

THRIVING^{AND} SURVIVING — MENTAL HEALTH^{IN} NORTH TYNESIDE

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH ^{IS} GOOD PUBLIC HEALTH

PROFESSOR COREY KEYES 2011

TAKE APPROPRIATE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR
ONESELF AND OTHERS

REALISE OUR ABILITIES,
LIVE A LIFE WITH PURPOSE
AND MEANING

MENTAL WELLBEING
INCLUDES THE CAPACITY
TO:

COPE WITH LIVES
UPS AND DOWNS
AND BE CONFIDENT
AND RESILIENT

FORM POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
AND FEEL CONNECTED
AND SUPPORTED

MAKE A POSITIVE
CONTRIBUTION TO
OUR COMMUNITIES

EXPERIENCE PEACE OF MIND
CONTENTMENT, HAPPINESS AND JOY.

FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND
MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION
Better mental health for all (2016)



North Tyneside Council

Foreword

I am delighted to present my second annual report as the Director of Public Health in North Tyneside which focuses on the important area of mental health and wellbeing.

For many years mental health has not featured prominently enough in our society but it is now strikingly clear that many of the big public health issues have emerged as visible symptoms of poor psychological wellbeing. Obesity, smoking, and substance misuse are all strongly associated with poor mental health.

It is good to see the prominence given to mental health in recent years and in particular the parity with physical health. Of course mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness; it is about resilience and wellbeing. Providing good treatment and care for people with mental illness is very important and necessary. However, focusing solely on this aspect is not sufficient to achieve the improvement in mental wellbeing in the population. We need to prioritise prevention and promotion of wellbeing and my report this year does just that.

Taking a lifecourse approach, the report assesses the current state of mental health and wellbeing in North Tyneside and considers how we can support our population to 'thrive' and how we can help residents to reach their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. The answers lie in the root causes of poor mental health, the known protective factors and the risk factors and also the considerable strengths and assets of our communities.

A number of people from a range of organisations have been involved in the compilation of this report, particularly colleagues from the community and voluntary sector to help us find out what makes people and communities thrive. A special thanks to Helen Smith, a local artist who works proactively with local mental health service users and has a strong interest in this field.



Wendy Burke

Director of Public Health, North Tyneside Council

“How people feel is not an elusive or abstract concept, but a significant public health indicator; as significant as rates of smoking, obesity and physical activity.”

Department of Health (2001) Making it Happen: a guide to delivering mental health promotion. London:DH.

1. Introduction

1.1 What is good mental health and wellbeing?

“Mental health and wellbeing includes the capacity to realise our potential, live a life with purpose and meaning and make a positive contribution to our communities.” ⁽¹⁾

We all have mental health and our mental health is important because it influences how we feel about ourselves and the people around us, our ability to make and keep friends and relationships, our ability to learn from others and to develop emotionally.

“Mental health is not just the absence of mental illness, it is a state of wellbeing and allows us to realise our potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, and allows us to work productively and contribute to our communities.” ⁽²⁾

1.2 Why is good mental health and wellbeing important in a population?

Mental wellbeing is profoundly important to quality of life. If people are mentally healthy and well then they are far more likely to be able to achieve their potential, realise ambitions, cope with adversity, work productively and contribute to their community and society. Mental wellbeing is associated with better physical health, positive interpersonal relationships and socially healthier societies. For these reasons, good mental wellbeing is fundamental to all our lives and to the communities in which we live.

Action to improve population mental health and wellbeing can contribute to a wide range of positive outcomes for individuals and communities, including:

- Improved educational attainment and outcomes
- Increased quality of life
- Increased life expectancy
- Reduced health inequalities
- Reduced sickness absence
- Improved productivity and employment retention
- Safer communities with less crime and more social capital

1.3 Thriving and surviving

Good mental health is an asset that helps us to thrive. Mentally healthy people and communities are equated with a thriving population.

Thriving

“The capacity of each of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual wellbeing that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.”

Mental Health Foundation (2017) Thriving or Surviving? The state of the UK's Mental Health.

The term ‘surviving’ is used to describe the population that is not thriving at an optimal level of good mental wellbeing.

Surviving

“You can't live without surviving, but you can survive without living a fulfilling life.”

Department of Health (2001) Making it Happen: a guide to delivering mental health promotion. London:DH.

The terms ‘thriving’ and ‘surviving’ do not provide a commentary on the presence or absence of mental health conditions. We have adapted a model by Corey Keyes 2007 ⁽³⁾ which challenges the traditional linear model of mental health, with severe mental illness at one end and the absence of mental illness at the other. The model acknowledges that it is possible to thrive with and without mental illness. People diagnosed with a mental illness can have good mental wellbeing, just as those without a mental illness can suffer from poor mental wellbeing.

⁽¹⁾ Faculty of Public Health definition

⁽²⁾ World Health Organisation definition

⁽³⁾ Corey Keyes, (2007) “Towards a mentally flourishing society: mental health promotion, not cure”, Journal of Public Mental Health, Vol 6 Issue: 2, pp. 4-7.

Figure 1: A model of thriving and surviving



Adapted from : Corey Keyes, (2007) "Towards a mentally flourishing society: mental health promotion, not cure", Journal of Public Mental Health, Vol. 6 Issue: 2, pp.4-7

2. How can we assess whether the population is thriving in North Tyneside?

There are very few measures of good mental health and wellbeing at a population level. Most measures of mental health focus on mental illness and the prevalence of certain diagnosed conditions in the population. While each year around a quarter of the population will experience symptoms of mental illness, mental health is not simply the absence of illness.

