



Improving children's wellbeing

Everyone's Business

ANNUAL
REPORT
2015/16



Acknowledgements

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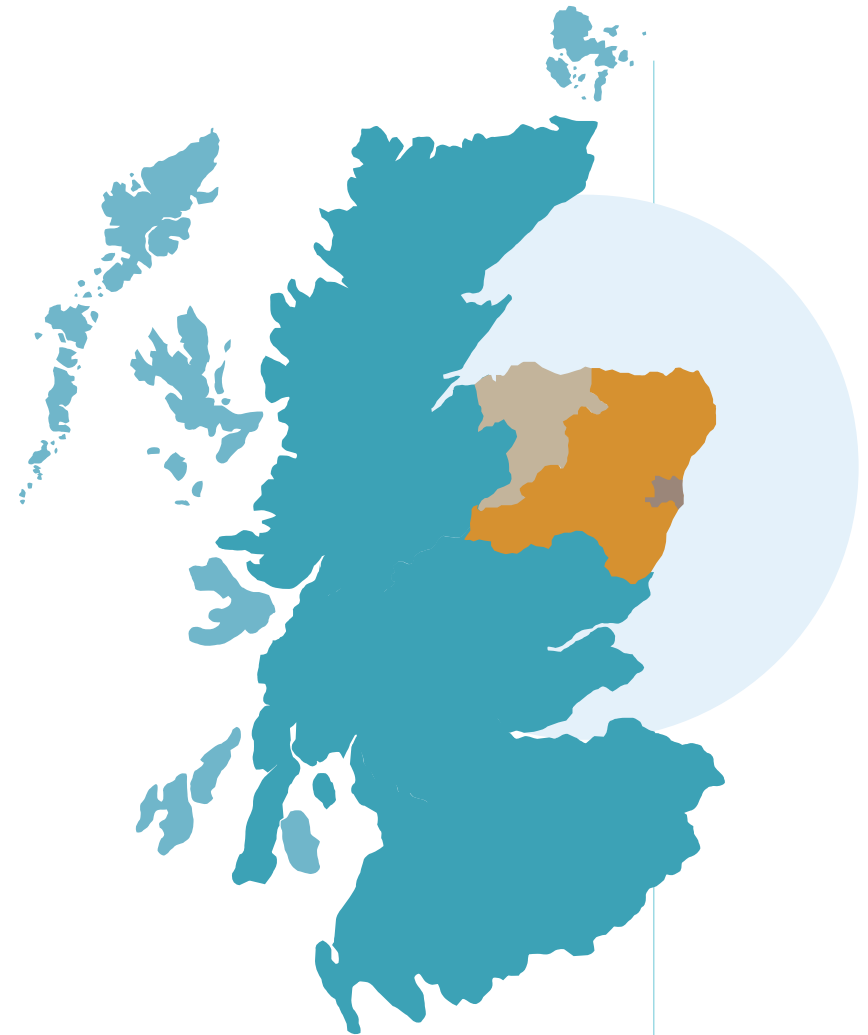
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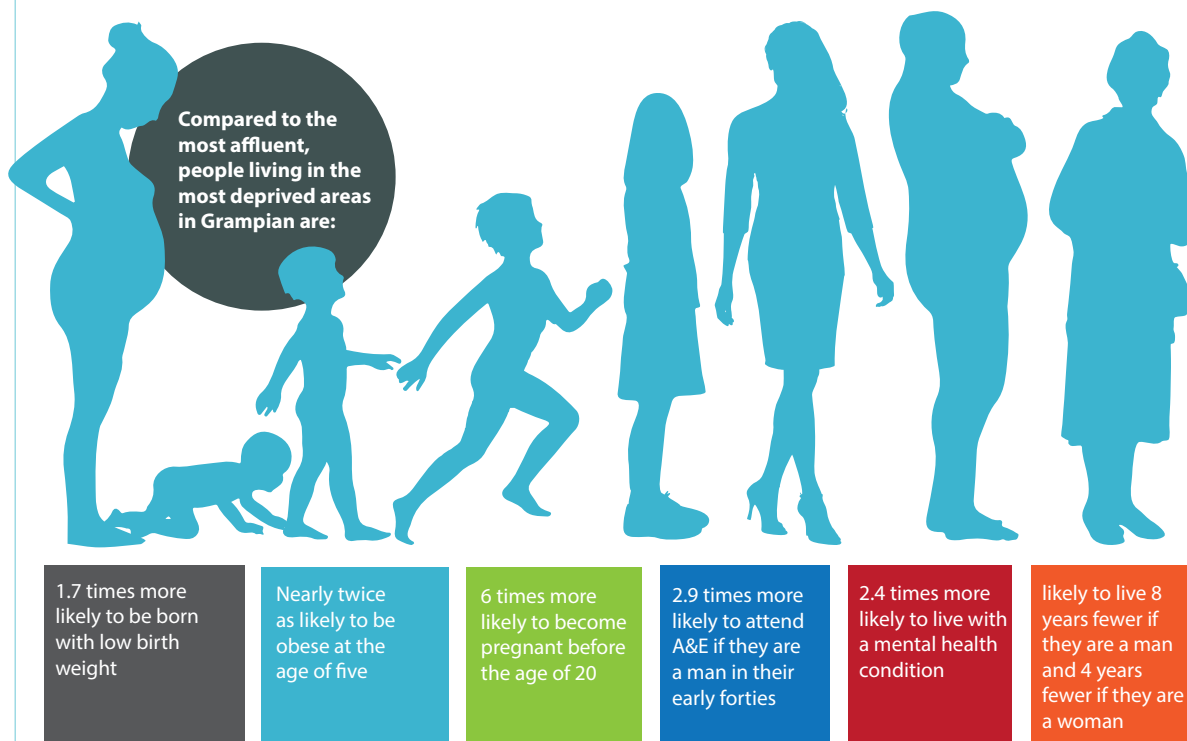
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Executive Summary

Some children in the North East do not get the start they need to be healthy and achieve their potential in life.



