

# Putting Health into Place

## Introducing NHS England's Healthy New Towns programme



TheKingsFund



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## Introduction

# How places matter to wellbeing

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Places where people live have a significant impact on their mental and physical health but that impact is too often negative. Many high streets are dominated by fast-food takeaways. Driving is often the only – and most convenient – way to get around. Poorly maintained parks and green spaces do little to invite walking or play. In numerous ways, neighbourhoods, towns and cities restrict people's choices and chances to lead healthier, more active lives.

People are living longer but are spending more of these additional years in poor health. Six million people over the age of 60 live with two or more long-term conditions, such as type 2 diabetes or depression. Many of these conditions are not inevitable, but are associated with the way people live.

UK schoolchildren are now among the least active in the world, and as a nation, we are among the most overweight in western Europe. Obesity, inactivity and social isolation are all strongly associated with the development of long-term conditions.

It is essential to help prevent ill health by planning, designing and developing higher quality places. There is growing evidence of how this can be done. For example, providing safe routes for walking to school or cycling to work helps promote physical activity, and attractive green spaces or parks for play and recreation can foster learning and wellbeing.

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# 1 IN 3

**CHILDREN IN YEAR 6 IS OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE**

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# 36,815

**DEATHS PER YEAR COULD BE AVOIDED THROUGH INCREASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

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## A perspective for change

In 2014 the NHS published its Five Year Forward View. This highlighted a string of challenges, including the need for diverse health and care support to treat people with multiple, concurrent long term health conditions. It also recognised the possibilities of a focus on illness prevention and innovative ways of providing healthcare.

Current housebuilding targets present an opportunity to create places that support people of all abilities, and in all stages of life. They present the potential to facilitate healthier lifestyles and to meet demand for well-designed new homes in attractive communities where it is convenient to walk or cycle.

Creating places that enable people to lead healthier lives requires the collaboration of a range of professions and policymakers. The Healthy New Towns programme addresses these issues and unites the professions required to work together – and in different ways – to effect change.

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**MORE  
IS SPENT EACH YEAR  
TREATING  
OBESITY  
AND  
DIABETES**

**THAN IS SPENT ON  
POLICE  
AND FIRE  
SERVICES AND THE  
JUDICIAL  
SYSTEM**

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## Healthy New Towns programme

NHS England established Healthy New Towns, a three year programme, to look at how health and wellbeing can be planned and designed into new places. It brings together partners in housebuilding, local government, healthcare and local communities to demonstrate how to create places that offer people improved choices and chances for a healthier life.

The programme's three priorities were:

- planning and designing a healthy built environment
- creating innovative models of healthcare
- encouraging strong and connected communities.

Places that were planning new large scale housing developments were invited to take part in the programme. Ten were selected to be 'demonstrator sites' to test innovation and explore possibilities. These sites represent a range of locations and explore different challenges.

Putting Health into Place, to be published by NHS England in spring 2019, will set out national recommendations for change and provide practical tools for anyone involved in creating new places, based on the 10 principles, which are introduced in this leaflet. NHS England has been collaborating with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and cross-government partners throughout the programme and is keen to see these principles adopted by garden cities and communities.

The final publication will be available from: [england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns](http://england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns)

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## Ten principles

# A route to healthy places

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### PLAN AHEAD COLLECTIVELY

# 1

Creating healthier places depends on support and involvement from local, professional and resident communities. This can be achieved through early, meaningful engagement and collaboration between people and organisations. A shared vision with clear objectives, based on local health evidence and forecasts, will help deliver improved health.

Partnerships should include: council planners and public health teams; health commissioners and providers; developers and housing associations; community-led organisations and residents; and businesses. Local planning authorities must look to ensure appropriate groups are consulted and represented at plan-making stages.

In Darlington, one of the Healthy New Town demonstrator sites, healthy principles were embedded into local planning policy after extensive consultation with local residents and businesses. The policy requires all new developments to embed key aspects of healthy placemaking in their design.

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### PLAN INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICES THAT MEET LOCAL NEEDS

# 2

Developing services that are fit for the future relies on partners agreeing a shared vision for health provision, with local people and clinicians involved throughout. New thinking is required.

Achieving appropriate services requires an understanding of specific local health needs and how they will evolve as the population changes, informed by robust forecasting and modelling. Evidence about how to provide high quality care, which meets people's physical, mental and social care needs in a joined-up way, should underpin an effective vision. The Halton Lea demonstrator site, in Runcorn, has done this and completed a detailed survey of its existing provision to inform its integrated local health and care strategy.

