

Hampshire Public Health Strategy

2026-2030



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1. Executive summary

People who live in Hampshire generally live healthy lives, however not everyone has the same chance to live a long and healthy life. Some people live longer with poor health or die sooner than others. These differences are unfair and are linked to factors such as income, housing, education, work, transport, the built and natural environment around us and support networks. Our Public Health Strategy sets out how Hampshire County Council and partners will work to reduce these inequalities and increase the number of years people can expect to live in good health.

Our aim is for everyone in Hampshire to live healthier, more independent lives, focusing our efforts where health outcomes for the population are poorest. We want to prevent illness, protect health, support good mental and physical wellbeing, and create the conditions that make healthy choices easier for everyone.

To do this, we will work across the whole life course, giving babies, children and young people the best possible start, supporting adults to stay well and active, and helping older people remain independent for longer. We will work with communities and partners to create healthier places to live, with cleaner air, greener spaces, healthier, safer homes and better social connections. We will take action to prevent long-term conditions such as cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes and dementia, improve mental wellbeing, and reduce harm from issues like alcohol and drug use and domestic abuse. By targeting action where it is needed most, and using data, evidence and community insight, implementing this strategy will help build a healthier Hampshire where everyone's health is improved.



Our ambitions

Create healthy, sustainable, inclusive and well-connected places

Achieve a smokefree Hampshire



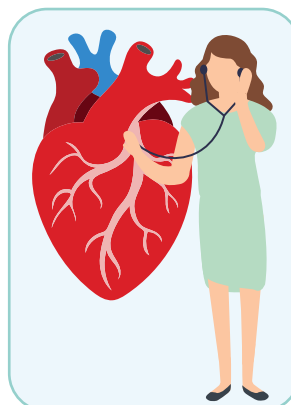
Improve health through safe, active and sustainable transport and cleaner air

Increase everyday physical activity

Improve work, income security and healthy homes

Enable healthier weight, better diet and access to nutritious food

Protect people from infectious disease and environmental hazards and support early detection of health conditions



Prevent long-term conditions such as heart disease, cancer, dementia and type 2 diabetes

Give every child the best start in life and prepare them for adulthood

Reduce harm from alcohol, drugs and gambling and support recovery



Prevent and reduce domestic abuse and its impacts

Improve sexual and reproductive health

Improve mental wellbeing and prevent suicide

Enable healthy, independent and socially connected ageing for older adults



2. Our vision

Our vision is to improve the health of everyone in Hampshire, with a strong focus on people and communities who experience the poorest health. We want more people to live longer lives in good health, and fewer people to experience preventable illness, poor mental wellbeing or inequitable circumstances that limit opportunities. This is our duty as the Public Health Authority.

Better health means a better quality of life for residents, stronger and more resilient communities. It also supports economic prosperity, helps protect our environment, and reduces pressure on health and care services.

Our work focuses on prevention, tackling the root causes of ill health, and bringing partners together to make support more effective. This strategy will:

- Help people live healthier lives for longer.
- Reduce avoidable health inequalities.
- Contribute to improving the underlying causes of ill health, such as housing, education, employment, transport and environment.
- Strengthen prevention and protect people from emerging risks.
- Improve coordinated action for health across the Council and with partners.



3. Guiding principles

Our guiding principles set out how we will work and make decisions, so that everything we do helps build a healthier, fairer and more resilient Hampshire; together they shape how every ambition is delivered. Realising our ambitions requires a consistent, whole system approach.



Figure 1: Guiding Principles

4. What shapes our health?

As the Public Health Authority, we can make the biggest difference to preventing ill health by focusing on the factors that influence health. The building blocks of health are part of daily life. They include the homes people live in, the places where people work and learn, how they travel, the food that they eat, the spaces and natural environment, and the relationships and communities that people are part of.

When all of these building blocks are in place, people are more likely to stay well for longer and avoid illness that could be prevented. When these building blocks are effective, they create stability and opportunity. When they are missing or weak, people are more likely to experience poorer health.

Working with others, we can influence the underlying factors that impact on the choices that people are able to make, such as what is eaten, how active people are, and whether people smoke or

drink alcohol. In turn, these behaviours have a direct impact on health outcomes. While these wider conditions and behaviours play the largest role, a smaller part of our health is influenced by genetics and by interactions with health and care services.