There are children whose health and life chances are affected by poverty in every electoral ward of the three local authorities in Grampian.



Intervening early in the wider determinants of children's wellbeing can avoid the high cost associated with dealing with health and social problems later in life. Some returns are seen quickly, others take longer to be realised. Every £1 invested in:¹⁷

Health visitors providing support to mums who are depressed can save

£8

School-wide anti-bullying programmes can save

£15

Designing healthier spaces for people to live in can save up to

£168

Preventing teenage pregnancy can save

£11

Supporting people who are struggling to enter the job market can save at least

£3



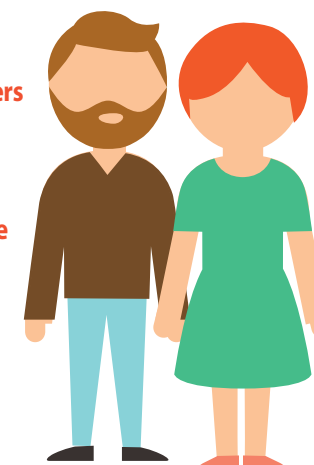
To intervene early and improve the wellbeing of children in the North East, public, private and third sector organisations need to work together, share the risks and eventually share the benefits.

In our work with health and social care partnerships, clinical services, community and locality planning, the Directorate of Public Health commits to:

1
Knowing issues of



4
Help decision makers in the North East create a society, environment and economy conducive to health and wellbeing for all



Message from the Director of Public Health

Welcome to the Director of Public Health annual report for 2015/16 which focuses on how to improve the wellbeing of children growing up in Grampian.

The issues that affect the health and wellbeing of children in the North East are the same as those that affect the health and wellbeing of us all: inequality, poverty, employment and education opportunities, housing, transport and connectedness to name but a few.

This report builds on themes raised in previous reports, including resilience and prevention. Prevention is an area where the public health and community planning agenda aligns with the health care agenda, through the NHS Grampian clinical strategy.

Promoting wellbeing in children to give them the best start in life is the first step on the road to health and wellbeing in adulthood and old age.

Improving the wellbeing of children is everyone's business. It requires commitment, communication and investment from public, private and third sector organisations across the North East. I would like to thank the many individuals and public, private and third sector organisations that have helped put this report together. Your contribution has been invaluable and I hope that this report reflects our shared values and priorities as partners.

To support radical change, the Public Health Directorate commits to:

- Strengthening participation and sharing intelligence about health so that individuals and communities can engage with the issues that are important to them and identify sustainable solutions

- Supporting our local partners to decide if what works in other areas would work here and, where evidence is lacking, generate local evidence to inform decision making
- Stepping up to be the champion for issues of health and wellbeing in local and national forums
- Taking every opportunity to influence policy and strategy which could improve the health of our population



Susan Webb
Director of Public Health

Getting a good start in life is the first step on the road to good health and wellbeing

Public Health is here to help you. Feel free to contact us:

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NHS Grampian Public Health homepage: <http://www.hi-netgrampian.org>

The conditions are right in Grampian to radically improve children's lives

Children of the 1950s

The University of Aberdeen has followed children born in Aberdeen between 1950-1956 as they grow and age. This group of individuals, known as the Aberdeen Children of the 1950s, are a jewel in the crown of Scottish health research and have helped to advance our understanding of wellbeing.

We have used excerpts from the studies that these children have been involved in to make the link between childhood experiences and lifelong wellbeing.

Implementation is underway of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The Act was developed from Scottish experience of the 'Getting It Right for Every Child' approach, which is concerned with individual child wellbeing. It is now our legal duty to work together in family and child-centred ways to ensure that all children achieve their potential.

In this report, we make the case that improving the wellbeing of children starts with improving the conditions which they are born into and grow up in. By this we mean the communities they are born into, the communities where we all live, work and grow old.

The 2013/14 Director of Public Health Report identified resilience as the currency needed in Grampian to overcome the individual, societal and organisational challenges that inequality, poverty and an ageing population bring. In this report, we build on the theme of resilience and its importance in promoting child wellbeing.

We are unequivocal that inequality in Grampian affects the wellbeing and life chances of children. Reducing inequality has to be at the heart of any strategy in Grampian that seeks to improve the wellbeing of children.

Effective action to reduce inequality is the product of partnership working focused on outcomes. There are many examples of this type of working across

Grampian, some of which are featured in this report. The North East of Scotland is a fount of innovation and creativity in using local assets and working within existing resources to build resilience. It can be less easy to see the frustration of those who want to do things to improve their communities but feel blocked from doing so. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provides a legal reminder that the resources which exist within communities are collectively owned and should be used to achieve a common purpose.

The year has been marked by a number of significant events from the signing of the first, legally binding global climate deal, the City and Region Deal and the UK decision to leave the EU. The link between health and wider social and economic forces is indisputable. Through community empowerment, locality planning and integrated children's services, we believe that there is both the opportunity and the means to alter the status quo and improve the wellbeing of children in North East Scotland.

Our report looks at the common areas across Grampian where local partnership action can make a difference to child wellbeing and sets out the contribution that public health can make.

Case Studies

The examples that are used in this report are a small flavour of innovation across Grampian. Innovation in public health builds on local assets and uses the evidence base to inform action. The examples of innovation provided in this report are by no means exhaustive.

Where the evidence base is lacking, innovative approaches should be monitored and evaluated carefully to see if they are beneficial. Questions those undertaking innovative approaches must answer are:

1. To what extent does this approach promote wellbeing and reduce inequality?
2. Is it appropriate to extend this approach to other communities?

Public Health specialists can provide expertise and support in the design, monitoring and evaluation of innovative approaches to answer these questions.

Giving Grampian children the best start in life improves all our lives

Last year's report described policy changes and the move towards health and social care integration. Since then, each of our Integration Authorities has defined localities, smaller areas contained within its borders. People living within localities will be able to influence how resources are best used in their local area to reduce inequality and improve health.