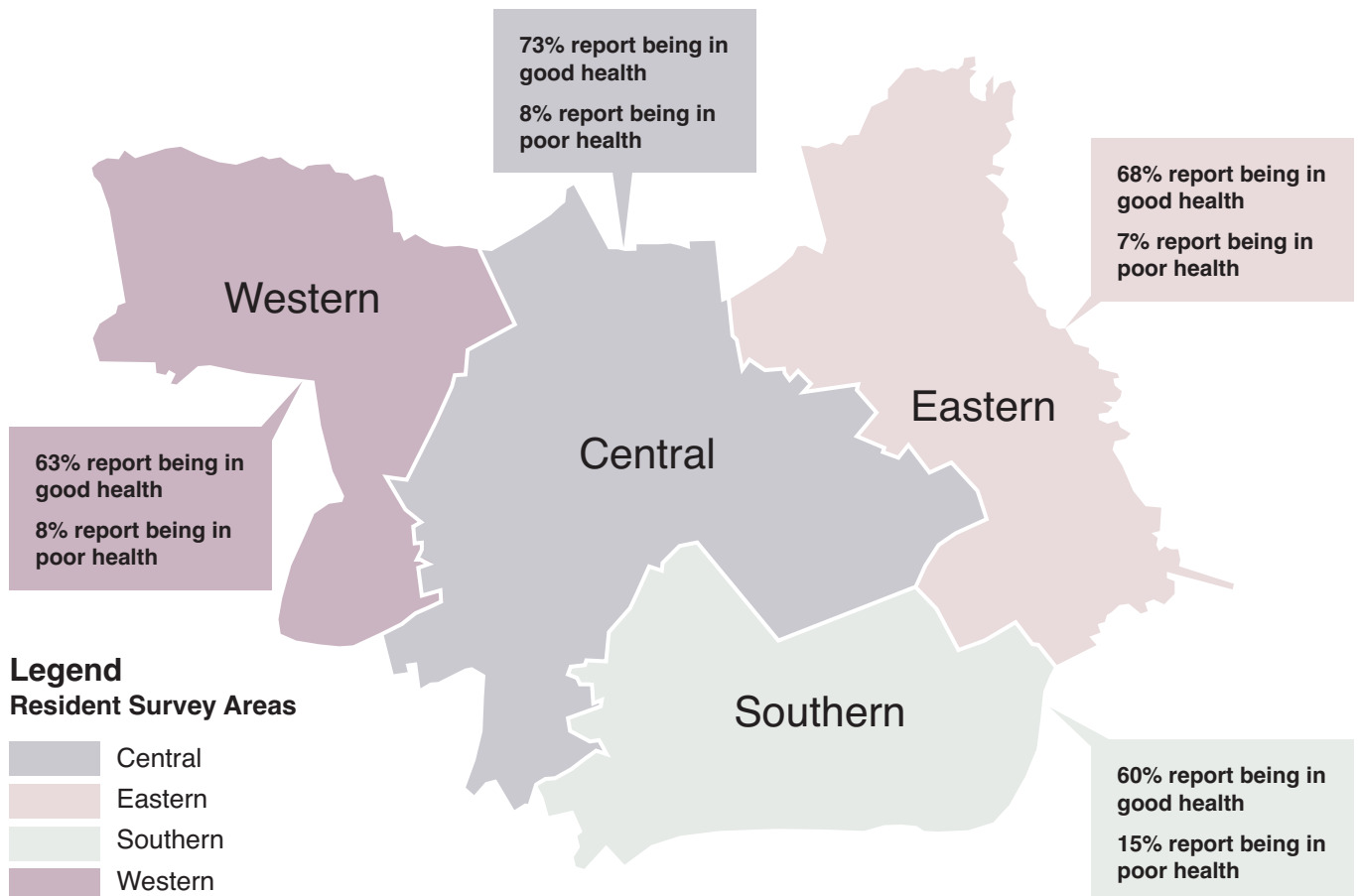
2.1 Self-reported health and wellbeing

North Tyneside Council conducts an annual Residents' Survey. The postal survey, conducted by Ipsos Mori, is sent to 4,000 randomly selected households. The process of

sampling and statistical checks used to analyse the results indicate that the data forms a representative sample.

Figure 2 shows self-reported health and wellbeing from this survey. In 2017, the majority of North Tyneside residents (67%) reported their health status as 'good' or 'very good'. More men (70%) reported being in better health compared to women (65%) and more younger people aged 18-34 (93%) compared to over 65s (43%). The central locality had the highest proportion of adults reporting their health status as 'good' or 'very good' (73%) and the southern locality had the lowest proportion (60%).

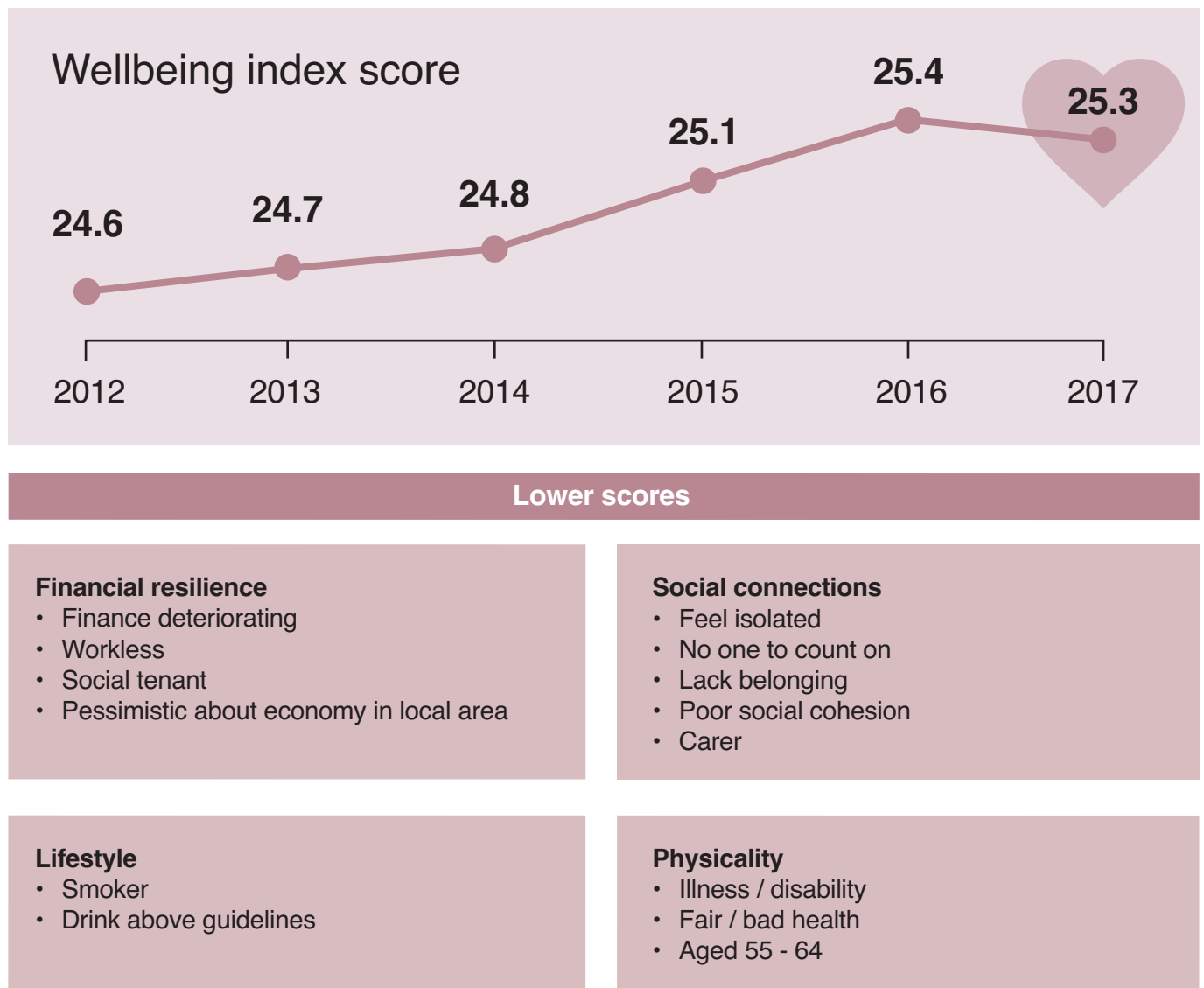
Figure 2:
North Tyneside Residents' Survey
Self-reported health and wellbeing 2017



The average wellbeing score in the Residents' Survey as measured by the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale was 25.3 (minimum available score 7 and maximum available score 35). The highest average wellbeing score was amongst those who lived in households with children (26) and those who were home owners (26). Generally there has been **an upward trend in the wellbeing scores in North Tyneside** and this upward trend has also been replicated both nationally and regionally. The **Measuring of National Wellbeing programme** ⁽⁴⁾ indicates that in 2015/16 **North Tyneside had a higher score (25.4) than England (25.2) and the North East region (24.8).**

Analysis of the factors that are driving lower reported scores include lower levels of financial resilience and dissatisfaction with the quality and choice of housing. People reporting lower scores are more likely to experience poorer physical health and have fewer social connections.

Figure 3



Source: North Tyneside Residents' Survey 2012-2017

⁽⁴⁾ Reference: ONS: Measuring National Wellbeing: Quality of Life in the UK, 2018. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/qualityoflifeintheuk2018>

2.2 An overall measure of thriving

Huppert and So (2009)⁽⁵⁾ developed a set of core features and a number of additional features that formed a framework for measuring levels of optimal mental wellbeing at a population level and this framework was applied to the European Social Survey (sample 43,000). An overall measure of thriving was defined as having all of the three core measures and three or more of the additional features. There was significant variation at a population level with over a third of the population of Denmark thriving, compared to only 6% in the Russian Federation.

Some of the health and wellbeing and social capital questions asked in the Residents' Survey have been mapped to the thriving features as defined by Huppert and So to provide an estimate of what proportion of the population in North Tyneside is thriving.

In North Tyneside, 20.3% of the population is estimated to be thriving, compared to 18.9% of the UK.