Health and care workforce needs must be forecasted; recruitment strategies should ensure suitable staff are attracted and retained; and the best digital infrastructure to support modern, technologically enabled care must be identified.

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### CONNECT, INVOLVE AND EMPOWER PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

# 3

Social connections are vital for health and wellbeing. Loneliness increases the likelihood of death by 26% and people with strong relationships are 50% more likely to survive life-threatening illness. Creating strong communities, by promoting cohesion and inclusion, helps people form these highly beneficial relationships.

Actively inviting established communities and new residents to be involved in decision making and shaping new developments can lead to a greater sense of connection with the place for those involved. Enabling residents to share information, time and resources in a way that uses people's skills and knowledge to benefit their community improves quality of life.

At the Bicester demonstrator site in Oxfordshire, a 'Healthy Bicester' Facebook page has been created. This simple and low cost initiative, which has successfully been used to promote community events, reaches an average of 13,000 people per month.

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### CREATE COMPACT NEIGHBOURHOODS

# 4

An important way to support health through the built environment is in the creation of compact, walkable neighbourhoods.

Well-connected, mixed use places with pedestrian and cycle-friendly streets enable people of all ages, abilities and financial means to reach jobs, services, shops and schools easily. Strong, healthy communities flourish in areas that do not rely on cars, and which encourage social interaction in attractive streets, parks and other civic spaces. Commitment to creating compact neighbourhoods is needed at the earliest stages of planning and development.

The Northstowe demonstrator site in Cambridgeshire has developed a healthy design code, which will ensure adequate provision and distribution of green space, and provides a standard for streets and open spaces.

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## MAXIMISE ACTIVE TRAVEL

# 5

Regular physical activity is essential for good physical and mental health. And when physical activity is incorporated into our daily routines, the likelihood of that activity being sustained is significantly increased.

Well planned neighbourhoods will make walking, cycling and affordable public transport the first choice for getting around for everyone, including people with impaired mobility. Providing appropriate infrastructure for whole journeys makes active travel options practical for users. Networks of safe walking and cycling paths, preferably segregated, are a good start. These should be augmented with clear signposting, seating and cycle-parking along routes, in public spaces and at transport hubs.

Modern technology can help, such as apps that make active travel an easier choice. In the Ebbsfleet Garden City demonstrator site locally organised walks and digital technology are being used to encourage active travel.

## INSPIRE AND ENABLE HEALTHY EATING

# 6

Enabling people to eat a balanced and healthier diet, and making it easy and affordable to do so, are key to tackling health inequalities and improving environmental sustainability. Careful placemaking, urban design and partnership working can give residents easy access to nutritious ingredients for home cooking, and to healthier food when they are out, whether at school or at work. Limiting access to less healthy foods, from fast food takeaways for example, would strengthen this approach.

Local authorities can use their planning powers to restrict the number of fast food takeaways. The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham was the first local authority in England to ban licences for hot food takeaways within a 400m radius of primary and secondary schools.

## FOSTER HEALTH IN HOMES AND BUILDINGS

# 7

More than 90% of our time is spent indoors and the buildings we occupy – and what takes place in them – have a big effect on our health. In homes, sufficient space, daylight levels, ventilation, outlook and privacy are essential for good health. In workplaces, schools and other institutions, there are many opportunities to support health through building design and management, and through the activities of the organisations that occupy them. Central to this is enabling people to gather and socialise, and to enjoy quiet reflection. Buildings that are comfortable, offer character and cultivate a sense of community and pride have a positive impact on people's health. Such buildings are also likely to be resilient to social and technological change.

Ebbsfleet Garden City is developing a quality mark to raise the standard of new homes being built. The quality mark includes criteria on natural light and ventilation, space and accessibility, as well as streets, neighbourhood design and landscape.

## ENABLE HEALTHY PLAY AND LEISURE

# 8

Leisure time and activity are vital to good health and wellbeing. Healthy placemaking must create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to come together, be active and enjoy leisure time collectively. Community groups and leaders must be consulted on emerging designs, and later given support by developers and the council to organise events. A wide range of things to do, in places designed to make it easy to join in, will be even more popular if supported by technology that helps people to find out what's on and how to take part.

At the Whitehill & Bordon demonstrator site in Hampshire there is an area of heathland, called Hogmoor Inclosure. This has been designed as a dementia-friendly family park, with clear, legible signage and a play area for young children. People living in a strong community, brought together by leisure activity such as this, are less likely to experience social isolation and depression.