We recognise that what happens early in life affects health and wellbeing in later life and old age. There is a strong economic case for investing in prevention programmes.

Our long history of partnership working in Grampian has forged strong relationships and a shared

understanding between public, private and third sector organisations. Despite this, it has been difficult to make a joint shift towards prevention and effectively reduce inequality. One of the challenges in making the move to prevention is knowing what works and what actions we need to prioritise.

We use this year's report to offer ways in which we can act at a local level to improve the communities that Grampian children are growing up in. If we can use the strong relationships that we have forged to combine knowledge of effective practice and intervene early, we will succeed in improving health and reducing inequalities for people of all ages in the North East.



The wellbeing of children is a reflection of the communities they live in



Child poverty: entrenching and exacerbating inequality in Grampian

Children of the 1950s

Aberdeen families of the 1950s earned and spent less than the average Aberdonian family today. Despite this, people from the 1950s said they did not consider themselves deprived, valuing the role that extended families and neighbours played in their upbringing.

Poverty affects children across Grampian. While the percentage of children living in poverty is lower than the Scottish average, the consequences of the poverty they experience are as important and have the same lifelong effects as the consequences for children living in Glasgow, Lanarkshire or Dundee. In every electoral ward of every local authority in the North East, there are children living in poverty, as many as 30% of children in some areas¹.

Child poverty means growing up without the resources to have the living conditions and participate in the activities which are the norm in 21st century Scotland³.

Across Grampian, there is widespread recognition and commitment to our responsibility to tackle child poverty.

Factors which contribute to insufficient household resources and poverty in Grampian include:^{4,5}

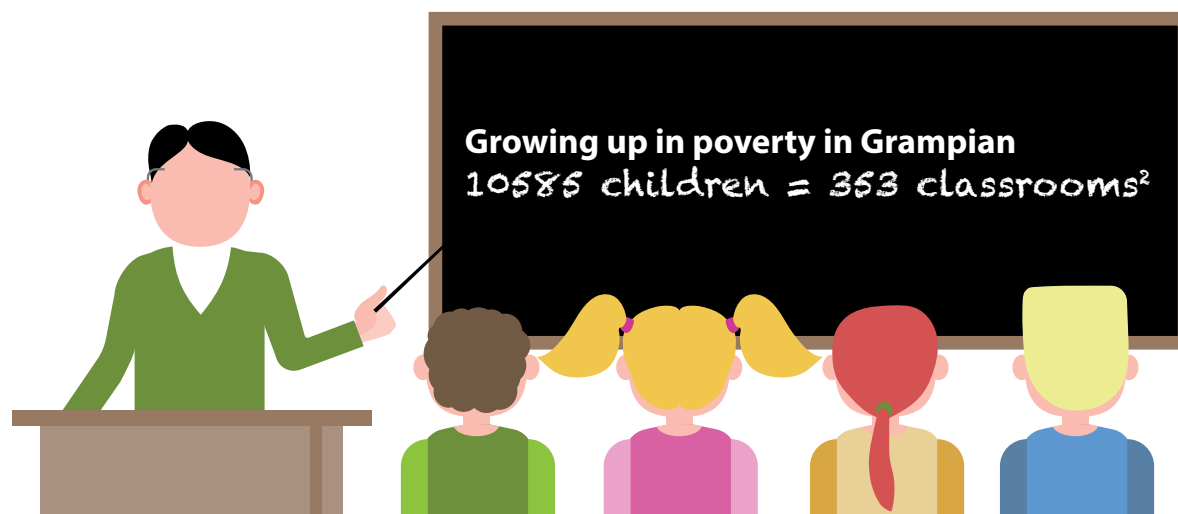
- Low wages and underemployment: employment alone is not a guaranteed route out of poverty. Changes to the quality and nature of work have driven up in-work poverty
- The barriers to work include a lack of suitable employment opportunities, a lack of suitable childcare, lack of transport to access employment opportunities further afield

- Welfare Reform, with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Health in all Policies concluding it is likely to increase levels of child poverty

While poverty reduction measures at the level of the UK and Scottish Governments are important, local early interventions can make a difference. Suggestions of effective local action from the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland include:

- Creating sustainable local economies which offer secure employment options and fair wages

- Making sure people take up the benefits that they are entitled to
- Providing affordable, high quality childcare close to the homes and workplaces of families
- Recognising and removing the additional costs of education, from uniform choices to school transport



Equal at Birth?

Some parents go through the devastating experience of losing a baby either during pregnancy or during the first year of their child's life. It is a rare occurrence, and the number of babies who die in the UK has fallen steadily over the last 20 years⁶. Despite this fall, the mortality rate for babies in the UK is high when compared to our European neighbours⁶. Maternal health and the development of the baby are strongly influenced by the social, economic, and environmental circumstances that surround them.

Babies born into poverty have a higher risk of dying

The majority of deaths in children occur during the first year of life⁶. Preterm birth and low birth weight are risk factors for death during infancy. These risk factors disproportionately affect the most disadvantaged in our society. Pregnancies to women living in areas with the highest levels of social deprivation are over 50% more likely to end in stillbirth or neonatal death than women in the most affluent circumstances⁷.

The complex benefits system and lack of awareness about financial entitlements mean that it is common to not claim the financial support that people are entitled to⁸. Approximately 40% of eligible women in Grampian do not take up the healthy start voucher scheme, even though they are entitled to it.

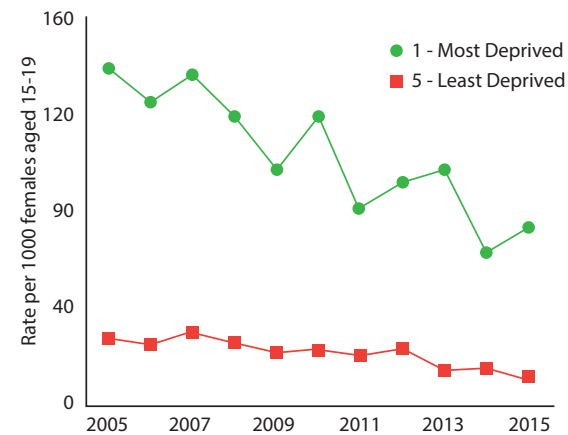
Healthy Start is a UK-wide government scheme that provides free vitamin supplements and vouchers for milk, fruit, vegetables and infant formula to



pregnant women and children under four. Other schemes, such as Sure Start vouchers and top up payments are available too and uptake varies across the country⁹.