These foundations matter at every stage of life. They help babies, children and young people get the best start, support families and working age adults to thrive, and enable older people to stay active and independent for longer. They also help explain why opportunities for good health are not the same for everyone.

Healthy people and places are essential to delivering the Council's wider ambitions. This strategy aligns with the Council's Strategic Plan, and other council strategies and local plans, as well as with local and national partner strategies, helping to narrow health inequalities and creating a healthier Hampshire for all.

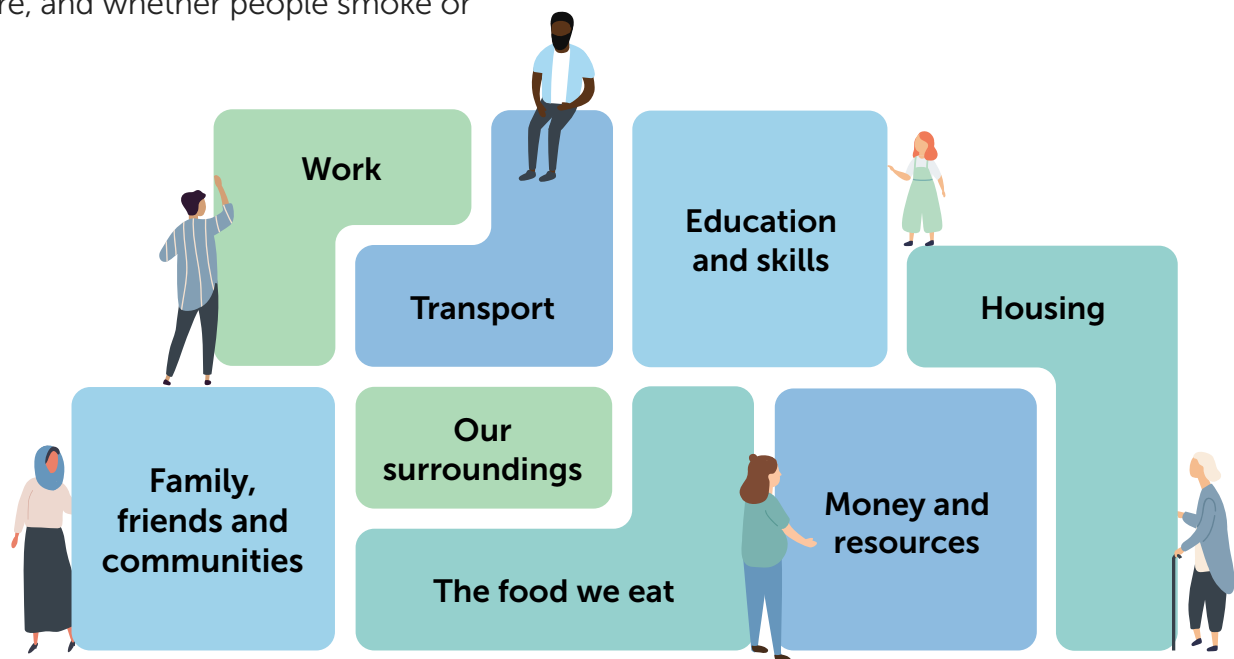


Figure 2: Building Blocks of Health

Image adapted from [Building Blocks of Health and Wellbeing from the Health Foundation](#)

Prevention and protection

Our focus is on preventing people from becoming unwell and protecting them from risk factors and health threats so that they can live long and healthy lives. Prevention means maximising the factors which support good health and acting as early as possible to reduce the

things which increase the risk of people becoming physically or mentally unwell. Prevention is commonly considered across three distinct but related approaches: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