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**PROVIDE HEALTH SERVICES THAT HELP PEOPLE STAY WELL**

**9**

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**CREATE INTEGRATED HEALTH CENTRES**

**10**

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New approaches to healthcare are placing greater emphasis on helping people to stay well and prevent avoidable illness. For instance, those with long-term conditions, such as type 2 diabetes or heart disease, can be supported so they can manage their own health and wellbeing through, for example, health coaching, peer support and digital technology such as mobile apps.

Creating new neighbourhoods provides opportunities to strengthen primary care and other out-of-hospital services. Integrated teams can be built that bring together a range of health professionals.

Health services can also be linked to other local assets such as ‘social prescribing’, which involves connecting GPs more closely with local charities and community groups. The Whitehill & Bordon, Barton and Barking demonstrator sites are all taking forward social prescribing initiatives.

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Providing a range of health services on a single site can make it quicker and more convenient for people to get support, advice, diagnosis and treatment. Integrated health centres enable health staff to work in a more joined up way, making connections between GP, acute physical healthcare and mental health services, for example. For instance, a health and wellbeing campus could offer GP services, diagnostic testing, a pharmacy, out-patient mental and physical health services, and leisure facilities, as well as serving as a base for community organisations.

Putting health facilities at the heart of the local community makes it easier to deliver the new approaches described in Principle 9. Achieving this could involve re-purposing NHS land and buildings to ensure they are put to best possible use, for example through the provision of housing for key workers, such as nursing staff.

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**Demonstrator sites  
Ten places that  
already lead the way**

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**WHITEHILL & BORDON IS EARLY IN ITS DEVELOPMENT, BUT ALREADY AROUND 150 PEOPLE A WEEK VISIT ITS HOGMOOR INCLOSURE GREEN SPACE**



# Demonstrator sites

## Healthy neighbourhoods start to take shape

Over 65,000 homes are planned or in development in the demonstrator sites. Here are the sites, followed by four of the initiatives promoting healthier, connected lives

### The ten sites

#### Barking Riverside, London

10,800 homes being built on brownfield land alongside the River Thames.

#### Barton, Oxford

885 homes on a site next to John Radcliffe Hospital.

#### Bicester, Oxfordshire

13,000 homes being built over 20 years.

#### Cranbrook, Devon

8,000 homes being built on greenfield land.

#### Darlington, County Durham

3,600 homes being built on three sites between 2018 and 2025.

#### Ebbsfleet Garden City, Kent

Up to 15,000 homes being built on brownfield sites by 2026.

#### Halton Lea, Runcorn

800 new homes and a health and wellbeing campus on a brownfield site.

#### Northstowe, Cambridgeshire

10,000 homes being built on the former RAF Oakington base and surrounding land.

#### Whitehill & Bordon, Hampshire

3,350 homes and commercial space being built on former Ministry of Defence land.

#### Whyndyke Garden Village, Lancashire

A 1,400 home development on a 91ha site planned for the Fylde coast.



## Case study

# Barking and Darlington embed health in spatial planning

Devising local 'healthy development principles' and including them in planning frameworks is a way of influencing long-term development to create a healthier place



Councils in Barking, east London, and Darlington, County Durham, worked with partners to include healthy development principles in their Local Plans. This approach was trialled for major regeneration sites in both regions.

### At Barking Riverside:

- Ten principles were developed to respond to local health needs
- The agreement also required the developer to create a health strategy to help to deliver the principles.

Barking was additionally the first council in the UK to ban hot food takeaways within 400m of schools in the borough.

### In Darlington:

- Six principles were developed as a checklist
- These principles were included in the Local Plan and will be considered in developments across the whole borough.

Darlington has already incorporated these principles into the design of an 81-home development.

**10**  
HEALTHY PLANNING  
PRINCIPLES

**REDUCE**  
HEALTH  
INEQUALITIES

**SUPPORT**  
INCLUSION

### Want to know more?

[lbbd.gov.uk/residents/  
health-and-social-care/  
healthy-new-town/  
overview](https://lbbd.gov.uk/residents/health-and-social-care/healthy-new-town/overview)

[www.darlington.gov.uk/  
health-and-social-care/  
healthy-new-towns](https://www.darlington.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/healthy-new-towns)

## Case study

# Ebbsfleet obesity strategy co-opts the smartphone

*Get Active* in Ebbsfleet is an initiative that aims to address high levels of childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes by rewarding participants with points on a smartphone app when they are active



*Get Active* in Ebbsfleet is available in Ebbsfleet Garden City in Kent, plus nearby Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley. It is a free smartphone app which is introduced to people as they move into new homes, to help them establish active routines, use green spaces and make social connections through joint activities such as walks.