Young maternal age is another risk factor for child mortality¹. Having children at an early stage of life can reduce educational opportunities for some mothers and put some children at risk of poverty. Rates of mortality in the children of women aged under 20 is higher than those who are older when their child is born. While the overall rate of pregnancies in women under 20 in Grampian is lower than the Scottish average¹⁰, women under 20 from the most deprived parts of Grampian are up to six times more likely to become pregnant than those from the most affluent parts. Given the

relative affluence of our population in Grampian, we should interpret the rates of pregnancy in young women as a sign that we could be doing more to raise aspirations of and opportunities available to young women. Doing so is in all our interest: every pound invested in preventing teenage pregnancy can return up to £11 in future savings to the public purse¹⁷.



Teenage pregnancy is falling but remains 6 times more likely in children living in deprived areas of Grampian

Local efforts to reduce poverty in children and their families would save lives as well as change lives

Closing the development gap in the early years

It is not immediately obvious which are the areas and who are the families that need help to close the development gap

From the day they are born, children learn and develop by touching, seeing, hearing, tasting, moving and playing¹¹. The skills children develop depend on the experiences they have. The first day in school is a milestone for every parent and it is important that on this day, children are ready to start Primary 1. Children who are behind in their development when they start Primary 1 are at a disadvantage and likely to underachieve at school. Sustained underachievement at school affects their life chances and health, wellbeing and happiness¹². There is overwhelming evidence that intervening long before children start school can reduce the gap in school readiness¹³ so children are better placed to make the most of the opportunities school and education offer.

Learning through play with mum and dad contributes to healthy development

Play is essential to the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of children. For families in economic hardship, it can be difficult to prioritise play against the day to day needs of food, shelter and heating, despite having the same desires for their child to succeed as more affluent families. Parents who live in poverty are also more likely to experience isolation, further limiting their ability to cope with the effects of poverty and provide for their children. Parents with little money to spare may feel disempowered to play and engage with their children because they can't afford expensive toys¹⁴.

Anyone can need help

The quality of early childhood experiences affecting children's development is determined by many complex factors, including how parents cope with the transition to parenthood¹⁵. Just as there are children growing up in poverty in every constituency of our three local authorities in Grampian, the developmental vulnerability of our children is unlikely to be solely found in the poorest 20% of our population¹⁶.

Case Studies

In HMP Grampian, a play together programme helps dads and their children bond through play.

"The family play sessions have been a positive experience for all of us. It has been much more relaxed which has meant we have been able to be ourselves, especially for my partner as he is able to move around the room and has been able to bond with his child".

Case Studies

Moray has Parental Early Education Programme (PEEP) groups in Lossiemouth, Elgin, Buckie, Keith, Dufftown and Forres. PEEP helps parents and children make the most of everyday play and learning opportunities. Health visitors give a PEEP leaflet to all parents. Nursery nurses, volunteers and public sector staff are also involved in the groups. PEEP gives parents an opportunity to meet other parents and make friends. This is particularly important when becoming a parent for the first time and finding that existing friendship groups change, or in an area like Moray with both an RAF and an Army base, service families can feel isolated.

Universal healthcare services under strain and critical to equity in childhood

In emphasising the importance of social, economic and environmental factors in determining health, it is possible to overlook the important contribution of healthcare to determining our health and wellbeing¹⁷.

The universal services of primary care and health visiting are two examples of these critically important health services. These services help to balance the impact of inequality and provide significant and long lasting returns on the investments made in them. Up to £8 can be saved for every pound invested in health visitors to support mothers who are depressed¹⁷.

A public health example of the success of the provision of universal health services in Grampian

are the high rates of childhood immunisation.

At times of financial pressure, a universal service can seem like an expensive luxury. Just as poverty is unevenly dispersed across Grampian, so too are needs for universal services. Areas with higher concentrations of deprivation may have many families who need intensive support. Other areas may have fewer numbers of families, but their needs for support are no less important.

Universal health services are a key investment for equity in the early years and need to be provided at a scale and intensity that allows professionals to respond quickly and appropriately to the needs of children of the North East.



Children, young people and families in Grampian want services to be there when they need them and as close to home as possible

Child Health 2020



A warm, safe place to call home

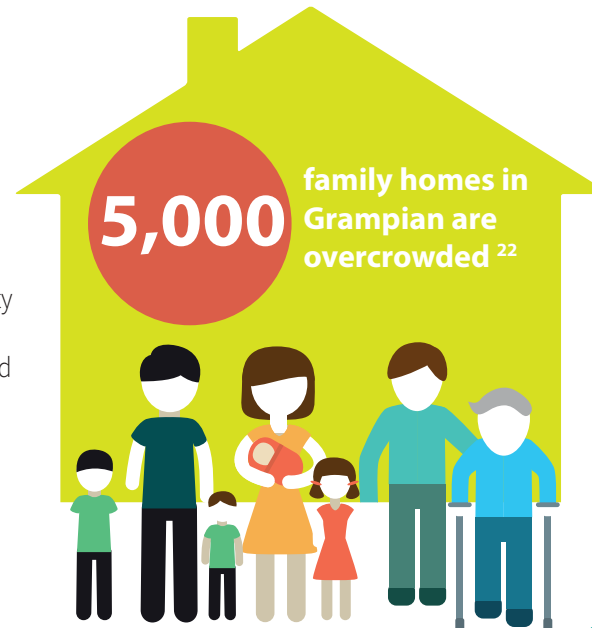
A home is fundamental to good health and wellbeing at any stage of life.