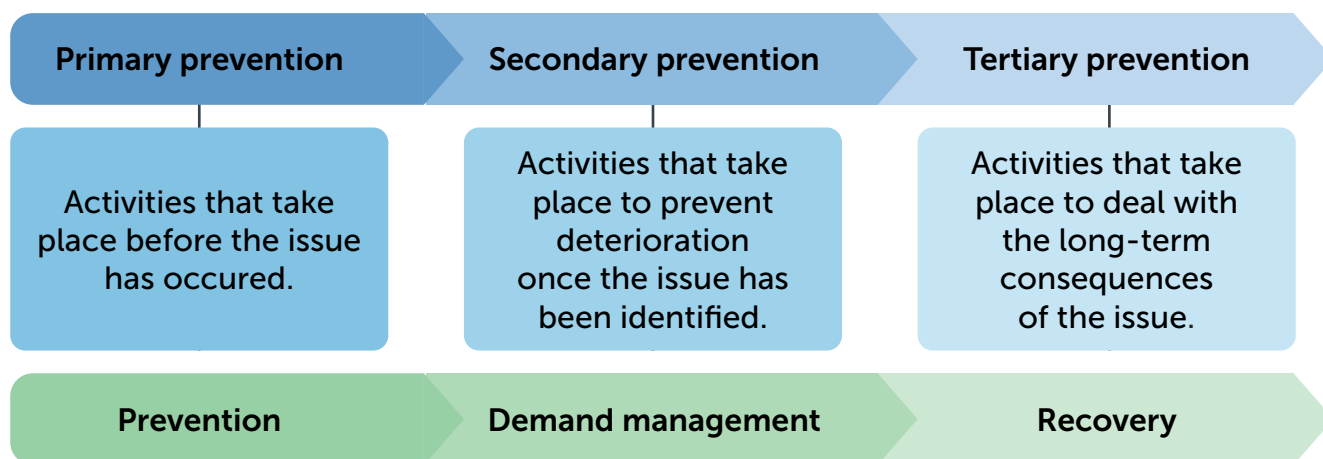


Figure 3: Prevention

We can all contribute to improving health and reducing inequalities in Hampshire by joining in coordinated, practical action across all sectors. By strengthening the building blocks of health, we make it easier for people to make healthier

choices, reduce behavioural risk and access high quality care when they need it. Working in partnership is vital to make a meaningful difference to the people and communities we serve.



In addition to the building blocks of health, shown below as socioeconomic and environmental factors, our health is shaped by the interplay of these influences and their impact on the choices and behaviours we are able to take. While access to and quality of health and care services also play a role, they are not the major factors.