Figure 4: **Distribution of the Thriving Features**

Distribution of the Thriving Features		
Combination of Features	UK	North Tyneside
Core measures only	23.7%	21.2%
Core +1 additional feature	23.5%	21.2%
Core +2 additional features	22.3%	21.0%
Core + >3 additional features	18.9%	20.3%

Features of Thriving	
Core Measures	Additional Features
Positive emotions	Self-esteem
Engagement, interest	Optimism
Meaning, purpose	Resilience
	Vitality
	Self-determination
	Positive relationships

UK data sourced from: European Social Survey

North Tyneside data sourced from: North Tyneside Residents' Survey

⁽⁵⁾ Huppert, F. A., & So, T. C. (2009). What percentage of people in Europe are flourishing and what characterises them? presented at the meeting of the OECD/ISQOLS meeting, July 23/24 2009, Florence.

2.3 A scorecard for thriving

The results from the 2017 Residents' Survey have been used to develop a thriving score card for North Tyneside.

This shows that there are **high levels of reported happiness and community cohesion**, however there

are lower levels of reported optimism for the future, a sense of people pulling together and people feeling useful and able to deal with problems well.

Figure 5: North Tyneside Thriving Score Card

Core Measures - Questions		
Positive Emotions	Indicators	%
Happiness	People with a high happiness score	72
Engagement	Strength of belonging to local area	75
	Pulling together to improve local area	36
	Community cohesion - local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	64
Meaning and purpose	I've been useful	52
Additional Features - Questions		
Optimism	I've been feeling optimistic about the future	41
Resilience	I've been dealing with problems well	56
Positive relationships	I've been feeling close to other people	64
	Participating in informal and formal volunteering	43
	I can count on someone to help me	92
	Never or not very often feeling lonely or isolated	76
Self-determination	I am able to make my own mind up about things	82
Vitality	No available measures	
Self esteem		

Key		Public Health Outcomes Framework (2.23iii)
		North Tyneside Residents' Survey (2017)
		WEMWBS Questions North Tyneside Residents' Survey (2017)

2.4 Inequalities in mental wellbeing

There are geographical variations for three core measures; pulling together to improve the local area, strength of belonging to the local area and community cohesion.

These measures are indicators of levels of social capital within a community. Social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.

Those residents in the east locality report the highest levels of social capital and those living in the south locality report lower levels of social capital (figure 5).

There is a socio-economic association with these measures of social capital, as the east locality covers some of the most affluent areas in North Tyneside whereas the south locality covers some of the least affluent areas.

Figure 6



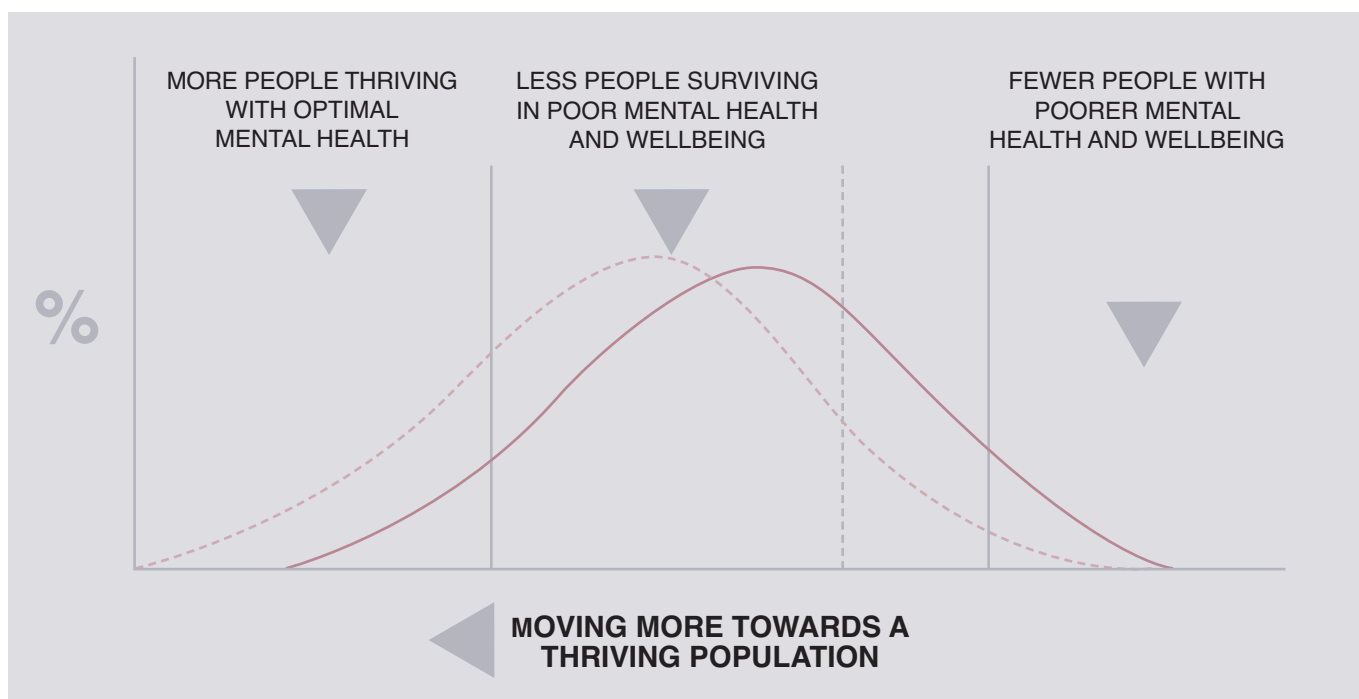
Data sourced from: North Tyneside Residents' Survey

2.5 How do we increase the proportion of the population who are thriving?

It is estimated that in the UK 20% of the population aged 16+ are thriving.⁽⁶⁾ Our figures identify that this is similar for North Tyneside; this means that we have around 34,000 adults who are thriving and are experiencing high levels of positive mental wellbeing and reaching their full potential. However, it also means that there are around 135,000 adults in North Tyneside who are surviving in a sub-optimal level of mental health and not reaching their full potential.

Figure 7 illustrates that in order to increase the proportion of the population who are thriving, an approach is required that aims to 'shift the normal distribution curve' (described by Rose⁽⁷⁾) to the left of the whole population rather than simply focussing on those people with the poorest mental health and wellbeing. Foresight⁽⁸⁾ suggests that "achieving a small change in the average wellbeing across the whole population" could produce a large decrease in the proportion of people who are surviving.

Figure 7: (adapted Huppert and So 2009)



In order to understand how we can create the conditions for more people in our population to thrive, we need to understand the known protective factors for thriving alongside the risk factors that negatively impact on mental wellbeing.

(6) Huppert FA & So T (2009 23-24 July), What percentage of people in Europe are flourishing and what characterises them? The Wellbeing Institute University of Cambridge Measuring subjective wellbeing: an opportunity for NSO's, Florence, (Briefing Document for ECD/SQOLS meeting)

(7) Rose G. (1985) Sick individuals and sick populations. *Int Journal of Epidemiology*;14:32-38

(8) The Foresight Report (2008), 'Mental Capital and Wellbeing: Making the most of ourselves in the 21st century'

Creating the conditions for a thriving population

Meadowell Connected – learning new skills

“Coming here is far better than I expected, there’s nothing more I could ask for. I’ve enjoyed learning lots of new skills, especially how to use the lathe. I’ve made a sundial and a plinth. I get all the support I need and everyone has been very kind to me. Coming here has helped my anxiety and my confidence.” (Local resident with a serious mental illness who is learning Joinery.)

Citizen’s Advice – helping people find a way forward, whatever the problem

“Thank you so much for your help, you were light at the end of a very dark tunnel. The situation I’d been in had made me feel ill with stress and I cried every day for weeks. I am just so grateful for the help I received.”

VODA – being an active citizen

“Volunteering has helped me realise that I have got skills and something to offer. My volunteering is also allowing me to learn more about vulnerable people and the issues that they face.

As I like working with people, volunteering has helped me meet others and be part of a team. My own confidence and self-belief have improved greatly and I am now thinking about future employment in social care, or support work.”

3. Protective factors for a thriving population

Protective factors promote good mental wellbeing and resilience. They may be thought of as strengths or assets that help to build resilience, maintain good mental wellbeing and support individuals to thrive.

