans will include appropriate outcome measures to monitor progress over time.

The HWB and its Strategy sets the strategic direction for many other strategies, forums and committees across Worcestershire.

## How do we work with the Integrated Care System?

The newly formed Integrated Care System (ICS) also has oversight of health and wellbeing for both Herefordshire and Worcestershire. This Strategy works alongside the Integrated Care Strategy, which promotes joined up working between the NHS, Local Authority, and voluntary and community sector partners to meet the health needs of the population.



# Section 2: Approaches to Improving health and wellbeing

The HWB has used the best available evidence to identify what our population needs, and which evidence-based approaches work to improve health and wellbeing and prevent poor health. We explain below some of those approaches used to support the development of this strategy.

## Wider determinants of health

Many factors contribute to our health and wellbeing and only around 20 per cent relate to good quality health care services.

The wider determinants of health are a diverse range of social, economic and environmental factors which have an influence on our health. These include our education, employment, housing, neighbourhood and community, as well as the lifestyles we follow. Factors like deprivation, low income and poor housing mean that some people experience poorer health and reduced quality of life. These potentially avoidable health inequalities have been exacerbated throughout the pandemic, often most impacting those who already experience worse health outcomes.

The HWB will consider these factors to help achieve its vision and priorities over the next 10 years..

40%

### Socioeconomic factors

Education, employment, income, family & social support, community safety.

10%

### Physical Environment

Housing, access to green space, air quality.

30%

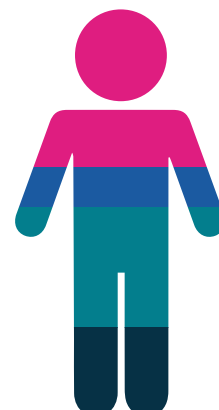
### Lifestyle factors

Diet and physical activity, tobacco use, alcohol use.

20%

### Health Care

Access to good quality health care services.



[Adapted from an illustration of the impact of healthcare and non-healthcare factors on a person's health. Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement Going Beyond Clinical Walls. Solving Complex Problems (October 2014).]

## Reducing health inequalities

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population and between different groups of people. They are socially determined by factors beyond an individual's control. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate effect on people from particular communities, different ethnicities, and those in specific jobs, such as front-line care, transport and hospitality, and those living in deprived areas, therefore making existing inequalities worse.

In general, the population of Worcestershire is healthy and there are many health-related measures where Worcestershire performs better than the national average. However, there are some areas in Worcestershire where people's health is worse than expected, and the average measures reported at County and district council level mask the differences in health outcomes experienced by some communities. For example, people living in more deprived areas have a shorter healthy life expectancy meaning they live more of their life in ill health than those living in more affluent areas.

### Spotlight: Health and Housing in Worcestershire

Housing associations, Local Authorities and the NHS in Worcestershire have come together to create a unique role to improve health outcomes through housing. A new post 'Head of Housing and Health Partnerships' has been created and will work across organisations to reach as many as 200,000 people living in social housing across the county. Work will include a focus on mental health in the community, rough sleeping and homelessness and providing health and care job opportunities for residents. The project will also explore wider areas, such as reducing pressures on adult social care and NHS services, enabling longer term independent living and focusing on reducing health inequalities.

## Prevention and early intervention

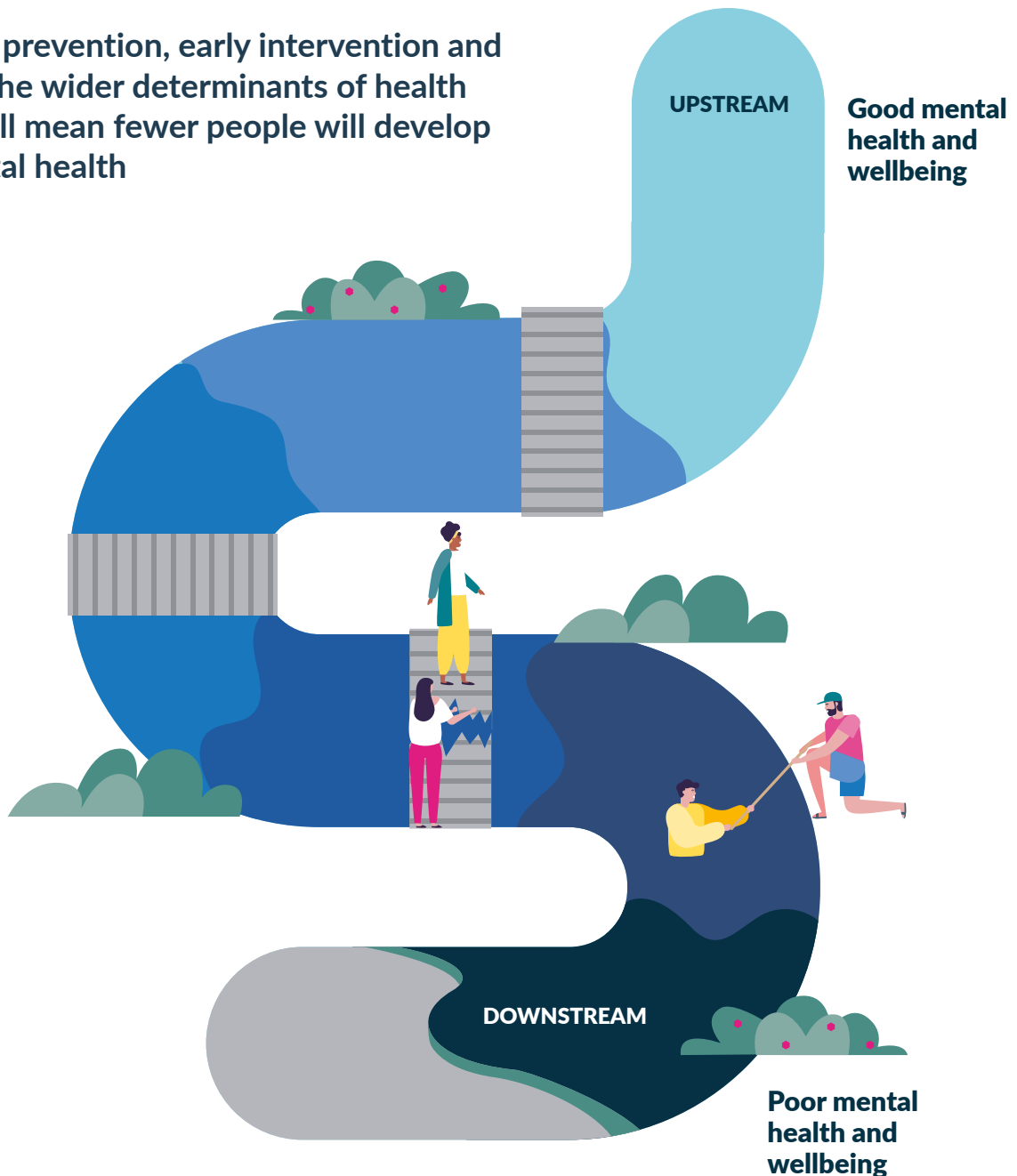
Prevention is about helping people stay healthy, happy and independent for as long as possible. This means reducing the chances of problems from arising in the first place and, when they do, supporting people to manage them as effectively as possible.

