

# East Sussex Health & Wellbeing Board Deep Dive Sessions Briefing Note

## Session #2: Improving healthy life expectancy

### 1. Background

A key East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) objective in the Shared Delivery Plan (SDP) for 24/25 is as follows:

*“We will strengthen the focus and role of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the East Sussex Health and Care Partnership by strategically aligning partnerships and working to support our shared priorities for delivering a joined-up offer for health, care and wellbeing, including prevention, across NHS, local government and VCSE sector services for our population.*

As a result it has been agreed to hold a programme of 7 informal ‘deep-dive’ sessions at quarterly intervals prior to the formal HWB meetings up until February 2026, structured around the priority themes in our [East Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) (JSNA). Both voting HWB members and non-voting members with speaking rights are invited to the sessions, which are aimed at deepening the shared understanding of our population’s health and care needs and priorities.

The sessions will also help strengthen the relationships and mutual accountability needed for whole system collaboration in the challenging financial context being experienced by all our organisations. In light of this, building on our strong foundations for partnership working each session will consider what is needed, or needs to be unblocked, to achieve the following ambitions and ingredients for success:

- A proactive collaborative approach
- Ownership of shared priorities at Place
- Trusted relationships and shared values
- Deeper operational collaboration in the borough and district geographies and communities

This briefing note sets out the summary outcomes and key messages from the second session which took place on **14 November 2024** in Lewes on the theme of health life expectancy (HLE).

## 2. Briefing note

### 2.1 Session 2: Improving Healthy Life Expectancy in East Sussex

Health Life Expectancy (HLE) has been identified as a key outcome measure in assessing the extent to which health is improving and disparities are narrowing across our population. HLE divides our expected lifespan into time spent in different states of health or disability. HLE is the average age people can expect to live to in a good state of health (illness or disability-free). This is important because the duration of the period of ill health near the end of life has significant personal and societal implications, including poorer quality of life, poorer health outcomes, more frequent hospital admissions and higher risk for premature mortality.

A full briefing about HLE and how we can improve it in East Sussex can be found on the East Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) website: [improving-healthy-life-expectancy-in-east-sussex](#). In summary, our shared objective is to help extend the years of life people spend in good health through a range of organisational and partnership activity covering social, economic, environmental and behavioural risks as well as actions designed to spot illness and disease early and intervene. The key messages about HLE in East Sussex are as follows:



National good practice recommends that to more effectively improve, and reduce the gap in healthy life expectancy, there needs to be a greater focus on improving the drivers of self-reported health as well as drivers of early death (premature mortality). To do this most effectively means:

1. Preventing the onset of chronic conditions, and effective clinical management of chronic conditions
2. Paying particular attention also to conditions which, if targeted, would have the greatest impact on HLE at population level: Musculoskeletal (MSK) and Cardiovascular disease (CVD)
3. A focus on the relationship between behavioural risks and wider determinants

4. Consideration of the complex relationship between wider determinants of health, psychosocial risk factors, health-related behaviour, and physiological risk factors
5. Improvements in self-reported good health among older age groups

## **2.2 Outcomes from the session**

The session spent time developing a shared understand of HLE and how each partner currently contributes to our shared plans for improving HLE in East Sussex, in line with the national good practice. Building on the analysis and recommendations set out in the [East Sussex JSNA briefing](#), the following suggestions were identified to help further refresh our focus on improving HLE looking forward to 25/26:

### ***Operational collaboration and service delivery***

- Equip staff and volunteers in all of our services with enough knowledge about HLE and the awareness of protective factors, and the skills and digital solutions to 'make every contact count' (MECC), so that the right people can be pulled through into speedy connections with appropriate support. For example, prevention and social prescribing services and support with Long Term Condition management.
- Within this, explore the role of single points of access and digital solutions to share information quickly between staff and volunteers in different services to help meet wider needs, and measure increases in referrals.
- Understand more about our whole system offer to meet the aspirations and needs of children and young people, and the gaps in the way we support this through universal services and access to more specialist help, learning from good practice in schools and youth services.
- Recognise the challenges of providing the NHS Health Check and give priority/capacity to this based on variations in uptake and our 5 ICT data profiles, and go to communities where we can see the uptake is low.
- Linked to all of the above, understand how our Integrated Community Teams could strengthen our focus on improving Healthy Life Expectancy for the populations within their footprints, including using data and insight to target joint action and services at high-risk groups and areas where inequalities in HLE are clustered.

### ***Measuring progress***

- Ask our joint East Sussex Population Health and Care Intelligence Steering Group to propose indicators and measures so we can see the impact of our shared work to improve HLE in East Sussex, as part of our HWB Strategy [Shared Outcomes Framework](#). Explore how this could be undertaken through a whole life course approach to ensure a focus on a good start in life and the ability to live well and age well.
- Give consideration to a population survey of East Sussex residents to gain more insight into self-reported health in our local communities at a sub-borough and district level, and use the data to actively influence decision-making.
- To gain more insight into how self-reported health needs can be positively impacted, identify how we can use our own local examples of good practice on a smaller scale to demonstrate how our partnership action is delivering better outcomes for people.

## 2.3 Next steps

This briefing can be shared with organisations, partners and stakeholders to facilitate a wider understanding of how our HWB stewardship role is developing and supporting our joint working.

The outcomes of this deep dive session together with the full [improving-healthy-life-expectancy-in-east-sussex](#) briefing and recommendations will be shared with our East Sussex Health and Care Partnership leadership groups to ensure it informs current work and future planning activity for 25/26, in particular for the Shared Delivery Plan, including:

- East Sussex Health and Care Partnership Executive Board
- East Sussex Health Outcomes Improvement Oversight Board
- Children and Young People Health Oversight Board
- East Sussex Population Health and Care Intelligence Steering Group
- Other lead partnership groups for financial inclusion and social isolation and loneliness where helpful

The next informal deep dive session is planned to take place on 6 February 25 with a focus on the building blocks of health – a decent home, education and employment alongside good social connections and community.

We will also return to the progress on our actions arising from the first deep dive session and shaping the shared narrative, values and principles that could underpin our HWB's strategic stewardship role in East Sussex. This includes the HWB's ambition to support deeper operational collaboration in our local geographies and the sustainability of our integrated health, care and wellbeing offer to our population and communities in our challenging financial context.

For more information please contact:

Vicky Smith

Programme Director, East Sussex Health and Care Transformation

East Sussex County Council and NHS Sussex

Contact: [vicky.smith@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.smith@eastsussex.gov.uk)