“Many of the risk and protective factors for good mental health lie well outside of mental health services: they are in family, friends, workplaces, community and wider society.”⁽⁹⁾

Our mental health and wellbeing fluctuates depending on what is going on in our lives and many factors can support, protect and promote ‘thriving’.

3.1 Thriving: Children and young people

Early years

The foundations of mental health are laid down in infancy in the context of family relationships.

“Positive and secure attachment results in positive emotional and social development, with children being able to cope with stress, having a higher perception of self-worth and being able to better adjust to adversity and change. Sensitive and caring parenting that enables attachment security also enables them to feel safe and to develop the capacity to trust others.”⁽¹⁰⁾

What happens in pregnancy and early childhood impacts on physical and emotional health all the way through to adulthood. Therefore, a positive early experience is vital to ensure children are ready to learn, ready for school and have good life chances.

Evidence strongly indicates that the most cost-effective way to build and promote good mental health and prevent the development of mental health problems across the population is to focus on childhood and adolescence.⁽¹¹⁾

The evidence indicates we should focus on:

- Promoting good parental mental and physical health to improve early child development and wellbeing
- Supporting maternal wellbeing and reducing adverse outcomes of pregnancy and infancy
- Encouraging good parenting skills – the influences of parenting are extremely strong and support from at least one caring adult is protective against a wide range of adverse issues

What are we doing in North Tyneside?

Ensuring children get the best start in life is a key priority for North Tyneside and we work very closely with a range of partners to provide universal preventative services to support parents, carers and families. It is essential that our babies and young children are nurtured in their early years and one example is promoting breastfeeding across the borough.

“Breastfeeding is a natural ‘safety net’ against the worst effects of poverty ... Exclusive breastfeeding goes a long way toward cancelling out the health difference between being born into poverty and being born into affluence ... It is almost as if breastfeeding takes the infant out of poverty for those first few months in order to give the child a fairer start in life and compensate for the injustice of the world into which it was born.”⁽¹²⁾

⁽⁹⁾ No health without mental health: a cross-government mental health outcomes strategy (2011)

⁽¹⁰⁾ Faculty of Public Health and Mental Health Foundation (2016) Better Mental Health for all : A Public Health approach to mental health improvement.

⁽¹¹⁾ Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008) London: The Government Office for Science.

⁽¹²⁾ James P Grant, Executive Director of Unicef (1980-1995)

The majority of women (65%) in North Tyneside start breastfeeding at birth, although this number declines to around 40% at 6-8 weeks. Breastfeeding protects against maternal depression and anxiety whilst also promoting secure attachment and providing the baby with the best start in life.

North Tyneside Council's 0-19 children's public health service

Our local in-house 0-19 children's public health service includes health visitors, public health school nurses, staff nurses/midwife, teenage pregnancy midwife and community nursery nurses and they work closely with families to create the conditions for our children to thrive across the life course. This service starts in the antenatal period and continues until the age of 19.

"I felt very reassured after the advice my health visitor gave me."

"I've found the service invaluable to me as a first time mum and feel that this service plays an important role for both parents and babies."

Childhood and adolescence

"Generally, qualifications improve people's chances of getting a job and of having better pay prospects and the resulting increase in standard of living. This in turn improves opportunities to obtain the prerequisites for healthy nutritious food, safe housing, a good working environment and social participation."⁽¹³⁾

Children and young people who are emotionally resilient are more able to deal with difficulties in their lives and to cope with uncertainty. Self-esteem, self-efficacy (a belief in your abilities), readiness to learn and developing a positive social identity are protective assets which help children and young people to thrive.

The evidence indicates we should focus on:

- Investing in pre-school and early education programmes, as they are particularly important to promoting school readiness, communication and social and emotional skills
- Raising the educational standards of the most vulnerable children and young people, including interventions that support attendance and school inclusion
- Building the social and emotional resilience of children and young people through whole-school approaches, including prevention of bullying

⁽¹³⁾ Dahlgren G, Whitehead M. European strategies for tackling social inequities in health: levelling up, Part 2. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2007

What are we doing in North Tyneside?

North Tyneside has an excellent early years offer, with 100% of early years childcare providers being rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'. In November 2017, 91.3% of children in North Tyneside attended a 'good' or 'outstanding' school; in the North East region, 20% of children are thought to attend an underperforming school. The quality of the education provision in North Tyneside is reflected in the educational and developmental outcomes achieved by our young people and the high numbers of 16–17 year olds who are in education, employment or training.

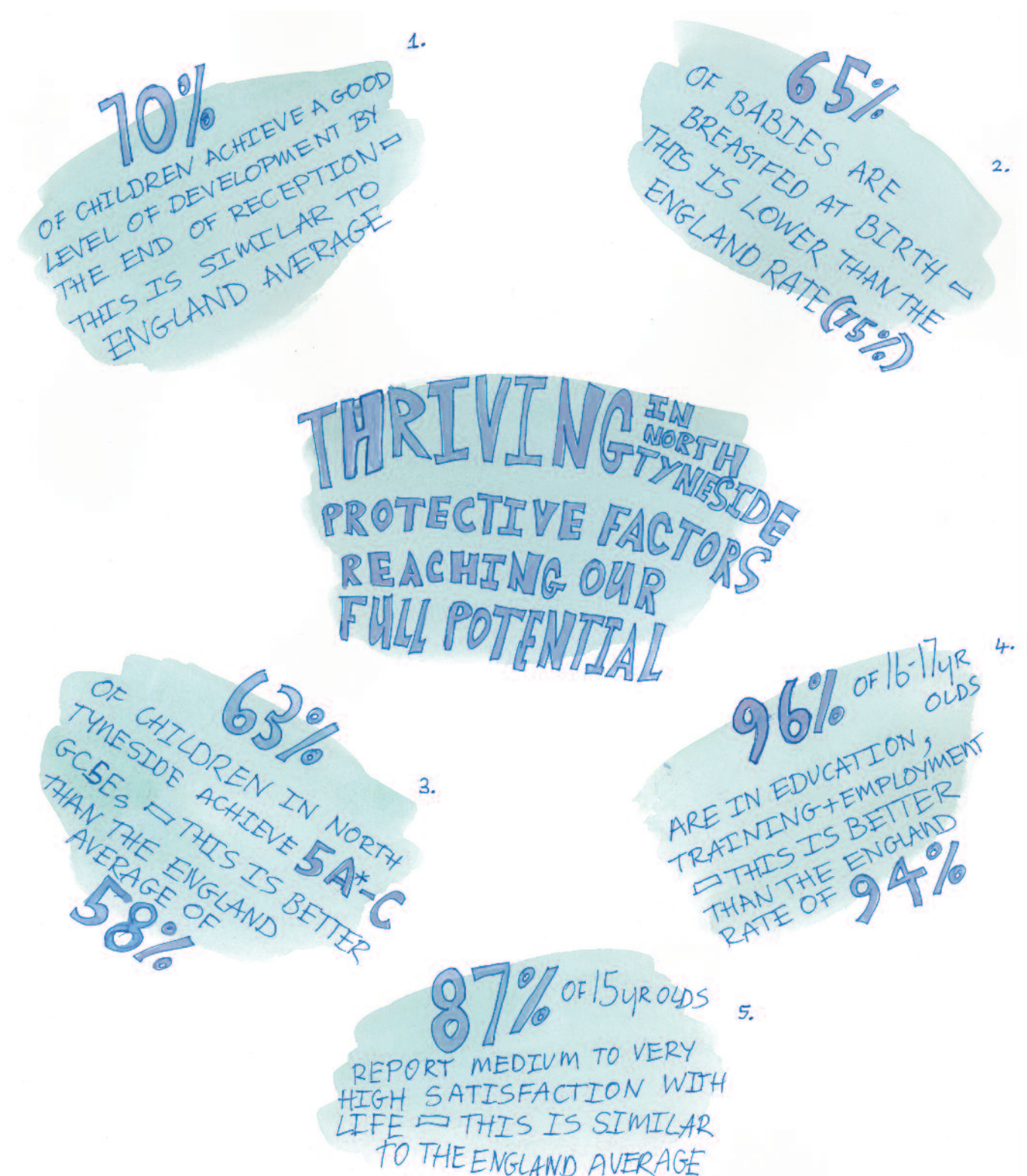
We have a key focus on promoting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing which includes a borough-wide, whole school approach to supporting the emotional wellbeing of our young people.