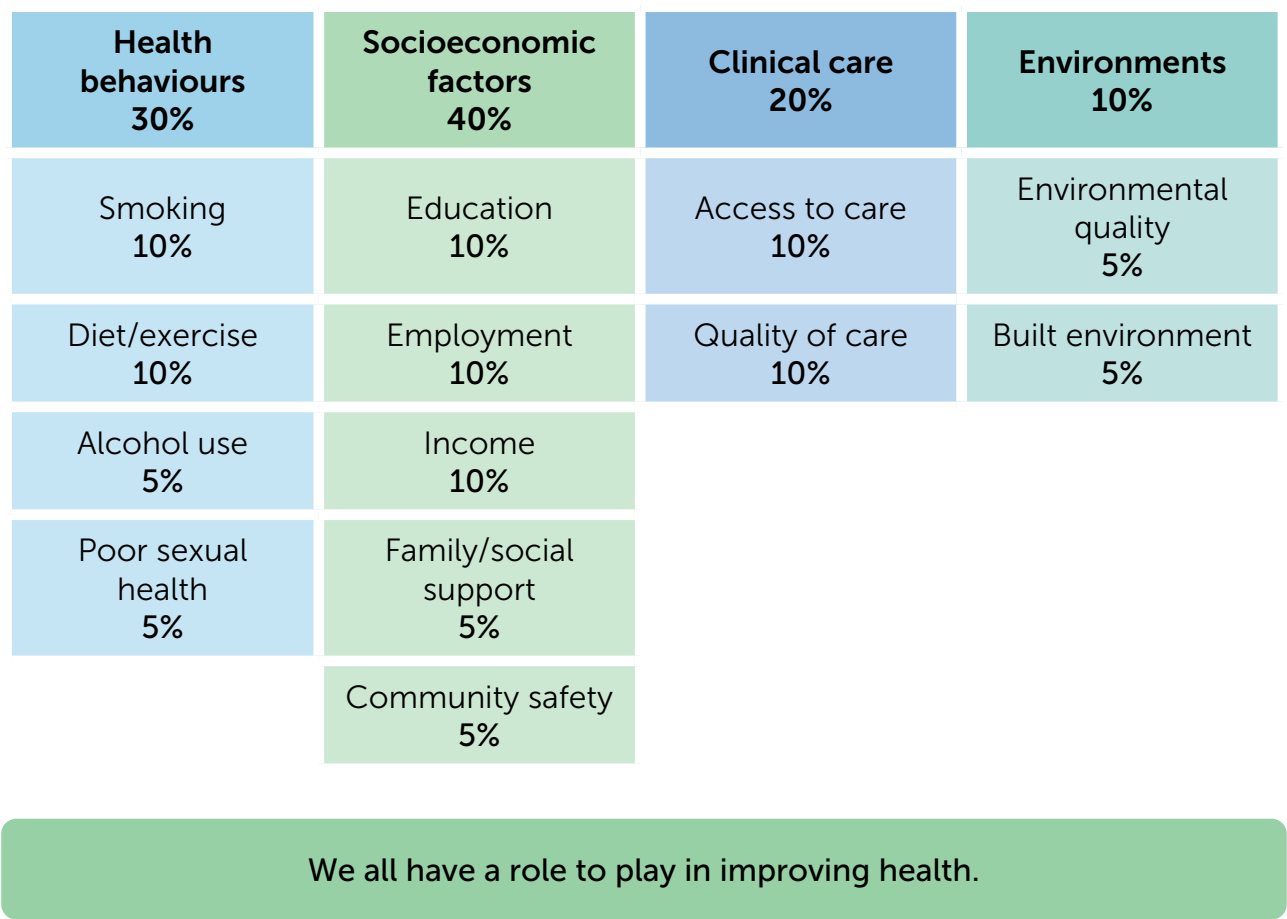


Figure 4: Contribution of factors to overall health
Source: Adapted from the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps model, developed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute (USA).

5. Our strategic ambitions

Our ambitions set out what we will focus on to improve health, protect people from risks, reduce inequalities and increase the years they live in good health. They are guided by our [principles](#).

Each ambition shows how we will take action; however, the power of our strategy lies in the way that these actions interact. The steps that we take to achieve one ambition will also support the delivery of others. For example, by shaping healthier places where people have access to green space, we will

make it easier and safer for people to be physically active and to meet and connect with each other. By giving babies, children and young people the opportunity to thrive, we will contribute to educational outcomes and enable people to gain the skills they need to access and remain in good employment.

To deliver these ambitions, we will work in consistent ways across everything we do, using our guiding principles to target action in line with the [Good Public Health Practice Framework](#).

Our ambitions	What we'll do	What success looks like
Create healthy, sustainable, inclusive and well connected places	Shape places through planning, housing and regeneration so homes, neighbourhoods and environments make healthy choices easier.	More people live in well-designed, connected places with good housing, access to green space and reduced health inequalities between communities.
Improve health through safe, active and sustainable transport and cleaner air	Prioritise active travel, public transport and local access to services, reducing car use, pollution and road harm.	Cleaner air, safer streets and more people walking, wheeling and cycling and using sustainable transport in daily life.
Improve work, income security and healthy homes	Work with partners to improve access to good work and ensure homes are safe, warm, affordable and meet people's needs.	More people in secure, healthy work and living in homes that support wellbeing and independence.

Our ambitions	What we'll do	What success looks like
Protect people from infectious disease and environmental hazards and support early detection of health conditions	Prepare for and respond to public health incidents and emergencies and ensure that high quality vaccination and screening programmes are in place and accessible to all.	Effective response to incidents and emergencies and increased, more equitable uptake of vaccinations and screening.
Give every child the best start in life and prepare them for adulthood	Provide early help and prevention, from pregnancy through childhood, working with families, services and communities to improve health.	Families thrive, children and young people grow up in good health, achieve their potential and have improved life chances.
Enable healthy, independent and socially connected ageing for older adults	Promote strength, balance, social connection and age-friendly environments that support independence.	Older people stay active, independent and connected, with fewer falls and less isolation.
Improve mental wellbeing and prevent suicide	Embed mental wellbeing across all our work, reduce stigma and expand early accessible support.	Improved wellbeing, fewer suicides and more people accessing help earlier for mental wellbeing.
Achieve a smokefree Hampshire	Make professional support to quit the norm, prevent uptake among children and create smokefree environments.	Falling smoking rates, fewer young people using nicotine and reduced smoking-related harm.
Increase everyday physical activity	Create inclusive opportunities and environments that support people to move more every day.	More people, especially those least active, are regularly active with improved health and wellbeing.

