

East Hampshire District Council
Welfare and Wellbeing
Strategy
2024 - 2029

Our Vision:

To empower our residents to live healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives which will create supportive, well-connected and resilient communities.

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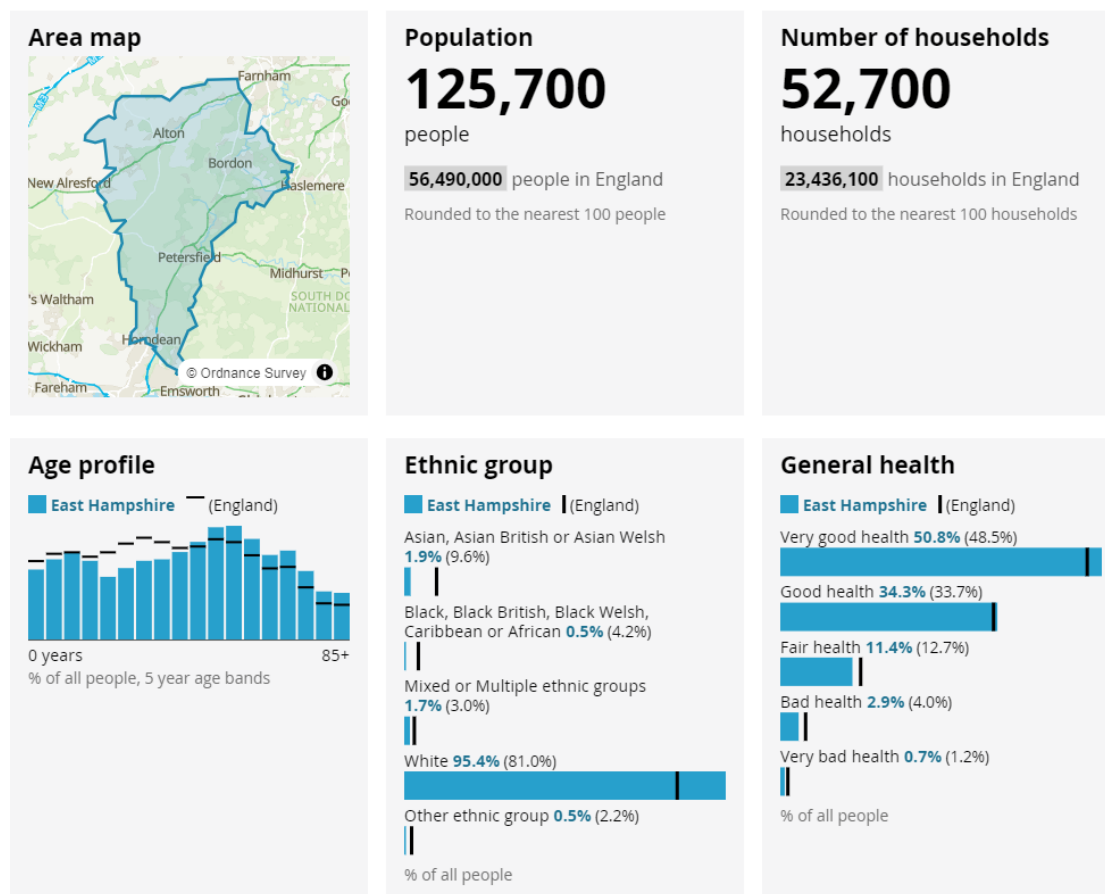
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Setting the scene

East Hampshire at a Glance

East Hampshire is a predominantly rural district, with 57% of the district situated within the South Downs National Park.

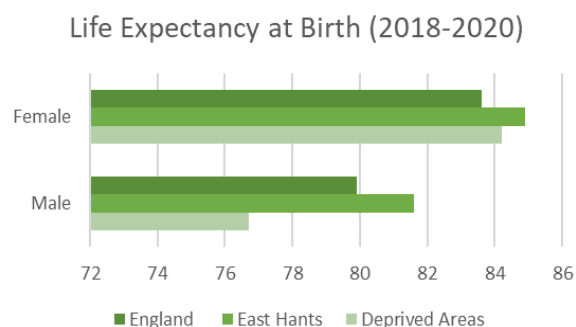
East Hampshire



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

East Hampshire has a significantly ageing population, with 24.5% of residents aged 65+ - compared to 18.6% across England and Wales. This figure is expected to increase significantly by 2029.

Life expectancy in East Hampshire is higher than the average in England. However, men living in deprived areas of East Hampshire face significant inequality in their life expectancy.





% Of residents aged 18+ are overweight or obese.
Lower than the national average of 64%



% Of reception pupils overweight or obese.