Focusing our energy and resources on prevention and early intervention will mean fewer people go on to develop specialist health and care needs. For example, by identifying the needs of children, young people and their parents early we can prevent poor outcomes later in life. Similarly, if we provide advice, guidance and support regarding the needs of older people we can prevent avoidable admissions to hospital and help maximise independence in later life. This approach can prevent needs escalating to a point that requires specialist interventions such as child protection and adult social care.

### In the words of the late Desmond Tutu:

“There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. Some of us need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in.”

**Focusing on prevention, early intervention and addressing the wider determinants of health upstream will mean fewer people will develop poorer mental health**



# Prevention triangle

**Preventative activities** can be divided into three categories (prevent, reduce, delay) as shown in the triangle below. These categories describe the type of intervention that could be provided and who they might be best suited to.



**Delay:**

taking action to delay the impact of ongoing problems to improve, as much as possible, people's quality of life. For example, rehabilitation programmes to support people with a mental health condition to return to or stay in work.

**Reduce:**

taking action to reduce the impact of problems at the earliest possible stage. Stop them getting worse and/or targeting actions at groups who have an increased risk of developing needs. For example, housing adaptations, taking measures to reduce high blood pressure, support for families affected by substance misuse.

**Prevent:**

taking action to prevent problems before they even happen. For example, parenting classes, cycling helmets, education programmes about healthy eating, exercising and vaccinations.

## Whole population approaches

A whole system approach is aimed at improving the health of an entire population. It is about improving the physical and mental health outcomes and wellbeing of people within and across an area, while reducing health inequalities. It includes action to reduce the occurrence of ill health, action to deliver appropriate health and care services and action on the wider determinants of health. It requires working with communities and partner agencies across Worcestershire.

**Spotlights on our communities**

Throughout this Strategy we have included spotlights on some of the brilliant work that has been taking place in Worcestershire communities.

Initiatives, activities, and funding change over time as they are reflective of local need. Some of these spotlights show projects that were part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Section 3: Health and wellbeing in Worcestershire

This section explains the journey so far, why we chose mental health and wellbeing and shows some of the local Worcestershire evidence.

## The journey so far

The HWB started considering its new Strategy in the summer of 2020, following an update on latest health needs outlined in the updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). A working group was formed that included elected members.

Members of the HWB 'championed each of the possible priorities, and the HWB then participated in a series of exercises to help decide on final priorities for the new strategy. The 'exercises were based on the evidence from the JSNA, the opportunities for system wide action on prevention and inequalities, and ability of the HWB to address the challenges presented by each priority. The exercise was also informed by engagement with almost 40 voluntary and community sector organisations. Following this, a public consultation was launched to hear your views on the priorities. Further information about this consultation is in section four.

Following this, a public consultation was launched to hear your views on the proposed priority of good mental health and wellbeing, supported by action in areas that we all need to be well in Worcestershire which are: healthy living at all ages; safe, thriving and healthy homes, communities and places; and quality local jobs and opportunities. Further information about this consultation is in section four.

## Why focus on mental health and wellbeing?

The World Health Organisation definition of mental wellbeing is 'a state where everyone is able to realise their potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community.'

We know that good mental health and wellbeing is an important part of all our experiences in life and that it is something that affects other areas of our health too. Better mental health and wellbeing is linked to improved physical health and living longer in better health. It also protects us from some mental and physical health conditions as it increases our resilience, helps us make healthy choices and improves our relationships and quality of life.

Our mental health and physical health are interconnected. Having good mental and physical health and wellbeing is the key to enable people to live happy, prosperous and independent lives. Research

shows that people with mental ill health are more likely to have a preventable physical health condition such as heart disease. Nearly one in three people with a long-term physical health condition also has a mental health condition, most often depression or anxiety.

Poor mental health also affects the economy, from lost employment to additional costs to health and public services. It is estimated that lost productivity, benefits payments, and costs to the NHS from mental ill health are around £70 billion a year in England.

Poor mental health is becoming more common. A nationwide survey of children and young people estimated that one in eight of 5 to 19-year-olds were likely to be experiencing mental ill health. Poor mental health when we're younger can mean an increased risk of mental ill health when we're older and developing unhealthy behaviours, such as performing poorly in education, substance misuse, self-harm and suicide.



## Worcestershire evidence

The infographic below shows some of the evidence that helps us understand the mental health and wellbeing of people who live and work in Worcestershire.

### Depression 2020/21

**73,197** people (**14.7%**) in Worcestershire

Adults 18+ (QOF) which is higher than the England rate of **12.3%**

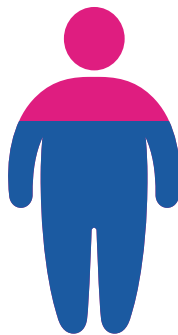


By **2032** the number of **people aged 85+** is set to increase by **61%** from **17,700** in 2021 to **28,500** in 2032



Almost **two thirds** (**64.2%**) of adults are **overweight or obese**.

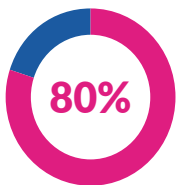
This is similar to the national average of **63.5%** (2019/20)



A Healthwatch survey reported in 2022 that **80%** (202 respondents in total) of

**children and young people**

felt that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their emotional wellbeing.

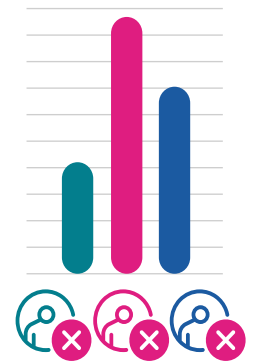


**4370** people are currently known to have **dementia** in Worcestershire (2020 PHOF) Public health profiles



In June 2022 there were **11,015** people claiming **unemployment** benefits in Worcestershire.