It is the starting point to building a better quality of life, gaining and then maintaining independence and setting roots in the local community. A home in an acceptable condition is warm, weatherproof and has enough space for the people who live in it. The physical environment affects our health and wellbeing. As young children spend the vast majority of their time at home, the conditions at home are particularly important for their health, wellbeing and development.

Making green space work for local people

Overcrowding is a particular problem for families living in socially or privately rented accommodation¹⁹. Children need space to play, develop, and do their homework and study for exams. The constantly changing sleeping arrangements in an overcrowded home can lead to problems with children's development, school work and affect their mental health²⁰. Overcrowding is associated with an increased risk of contracting meningitis and tuberculosis in children. The lack of space and privacy causes stress, conflict and can damage family relationships²¹.

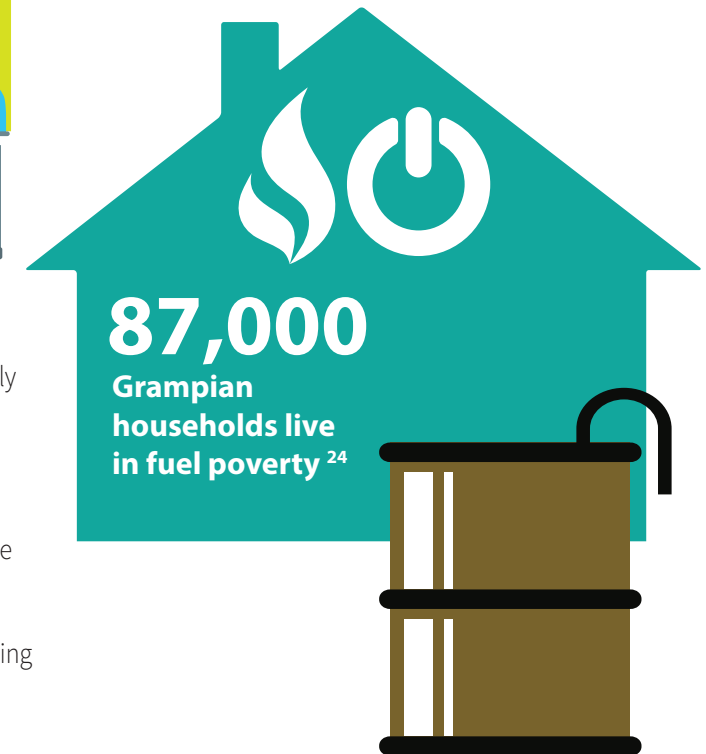
It is well recognised that green spaces are community assets which could help improve the mental health and wellbeing of an individual in addition to the wellbeing of the wider community.



Simply increasing the amount of green space in a community is not enough. People are less likely to use local green spaces if they feel unsafe or excluded from the community. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provides opportunities to communities who wish to take responsibility for local green spaces. Defining the use of these spaces according to the priorities of local people could help mitigate some of the negative effects of overcrowding and poor housing conditions.

Making homes more energy efficient improves children's physical and mental health

To stay warm and healthy, most people need to heat their homes to about 18°C in the bedrooms and around 21°C in the living area. If the price of fuel is high, the energy efficiency of a home is low or the household is on a low income, people are forced to spend a large proportion of their income on heating their home.



We should help communities lead the way in how their green spaces are used

Spending more than 10% of household income to adequately heat the home is the threshold for experiencing fuel poverty. People in fuel poverty are forced to make choices between heating and other household expenditures. Rationing energy use can result in cold, damp homes. Babies growing up in these conditions may not reach their full developmental potential. Children from cold homes are more likely to have respiratory problems. Furthermore children in poor housing conditions are more likely to have mental health problems such as anxiety and depression²³. These adverse outcomes reflect both the direct impact of the housing and the associated material deprivation. Investing in housing and projects to reduce the effects of cold would give rapid returns to the public purse in terms of physical, developmental and mental wellbeing¹⁷.

Preventing accidents at home saves lives and reduces inequality

Preventing injuries and accidents at home is an important way of improving children's wellbeing in Grampian. Local intelligence can be a valuable tool in directing preventative support and assistance to households as well as evaluating the effects of housing policies or projects. The highest rates of injuries as a result of an accident at home are in the under fives. Although the numbers of children injured after an accident at home has fallen in recent years, there is still much room for improvement. Aberdeen city has a particularly high rate of

Case Studies

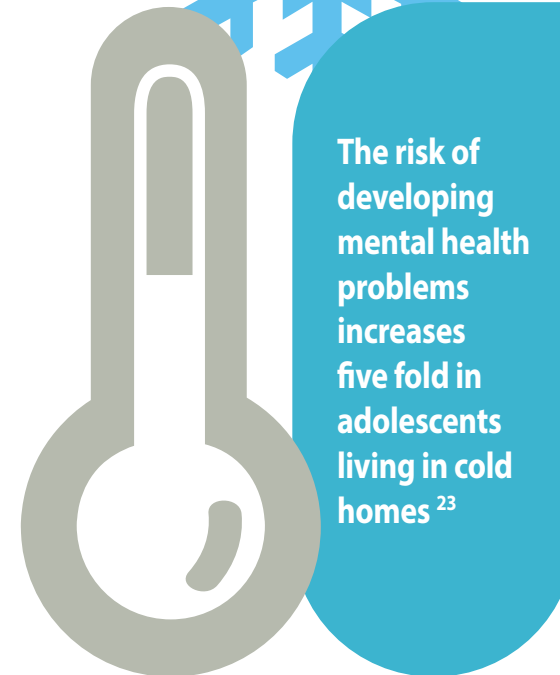
When health visitors visit families at home they discuss home safety and first aid. Grampian families have the opportunity to discuss safety concerns before their children become mobile.

Families can take up the offer of free safety equipment and fire prevention advice offered by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and other local partners.

recorded accidents in the home when compared to other urban areas. The highest rates are seen in the most deprived areas.