The Cedarwood Trust: PlayLab – promoting learning through play

The Cedarwood PlayLab was developed through conversations with children and residents who wanted to support early years education. With support from the People's Projects, they created an active play facility, 'PlayLab', for children of the Meadow Well Estate of North Tyneside.

PlayLab developed a number of activities and programmes which have supported the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) learning opportunities for children on the estate. Play is important in that it enables children to learn in a way that is appropriate to them, encouraging independence and equipping them with problem-solving skills to use throughout their lives.

"We want the Meadow Well Estate to be known as a place of innovation and fun, a place that is celebrated positively and a place that has utilised the energy of its community to improve quality of life and change its own future. The PlayLab has engaged local children in learning through a range of interesting activity including astronomy, wildlife and the science of magic. Parents have told us how much their children love the PlayLab and teachers have commented on improved understanding and confidence within the STEM subjects."

Figure 8: **Protective factors: Children and young people – how are we doing in North Tyneside?**

1	PHE Fingertips: School-age children Profiles 2016/17
2	PHE Fingertips: Early Years Profiles 2016/17
3	PHE Fingertips: School-age children Profiles 2015/16
4	PHE Fingertips: School-age children Profiles 2015
5	What About YOUth (WAY) survey 2014/15

3.2 Thriving: Working age adults

“The shape and content of work and individual health and wellbeing are strongly related. For the benefit for firms, workers and the public interest we need to develop a more proactive approach to workplace health.”⁽¹⁴⁾

Reaching adulthood is a key point in the lifecourse and for the majority of people it is a time when they commence employment. Work settings offer opportunities to promote individual health and wellbeing, and access to and retention of work promotes and improves the overall wellbeing of the population. Work can provide a sense of fulfilment and opportunities for social interaction. For most people, work also provides their main source of income.

Relationships are significant in adulthood, especially recognising the impact that people can have on others' mental wellbeing through various roles such as partner, co-worker, parent and carer.

Access to community resources, such as friendship networks, facilities for children, opportunities for exercise and the quality of the environment, all impact on the ability to thrive as an adult. Having a decent home, feeling safe and having stability are also key factors to wellbeing.

“Even intuitively, poor housing conditions will have an effect on mental wellbeing; the home provides more than shelter, and the ‘meaning of home’, for example as a haven of security, is an accepted psychological and social construct.”⁽¹⁵⁾

The evidence indicates we should focus on:

- Enhancing and regenerating neighbourhoods and ensuring people have decent homes
- Promoting workplace programmes that promote good mental health and initiatives to help adults at risk of stress, anxiety and depression

What are we doing in North Tyneside?

North Tyneside is viewed as a safe place to live and has undergone a significant regeneration, which has resulted in the borough moving from an economically depressed area to one of relative affluence. This is reflected in the levels of economic activity and relatively low numbers of families living in low income households.

The borough has seen an increase in the number of people in employment and this has replicated the trend at a national level; however it has been significantly higher than the North East. The large numbers of people living in North Tyneside in the working age population offer substantial opportunities to introduce interventions that protect mental health through the workplace.

The Better Health at Work Award scheme was established in 2008 in the North East region and is coordinated by the Northern region Trade Union Congress (TUC). Thirty-seven of our local organisations have signed up to this Award, which recognises the achievements of organisations that promote healthy lifestyles and consider the wellbeing of their employees.

Better Health at Work – Quorum Business Park

Quorum Business Park has a tradition of encouraging staff to get active and take part in sports and other activities as part of their Better Health at Work programme, including the Quorum Kites running club.

“The Quorum Kites have gone from strength to strength since we first launched in the Spring of 2015. We have a hard core group who meet all year round. It’s great to get together as a group and it really helps to wind down and de-stress after being stuck in an office all day.”

⁽¹⁴⁾ M.Taylor (2017) Good Work: The Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices

⁽¹⁵⁾ Wilkinson, D. (1999) Poor housing and ill health: A summary of research evidence, DoH, Scotland.

3.3 Thriving: Older adults

“People aged 55 and above are the most likely age group to take positive steps to help themselves deal better with everyday life – including spending time with friends and family, going for a walk, spending time on interests, getting enough sleep, eating healthily and learning new things.” ⁽¹⁶⁾

Retirement can be associated with a period of high wellbeing and it is a time when people pursue leisure activities and volunteering, which all have positive benefits for good mental wellbeing.

Relationships and connecting with others is a key area for a mentally healthy later life. Social activities, social networks, keeping busy and ‘getting out and about’, good physical health and family contact are among the factors most frequently mentioned by older people as important to their mental wellbeing.

The evidence indicates we should focus on:

- Promoting good relationships and connecting with others, which is important for a mentally healthy later life
- Offering tailored, community-based physical activity programmes and activities that promote social participation, e.g. guided walks ⁽¹⁷⁾

What are we doing in North Tyneside?

We have a key focus on promoting independence, health and wellbeing in our older population. Supporting our older population to thrive is crucial, particularly as we know that people are living longer. A significant proportion (20%) of the population in North Tyneside is aged over 65 (2016).

The self-reported health status of over 65s is a measure of the quality of life of our older population. This measure includes assessing levels of anxiety and depression. In North Tyneside this indicator has improved year on year (2011– 2017) and is similar to the England score.

North Tyneside Council supports our voluntary sector organisations that provide many services and projects that promote mental health and wellbeing, particularly to our older residents, e.g. reading groups, digital inclusion, lunch clubs, walking group, arts and craft and conservation projects. Our voluntary sector also plays a vital role in connecting all communities by bridging gaps, providing information, advice and advocacy for older people.

The North Tyneside Social Prescribing Service aims to link people in with activities in their community to improve their mental health and wellbeing. All of these activities are about improving quality of life through increasing opportunities for participation and inclusion that enhance control and prevent isolation.

Good Neighbours – VODA

Good Neighbours is a volunteering programme run by VODA. It aims to harness latent capacity in the community for ‘neighbourly’ interventions that support vulnerable and isolated North Tyneside residents to be more independent, socially connected, healthy and safe at home. The volunteers carry out a range of activities from simple home maintenance and repair tasks, accompanying people to appointments, tidying gardens, helping with shopping and dog walking.

The beneficiaries of the Good Neighbour project really value the support they get:

“Amazed at the help provided. I had no one to turn to for jobs. My help was a real gentleman, couldn’t have been more helpful. Wish there was some way I could show my appreciation. It is such a relief to have someone do ‘the little things’.

“It is really wonderful to know when you are on your own that there are lovely people who are willing to give their time to help you.”

⁽¹⁶⁾ Mental Health Foundation (2017) Thriving or Surviving? The state of the UK’s Mental Health

⁽¹⁷⁾ PHE (2017) Living well in older years: JSNA Toolkit

Figure 9: Protective factors: Adults – how are we doing in North Tyneside?



1-3	PHE Fingertips: Health Assets Profiles 2015/16
4	PHE Fingertips: Health Assets Profiles 2016/17
5	Census 2011
6	PHE Fingertips: Child Health Profiles 2014
7	North Tyneside Community Safety Dashboard

3.4 Thriving: Communities

“People expressed attachment to the communities in which they lived and to their networks of families and friends, rather than to the physical places...”⁽¹⁸⁾

Family homes, neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces all constitute communities. Communities and social networks to which individuals belong over their lifetime have a significant impact on emotional wellbeing and their ability to thrive. Thriving communities are those where people are well connected, are inclusive and respectful of all and people can be involved in local decision making. A culture of cooperation and tolerance, a sense of belonging, strong social relationships and engagement in community life are necessary for good mental health and wellbeing. Evidence also shows that communities who engage and connect with each other help individuals in many ways, e.g. through practical or emotional support.