(March 2020, **8,305**, June 2020 **18,510**, June 2021 **15,345**)



**37,469** households in Worcestershire (**14.5%**) are thought to be living in **fuel poverty**, the figure for England is **13.2%** (2020)



**8%** of adults responded to a Healthwatch survey in 2020 (170 respondents in total) had not been able to find

**mental health and wellbeing support**



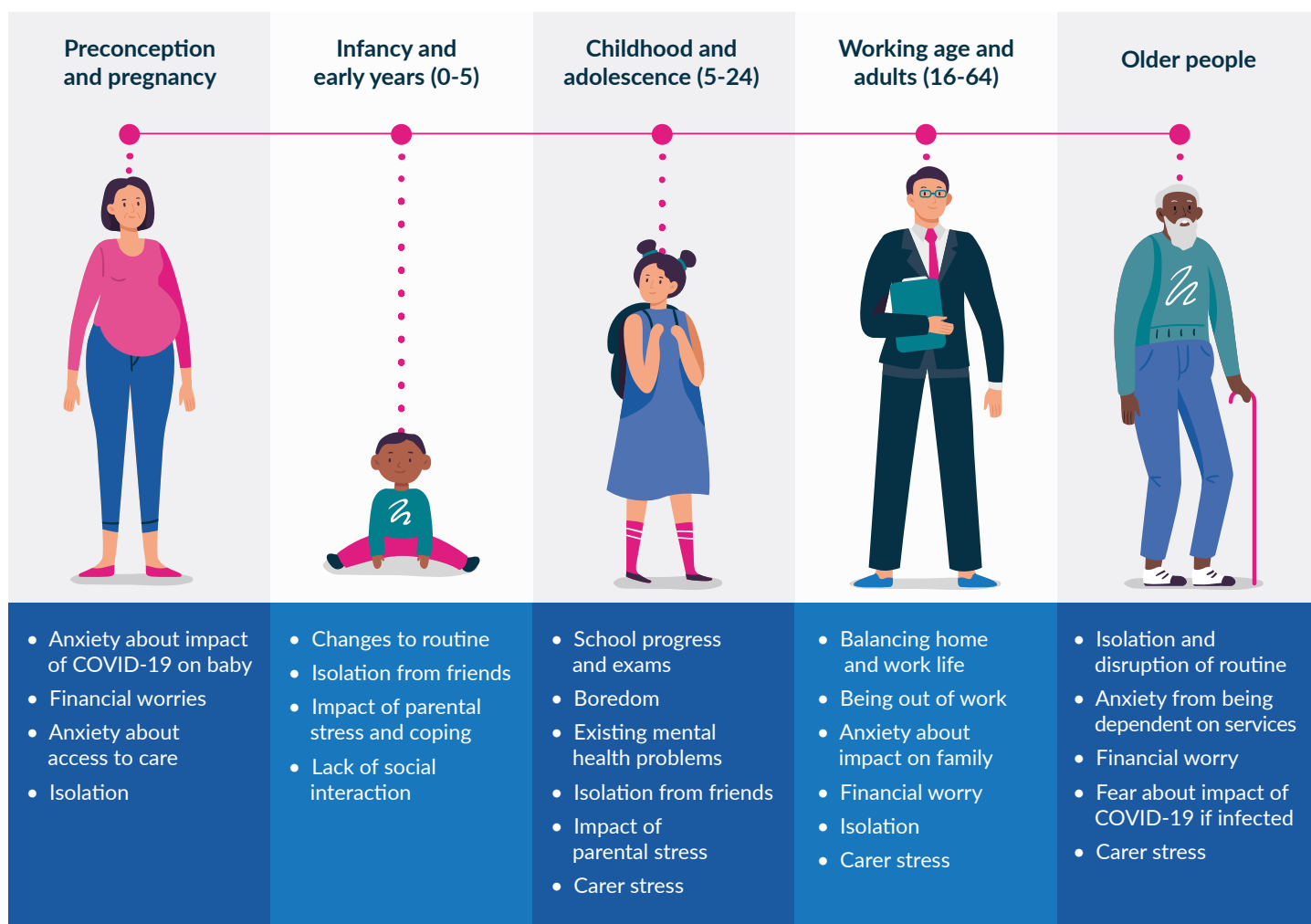
# The impact of COVID-19 pandemic

Before COVID-19 there was already a persistent gap in life expectancy and in the number of years people lived in good health between the most and least affluent areas. COVID-19 has exacerbated existing health inequalities and certain groups have experienced disproportionate effects on their mental health. We also do not fully understand the effects of long COVID-19 on our population.

Whilst the negative impacts of COVID-19 are significant, there have also been some positive impacts. Communities have responded to COVID-19 by supporting one another in new ways. More people are recognising the importance of both their physical and mental health and are more willing and able to talk about mental health and wellbeing than ever before.

It is important to remember that COVID-19 is not the only infectious disease that can impact our health and wellbeing. We will continue to deliver effective vaccination and screening programmes that reach all groups of our population and are essential to enabling good physical and mental health and wellbeing.

## Here are some of the ways COVID-19 has affected us:



10 Different impacts of COVID-19 across the life course (Adapted from LGA and PHE Health Matters Image)

### Spotlight: Inspire Community Café, Redditch

Karen has spent the last 10 years running grass-roots community projects on an estate in Redditch. During lockdown she opened the Inspire Community Café with some local volunteers, purchased a van, and organised a food parcel scheme that reached over 400 of the county's most vulnerable people. Now, following the ease of lockdowns, the café continues to provide formal and informal mental health support and a range of community activities, befriending and support groups.

## Section 4: Capturing community views

This section looks at how we captured community views and involved people in the development of the Strategy.

### The consultation

We wanted to make sure that the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is driven by the needs and experiences of the people who live and work here. We have taken several approaches to find out what 'being well' means to the residents of Worcestershire.

We asked people to respond to a formal consultation survey on the development of the Strategy. The consultation was shared widely throughout the county, to individuals, partners, communities, and voluntary organisations. It asked respondents to share their views on the proposed priorities and vision; what 'being well' means to them; and thoughts on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the 12-week period, the consultation survey received 1627 responses (online and paper copies). Of those completed, 97% were from residents and 3% were from organisations which included: Voluntary and Community Sector (VCSE), Public Sector, Health, Leisure and Education.