Our ambitions	What we'll do	What success looks like
Enable healthier weight, better diet and access to nutritious food	Improve access to affordable, nutritious food, create healthier food environments and target support where need is greatest.	Healthier diets, reduced obesity and food insecurity, and narrower inequalities in diet-related health.
Prevent long-term conditions such as heart disease, cancer, dementia and type 2 diabetes	Increase early identification and management of risk factors through health checks, screening and integrated care.	Fewer people develop preventable conditions and gaps in outcomes between groups are reduced.
Reduce harm from alcohol, drugs and gambling and support recovery	Prevent harm earlier, improve access to treatment and recovery, and reduce stigma across communities.	Fewer deaths and harms, more people accessing support and sustaining recovery.
Improve sexual and reproductive health	Provide inclusive, accessible information and services, focused on preventing harm, particularly for groups bearing the highest burden.	Lower rates of infections and unplanned pregnancy, with improved access to services.
Prevent and reduce domestic abuse and its impacts	Strengthen prevention, support victims/survivors and work with partners to reduce harm.	Fewer people experience abuse, with earlier help, better outcomes and safer communities.

6. What drives ill health in Hampshire?

Our strategy ambitions are informed by robust information about health needs across Hampshire, as well as evidence of what works to prevent ill health, help people to stay healthy and protect people and communities from harm. [Hampshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA) brings together intelligence to inform strategy development and intervention design for all partners.

The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) data helps show how different risks affect people's health by measuring Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) – a combined measure of years of life lost due to early death (premature mortality) and years of healthy life lost due to disability owing to prevalence of health conditions (see [Figure 5](#)).

Overall burden of disease

For every 100,000 people, around 31,000 years of healthy life are lost due to illness, disability and early death. This reflects both people dying younger than expected and living longer with conditions that reduce quality of life.

Key risk factors driving poor health

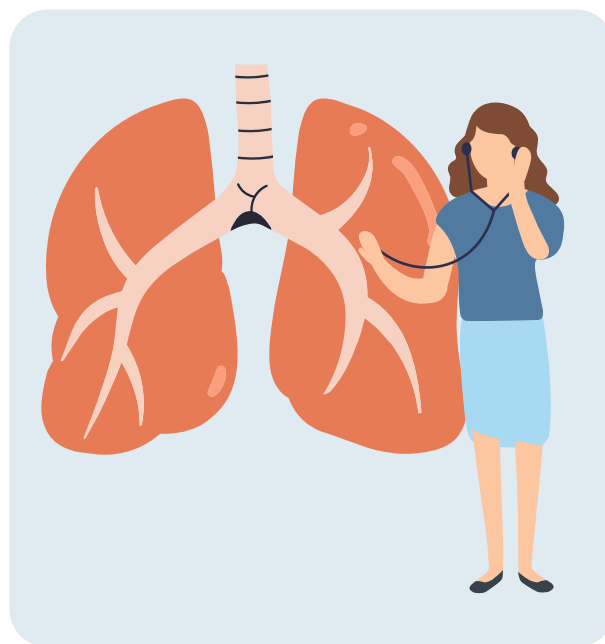
The largest contributors to ill health are excess weight, smoking, alcohol and drug use, high blood pressure, high blood sugar and air pollution. Mental health conditions also have a major impact, accounting for around 14% of all years lived with disability, alongside the wider effects of poor emotional wellbeing.



Preventable illness and early death

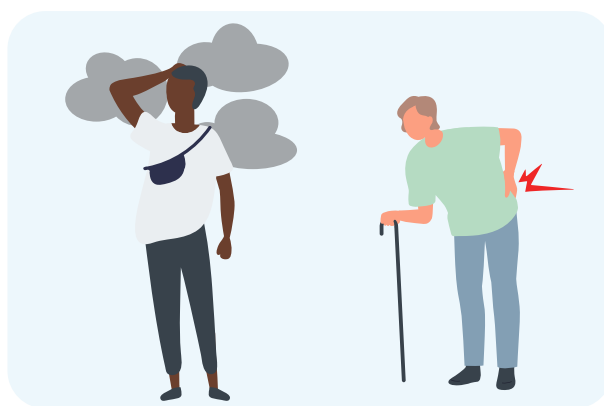
Many of the leading causes of poor health in Hampshire are preventable and closely linked to everyday risk factors and wider social conditions. The burden falls most heavily on more disadvantaged communities.