The app uses a rewards system in which physical activity wins users BetterPoints that they can swap for vouchers to use in local shops or donate to charity. Evidence shows the system is linked to better mental health and wellbeing by incentivising activity, such as commuting by bicycle instead of car, or walking for at least 150 minutes a week.

The programme launched in Ebbsfleet in March 2018 and within the first seven weeks its 450 users had:

- Cycled more than 2,000 miles
- Walked more than 7,000 miles
- Run more than 500 miles.

The organisers aim to have 1,000 participants by March 2019.

**TECH**  
INCENTIVISES  
ACTIVITY

**450**  
NEW MEMBERS  
IN SEVEN WEEKS

**2000+**  
MILES CYCLED

### Want to know more?

### Get Active in Ebbsfleet

[https://ebbsfleet.  
betterpoints.uk/  
programmes/157](https://ebbsfleet.betterpoints.uk/programmes/157)



## Case study

# Whitehill & Bordon boosts the appeal of its green spaces

Access to the natural environment is important for health and wellbeing. Making careful changes to green spaces can improve the health of people with many different needs, abilities and interests



Protecting, restoring and improving existing green spaces can encourage more people to go out, helping them become more active and sociable which raises mental and physical health and sense of wellbeing.

Hogmoor Inclosure, adjacent to Whitehill & Bordon in Hampshire, is 54ha of wooded heathland. It is managed by a local environmental organisation on behalf of the development manager, which worked with local access groups and charities on its plans. By making the heathland more appealing to all parts of society, many more people have benefited from exercise, contact with nature and the opportunity to get involved in community activities. Features include:

- Interactive areas, water features and a communal food growing plot
- Café, classroom, and a changing places toilet for disabled adults' use – so people with different needs can be confident to visit
- A natural environment play area.

Whitehill & Bordon is early in its development, but already around 150 people a week visit Hogmoor Inclosure and more than 200 runners, walkers and joggers took part in its first park run.

**WORK**  
WITH LOCAL  
CHARITIES

**200+**  
ACTIVE IN FIRST  
PARK RUN

**ENHANCE**  
NATURE TO  
INCREASE ACCESS

Want to know more?

**Whitehill & Bordon**  
<http://whitehillbordon.com>

## Case study

# Halton joins up healthcare, housing and community life

Innovative health facilities can create a hub for local neighbourhoods and support new approaches to care that co-locate healthcare services and community facilities on a single site



At the centre of the vision for creating a healthy place in Halton, Cheshire, is a health and wellbeing campus. This will enable the residents of Halton Lea and beyond to go to a single place for most of their health and care needs – co-locating healthcare and other facilities, including an older people's home and a nursery. The campus will support co-ordinated working between GPs, medical specialists, mental health experts and community health services such as district nursing.

The ambition for this campus is to re-build and transform an existing hospital site, to provide:

- Enhanced healthcare facilities
- A leisure centre
- Multi-generational housing
- Green spaces
- A venue for community activities.

The vision for the health and wellbeing campus was developed through close collaboration between NHS organisations, Halton Borough Council and local people. An analysis of the likely future needs of the population by the local academic health science network and others was also used to help futureproof the campus and its services.

**HOUSING**  
FOR ALL AGES

**ANALYSE**  
NEEDS TO  
FUTUREPROOF

**CREATING**  
HEALTH AND  
WELLBEING CAMPUS

Want to know more?

**Active Halton**  
<https://hit.activehalton.co.uk>

## Publication partners

Putting Health into Place was commissioned by NHS England and produced through a creative collaboration between:



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### The TCPA

[tcpa.org.uk](http://tcpa.org.uk)

### The King's Fund

[kingsfund.org.uk](http://kingsfund.org.uk)

### The Young Foundation

[youngfoundation.org](http://youngfoundation.org)

### PA Consulting

[paconsulting.com](http://paconsulting.com)

### Public Health England

[gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england](http://gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england)

### NHS England

[england.nhs.uk](http://england.nhs.uk)

## For more information

Find out more about Putting Health into Place at:  
[england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns](http://england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns)

## Cover

In Whitehill & Bordon a play area made of natural materials such as stone, wood and sand has been created in the Hogmoor Inclosure, a local green space. Immediately popular, it has encouraged local children to get active and provides a great place for them to meet and make friends with others from the new development as they move in.

Photography: Mike Ellis Photography

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