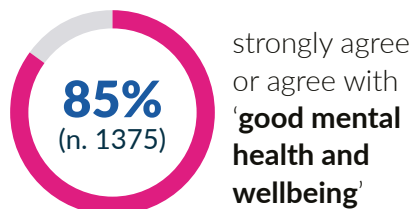
In addition to the formal consultation, we have undertaken research in the community with a variety of groups and organisations to understand the lived experiences of many different Worcestershire residents. The results from all this engagement work will continue to inform the development of action plans which will support the delivery of the Strategy. The HWB is committed to ongoing engagement in the community, with findings being used to refine action plans and support the Strategy as it evolves over the 10-year period.



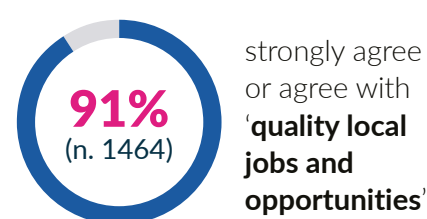
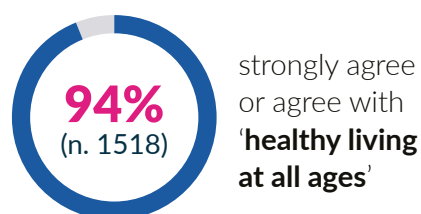
# Consultation findings: what you said

The public consultation ran from February 7th – May 6th 2022 and received 1627 responses.

## Your thoughts on our proposed priorities:



The Health and Wellbeing board have identified the following 3 things that we all need to **be well in Worcestershire:**



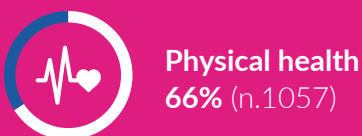
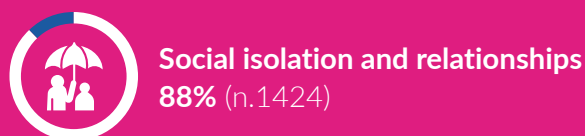
\*(n.) = the number of responses to the question

## Being well & COVID-19

Being well means different things to different people! You told us that these 3 things are the most important:



80% (n.1288) think that COVID-19 has decreased the health and wellbeing of people living and working in Worcestershire – the following 3 things have been most negatively affected:



# What else is important to you...

We analysed your responses and these are the things that are **important to you**.

## Information & advice

- Accessible and inclusive information and advice to support wellbeing.
- Knowing what information is available and where to find it.

*“...people may need access to advice and help to understand how they can remain healthy when their routines suddenly change.”*

## Accessing services

- Being able to access health and wellbeing services in a variety of ways.
- Having services that are tailored to individual needs.
- Clear communication between services and the public.

*“Physical access to community facilities, particularly for those unable to access the internet (although increased online access is a positive, particularly for those with mobility/access issues.)”*

## The rising cost of living

- Healthy living- the cost of healthy food and access to physical activities.
- Homes & communities- rising costs impacting household budgets.
- Jobs & opportunities- quality jobs, support to find employment, the cost of public transport.

*“The world looks like a different place, post-Covid, and a less safe, less predictable, less familiar one.”*

## Reliable & affordable transport

- Access to safe, reliable, and affordable public transport particularly in rural areas to support employment and access to services.
- Good infrastructure for safe active travel.

*“Transport is a real issue for rural communities. where I live if you don't drive it's very difficult to get to work.”*

## Physical health

- Having good physical health and mental health.
- Access to affordable physical activity opportunities in your local community and at work.

*“Physical and mental health are linked. Poor physical health can lead to poor mental health and vice versa. Both needs to be addressed.”*

## Your local environment

- Opportunities to access well-maintained recreational and green spaces.
- Enjoying the benefits of being outdoors and protecting your local environment and countryside.

*“Our environment, countryside and heritage play a significant and often underestimated role to promote health and wellbeing.”*

## Measuring progress

- Understanding how priorities will be achieved and measured.
- Remaining flexible to meet changing needs of the population.

*“...it needs a cohesive practical delivery plan, delivering a local service to local people. It also needs a good prevention strategy.”*

## Your feedback will...

- Inform the development of the Strategy and action plans.
- Shape the Board's commitment to ongoing engagement.
- Put Worcestershire resident's views at the centre of the 10 year Strategy.
- Be shared with all HWB partners.

Findings analysed from **1627** responses

# Section 5: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy

This section outlines our vision and priorities for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

## Vision and priorities

Based on all the evidence and feedback from the consultation, the HWB concluded that the overarching priority for its new 10-year Strategy should be mental health and wellbeing, supported by action in areas that we all need to be well in Worcestershire which are: healthy living at all ages; safe, thriving and healthy homes, communities and places; and quality local jobs and opportunities.



### Our Vision

The vision of the HWB is 'working together for better health and wellbeing in Worcestershire'.



### Our Priorities

The HWB wants to focus its new Strategy on good mental health and wellbeing, supported by action on the wider determinants of good mental health and wellbeing outlined here.



## Priority: Good mental health and wellbeing

This Strategy demonstrates the important role mental health and wellbeing plays in all aspects of our health; that's why we want to improve mental health and wellbeing for everyone in Worcestershire. We will continue to support work across the wider health and wellbeing agenda that contributes to better mental health and wellbeing.

We will work together across the system to improve mental health and wellbeing, supporting people to live well in good health for as long as possible, particularly those who have poorer health outcomes. This means we all have a role to play, public, private, and voluntary and community sector as well as everyone who lives and works in Worcestershire.

The consultation findings highlighted several areas that are important to you. From tailored and accessible information and advice through to specialist mental health services and support. We recognise the issues in accessing the services and support we need to have good mental health and wellbeing. It also recognises

the significant impact that the COVID-19 pandemic and rising cost of living has had and continues to have on mental and physical health. The HWB will continue to work with system partners to assure these issues are being addressed.

There is a wealth of existing work already being delivered across the system that contributes to improved mental health and wellbeing, and we will continue to recognise this as an important part of achieving our vision and priorities.

Providing support at individual, community and societal levels, with action at every stage of life, and in the places where people are born, raised, live, learn and work can help to prevent poor mental health and wellbeing.