% Of Year 6 students overweight or obese
Lower than the national average of 38%



% Of residents aged 18+ are registered with depression
Higher than the national average of 12.65%



% Of adults in the district are physically active
Higher than the national average of 67%



% Of children and young people in the district are physically active
Lower than the national average of 47%

Our Progress So Far

The Council is constantly striving to improve the welfare and wellbeing of residents within the district. Over the last 4 years, this has been achieved through significant investments into projects that met the needs identified in the *Welfare and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2024*.

The Welfare Fund was set up to provide a way to achieve the Action Plan set out in the *Welfare and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2024*. So far, this fund has awarded £384,488.10 through the commissioning of 17 projects in East Hampshire with specific focus on improving the welfare and wellbeing of residents. Some of the key projects commissioned through this funding include:

- A Youth Mental Health Worker at A31 PCN who provides support to those aged 11-17.
- A Debt Advice Worker at Citizens Advice who provides specialist in depth debt advice to those with complex issues.
- An Outdoor and Active Project Officer at Queen Elizabeth Country Park who is organising activities and events that encourage people to be physically active, with a focus of improving their mental wellbeing.

The Supporting Communities Fund awards funding to organisations delivering services across the district, which focus on improving people's lives. During the period of the previous Welfare and Wellbeing Strategy, almost £1.3million was awarded to different projects over the course of 4 years. Some of the key projects that have supported the welfare and wellbeing of residents are:

- Bushy Leaze (2020) for staffing the Family Support Team.
- Age Concern (2021) providing information and connections service for older people in East Hampshire.
- Alton Methodist Church (2022) providing Chaplaincy to older people.
- Project 94 CIC (2023) providing youth hub sessions for 11–16-year-olds.

Another successful project was the transformation of our own former community hall in Whitehill & Bordon into 10 housing pods for temporary accommodation to help ease homelessness. This project was completed in partnership between East Hampshire District Council, a housing manufacturer and a local charity.

We have also supported infrastructure funding that has benefitted the welfare and wellbeing of communities. These have included:

- £50,000 of CIL funding allocated to a project to provide further capacity at Chawton Park surgery (2022)
- £710,348 of CIL funding allocated to a project to build a full size floodlit 3G artificial grass pitch at Bohunt School (2021)
- £190,000 of CIL funding spent on delivering Treloars Hydrotherapy Swimming Pool and facilities (2022)

Vision

Our vision is to empower our residents to live healthy, fulfilling, and independent lives which will create supportive, well-connected and resilient communities.

Enabling our residents to live healthy lives is a key part of improving the quality of life for all residents. Having healthy and connected communities ensures the welfare and wellbeing of all residents. We are aware that not everyone experiences this quality of life, and we want to empower our communities to reach their full potential. Putting the welfare and wellbeing of East Hampshire citizens first is a fundamental part of our core functions as a Council, enabling our workforce to put our residents first.

Over the autumn of 2023, East Hampshire District Council engaged with key partners and stakeholders across the district to understand the challenges and issues relating to the welfare and wellbeing of East Hampshire residents, and what our priorities should be for residents' welfare over the next five years. Informed by the conversations we had; we have been able to create a shared Vision for East Hampshire, which cannot be delivered without the support and involvement of key organisations and our residents. Some of the main challenges raised in our consultations include lack of resources, transport issues, and limited access to support. We want to assist our residents to tackle these issues which can be barriers to live healthy and fulfilled lives as active participants in their families, communities, and workplaces.

Working with our partners we want to make this Vision a reality and offer the right services in a targeted, effective, and sustainable way. This Strategy sets out the key priorities we will focus on to achieve the Welfare and Wellbeing outcomes over the next five years 2024-2029, in line with our Corporate Plan. **Our ambitions are outlined in Better PLAN which centres on Places, Living, Ageing and Networks.**

Priorities / Outcomes

Better Places	
The environment around us is crucial for our welfare and wellbeing. Improving places, settings and homes in which we live, work, learn and socialise will strengthen communities and develop a sense of place and belonging. Empowered neighbourhoods will flourish and prosper.	
P1	Fit for purpose and future proof community infrastructure, including sustainable transport and appropriate planning policies
P2	Protected and enhanced local spaces
P3	Adaption to, and mitigation of, climate change
P4	Appropriate and safe accommodation accessible to all

Better Living	
Good health is necessary for a thriving community and greatly influences our wellbeing and ability to achieve. The health of all residents, both mental and physical, is critical to ensure the district grows in a sustainable way that meets the needs of current and future residents. A healthy community will sustain wellbeing, leaving no-one behind.	
L1	Positive mental wellbeing including suicide awareness and prevention as well as access and promotion of services
L2	Reducing health inequalities with particular attention to long-term health conditions, disabilities and lower socio-economic groups
L3	Improved physical health through increased opportunities for physical activities for all with focus on people with disabilities, long-term health conditions and reducing obesity.
L4	Best start in life for children and young people together with successful transition into adulthood