- Cancer and heart disease are the biggest contributors to early death, particularly lung, liver and skin cancers. These are strongly linked to modifiable risks such as smoking, alcohol use, poor diet, obesity and low physical activity.



- Smoking remains the single biggest risk factor for ill health in people under 70. However, the impact of obesity, poor diet and high blood sugar has increased significantly over the past 20 years. While some risks had been improving, progress has stalled or reversed since around 2020, meaning the overall burden of preventable disease is now rising again.

- Conditions that do not always cause early death still have a major impact on quality of life. Mental health conditions (such as depression and anxiety) and musculoskeletal problems (such as back pain) are among the leading causes of ill health in people under 70 and have remained consistently high over the past decade.



The chart on the next page displays total burden by risk factor (y axis), broken down into broad cause groups or more detailed causes (as shown in the key). The size of the bar indicates the burden of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per 100,000 of the population to allow comparison.

South East England, both sexes, all ages, 2023

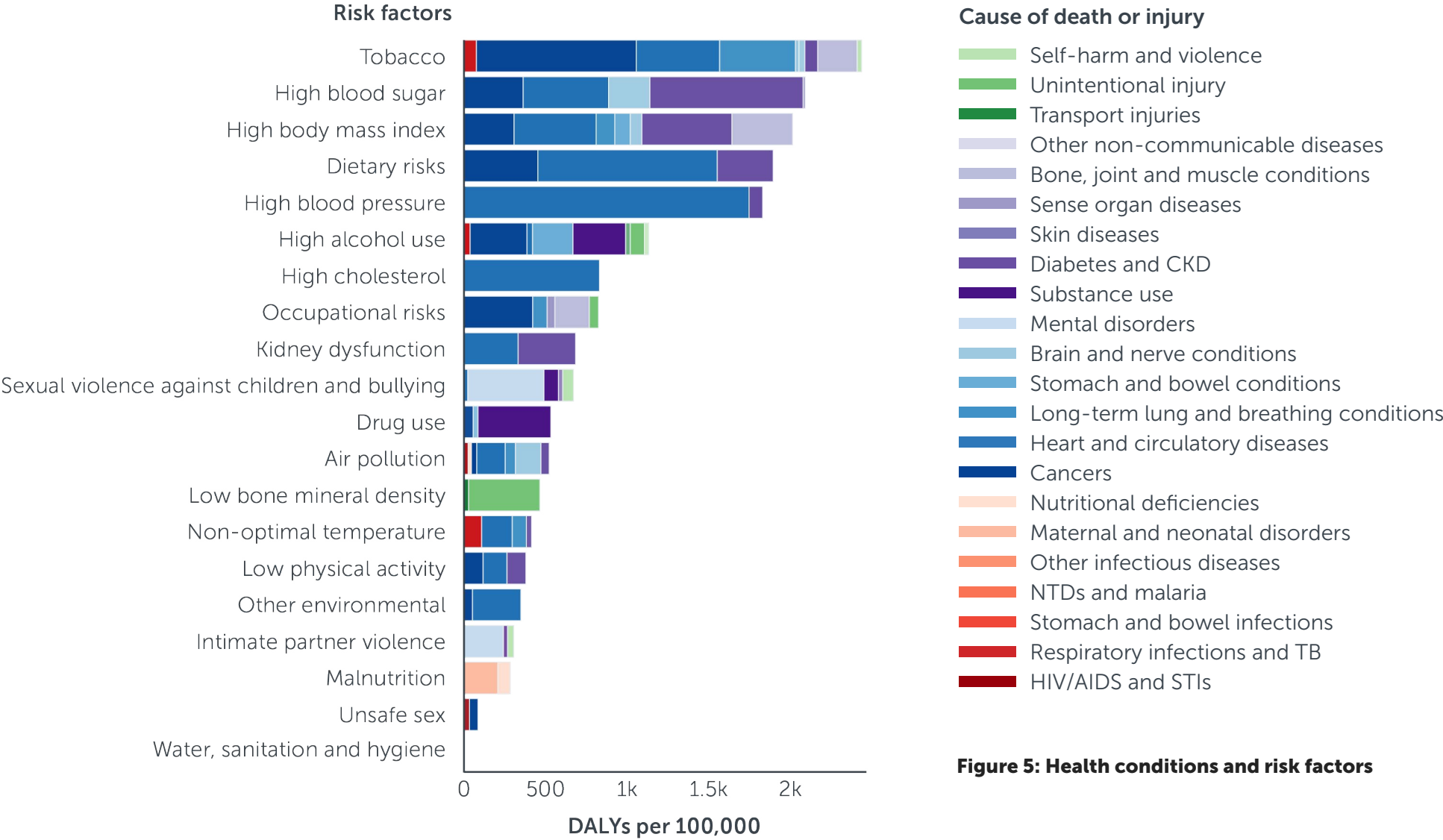


Figure 5: Health conditions and risk factors

Disability Adjusted Life Year = One DALY represents the loss of the equivalent of one year of full health. DALYs for a disease or health condition are the sum of years of life lost due to premature mortality (YLLs) and years of healthy life lost due to disability (YLDs) due to prevalent cases of the disease or health condition in a population.

Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation: Interactive data visuals, available at <https://www.healthdata.org/data-tools-practices/interactive-data-visuals>.

Health inequalities in Hampshire

Hampshire is generally a healthy place to live and work, however this masks differences in health between communities. People living in more deprived areas and those with additional needs experience poorer health, develop illness earlier, and are more likely to die younger.

These differences are seen most clearly in life expectancy, years lived in good health, and rates of preventable illness and death.

Deprivation and place

66,000 people live in Hampshire's most economically deprived areas, with life expectancy around nine years lower for men and 11 years lower for women, and up to 15 fewer healthy years. The rate of preventable deaths among under 75s in the most deprived areas is almost three times higher than in the least deprived areas.



Gender

Men have higher early and preventable death rates; women tend to live longer but spend more years in ill health.



Ethnicity

Although Hampshire is less ethnically diverse than the national average, some minority ethnic groups are more likely to experience poorer outcomes, linked to deprivation and barriers to services.



Learning disabilities