**A whole system approach that places greater emphasis on prevention is critical to improve mental health and wellbeing in Worcestershire.**

YOU SAID

***"There are many individuals who are struggling at the moment and will increasingly struggle as circumstances (e.g., cost of living etc.) get more difficult"***

***"Good mental health and wellbeing is the foundation upon which people can build happy and productive lives and relationships"***

***"Mental health and wellbeing is a community back bone... health and wellbeing is my highest priority"***



### Spotlight: Now We're Talking

The Now We're Talking (NWT) campaign started in 2018 to raise awareness of the NHS Healthy Minds Service and wider mental health support. The NWT campaign has forged strong links with partner organisations and is the face of mental health communications in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Their recent video campaign 'acting together to prevent suicide' hopes to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and highlight where to get support.

Other recent campaigns include mental health signposting, initiatives around art, nature, and sport as well as outreach with schools and colleges and at public events.

## Spotlight: The Five Ways to Wellbeing

The Five Ways to Wellbeing is a great tool for improving our mental wellbeing. It captures a range of evidence-based approaches to building and maintaining good mental wellbeing for the whole population, from infancy into older age. There are a range of local initiatives that support the Five Ways to Wellbeing including:



### Connect:

- Approaches like the Good Neighbour Networks and the Stay Connected Pledge are keeping communities connected.
- Local initiatives, like Pershore Wellbeing Hub, provide a range of information and support to improve wellbeing and connect.



### Be active:

- Free resistance bands and exercise leaflets are available for the over 50s through the Living Well for Longer programme.
- Physical activity and leisure opportunities are available for all ages and abilities across the districts.



### Take notice:

- Worcestershire has a wealth of arts, nature, and cultural opportunities.
- Our museums offer a variety of collections and exhibitions covering centuries of the county's history.



### Keep learning:

- Free and low-cost adult and family courses are available online and in local community venues.
- The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Wellbeing and Recovery College offers courses to give people the tools and skills they need on their wellbeing and recovery journey..



### Give:

- The NHS, Here2Help, and our volunteer centres all provide opportunities to 'give' across the county.
- Benefits include enhancing skills, improved wellbeing, opportunities to socialise, an significant range of societal benefits.



## Our ambitions for good mental health and wellbeing:

### 1. We will take a whole system approach to improving mental health and wellbeing and preventing mental ill-health across Worcestershire.

#### This includes:

- Promoting good mental wellbeing and resilience (the ability to cope with challenges)
- Preventing mental ill-health (including spotting the signs and intervening early)
- Supporting recovery from mental ill-health (including access to appropriate services)
- Tackling the stigma around mental ill-health.
- Providing accessible and inclusive information and advice in appropriate formats.

### 2. We will continue to align and support local partnership strategies that contribute to improving mental health and wellbeing.

#### This includes:

- Sharing data, intelligence, and resources.
- Working collaboratively, improving integration and communication.
- Reducing duplication and fragmentation

### 3. We will maintain our commitment to reducing inequalities by focusing on:

- People living in deprived areas.
- People with poorer health outcomes including those with severe mental illness.
- People living with disabilities, co-morbidities, and long-term health conditions.
- People facing multiple disadvantages including those experiencing homelessness, refugees, and traveller communities.
- People who misuse drugs or alcohol.

### 4. We will continue to engage with local communities over the lifetime of this Strategy.

#### This includes:

- Having ongoing and meaningful conversations about mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensuring lived experience insights are central to decision making and service delivery.
- Feeding back to the community about the impact of their views



## Sub-priority: Healthy living at all ages

Mental and physical health go hand in hand, and it is important to improve health and wellbeing across the life course. Healthy living at all ages aims to ensure that everyone is supported to make healthy choices throughout their life. This includes supporting people to maintain a healthy weight, to do more physical activity, limit alcohol intake and quit smoking.

Positive early experience is vital to ensure children are ready to learn, ready for school and have good life chances. As children grow and develop, it is both the physical environment around them and the social environment they experience that supports their development well.

**It is vital to give every child the best start in life; ensuring good physical and mental health before and during pregnancy is important for both mother and baby.**

We want to focus on improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and young people in Worcestershire as building resilience from an early age will have long life benefits.

We know that resilient children do better at school, better in adolescence and grow up to be resilient adults; and in turn resilient parents will support their

children well through childhood and adolescence.

Appropriate and timely experiences and support for young people on their journey to adulthood is essential to ensure future health and wellbeing. Supporting and enabling adults to live well and take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing enables us to reach our potential and stay well through life's tough times.

As we get older, looking after your mental and physical wellbeing can help to slow down age-related functional decline and reduce the need for specialist care. To support people to age well, we need to maintain independence in the home and ensure the best possible outcomes for older people, Carers and those living with co-morbidities or long-term health conditions (for example, dementia).

Preventing loneliness for all ages has a significant impact on many aspects of our physical and mental health. We can promote opportunities to spend time with others, like physical activity or intergenerational activities, which can have a positive effect across the life course.

**Healthy lifestyles combined with wider preventative measures like health screening or early intervention services, we can all start well, live well and age well.**



### **Spotlight: Social Prescribing – Children, Adolescents, and Families**

The Social Prescribing Children, Adolescents and Families (CAF) service supports children and young people aged 8 – 18 years and their families. The CAF team was set up in response to the issues facing families and young people in our most disadvantaged areas within North Bromsgrove District. The programme has been set up by the Bromsgrove and District Primary Care Network (PCN) and is delivered by Onside. A similar service has been developed in Droitwich, Ombersley the Rurals PCN, and by Wyre Forest Network of Independent Practices (WFNIP) and Wyre Forest Health Partnership.

A care coordinator and social prescriber provide non-medical holistic support on a 1-1 basis with issues such as education, mood, anxiety, family relationships, loneliness, exercise.

***“The Social Prescriber has been a great support with school and been able to talk things through privately outside of family. She has been someone to vent to after my mother’s death and phone calls when needed were useful. I feel less stressed with school, less overthinking and feel more positive. She is a helpful and down to earth Social Prescriber.”*** – Young Person W. Barnt Green Surgery.

### Spotlight: Health walks

The Worcestershire Health Walks programme offers free short group walks led by trained volunteers. Health Walks take place across the county and are a great way to explore our Green Flag award winning parks and green spaces.

*"After having a Cardiac Arrest walking has become important to maintain my fitness. It gets me out and about and, being a walk leader, a purpose for getting up and getting moving. Although I lead the Group, it's not my Group - we all take responsibility for each other. I like how everyone has a different story and to hear about other people's lives."*

Lickey End, Bromsgrove Health Walk Volunteer



### You said:

*"There are obvious times in one's lives when things may dramatically change, such as employment, pregnancy, when people may need access to advice and help to understand how they can remain healthy when their routines suddenly change."*

*"I think that if you are emotionally well, this enables you to embrace physical challenges, and it motivates you to engage in physical activity."*

## Our ambitions for healthy living at all ages

### 1. We will support people to start well, live well and age well so they can live a greater proportion of their lives in good health.