Within public health, we have an important role in helping people understand their local public health priorities by providing intelligence to inform their actions. We understand that it can be difficult to wade through large reports or figure out what is going on in your area from complex statistics. Available online alongside this report are examples of how we are trying to make health statistics easier to interact with by using new ways to make data more visual (see link below).

<http://www.hi-netgrampian.org/publichealth>



The risk of developing mental health problems increases five fold in adolescents living in cold homes²³

People of all ages and from all backgrounds can get into financial difficulty because of the amount they have to spend on heating their homes

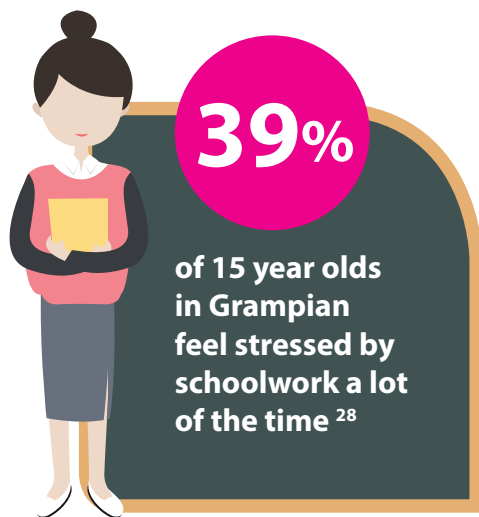
Resilience: how to thrive in the 21st century

Children of the 1950s

Aberdeen kids who were bullies, or were bullied, had poorer health in their fifties compared to kids who were not involved in bullying²⁶.

As children are growing up, experiences like living in poverty, having a parent with a health problem or being bullied have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing and life chances²⁵.

Worries about exams, future job prospects and the intensity of the online world²⁷ have a direct effect on how safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, responsible, respected and included children in Grampian feel.



Resilience broadly refers to the ability of people and communities to withstand stress or challenge. It is a key component of social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing²⁹.

The experience of chronic low level stress has been shown to affect human physiology and is associated with an increased risk of developing chronic long term conditions such as heart disease and arthritis. Health damaging behaviours, drinking alcohol, taking drugs, smoking and violence can be survival strategies that individuals adopt in the face of multiple, seemingly insurmountable, problems³¹.

Improving the mental and emotional wellbeing of children is associated with:



Lower prevalence of mental health problems



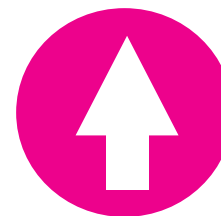
Healthier lifestyles



Better relationships within families



Better educational achievement



Greater economic productivity when they start work

Case Studies

“Knowing that two thirds of smokers start before they were 18, we decided that our vision was of a school where it was normal not to smoke. We will strive to give our students an effective education that equips them to make positive choices on tobacco and a school environment that supports their right to remain free from addiction. Bucksburn Academy will do our bit in creating a smoke free Scotland”.

Head Teacher, Bucksburn Academy



As our experience of mental health promotion grows, so too does our understanding about the wider determinants of health. The ‘Whole School’ approach to health promotion, such as the Bucksburn Academy example in our case study, moves beyond just giving information and teaches children practical life skills about making healthy choices and gives them the chance to practice and develop these skills. Learning these skills has

wider benefits, including improving academic achievement³².

The Whole School approach also shows us how wellbeing is produced socially. The level of interactions between pupils, between pupils and teachers and between the school and the community are important determinants of wellbeing.

The stark difference in haves and have nots across Grampian may intensify the stress experienced by those struggling with poverty and disadvantage. There is no doubt that this stress and anxiety is felt by both adults and children in Grampian. It brings us back to the point that we need to balance our focus on individuals with mental illness with a focus on social justice if we are to create a healthier, happier and more successful society.

Our case study of the ‘Big Noise in Torry’ project benefits from the partnership between its parent organisation Sistema Scotland, Education Scotland and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health. The integrated and thoughtful evaluation shows the importance of considering a range of perspectives when thinking about outcomes. Across the North East of Scotland, there are diverse organisations that anchor communities together and provide an important hub for social regeneration and individual social mobility. The experiences that people have as a result of participating in a programme have a direct bearing on its impact, but can be difficult to measure and describe. If in Grampian, we are going to embrace innovative and creative approaches to prevention, we must make adequate provision for evaluation and develop a system where even small organisations with limited financial resources are supported to demonstrate the positive impact that they are having in delivering on the prevention agenda.

Children of the 1950s

1950s Aberdeen women with more friends as children felt they experienced better physical and mental health in later life and coped better with financial challenges compared to women with fewer friends³⁰.

Children of the 1950s

In 1950s Aberdeen, changing jobs and moving to find work was less common than it is today. People born at this time said stability in employment led to stability within the local neighbourhoods.

A strategy to build resilience and improve mental wellbeing in children helps overcome some of the negative effects of adversity, but alone, this type of strategy does not overcome inequality. Poor children who have better emotional wellbeing and qualities of resilience have better educational outcomes than those who do not. However, richer children will still, in general, do better. The same is true for communities; resilient poor communities may have lower mortality than similarly deprived areas, but will still have higher mortality than affluent communities. Local efforts to build resilience need to be done at scale to respond to the dispersed nature of poverty and disadvantage in Grampian. Building resilience, therefore, is only part of the picture: the greatest improvements in children's wellbeing can only be made by reducing the gap between rich and poor.

Promoting resilience in children can increase their lifetime earnings by

9%



Case Studies

Since April 2015, Big Noise Torry has given local children the chance to take up an instrument and perform. Some of the children had not heard of their instrument before they started playing it. Stars emerge each week as the children work hard to hold their instruments properly, learn new notes and play together. They may not

have been in the orchestra for long, but the mini professionals have already played in concerts to the delight of their friends and family and local community members.



Finding a good job and staying in work

In last year's report, we looked at in work poverty in Grampian, caused by a mixture of low wages, temporary work and the impact of recent welfare reforms. In 2012, Save the Children identified that unemployment and low wages were at the heart of child poverty in Grampian⁵.