People with learning disabilities have poorer health and die younger due to delayed diagnosis, access issues and unmet needs.



Mental illness

People living with a severe mental illness face a mortality risk that is five to six times higher than the general population, largely from preventable physical conditions.



Exclusion

People facing multiple forms of exclusion, such as homelessness, alcohol use or drug use, also experience very poor health and some of the lowest life expectancy of any group.



Please refer to our [Hampshire JSNA](#) for more information on risk factors, preventable illness and health inequalities.

7. Statutory duties and Public Health responsibilities

Like all upper-tier local authorities in England, Hampshire County Council has a legal duty to protect and improve the health of its population and reduce health inequalities. This is funded by a ring-fenced Public Health Grant from the Department of Health and Social Care.

The Council is required by law to commission a set of mandated public health services. These include services that prevent illness and support people to stay well, reduce health inequalities and protect the most vulnerable. Delivering these services helps reduce avoidable ill health and disability and lowers pressure on health and care services, supporting healthier, stronger communities.

Protecting people from health threats is a statutory public health responsibility. The Council plays a key role in preventing and responding to infectious diseases and environmental hazards, working closely with the NHS, UK Health Security Agency and other partners. This includes planning for and responding to incidents such as disease outbreaks, environmental contamination and future pandemics.

Hampshire's Director of Public Health (DPH) is a statutory officer with specific legal duties. The DPH provides independent advice and leadership on health protection and health improvement, leads the local response to health protection incidents and ensures that plans are in place to protect the population in emergencies.

Improving health cannot be achieved by the Council alone. Hampshire County Council's public health team works closely with other Council departments alongside other local councils, the NHS, the voluntary and community sector, and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System (ICS). The public health team provides data, evidence and expert advice to support shared decision making and collective action through the Health and Wellbeing Board and the wider health and care system.

We are committed to delivering our healthcare public health function by aligning the Public Health Strategy to embed prevention and reduce health inequalities across our health systems, using intelligence and leadership to maximise population health benefit. We deliver this partnership role through tools such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and our responsibility to provide public health advice to the NHS, helping to embed prevention, improve population health and reduce inequalities across Hampshire.