#### This includes:

- Enabling children and families to access the services and support they need for good mental health and wellbeing, from pre-conception through to adulthood.
- Supporting early years and educational settings to effectively promote good mental health and wellbeing.
- Working with partners to enable people to work for as long as they want and are able to.
- Providing support for people living with long term health conditions, co-morbidities, and disabilities.

### 2. We will enable people to improve and maintain their own health and wellbeing and make healthy lifestyle choices.

#### This includes:

- Understanding the barriers to healthy lifestyles.
- Promoting physical activity opportunities that are accessible for everyone.
- Encouraging people to reduce their alcohol consumption, stop smoking and tackling substance misuse.
- Promoting good oral health.

### 3. We will support people to live healthy and independent lives for longer, with appropriate support and care available when they need it.

#### This includes:

- Providing affective and accessible services to those who need them.
- Delivering the right support for people during life transitions like illness, job loss, pregnancy, divorce, or retirement.
- Encouraging people to maintain a healthy weight, eat healthier, reduce their alcohol consumption and stop smoking.

## Sub-priority: Safe, thriving and healthy homes, communities and places

Whether we live in cities, towns or rural areas, the communities we live in really matter for our wellbeing. With 85% of our county being classed as rural, and urban areas having good access to parks, open spaces and public rights of way, there are many opportunities which support healthier lifestyles.

Communities make a vital contribution to health and wellbeing. The assets within communities, such as skills and knowledge, social networks and community organisations are all building blocks for good health. This will also connect people with wellbeing opportunities in their communities including arts, culture, and physical activity.

Having a safe and secure home in good physical condition can promote good mental health and wellbeing. In contrast, exposure to housing insecurity or affordability issues may contribute to poor mental health. The HWB will support existing partnerships who already aim to improve the amount of good quality affordable housing in Worcestershire to meet the needs of the population now and into the future.

**The wider natural and built environment (including access to green space, leisure opportunities and active transport) can also influence our health and wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic has made many of us more aware of how much we value our outdoor spaces for our health and wellbeing.**

People face multiple disadvantages depending based on where they live. Families in the most deprived areas are less likely to have access to green space, and people who live near poorly maintained green space are less likely to use it.

Crime and antisocial behaviour are more prevalent in deprived areas as well as feelings of loneliness, lack of a sense of community and belonging, and poorer social networks.

**We can change how we think about the relationship between our surroundings and our health, enabling residents to have access to the things they need to live a healthy life in their community.**

### Spotlight: Repair Cafés

Repair Cafés (RCs) are a community led initiative helping society to reduce their waste, forming an opportunity for social cohesion and the learning of new skills. People can bring broken items to be mended while they wait, allowing the opportunity to watch and help with the repair and have a drink and chat in the café. Volunteers are central to the initiative.

*"I have at least two or three enquiries each week from community groups who ask for help and advice in starting their own RC. They are so inclusive and not only enable people to put their practical skills to good environmental, economic and social use but provide an opportunity for these skills to be passed on to a new generation. RCs bring people together from all kinds of backgrounds and cultures - they're a win-win community initiative"* Malvern Hills Repair Café



# There are **positive and negative aspects** of communities and places that can impact our health and wellbeing, these include:

## POSITIVE ASPECTS

- Feelings of safety and security
- Sense of belonging to the community and having influence and control
- Having places to meet people and socialise
- A home in good condition that provides a stable and secure base



## NEGATIVE ASPECTS

- Poor social networks and relationships with neighbours
- Lack of access to affordable goods and services
- Poor transport links (including active transport)
- Limited access and opportunities for physical activity including green space

## Examples of community approaches

### Spotlight: Asset Based Community Development

An asset based community developed (ABCD) approach places the emphasis on communities' assets, alongside their needs. Building, strengthening, and developing community assets can enhance health, wellbeing and resilience; reduce long-term pressures on higher-cost health; care and support services; and enable people to participate in and benefit from community resources and activities.

Community Builders have been employed through District Councils and community partners to focus on growing neighbourhood connections and supporting resident led actions.

A local resident and mum was supported by a Community Builder to set up a new "Stay and Play" parent and toddler group up on the Abbeydale estate in Redditch. The first stay and play session had 20 families attending and there has been a wealth of positive feedback:

*"This has given me purpose and focus, I was worried at first but I'm getting more confident each week, it has improved my anxiety and mental health because I feel like I'm doing something that is making people happy and can socialise again."*

### Spotlight: Community Transport

Community Transport plays an important role in the county's Passenger Transport network and most schemes are run by the voluntary and community sector with volunteers being at the heart of the services. Schemes are active in identifying vulnerable people and providing a tailored service which can build confidence, reduce loneliness and support people to remain independent.

*"Community Transport has given me back my independence"*

For example, community transport in Wyre Forest and North Worcestershire helps people of all ages from Students to Pensioners with appointments at medical centres or hospitals, lunch clubs, day centres or shopping trips covering over 400 journeys a week.

YOU SAID

*"It's important to work toward improving and maintaining a healthy environment in the home and in the local community"*

*"People need to feel safe in their own homes and communities. They need to feel valued and included within their community....and that they are not alone"*

## Our ambitions for safe, thriving and healthy homes, communities and places:

### 1. We will continue to provide access to healthy, safe, affordable, and warm homes that support a better quality of life and good mental health and wellbeing.

This includes:

- Supporting people on low incomes to keep their homes warm and well-insulated.
- Working to reduce the number of people at risk of homelessness.
- Helping people to live more independently and assist in reducing pressures on the health and social care sectors.
- Supporting the delivery of the Housing Strategy and collaborating on policy.

### 2. We will work to improve our communities and places, making sure good mental health and wellbeing is at the centre.