Better Ageing	
Residents should be supported in staying independent and healthy for as long as possible. A coordinated approach will create an environment in which people can fulfil their potential, minimise the effects of disease and build social connections. Communities will be enabled to improve and maintain wellbeing at any age.	
A1	Promoting Live Longer Better principles to increase healthy life expectancy
A2	Resilient and independent ageing community which fully participates in society by supporting digital inclusion
A3	Reducing the drivers of social isolation and loneliness by improving social connections, mapping transport links and volunteering opportunities

Better Networks	
In order to create a well-connected district, organisations and communities must work together. The strength of connections between corporate, voluntary and charity sectors are crucial in supporting the health and wellbeing of all groups within society and building capability to respond to emergencies. Resilient communities can create sustainable change.	
N1	Improving access to support in the community for all underrepresented groups, including but not limited to; ethnic minority groups, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, refugees, travellers, veterans
N2	Supporting organisations across the district to assist those facing financial difficulties with respect to cost-of-living crisis, fuel poverty and food poverty
N3	Contingency arrangements in place for emergencies relating to health, environment, politics and other

Our Focus and Approach

It is vital that we work with our partners and communities to help us achieve these priorities. We are going to take a community-centred and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach which involves:

- Building relationships in our communities to increase social capital and strengthen communities
- Assessing community resources to establish a sense of civic responsibility
- Collaborations and partnerships, including at a neighbourhood level
- Creating associations of volunteers with a common interest to mobilize communities

Working differently with our communities (ABCD approach)

There is a real opportunity to mobilise health and wellbeing solutions through assets that already exist in our communities. We want to see a shift in culture and behaviours amongst partners which will include:

- Promoting autonomy and enabling community solutions by valuing the community leaders who have understanding, trust and authenticity; and supporting existing partnerships
- Facilitating forums and community engagement to enable better collaboration and communication between public and third sector partners and by helping partners and communities share what they do and learn from each other
- Progressing work to change the way we commission services to better recognise social value
- Providing practical support to build up the community sector, including by pooling resources to increase capacity and connections and enable communities to maximise social action



Figure 1: Innovation in community-centred support.

The 'rainbow' illustration is intended to demonstrate that local areas can build a variety of asset-based services to meet every level of support need within a community ranging from preventative to acute services and crisis-response.

Many of our priorities will be delivered through a number of local partnerships and delivery groups, which will be crucial in this work. We will be working within our district, across our county and at a more local neighbourhood and community level to enable local action across East Hampshire. We already have well-established existing partnerships in East Hampshire.

Primary Care Networks

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are groups of GP practices working closely together in partnership with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and voluntary services in their local area. PCNs build on the core of current primary care services and enable greater provision of proactive personalised, coordinated and more integrated health and social care. Our collaboration with three East Hampshire's PCNs, A31 PCN, East Hants PCN and Swan Medical Group, is critical to benefit patients by offering improved access and extending the range of services available to them, and by helping to integrate primary care with wider health and community service. We will continue to meet regularly with the PCNs and Social Prescribers to promote information sharing and assistance between the organisations.

East Hampshire Health & Wellbeing Partnership

The Partnership includes key members from East Hampshire District Council, the Primary Care Networks, Integrated Care Boards, and key local partner organisations. The partnership focuses on creating measurable outcomes, to ensure that it is creating an action led and strategic impact. We will continue to develop the East Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Partnership and work through our priorities that emerge. We will take part in the subgroups to shape the three key areas identified for the future strategic development: Shared Community Estates for Community Health Services, Better Physical Health & Improving Mental Wellbeing, and Inequalities among Vulnerable Communities.

Links with existing plans and strategies

This Welfare & Wellbeing Strategy aligns with the objectives set out in the [East Hampshire District Council's Corporate Strategy 2020-2024](#).

It is aligning with the priorities of [Hampshire Public Health Strategy 2023-2026](#), whilst shaping their work and partnerships.

It contributes to [Hampshire 2050 Vision](#) of Hampshire's natural environment as its most valued asset and promoting community's resilience, health and wellbeing by taking full advantage of natural environment.

It also sets out how we will work to improve overall outcomes for children and young people in line with [Hampshire Children and Young People's Plan 2022-2025](#)

The strategy closely aligns with the strategic vision of reducing carbon emissions and increasing active travel as outlined in [East Hampshire District Council Climate and Environment Strategy 2020-2025](#) and [Hampshire County Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025](#).

Building on system wide focus on awareness and prevention, it also supports [Hampshire Mental Wellbeing Strategy and Suicide Prevention Plan 2023-2028](#).