8. Delivery, governance and monitoring

The delivery of this Public Health Strategy will be led by Hampshire County Council, working closely with partners across the NHS, district and borough councils, the voluntary and community sector, and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System (ICS). Progress will be overseen through existing governance arrangements, including the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board, ensuring shared leadership, accountability and alignment with wider local strategies and plans.

The Public Health team will continue to provide system leadership, evidence and expert advice, working across the Council and with partners to embed prevention, reduce health inequalities and improve population health. The strategy will be monitored using a balanced set of measures that focus on outcomes, inequalities and long-term impact.

This will include:

- National Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF) indicators to track progress against key population health outcomes and the Local Outcomes Framework (LOF).
- Locally agreed indicators to reflect Hampshire's priorities and local needs.

Together, these measures will help us understand whether health is improving, whether gaps between communities are narrowing and where action needs to be strengthened.



9. Partnering with us: how we can work together

Improving health and reducing inequalities in Hampshire requires action across the whole system and we ask all partners to:

Make prevention part of everyday practice – Act early to prevent ill health and stop problems from getting worse. Build prevention into decisions, services and pathways across health, care, education, housing, workplaces and communities.

Take action to reduce health inequalities – Make health inequalities a clear consideration in strategies, investment and service design. Focus effort where preventable illness, poor access and avoidable harm are greatest.

Use data, evidence and insight to guide action – Use shared intelligence such as the JSNA and population health data, alongside local knowledge and lived experience, to target action where it will make the biggest difference.

Help create healthier places to live and work – Shape homes, workplaces and neighbourhoods so they support good health including cleaner air, safer streets, greener spaces, active travel and access to healthy options.

Communicate clearly and build health literacy – Provide information and advice in ways people can easily find, understand and act on. Support staff to have clear, confident and compassionate conversations about health.

Give equal importance to mental and physical wellbeing – Promote mental wellbeing across policies, commissioning and services, with early access to support and environments that protect and improve wellbeing.

Strengthen support for babies, children, families and young people – Work together to give every child the best start in life, enable children to grow and develop, young people to achieve their potential, and families to thrive, with early support.

Support healthy, independent ageing – Help people prepare for later life by promoting strength, balance, social connection and age-friendly places, and reducing the risk of falls, frailty and isolation.

Support healthier behaviours through joined-up action – Take every opportunity to support people to smoke less, move more, eat well, look after their mental and sexual health, and reduce alcohol, drug and gambling-related harms. Promote and connect people to local support services.

Protect health and reduce avoidable harm – Work together to prevent domestic abuse, reduce violence and substance-related harm, protect vulnerable people, and improve uptake of screening, immunisation and health checks – especially for under-served communities.

10. Useful links

This strategy is supported by a range of plans, evidence and tools that set the wider context for improving health in Hampshire and tracking progress over time. The links below provide more detail on related strategies, how decisions have been assessed for equality and fairness, the evidence that underpins our priorities, and how you can follow progress or get in touch.

What you'll find	Description
<u>Hampshire County Council Strategic Plan</u>	Explains the Council's main priorities and long-term plans for Hampshire.
<u>Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy</u>	Sets out how partners will work together to improve health and reduce inequalities.
<u>Best Start in Life</u>	Describes our shared approach to giving babies, children and families the best possible start.
<u>Local Transport Plan 4</u>	Our long-term plan to cut car use and create a low carbon, people-focused transport system.
<u>Local Nature Recovery Strategy</u>	Sets out how we will restore and connect natural habitats for nature recovery and biodiversity.
<u>Economic Strategy for Hampshire 2025 to 2027: Committing to Prosperity</u>	Describes how the local economy will grow and support jobs and prosperity.
<u>Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System (ICS) Strategy</u>	Explains how health and care organisations across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board geography will work together to improve health and reduce inequalities.
<u>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</u>	Assessment of how this strategy supports fairness, inclusion and equality.
<u>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)</u>	Evidence on local health needs, inequalities and what affects health in Hampshire.
<u>Public Health in Hampshire</u>	Explains the work of the Hampshire Public Health team and how you can access our services, information and support.

Contact us at:
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