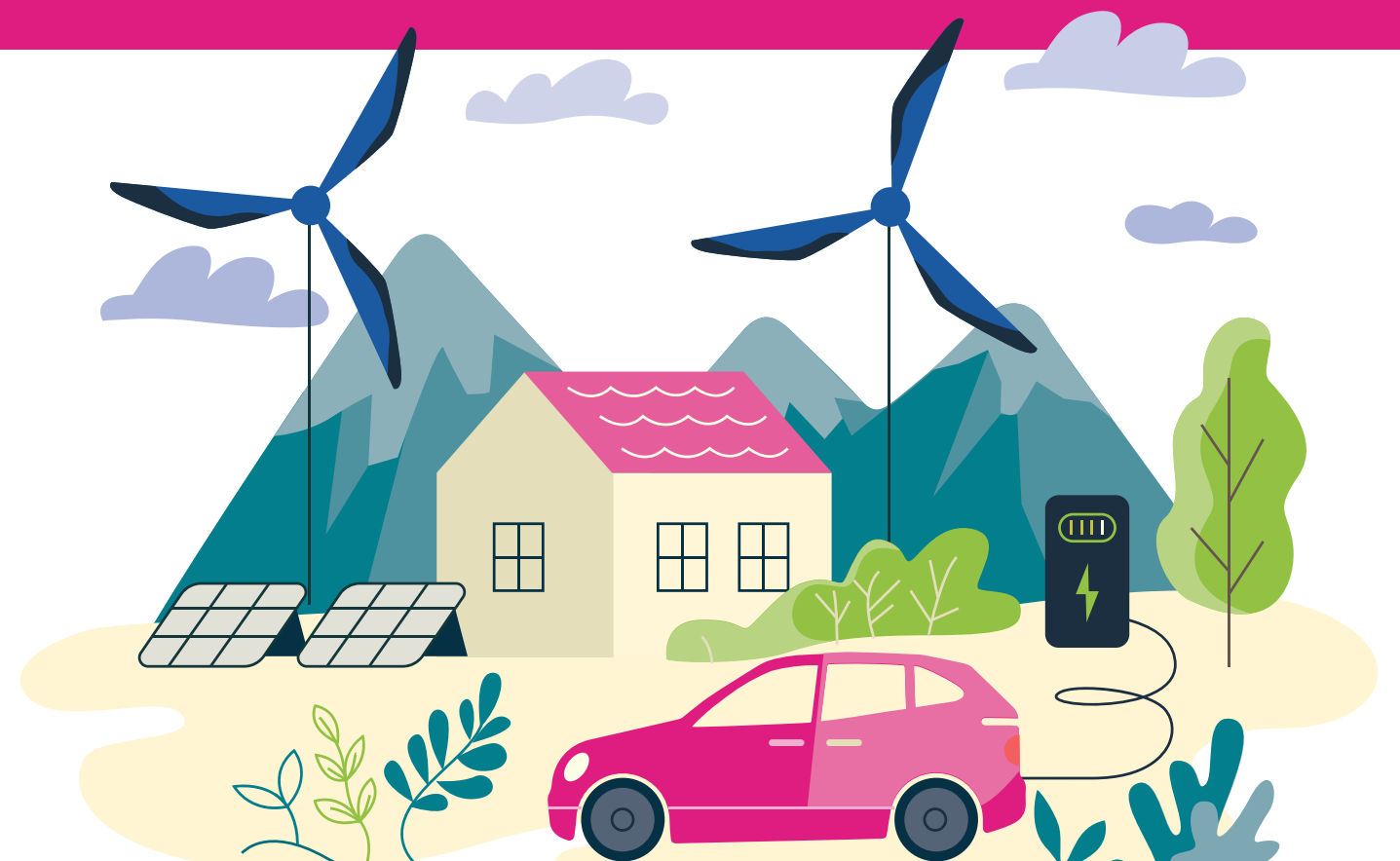
This includes:

- Working to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour and promoting community safety.
- Enhancing community connectedness and enabling communities to develop local solutions through an asset-based approach.
- Ensuring a range of local and affordable activities and events are available to people of all ages.

### 3. We will continue to protect our environment and promote the positive benefits it has for our mental health and wellbeing.

This includes:

- Maximising the usage of and access to green space and outdoor activities.
- Providing safe and accessible opportunities for active and sustainable travel.
- Understanding and addressing air quality and climate change in Worcestershire.



## Sub-priority: Quality local jobs and opportunities

Jobs and opportunities are influential for our mental health and wellbeing. They matter for health directly, as well as underpinning other factors that influence health and wellbeing such as income or social networks.

A quality job is important for mental health and wellbeing and provides an income and opportunity to make social connections. 'Quality' work is defined as having a safe and secure job with good working hours and conditions, supportive management and opportunities for training and development.

Conversely, low-quality work including low job security or low job satisfaction is associated with worse health outcomes such as prolonged stress. Low-quality work is unequally distributed across society, reflecting broader inequalities.

Research suggests that volunteering and acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing. Volunteers make a significant contribution to improving the lives of people in our county. There are many opportunities to volunteer locally through our voluntary infrastructure organisations and system partners.

Worcestershire has relatively high employment, but still faces challenges. After more than doubling in 2020, claimant count unemployment has fallen steadily over 2021 but remains 33% higher than before the pandemic. The impact has been greatest on young people with 4.1% of those aged 18-24 now claiming unemployment related benefits.

**Our aim is for Worcestershire to be a prosperous county with quality local jobs and opportunities.**

Unemployment has many negative consequences on health and wellbeing such as being a source of stress, a cause of poverty, associated with unhealthy coping behaviours such as smoking and drinking. People who are unemployed have twice the rate of common mental health conditions, and unemployment is associated with an increased risk of mortality and morbidity.

For people living with a mental health condition, learning disability or problematic alcohol or drug use, it is disproportionately difficult to find a job or remain employed. Enabling people to obtain or retain work and volunteer opportunities is a crucial part of the economic success and wellbeing of every community and industry.

Volunteers make a significant positive contribution to improving the lives of people in our county and we need to ensure that support mechanisms are in place including appropriate training.

**YOU SAID**

*"A job -be it paid or voluntary - contributes to a person's sense of worth and value..."*

*"Here we need to make sure that opportunities are open to all, people who are furthest away from the job market can present with multiple complex needs..."*

**A healthy and happy workforce has synergistic benefits for:**

 **WORKPLACES**

 **PRODUCTIVITY**

 **THE ECONOMY**



Source: PHE Health Matters

### **Spotlight: Suicide Prevention and Workplaces**

As part of the Herefordshire & Worcestershire Suicide Prevention Programme, an initiative has been rolled out to encourage and support employers and employees to raise awareness about suicide and support available, tackle mental health stigma, and embed suicide prevention within the company culture.

A mental health and wellbeing resource hub for businesses, including a downloadable suicide prevention policy has also been created. A high number of local businesses have enrolled in the initiative including those from Manufacturing, Social Work, Construction and Agriculture.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire Service is one organisation benefitting from the learning and resources offered by the scheme. Resources have been shared with stations across the counties and the service is being supported to explore training opportunities for staff.