This strategy joins Energise Me in their vision to inspire and support active lifestyles in their [We Can Be Active Strategy](#), and Sport England in their vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity in their [Uniting the Movement Strategy](#).

Better Places

What do we know?

East Hampshire is a predominantly rural district, but there are areas which are more urban. On average, there is 240.7 people living per square kilometre in East Hampshire, with the main urban areas of the district being Petersfield, Bordon, Alton, and areas in the South of the district. Due to the rural nature of the district, with some pockets of urbanisation, access to services is varied. The district is seeing growth in dwellings, particularly in the West of Bordon and near Horndean. We must be mindful as a district of our emissions, with a large proportion of emissions being caused by transport and energy consumption.

Key stakeholders have raised 'place' as a priority in terms of the accessibility of services it provides residents with. Access to services, through both the infrastructure that exists and the travel routes available, was highlighted by stakeholders as a key barrier preventing residents from reaching their health and wellbeing goals.

We want to ensure that the environment within in East Hampshire is supporting the welfare and wellbeing of residents. Creating places that flourish and prosper, so that their communities and residents can thrive.

Success in 5 years....

Our vision is for residents to live fulfilling and independent lives, by enhancing the place in which people live, work, learn and socialise, we can support communities in reaching this goal. In 5 years, we hope to have helped to better the places in which communities exist. Residents will not be restricted by the environment around them and will have better access to the services they desire.

Our key areas of focus and ambitions

Community Infrastructure

Access to services and facilities across East Hampshire is varied due to the rural nature of the district. The urban areas of the district tend to have better access to leisure facilities, community and health infrastructure, compared to the rural areas.

This strategy will work alongside East Hampshire District Council's Local Plan, in order to ensure that developments in the district benefit the local communities. The creation of healthy, accessible, and inclusive communities is a priority across the Council.

Over the course of the next 5 years, we want to see improvements made towards the accessibility of community infrastructure that is fit for purpose and future proof. We want to create the right community spaces to support health and wellbeing of all residents in the district.

Our Ambitions:

- Transport – support the accessibility and availability of transport, to ensure that residents can access services across the district.
- Accessibility – enable facilities in the district to become more inclusive and accessible, meaning that all residents can achieve their welfare and wellbeing ambitions.
- Joined up approach – continue to work in collaboration with our planning team, ensuring that there is continuity between the Local Plan and the infrastructure in the community.

Open Spaces

In general, areas in East Hampshire have lower access to public urban green spaces, but they have good access to the countryside due to the rural nature of much of East Hampshire. We recognise the importance of the links between quality open spaces and the physical and mental wellbeing of residents.

We want to enable every resident to have access to open spaces within our district, enabling them to fulfil their own wellbeing and enhance their health.

Our Ambitions:

- Accessibility – we want to ensure that all residents have the opportunity and ability to access open space in their community.
- Protected and enhanced space – it is important to encourage communities to value and maintain their open spaces, to ensure that they can get the maximum benefit out of these spaces.
- Good quality – help to ensure that the open spaces in the district are long-lasting, fit-for-purpose and future-proof.

Climate Change

The Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, and we recognise our role to work with the community to adapt and mitigate to the climate emergency. Our work on climate change adaptation and mitigation within our communities will be in support of the Council's Climate and Environment Strategy.

Within East Hampshire, 39% of emissions in the district are from transport, with 99% of these coming from road transport. Domestic energy consumption in East Hampshire is also higher than the Hampshire and England average. Air quality in East Hampshire is lower towards Petersfield and the South of the District.

It is vital that we support our communities in mitigating the effects of climate change and adapting the way they live in response to climate change.

Our Ambitions:

- Carbon neutral – we plan to support communities in their efforts to become carbon neutral, in line with the Council's pledge to be carbon neutral by 2035.
- Mitigate the effects of climate change – we will support communities to reduce their carbon footprint, ensuring they can future proof themselves against the effects of climate change.

- Adapt to the changes – it is vital to build community resilience against the effects of climate, adapting to the changes we are likely to see in the district – including heat waves and flooding.

Accommodation

All residents deserve to be in accommodation that is appropriate, safe, and accessible. In East Hampshire, houses have become less affordable over the last two decades – the rise in the household affordability ratio has been greater in East Hampshire compared to the rest of Hampshire and England. In addition, there is still a low proportion of properties in East Hampshire that are rented, either socially or privately, due to the high levels of home ownership across the district.

Homelessness is an important issue to address as it is linked closely with a wide range of serious health problems. Rough sleepers on average die 30 years earlier. From 2020 until December 2023, 1,315 households in East Hampshire approached the Housing Team as homeless or threatened with homelessness. There were 298 applications on Hampshire Home Choice with a health/welfare need to move, some of which indicated their need to move due to the impact their current housing was having on their health or welfare issues.