The evidence indicates we should focus on:

- Promoting inclusion and strengthening support networks to increase opportunities for participation, personal development and problem-solving, which enhance people's control over their lives and prevents isolation
- Supporting participation in community life, e.g. volunteering which can increase self-esteem, provide a sense of fulfilment, develop new skills, provides purpose and opportunities for social interaction
- Promoting the benefits of activities in the natural environment and encouraging access, e.g. our green spaces, parks and beaches
- Encouraging participation in arts, creativity, sport and culture which have been shown to improve confidence, self-esteem, motivation and provide opportunities for increased social contact

What are we doing in North Tyneside?

North Tyneside has a wealth of community assets and, as Figure 10 shows, our residents make great use of them.

As noted previously we have an active voluntary sector and a large number of residents who are very involved in their communities in a variety of ways.

Volunteering

North Tyneside Volunteer Centre is based at VODA and has seen a year-on-year increase in the numbers of people seeking their help to identify volunteer opportunities. Last year they matched 1,781 local people to new volunteering opportunities in 88 different organisations.

VODA Volunteer Centre

The quotes below show some of the benefits that some of our local residents have gained through volunteering:

“I’ve made friends, dream come true. My self-confidence has increased by meeting people and the beneficiaries are lovely to meet, they make me feel good about myself.”

“Volunteering has helped me realise that I have got skills and something to offer.”

“I feel pride from doing something for the community and confidence that I can offer my skills to others.”

“I was 52 years old when I was made redundant and I found it really difficult to find another job and my confidence really suffered. I applied to become a volunteer at Citizen's Advice. My confidence improved and after one year as a volunteer I was successful in securing a part time job, so I'm now a permanent member of staff.”

⁽¹⁸⁾ Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2008) People's attachment to place: The influence of neighbourhood deprivation

Our environment – green spaces, parks, beaches and woodlands

Safe, green spaces may be as effective as prescription drugs in treating some forms of mental illnesses, without the costs of side-effects and ever-rising numbers of prescriptions.⁽¹⁹⁾

North Tyneside has excellent, well maintained and accessible award-winning parks, allotments and woodlands that are highly valued and used by residents. Access to the coast, a park or green space can have wide-ranging benefits for our wellbeing. A safe, natural environment can be a break from our busy lives – a place to get some fresh air, to exercise or play, or a place to go and relax.

Wellbeing benefits of allotments

Allotments and community gardens have a vast benefit to wellbeing and increase physical exercise, encourage a nutritious diet, help people relax, teach new life skills, facilitate social interaction, build cohesive communities, strengthen social ties and networks. These benefits are clearly demonstrated in the quotes below:

“My allotment has aided my recovery from depression greatly, seeing how my efforts and care of the soil have helped vegetables, fruit and herbs to grow. Without this peaceful haven in my life I would not have recovered as fully as I have and am appreciative of North Tyneside Council’s Allotment team for allowing me access to my garden.” North Tyneside resident who has depression.

“Our allotment is a very valuable asset in our lives. As well as getting out into the fresh air and getting a bit of exercise it’s a great way to meet people socially, catch up and swap ideas on gardening.” North Tyneside resident.

“We grow organically and make all our own jams and chutneys. Our neighbours would be really disappointed if we didn’t give them a weekly basket of fresh veggies. Our allotment really is a vital part of our daily lives.” North Tyneside couple in their 80s.

Leisure, sports, culture, art and heritage

North Tyneside has a diverse and unique historic environment. Our borough has a huge array of cultural services covering arts, heritage, libraries, sports and recreation. Many of these services offer free opportunities for residents to participate in a range of different activities.

Explore the great outdoors – Health Walks

There are a number of weekly and bi-weekly walks taking place in North Tyneside of varying lengths for varying abilities that enable residents to explore our beautiful and interesting green spaces, parks, heritage and coastline.

The led walks include a social element as the group finishes up with a tea/coffee at the end of the walk. One of our local residents who enjoyed the Health Walks decided to volunteer to become a walk leader. After undertaking the training he now leads local walks every Wednesday morning, regardless of the weather, and is also leading a Sunday family Health Walk from The Rising Sun Country Park.

“The walks have so many benefits both from a health and social aspect. They allow you to meet new people and make new friends, as well as learning a lot about the history of the area as you walk. The training was all very well-structured, helpful and informative. I thought I knew all there was to walking but I still learned a few things and I really enjoyed it. I now feel a lot more confident when leading a walk group and I’m glad I have the opportunity to pass on the joys and benefits of walking to others.”

(19) http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/r_great_outdoors.pdf

Figure 10: Protective factors: Community assets – how are we doing in North Tyneside?



4. Surviving in North Tyneside

While many factors can support, protect and promote good mental wellbeing there are also key risk factors that can impact negatively on population mental wellbeing and the ability to thrive. The risks of poor mental health and wellbeing are many and can start before birth and continue in early life. These factors can influence a person's mental health years later. Risk factors may continue throughout adulthood. There are risks that are part of the wider environment we live in. They include poor educational outcomes, a lack of access to good employment opportunities, living in areas of high noise and pollution levels, and lack of access to green and peaceful spaces.

People with poorer mental health are more likely to experience physical health problems, smoke, be overweight, use drugs and drink alcohol to excess, have a disrupted education, be unemployed, take time off work, fall into poverty, and be overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

We need to enhance all the protective factors outlined previously to ensure that our whole population in North Tyneside is able to cope with the demands of daily life and is equipped to thrive.

4.1 Risk factors: Children and young people

Some groups of young people are vulnerable to poor mental health. There is strong evidence of the link between poverty during childhood and later mental health problems. Children from the poorest households in the population are three times more likely to have a mental health problem than those growing up in the least deprived households. Other risk factors that affect wellbeing as an adult include abusive or neglectful parenting, parental drug and alcohol misuse, bereavement, parental divorce and disability.

The evidence says we should focus on:

- Recognising early signs of poor mental health in children and young people and offering timely support to prevent and reduce the impact of mental health problems developing

What are we doing in North Tyneside?

All partners in North Tyneside work together, through the Our North Tyneside Plan, to ensure that the borough has a bright future ahead and that it continues to be a great place to live, work and visit for generations to come.

We are committed to supporting the emotional and mental health needs of the children and young people in North Tyneside. We have a key focus on prevention and early intervention which are vital for improving children's life chances and delivering better outcomes for them and their families. The sooner we can help families, the less likely it is that their situations will worsen.

Kooth.com – online counselling and emotional wellbeing support

Kooth is an early intervention online mental health service for young people aged 11-18, with no waiting lists. Self-help materials, mood tracking and goal-setting tools are available on the site at any time via any connected device and qualified counsellors are available for young people to chat with online.

Many young people just need a bit of extra support for what may be short-term difficulties in their lives. However, these are not insignificant issues and may affect their psychological and emotional wellbeing.

Kooth complements the range of existing services and measures provided in North Tyneside to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people and their families.

Figure 11: Risk factors: Children and young people – how are we doing in North Tyneside?



1&2	PHE Fingertips: CYPs Mental Health and Wellbeing 2014/15
3	PHE Fingertips: Tobacco Control Profiles 2014/15
4	PHE Fingertips : Local Alcohol Profiles for England 2014/15

4.2 Surviving: Adults

Working age adults

For working age adults, low educational attainment, material disadvantage and unemployment are particularly strong risk factors affecting mental wellbeing. There is a substantial evidence base which identifies the association between unmanageable financial debt and poor mental health.

The evidence says we should focus on:

- Supporting unemployed working age adults into good quality employment
- Ensuring those who are unable to work have access to a reasonable standard of resources and are supported to lead fulfilling lives, moving towards employment as appropriate
- Workplace interventions to prevent stress, depression and anxiety problems
- Interventions and activities that help people 'live well', promote mental health, and prevent the adoption of health risk behaviours, such as targeted approaches for smokers with mental disorder or physical activity programmes for those with depression

What are we doing in North Tyneside?