### **Spotlight: The Youth Hub, at The Hive**

The Youth Hub is a career advice drop-in facility for young people based at The Hive, Worcester.

The Hub is aimed at 15- to 24-year-olds and provides a 'one stop shop' to support young people in finding the right career path: providing 1-1 advice with a dedicated advisor, employability workshops and training.

***"The young person had a real desire to work but has struggled since leaving school to maintain employment due to his learning difficulties. The Career Advisor explored a number of options – the young person completed a course and 20-hour placement which will give him great experience to gain paid employment."***

It is a partnership between Worcestershire County Council, The Department of Work and Pensions and The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership.

## **Our ambitions for quality local jobs and opportunities:**

### **1. We will work to improve access to quality jobs, training, and volunteering opportunities.**

This includes:

- Enabling access to suitable training opportunities directly through workplaces and via apprenticeships, internships, further and higher education and courses within communities.
- Supporting activity to strengthen and increase the number and variety of volunteering opportunities across the system.
- Recognising access issues and barriers for all ages, including access to reliable and affordable public transport.

### **2. We will work with businesses and organisation to support people to develop within their jobs, or in getting back to work.**

This includes:

- Supporting people with mental and physical health conditions, disabilities or those facing multiple disadvantages to get back to and remain in work.
- Enabling opportunities for in-work development, contributing to the future workforce.

### **3. We will work with businesses and organisations to promote inclusive, healthy, and productive workplaces.**

This includes:

- Ensuring workplaces are health promoting environments and that people are supported with poor mental health, long term health conditions and disabilities.
- Supporting employers to build and retain a healthy, inclusive, and diverse workforce.
- Protecting people from adverse working conditions that can damage health.
- Encouraging flexibility to enable people to balance work and family life.



# Section 6: From Strategy to action

This section explains how we plan to deliver and measure progress on the Strategy.

## Delivering the Strategy

To achieve our vision, action is required by a range of different organisations, communities, and individuals from across the system. It is essential to work together to ensure the Strategy is implemented. Board members, commissioners, providers, elected members, communities, and individuals all have a role to play in delivering action plans and achieving outcomes.

A set of detailed plans with clear actions, milestones and timescales will be developed, outlining how the strategy will be delivered. Action plans will be driven by the best available evidence, local need, previous learning, and findings from the strategy consultation.

It is important that this Strategy and our health and care services are informed by both robust evidence and people's views and experiences. As such, the HWB is committed to ongoing engagement and supporting co-production and community-led approaches.

## Measuring progress

### The Board will support implementation by:

- Ensuring that the Strategy is widely available and raising awareness of it at every opportunity.
- Providing leadership and advocacy.
- Seeking participation and contributions from our public, private, health, voluntary and community sector, and education partners.
- Facilitating debate on difficult issues.
- Building relationships and enabling partner organisations to align policies, services, resources, and activities to increase their collective impact on health and wellbeing.
- Promoting examples of good work.
- Overseeing progress and offering challenge and support where necessary.

### The Board will hold statutory partners to account for implementation of the Strategy by:

- Delegating to the 'Being Well Strategic Group' the responsibility to agree a set of detailed plans with clear actions, responsibilities, milestones, and timescales. The Being Well Delivery Group may task and delegate to other boards, partnerships, and forums where appropriate and agreed by the HWB.
- Receiving progress reports against action plans from the Strategic Group.
- Tracking progress against a set of performance indicators which will be reported annually to the Board.



# The outcomes framework

A range of outcomes and indicators will be used to measure the impact of this Strategy; however they may change over time. The diagram below has been developed from a model produced by 'What Works Wellbeing' to combine the best available national and local data sources. This outcomes framework will give an overall view of the progress towards our main priority. Monitoring these measures will help to inform local decision-making, helping us better understand the wellbeing of Worcestershire, and how we can act to improve it.

This framework will continue to be reviewed and updated to ensure it continues to use the most relevant and best quality data available. More specific sets of outcomes and performance indicators will form part of the action plans to assess the impacts of this Strategy. We are also seeking better ways to reflect mental health outcomes in children and young people. The diagram below shows the priorities and indicators that will be measured on key aspects of health and wellbeing that contribute to our vision. Monitoring these measures will help to inform local decision-making, helping us better understand the wellbeing of Worcestershire, and how we can act to improve it.



## Measures

We want to achieve...	Outcomes	Measures (including source)
Good Mental Health and wellbeing	Adult wellbeing Adult mental health Child mental health	Personal wellbeing** Depression prevalence and incidence* Hospital admissions as a result of self-harm*
We will support this through...	Determinants	Measures (including source)
<b>Healthy living at all ages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Best start in life</li> <li>■ Healthy behaviours</li> <li>■ Loneliness</li> <li>■ Overall health</li> </ul>	School readiness (end of reception)* Physical activity, alcohol, smoking* Obesity* Loneliness* Healthy life expectancy*
<b>Quality local jobs and opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Education</li> <li>■ Employment</li> <li>■ Income</li> <li>■ Deprivation</li> </ul>	Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)* Unemployment rate** Median gross weekly pay** Children in low-income households* Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation Score*
<b>Safe, thriving, and healthy homes, communities, and places</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Natural environment</li> <li>■ Homes</li> <li>■ Community</li> <li>■ Crime and security</li> </ul>	Use of parks and open spaces*** Fine particulate pollution* Homelessness reduction duty* Satisfaction with local area*** Sense of belonging*** Volunteering*** Violent crime***

Measures in this table are taken from a variety of local and national sources:

\*Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF)

\*\*Office for National Statistics Nomis (ONS NOMIS)

\*\*\*Worcestershire County Council Viewpoint Survey

## Glossary:

**Asset Based Community Development (ABCD):** ABCD is an approach to sustainable community-driven development. It builds on the assets that are found in the community and mobilises individuals, associations, and institutions to come together to realise and develop their strengths.

**Health disparities and health inequalities:** Unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population and between different groups of people. Terms are used interchangeably.

**Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB):** The HWB oversees the new system for local health commissioning. It leads on the strategic planning and co-ordination of NHS, Public Health, Social Care, and related Children's Services.

**Integrated Care Systems (ICS):** Partnerships of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, and to improve the lives of people who live and work in their area.

**Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA):** An annual statutory report that provides a summary of the latest public health data and information for Worcestershire, it also identifies emerging issues for the county.

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