Whilst homelessness in East Hampshire is not as high as other areas, it is still a significant issue that needs addressing.

Our Ambitions:

- Preventing Homelessness – we will ensure that advice and assistance is available to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Providing housing support – during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, more and more households are facing issues and require support in order to stay connected to their communities.
- Homes for Ukraine – within the district, we have almost 200 Ukrainian families living with us who have escaped conflict, it is important that we continue to provide them support as they become a part of our community.

Better Living

What do we know?

The World Health Organisation defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.

In East Hampshire, nearly 51% of residents live in very good health, which suggests that our district is performing well in keeping the population’s general health very good. However, not everyone enjoys the same level of good health.

The areas estimated to have lower mental health and wellbeing are Alton Eastbrooke, Alton Westbrooke and Whitehill Deadwater. These wards are amongst the lowest 20% in the county.

31.6% households in East Hampshire are deprived in one-dimension. The wards with most income deprived households are Whitehill Chase, Bramshott & Liphook and Alton Wooteys. People who live in more deprived areas – where there is less access to services, work, and education – are more at risk of suicide.

75% of adults in East Hampshire are physically active, however evidence shows that disabled people and people with a long-term health condition are twice as likely to be physically inactive than those without a disability or health condition. In a recent Get Up and Go Activity Survey of almost 400 East Hampshire residents, 69% of respondents did not meet the government recommended guidelines of 150+ minutes of moderate exercise per week. 30.2% of children and young people nationally do less 30 minutes a day of physical activity or sport.

Key stakeholders raised ‘health literacy’ as one of the priorities, demonstrating the importance of educating our residents how to access and understand information about health, in order to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing.

Success in 5 years....

We believe that all residents should enjoy the best possible standard of physical health and mental wellbeing and have access to appropriate health care and support when they need it, and that people with disabilities or long-term health conditions should have specialised care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.

Our key areas of focus and ambitions

Mental Wellbeing

Poor mental health impacts on individuals and their families, in lost income, lower educational attainment, quality of life and a much shorter life span. Enabling and ensuring a high standard of mental wellbeing for East Hampshire residents is of great importance in this strategy. The prevalence of depression in East Hampshire has risen to 14.45% in 2020/2021 since 2016/2017 where it stood at 10.1%. This is

higher in comparison to England (12.29%) and Hampshire and Isle of Wight (13.64%) in 2020/2021.

Over 50% of Citizen Advice East Hampshire clients stated that they had long term health conditions or disabilities. 27% of those presented with mental health problems. Mental health has taken over as the main disability as stated by clients. Research shows that money and mental health are often intricately linked.

There were 13 suicides registered in East Hampshire in 2021. Our PCNs have an estimated 2000 patients across their practices who have expressed suicidal ideation, with almost 300 non-fatal suicide attempts. Males are 2.9 times more likely to die by suicide in England than females. The national and local suicide rate has not fallen since 2018. There is therefore much more we must all do to save more lives.

Our ambitions:

- Positive mental wellbeing – we want to better equip communities to support people’s mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities to connect with others.
- Awareness and prevention of suicide – we want to ensure that appropriate support and signposting for suicide awareness and prevention is available within our communities and workforce.
- Access and promotion of services – it is crucial to increase availability of timely, effective support, care and treatment that promote and support people’s mental health, meeting individual needs.

Health Inequalities

Health inequalities arise from a complex interaction of many factors - housing, income, education, social isolation, disability - all of which are strongly affected by one's economic and social status.

In Hampshire, there are inequalities in employment rates between men and women (men have higher employment rates), age groups (those aged 25 to 49 have higher rates than those aged 16 to 24 or those aged 50 to 64), and disability (those without a disability have higher rates than those with a disability). Poorer quality employment can impact on health and wellbeing. In 2020, 22.4% of women in East Hampshire were in jobs that paid lower than a living wage.

13.4% of people in East Hampshire have two or more long-term health conditions. The greatest number of people having two or more long-term health conditions live in Alton with the next largest group living in Whitehill and Bordon. 15.6% of people in East Hampshire are registered as disabled under the Equality Act.

16.4% of adults with a learning disability are estimated to be identified on GP registers. Key areas are Liss, Bordon and Liphook. People with learning disabilities are more likely to go to hospital for conditions that could be managed by the GP and other community health services. In line with the NHS long term plan to ensure that 75% of individuals with a learning disability will attend a health check through the

learning disability enhance service, we want to offer necessary support to narrow this gap.

Our ambitions:

- Long-term health conditions – we want to support people to manage their health conditions.
- People with disabilities – improving access to healthcare services and employment for vulnerable residents, including those with learning disabilities is vital for an inclusive community.
- Lower socio-economic groups - we are committed to focus on groups at risk of poorer health outcomes.