North Tyneside has a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations that provide services to support those who might need signposting to welfare advice, employment support, benefit uptake, debt management and financial literacy information.

Employment, skills and life-long learning

Adult learning and skills courses are available for our residents to participate in a wide range of courses with opportunities to improve skills, enhance career prospects or simply try out something new. Adult Learning courses include English and maths, ICT, early years and childcare, counselling, hospitality and catering and construction and horticulture. Our offer includes courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities (ALDD) and a community and family learning offer covering subjects such as modern foreign languages, art and crafts, cookery, drama, dancing and digital photography.

Employability projects also support unemployed residents to overcome barriers to employment and move into the labour market by learning.

"I had a very positive experience at college and gained new skills in ICT, Literacy and Numeracy. My confidence has also improved and I am more aware of how my skills and abilities can be used to enhance my future career options."

Older people

A decline in mental wellbeing should not be viewed as a natural and inevitable part of ageing. However, many older adults will suffer from physical ill health and this can lead to poor mental health and withdrawal from social activities. Loneliness and social isolation are key risk factors which can lead to poor mental health and wellbeing.

The evidence says we should focus on:

- Promoting physical activity to improve mental functioning
- Identifying isolated older people who are less visible within our communities
- Ensuring the effective recognition and treatment of depression in older people – especially those at increased risk, for example people who have been recently bereaved, or those with long-term conditions
- Addressing physical disabilities to improve quality of life and reduced social isolation

What are we doing in North Tyneside?

There are a range of early intervention services in North Tyneside for older people, including 'Care and Connect' which aims to identify services that reduce isolation, maintain and improve health and encourage community access. Care and Connect provides advice and support to stay independent and connected with the community.

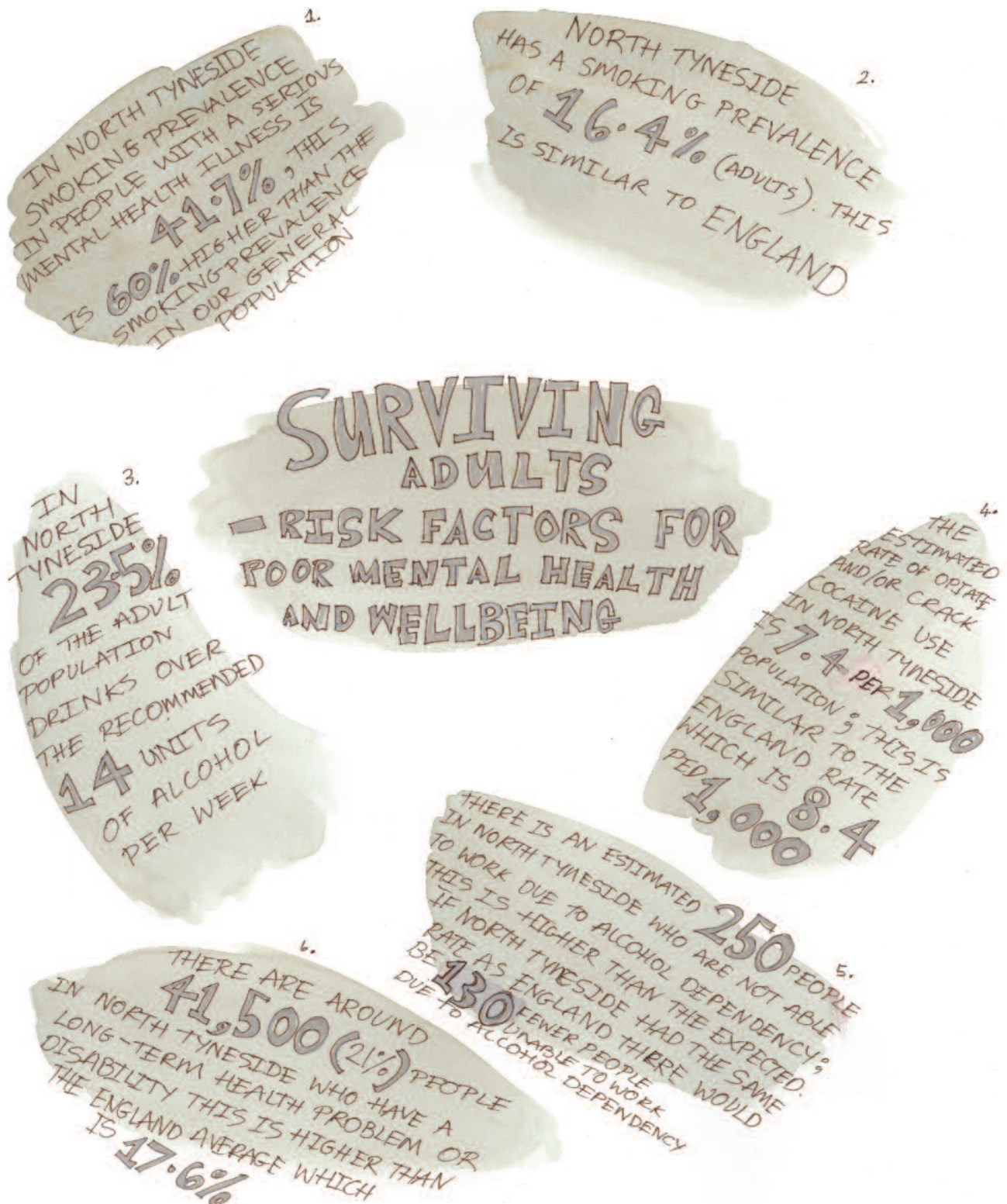
We commission a befriending service which identifies older people aged 50+ who are extremely socially isolated in North Tyneside. They are matched up with a volunteer befriender who visits them for around an hour or two a week for a chat in their own house. This service improves mental wellbeing, both to the person being befriended and the 'befriender'. For those receiving the intervention, it promotes social inclusion and reduces loneliness, while for the befriender there is the personal satisfaction of contributing to the local community by offering support and skills.

Meadowell Connected

Meadowell Connected is a voluntary sector organisation whose aim is to be a place to meet new people and gain new skills to help the community thrive, including community gardens, bee keeping, computer literacy and furniture making.

"Coming here and getting out and being active again has been wonderful. I'm getting more involved in all my old hobbies and the things I used to be interested in. I even surprised the staff here when I managed to help dig out a raised bed and surprised myself by being able to push a wheelbarrow. I feel like I'm steadily getting my life back."
North Tyneside resident with health problems.

Figure 12: Risk factors: Adults – how are we doing in North Tyneside?



1	PHE Fingertips: Mental Health JSNA 2014/15
2	PHE Fingertips: Tobacco Control Profiles 2016
4	PHE Fingertips: Mental Health JSNA 2014/15
3&5	PHE Fingertips : Local Alcohol Profiles for England 2011-14
5	PHE Fingertips : Local Alcohol Profiles for England 2016
6	Census 2011

4.2 Surviving: Living with mental health problems

We know that poor mental health often begins early in life – in fact, half of all cases of diagnosable mental illness begin by age 14 and three-quarters by the mid-20s.

Recent research indicates that two-thirds of adults say that they have experienced mental ill-health at some point in their lives, while national surveys have found that 1 in 6 people in the past week will have experienced a common mental health problem such as anxiety or depression.

Mental health problems range from the worries about everyday life through to serious long-term conditions. The most common mental health symptoms are depression, anxiety or panic. These are severe forms of ‘normal’ emotional experiences that affect our ability to get on with our daily lives.

There are also more severe forms of mental illness such as bipolar disorder (characterised by periods of depression and hyperactivity) and schizophrenia (characterised by withdrawal and often hallucinations). Between one and two people in every 100 experience these forms of mental illness.

A mental health diagnosis doesn’t always require long term treatment. Most people who experience mental health problems recover or learn to live with them. Sometimes mental health problems affect people temporarily and need some short term treatment, for example following life events such as divorce, bereavement, redundancy, retirement and taking on caring responsibilities.