Sustainable economic development which provides secure employment and wages is therefore central to a child poverty reduction strategy, but also central to promoting the wellbeing of children, young people and their families in Grampian.



Aside from the material hardship associated with being out of work, unemployment is associated with mental and physical ill health and increases the chances of premature death^{34,35}. Long term unemployment of parents increases the likelihood of their children being unemployed³⁶. In the UK,

poor mental health is one of the leading causes of unemployment and sickness absence. In previous reports, we have profiled the work of the Healthy Working Lives team within NHS Grampian. In this report, we return to the importance of promoting the mental and physical health of those in work because doing so keeps people in work, benefiting the family and children of that individual. It also leads to increased productivity, benefiting communities in the Grampian area³⁷.



A marker of success is the number of children who leave school and move on to positive destinations. The longer individuals stay in education or some form of training, the better their employability prospects³⁸.

Case Studies

The Foyer in Aberdeen, a local social enterprise and charitable organisation developed Discovering Talent - A programme where young people are offered tasters in a variety of areas from music, arts and crafts to hospitality and construction, to discover and develop their interests and talent, gain invaluable skills and experiences, increase confidence and resilience to empower them to make decisions and positive changes in their lives. The young people accessing Discovering Talent have experienced a range of barriers to moving into a positive destination e.g. lack of education/qualifications, offending behaviour and family

issues. However, for many, lack of confidence, communications skills, encouragement and not knowing what they want to do prove the biggest obstacles.

Discovering Talent gives young people the opportunity to explore their strengths and interests, to identify their goals and aspirations in a supportive and flexible environment and to take responsibility for their own development through self-directed learning aided by guidance and support from a Foyer Development Coach. Young people also have the opportunity to gain SVQs.

Sustainable local economic development is central to any child poverty reduction strategy in Grampian

**Local action
to close the
gap in digital
literacy
helps people,
whatever
their age, find
employment**

Leaving school and entering the job market is a key transition in the life of a young person. Unemployment, even for a short period at this stage, is associated with lower life satisfaction, poorer health status, poor job satisfaction and lower income³⁹. The chances of being employed in long term sustainable employment later in life are also significantly reduced⁴⁰. Unemployment is widely recognised as a key determinant of health. Understanding the particular significance of unemployment in young people and empowering them to successfully make the transition into work has a clear value in any local strategy to reduce inequality in Grampian.

According to a survey by The Prince's Trust, one in ten unemployed young people said that they felt embarrassed by their computer skills and one in six would not apply for a job if it required basic computer skills⁴¹. Although young people in Grampian may be well connected on social media and fluent in text speak, they can struggle to write an email applying for a job or construct their CV⁴¹. Local area and regional economic regeneration strategies across Grampian place an emphasis on nurturing the digital and IT sectors. As these plans are further developed, it is important that we consider how digital literacy can be improved for all.

Innovative partnerships between schools and local businesses can help ease the transition into employment for young people while at the same time enabling local businesses to succession plan

and plug skills gaps⁴². It strikes at the heart of the recruitment and retention challenges that many sectors in the North of Scotland are faced with.

Case Studies

At the Learning House in Peterhead (pictured below), courses are on offer to help young and old alike improve their computer and digital skills. Working together and learning skills from each other, the older and younger generations learn that the gap between them is not so great after all.

Case Studies

Johnstons of Elgin, together with The Moray Council, established links with local primary and secondary schools hoping to 'invest in the future to develop young workforces in local communities'. Following a bespoke work experience programme, 56 senior pupils learnt about the history, heritage and values of the company, met apprentices and practised some practical textiles skills. Five former pupils secured full-time employment.



Planning for a healthy, successful and sustainable future

The places and spaces that we grow up in have an effect on our health, wellbeing and happiness in later life.

The success of our efforts to improve our health and wellbeing are influenced by the man-made and natural environment around us, the places in which we live, work, play, travel and socialise. The man-made environment includes several of the wider determinants of health: housing, transport, shops, food outlets, hospitals and health centres, to name but a few.

Saving lives and promoting wellbeing through transport choices

The relationships between transport and health are multiple and complex. Transport provides access to health promoting opportunities such as: work, education, friends and family as well as local healthcare services and public leisure facilities⁴³. Car ownership is essential for rural dwellers to get to work, to school or to socialise. It is also an expensive necessity and eats into many, already tight, household budgets.

The lowest levels of car ownership are recorded in the areas with the best public transport facilities which are in the central parts of Aberdeen. Across Scotland, 52% of trips, which would take half an hour on foot were made by car⁴⁴.

Reducing private car use and encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport is particularly beneficial to the health of the most disadvantaged members of our communities⁴⁵. In Grampian, more and more children are being driven to school, partly because parents are concerned about road safety and letting their children walk or cycle there. Driving children to and from school means they are missing out on physical activity and the opportunity to practise road safety skills. The increased volume of traffic on the roads contributes to poorer air

quality and premature mortality⁴⁶. Reducing traffic emissions also reduces CO₂ and helps reduce the adverse impact of climate change. Making sustainable travel safer, easier and more desirable in Grampian should help allay the fears of parents and improve the health of children. Research into sustainable travel has identified wider benefits in the form of increased productivity and lower sickness absence among workers who use sustainable travel options compared to car users⁴⁷.



Case Studies

Getabout is the North East regional sustainable travel brand with the aim to increase choices and sustainability in public and private transport in Aberdeen City and Shire. The Getabout partnership encourages car-sharing, taking the bus or train, cycling or walking. The Getabout partners, one of which is NHS Grampian, have also devised other strategies to improve air quality, reduce noise and support people to travel actively to reduce some of the health risks associated with transport.