Physical Health

All residents in East Hampshire should have access to diverse and wide range of affordable activities which allow for active lifestyles. 58% of adults were classified as overweight or obese in East Hampshire in 2021/2022.

Only 10% of adults were walking for travel at least 3 days per week in East Hampshire in 2019/2020 as compared with 15% in England.

There is a higher concentration of takeaways and fast-food outlets in the more deprived areas (urban areas of Alton and Bordon).

It is vital to encourage ideas to increase the number of neighbourhood activities and support our communities understand the importance of physical activity. People who have a physically active lifestyle have 20% -35% lower risk of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease and stroke compared to those who have a sedentary lifestyle.

Our ambitions:

- Opportunities for physical activity – we want to empower everyone to engage in physical activities of their choice and suiting their needs.
- Obesity – reducing the rates of obesity in all ages will reduce the risk of many serious health problems and chronic conditions.
- People with disabilities – we want to understand differing motivations and barriers when it comes to sport and physical activity to address the issue of physical inactivity among this community.
- Long-term health conditions – collaborative approach across sectors will enable us to deliver more opportunities to become active.

Children and Young People

Our children and young people have been significantly impacted by the pandemic which exacerbated existing challenges and increased the risk to their emotional and mental wellbeing. Young people between 16-34 were found to be particularly at risk of being often or always lonely. 4 out of every 10 young people now feel lonely.

2,851 7–16-year-olds are estimated to live with a probable mental health disorder in East Hampshire. It has been estimated that at least 1 child in every classroom has been referred to Children Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in the last year. The highest number of referrals was for age range 13-15.

Mental wellbeing indicators show poorer results from students in East Hampshire in 2021/22 than in 2019/20. Staff reported high confidence in supporting students' mental health, they were less confident referring carers to external support services and dealing with students who may be suicidal.

45% of children and young people are physically active in East Hampshire. 33% of year 6 students are overweight/obese. 25% of the prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity) in Year 6 children, can be explained by deprivation.

Our ambitions:

- Best start in life – focus on pro-active prevention in services from the earliest point in child's life by positive awareness and early help and support.
- Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy – we want to ensure that our services have adequate resources, including self-help, and are easy to navigate.
- Successful transition into adulthood – is it vital that our communities support our children and young people to build resilience and find their own solutions.

Better Ageing

What do we know?

In East Hampshire there has been an increase of 30.5% in people aged 65 years and over, and the largest proportion of adults are aged between 45 and 64 years. The largest growth in population will be those aged 65 or over, between 2021 and 2038, the population in this age range is expected to increase by 37% (10,200 to around 40,800).

45.5% of East Hampshire residents are older than 50 compared to 37.8% across England. Older people are more likely to have two or more long-term health conditions, in addition are also more likely to suffer from conditions associated with ageing, such as reduced mobility, urinary incontinence, frailty and dementia. Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) remains a persistent challenge leading to a number of premature and preventable deaths. It contributes to just over 30% of deaths in Hampshire.

This priority focuses on enabling older residents to remain independent and healthy, and an active part of the community for as long as possible. We want to give older residents the choice to stay in their own homes, where their support network may have been built up over a number of years.

In our key stakeholder consultations, it was identified that promoting good health and proactive care as well as community engagement which includes social and volunteering opportunities for older people, is an inherent part of building resilient communities which support and help each other. Strong communities bolster wellbeing at individual and community levels, helping to protect against the effects of the social determinants of health and can help reduce social isolation, exclusion and loneliness.