Protecting mental wellbeing in these difficult periods or when people experience setbacks is essential. Our strategic approach is to ensure that people can access appropriate support, to stop symptoms worsening or spiralling into crisis at the earliest possible opportunity.

Examples of support available:

Children	Adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from family, carers and friends • School support • Voluntary sector organisations • Online support – Kooth.com • Primary care support • Primary Mental Health Workers • Community specialist support – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) • Inpatient specialist support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from friends and family • Peer support • Help from local community and voluntary organisations • Good employment practice • Discussion and assessment in primary care • Treatment and support from community and hospital mental health services

Launchpad: KOSMOS – “Where do you get your support from?”

KOSMOS was a participatory arts project asking people with mental health problems ‘Where do you get your support from?’ Participants interpreted the term ‘support’ in a range of interesting ways. Over 70 people were asked this question at workshops and asked to share their support networks.

Participants’ individual maps have been transformed into nine placards giving voice to “where we do and don’t get our support from”. As the workshops progressed, it became apparent that support could be categorised in the following ways: Group, Virtual, One-to-One and Me-Time. Support that people used to have and miss, or that they wish they had, is represented as black holes.

The map (opposite) provides a snapshot of support for mental health and wellbeing across North Tyneside in 2017.

MH:2K – Young People’s Citizen Research Project

North Tyneside was selected by the Wellcome Trust to be one of four local areas in England to participate in an innovative project to harness young people’s views, opinions and experiences around mental health. Twenty-seven of our local young people aged 13-18 were trained to become Mental Health ‘Citizen Researchers’. They identified the most important mental health challenges facing young people in North Tyneside by speaking to their peers and have had over 500 conversations during 2017/18.

Themes that were identified by our young people as having the biggest impact on their mental health and wellbeing were:

- Healthy relationships
- Social media and self esteem
- Schools and exam pressure
- Stigma, support and awareness
- Self harm and suicide

The researchers have worked closely with North Tyneside’s Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Strategic Partnership to make practical and realistic recommendations for change which they will be looking to take forward in the coming year.

5. Conclusion

Mental wellbeing is important for the healthy functioning of not only individuals throughout their lives, but for communities and society as a whole to flourish.

Mental wellbeing affects behaviour, social cohesion and economic prosperity. It is widely accepted that people should seek to maintain good physical health, however it is equally important to act to support good mental health for ourselves and also for the people around us. Positive mental health across a population embodies vital personal resources and the ability to cope with adversity; and is a key contributor to thriving families, communities and society as whole.

Of course it isn't a level playing field when it comes to the experience of individuals, because the ability to protect and sustain mental health is affected by life circumstances and by a number of social factors.

We need universal approaches to support and promote better mental health across the life course; this will necessitate promoting the protective factors identified in this report across the population and placing priority on where the risks are greatest.

Recommendations for a mentally thriving population in North Tyneside

The following recommendations are not aimed at any one specific organisation or service. Mental health is everyone's business: individuals, families, employers, schools, colleges and communities all need to play their part in promoting mental wellbeing across the population.

By using the evidence base in this report and working in partnership to improve mental health and wellbeing, we will potentially bring wider social and economic benefits to North Tyneside by building individual, family and community resilience.

1. Improve the public's understanding of how to look after their own mental health and wellbeing

Key resources:

- Ten steps we can all take to thrive (Mental Health Foundation)⁽²⁰⁾
- Five Ways to Wellbeing (New Economics Foundation)⁽²¹⁾
- Five Ways to a Happy Childhood (Children's Society and New Economics Foundation)⁽²²⁾
- How to Nurture a Child's Mental Health (Infographic, Institute of Health Visiting)

What more do we all need to do?

- Increase and promote mental health literacy widely across health, social care and community and voluntary sector partners
- Harness technology and social media that can support individual interventions to promote wellbeing, e.g. mindfulness, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Support population-wide campaigns to promote good mental wellbeing and reduce mental health stigma
- Display resources on websites, in libraries, children's centres and community venues

2. Focus on the foundations – nurture the early years

Key resources and community assets:

- Parents and families
- Community midwifery
- 0-19 Children's Public Health Services
- Early help services
- Children's services
- Nurseries and schools

⁽²⁰⁾ Mental Health Foundation (2017) Thriving or Surviving? The State of the UK's Mental Health

⁽²¹⁾ New Economics Foundation (2008) Five Ways to Wellbeing

⁽²²⁾ Children's Society (2014) Ways to Wellbeing

What more do we all need to do?

- Increase children's life chances by focusing on the critical 1,001 days from conception to age two
- Ensure our children experience healthy relationships that support them to be resilient, capable and confident
- Roll out perinatal mental health training to front line staff across all settings
- Further integrated working in locality teams to provide holistic family support
- Review the current offer of parenting programmes and ensure there is a menu of evidence-based programmes in a variety of settings and through a variety of means (individual face-to-face, groups, online, linked to two-year-old offer)
- Improve readiness to learn and readiness for school

3. Create mentally healthy places and build community resilience**Key settings:**

- Schools
- Workplaces
- Community groups

What more do we all need to do?

- Empower and develop individual and community resilience across appropriate settings
- Ensure the proportion of young people not in education and training remains low
- Further develop training and resources to support resilience in young people in schools
- Increase training opportunities for young people, including apprenticeships
- Increase the number of employers signed up to the Better Health at Work Award and promote mental wellbeing as a key component of workplace health and wellbeing initiatives
- Promote lifelong learning
- Ensure there is good employment and opportunities for those with mental health problems

4. Connect communities, facilitate participation and promote inclusion**Key resources and community assets:**

- Residents
- Voluntary sector organisations
- Community clubs, groups and networks
- Green spaces, beaches and parks
- Cultural spaces and activities, e.g. museums, theatres and libraries
- Leisure facilities

What more do we all need to do?

- Take responsibility to be 'active' citizens and support neighbours, communities and local people
- Build on the strengths and capabilities of our local communities to identify and promote the 'assets' and facilities available locally
- Promote the assets of the borough that improve wellbeing, e.g. beaches, parks, allotments, libraries, museums, sport and leisure
- Build resilience by continuing to invest in social prescribing to support people to develop skills and knowledge to improve their own wellbeing
- Increase the number of people volunteering in North Tyneside by making it attractive, worthwhile and meaningful
- Promote access to community groups through the SIGN website, Care and Connect and Care Navigators
- Support activities that bring people together, e.g. volunteering, connecting with others through groups, clubs, events and shared interests

5. Connect mental wellbeing with physical health**Key resources and community assets:**

- Primary care and NHS services
- Active North Tyneside
- Commissioners of services
- Community and voluntary organisations

What more do we all need to do?

- Increase understanding of the links between physical health and mental wellbeing, particularly in areas such as tobacco, alcohol, obesity and physical activity
- Ensure that people with long term conditions are supported to 'thrive' and their mental health and wellbeing needs are not forgotten
- Promote physical activity as an evidenced-based intervention for promoting wellbeing in those with health conditions – especially our walking schemes and free swimming
- Empower and support a person with physical health problems to 'self-manage' which helps to build resilience, develop skills and confidence and promote social prescribing
- Ensure that people with mental illness also have their physical health needs met

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Senior Public Health Manager, North Tyneside Council

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Craig Anderson

Policy, Performance and Research Manager, North Tyneside Council

Neil Tait

Policy, Research and Intelligence Adviser, North Tyneside Council

Robert Dixon

Policy, Research and Intelligence Adviser, North Tyneside Council

Jerry Dronsfield

Operations Manager Horticulture and Parks, North Tyneside Council

Alison Bailey

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Mandi Cresswell

Meadowell Connected

Phil McGrath

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Ian Dougall

VODA

Beth Williams

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Service User Focus Group

Launchpad North Tyneside

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www.helensmith.co.uk

Wendy Burke

Director of Public Health

North Tyneside Council

The Silverlink North
Cobalt Business Park
North Tyneside
NE27 0BY

www.northtyneside.gov.uk



North Tyneside Council