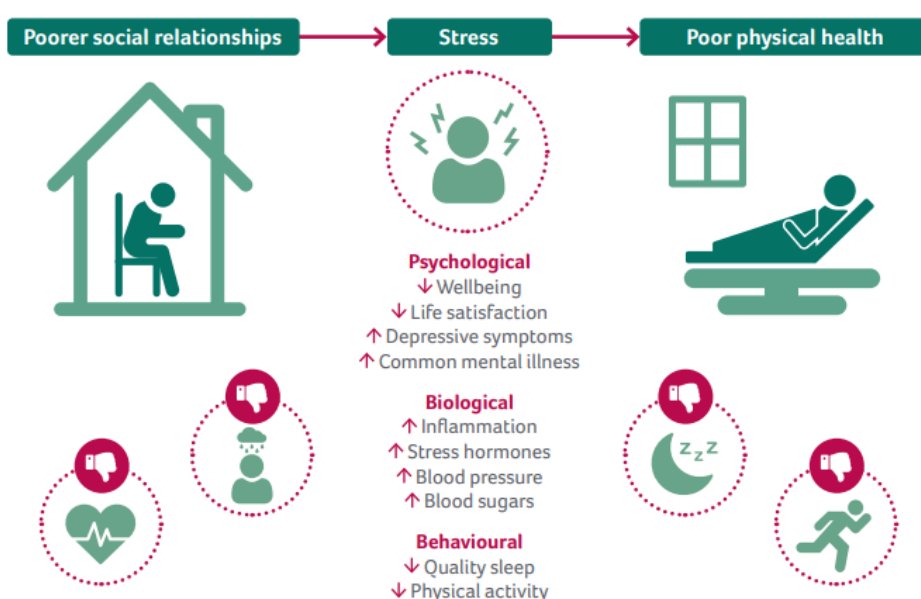


Figure 2: Why people with poorer social relationships may have worsened health

Success in 5 years....

Our vision is to maximise the independence and minimise the time in ill health for our ageing population. In 5 years', time we want our residents to experience quality, enjoyment and independence through our coordinated approach which will create an environment complementing human relationships and building social connections.

Our key areas of focus and ambitions

Living Longer

Life expectancy across Hampshire has been increasing over time, however improvements have slowed, and this has been particularly noticeable for women and people living in the most deprived areas of the county. Gap in life expectancy in years between the least and most deprived areas in East Hampshire for males is 3.4 and females 1.4.

Falls prevalence of people 65+ in East Hampshire is nearly 27% (8,381 people) and reduced mobility prevalence stands at 19.2% (6000 people). Prevalence of urinary incontinence is 25.7% (8,057 people). Key areas are Petersfield and Alton. Estimated number of people with severe or moderate frailty is 3,700. Aside from increasing age, risks factors linked to developing frailty include obesity, deprivation, being female, poor lower body strength, loneliness and sedentary lifestyle.

There are 742 people registered with dementia in East Hampshire.

Our ambitions

- Live Longer Better Campaign – we want to enable people to live better for longer and reduce the time at the end of life when people are dependent on others.
- Healthy life expectancy – it is our aim to increase the number of years East Hampshire residents can anticipate living in good health.

Resilient Communities

Around 7 in 10 (69%) of people aged 75 & over and 3 in 10 (30%) of people aged 65 to 74 are not able to complete eight of the most fundamental tasks required to use the internet safely and successfully. Some of the barriers include not trusting the internet (around 39% of people aged 65 to 74, and around 39% of people aged 75 & over), not having access to good enough equipment and/or broadband access (around 30% of people aged 65 to 74, and around 20% of people aged 75 & over) or health reasons (around 27% of people aged 65 to 74 and aged 75 & over).

Our ambitions

- Digital inclusion – we want to ensure that members of the community can choose to engage and benefit from the opportunities of new technologies, whilst not isolating those without access.

- Independent living – we want to empower our residents to participate in community life and pursue activities of their own choosing.

Loneliness and Social Isolation

Loneliness is part of the human condition, however long-term loneliness can be damaging for our mental and physical health.

Carers are 7 times more likely than the general population to say that they are always or often lonely. Nearly 8% of East Hampshire population provide unpaid care, nearly half of them are aged 50-64 years.

Transport is one of the aspects of the built and natural environment which was identified as the main characteristic that can be designed and shaped, through planning policy, to promote positive health outcomes.

Our ambitions

- Advancing social connections – we want to build a culture of connection in our communities, to cultivate values of kindness and commitment to one another.
- Transport – we want to support and promote community transport to increase accessibility.
- Volunteering – it is important that we boost volunteering opportunities to tackle loneliness and social isolation among older people.

Better Networks

What do we know?

Residents in East Hampshire in general feel that they are living in safe communities, however, 30% of East Hampshire don't feel that they have a sense of community and 39% of residents would like there to be more activity within their communities. Therefore, whilst residents may feel physically safe in their communities, there is still too large a proportion of residents who do not feel connected or a sense of belonging to where they live.

This priority focuses on building stronger networks amongst residents, with particular focus on individuals and groups who may feel left behind within their community. By building stronger networks and connections, we will be helping to build resilient communities who are better equipped to support themselves and each other.

In consultation with key stakeholders, we consistently heard of the importance of holistic and joined-up approaches to services. It is important for all sectors to work together – corporate, voluntary, charity and public – to provide communities with cohesion. Our key stakeholders agreed with us as to the importance of community resilience and development, especially when responding to emergencies.

The aim of this priority is to create better connected communities with stronger social networks. These communities will have higher levels of engagement in Council consultation allowing them more influence over decisions. Improved connectivity within these communities enhances the safety of residents and encourages better provision of locally run services.

Success in 5 years...

Whilst we are taking a community-centred and Asset-Based Community Development approach throughout this strategy, it is particularly central to our priority of Better Networks. We hope to support communities in beginning to support themselves. Creating better networks will build upon and strengthen the existing links within communities and between partners, in order to enhance the welfare and wellbeing of all residents and lead them towards fulfilling and independent lives.

Our key areas of focus and ambitions

Underrepresented groups

Underrepresented groups in East Hampshire include, but are not limited to, veterans, ethnic minority groups, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, refugees, travellers and unpaid carers.

Within East Hampshire, 11.8% of households include a Veteran – higher than the percentage in England (7%). At its peak in April/May 2023, East Hampshire also hosted 420 Ukrainian guests. 14.8% of the population are disabled under the Equality Act. 7.9% of the population in East Hampshire are providing some level of

unpaid care. 4.6% of the population in East Hampshire identify as an ethnicity other than white. In 2020, there were 50 Gypsy and Traveller households identified and 54 Travelling Showpeople.

Underrepresented groups such as these can find themselves socially excluded in the communities in which they live, this can lead to them facing barriers to healthcare and poorer health outcomes. Providing appropriate access to support for these groups is essential to the welfare and wellbeing of these groups.

Our ambitions:

- Access to support – we want to improve access to support for all underrepresented groups in the community.
- Cohesion – we hope to enable and empower communities to support each other and become more cohesive communities.
- Provision – it is important to consider underrepresented groups in our planning decisions, giving them a voice to ensure that provision meets their needs.

Financial difficulties

The Cost-of-Living crisis has meant that more residents are struggling with their finances. Citizens Advice East Hampshire have seen a considerable rise in demand for their services, with many clients struggling with debt, access to and the maintenance of private rented and affordable housing, and delays and incorrect Personal Independent Payment (PIP) decisions.

The proportion of residents in East Hampshire experiencing fuel poverty is lower compared to Hampshire and England, however, there are areas in Alton and Bordon with higher proportions of residents struggling with fuel poverty. Food insecurity in East Hampshire is greater in the rural areas due to poor community infrastructure.

Our ambitions:

- Assistance – we want to provide assistance to those facing financial difficulties, particularly in the light of the cost-of-living crisis and the heightened fuel and food poverty.
- Education – by supporting residents through financial difficulties, our communities will have better comprehension on how to cope with financial difficulties.
- Financial Wellbeing – with the help of key partners, we hope to support residents to enhance their own financial wellbeing, which will have positive effects on their mental wellbeing.

Planning for emergencies

Since the last strategy, the country has faced a variety of different emergencies. From the health emergency of Covid-19 to the financial emergency of the Cost-of-Living crisis, to political emergencies of the war in Ukraine and the ongoing Climate emergency. The country and our district have dealt with these emergencies, with

communities being at the forefront of the responses. We want to ensure this continues and to support communities to be best equipped to deal with any future emergencies.

The impact of these emergencies on communities is significant. In East Hampshire, there are 709 homes at risk of flooding – particularly in West Liss and the south of Alton. With extreme weather events becoming more regularly, this is a heightened risk. The effects of Covid-19 on the welfare and wellbeing of residents were considerable in East Hampshire, with 12.2% of residents rating that they always or often felt lonely, compared to 5.7% across Hampshire and 7.3% across England. This is likely linked to the rural nature of the district, making many residents more vulnerable.

Our ambitions:

- Contingency arrangements – we want to help to ensure that appropriate contingency arrangements are in place to deal with health, environmental, social, political, and any other emergencies.
- Community connections – as was seen in the Covid-19 pandemic, residents working together and supporting one another helps to create communities that are more resilient to emergencies.

How will we know if the strategy is successful?

The success of these priorities and ambitions will be measured against our Action Plan and key performance indicators, which will be developed after the public consultation. The Action Plan will remain live throughout the length of the strategy and will be reviewed regularly.

There are many factors that impact on wellbeing and welfare making it difficult to directly attribute changes to key statistics at population level to the activities of this strategy. These changes will come about because of the combined impact of a wide range of factors, partners, strategies and plans.

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Data Sources

Alton Climate Action Network (ACAN)
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
Citizen Advice East Hampshire
EHDC's Local Plan
Fingertips
Get Up and Go residents' survey
Global Burden of Disease (GBD)
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2020
Health and Wellbeing in schools 2021 student survey
Housing Team EHDC
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Hampshire
Local Inequalities Explorer Tool
Mental Health Foundation
Money and Mental Health Policy Institute
Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Petersfield Climate Action Network (PeCAN)
Primary Care Networks
Samaritans
Sport England
The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)
The Marmot Review

Figure 1: [Innovations in community-centred support | TLAP](#)
(thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk)

Figure 2: Royal Voluntary Service 'Volunteering for a healthier Britain'