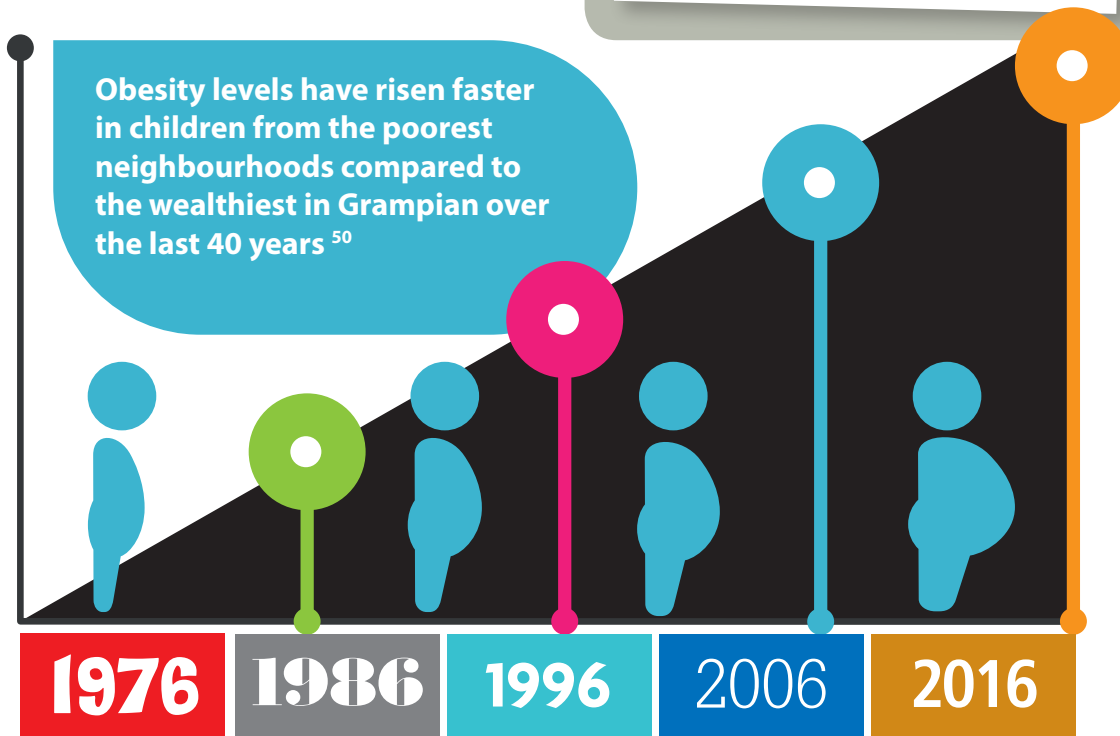
Children of the 1950s

Aberdeen's Children of the 1950s said that growing up in our own wee corner of Scotland, in a city that felt like a village, gave us a strong sense of identity and pride in our community. It's what makes Aberdeen special.

Designing places for people and with people improves health

Earning a low income and living in a deprived area are two barriers to adopting a healthy lifestyle and getting a balanced diet. A lack of local shops and amenities can decrease rates of active travel if people perceive the need to drive to buy their essentials.

The highest concentrations of fast food, tobacco and alcohol off licences are seen in our most deprived communities



There are big differences across Grampian in terms of the presence and quality of local amenities for people. Some local amenities: off licences, fast food outlets and food vans, are associated with damaging effects on health. The highest concentrations of fast food ⁴⁸, tobacco and alcohol off licences ⁴⁹ are seen in our most deprived communities, an example of how, when we do not explicitly consider the wellbeing of local people during the planning process, we can inadvertently contribute to health inequalities.

Community councils have a statutory right to be consulted on applications for planning permission. The views of the community are an important consideration in the planning process.

As the localities identified by each health and social care partnership are established, there is perhaps a role for them to contribute information to help inform local responses to planning requests. NHS Grampian's Public Health teams are well placed to provide advice and support on the likely impact on health and wellbeing. While this may not be required in every case, considering the physical, social and mental wellbeing of individuals and communities when planning places in Grampian could improve health and reduce inequalities.



Sustainable planning to reduce the impact of natural disasters and climate change

Natural disasters have a huge impact on public health. Rising sea levels and flooding from sporadic heavy downpours increase the number of people in Grampian who are at risk of harm from flooding⁵¹.

In addition to loss of life and property, people face health risks from contact with contaminated water. Victims of flooding may also experience anxiety, depression, and stress⁵². For some people, the experience of flooding can have long-lasting negative effects. Sustainable planning is a central part of mitigating the risk of flooding⁵³.

Case Studies

Storm Frank and the heavy downpours in the New Year of 2016 caused widespread flooding in the North East of Scotland. Following the floods, local environmental health and health protection departments provided advice to reduce the risk of gastrointestinal illness caused by contact with contaminated flood waters.

Designing places that people can live healthy lives in is one of the most effective ways of improving complex public health problems and reducing inequality

Growing up safe from alcohol harm

Children of the 1950s

Life-long residents of Aberdeen have noticed a change in drinking behaviour: drinking at home has become much more common over the years. In their time, alcohol was only brought out on special occasions like Christmas and New Year so, as children, they rarely saw adults drinking in the home.

Alcohol is a legal drug and forms an integral part of our lives, culture and economy, particularly so in Grampian. We use it to celebrate, commiserate and socialise. However, it is also a toxic substance that causes harm to our health and society⁵⁴.

Children and young people growing up in Grampian today experience very different attitudes towards alcohol than any of the generations before them.

We are drinking more alcohol in our living rooms than in pubs: over three quarters of the alcohol sold in Scotland comes from off licences and supermarkets⁵⁵. When we do go out, it is often after a few drinks at home first, because it is cheaper. Trained bar staff and industry sponsored schemes like Best Bar None keep customers safe from the excesses of alcohol. At home, there are no trained staff looking out for us, there are no standard measures to help us keep track of how much we have drunk, so we are more likely to drink in a way that causes harm than when we go out⁵⁶. Perhaps the most concerning aspect of our shift to drinking more at home is that children are more likely to be around alcohol and to see at first hand the harm that excessive alcohol consumption can cause.

Seeing how we behave as adults has a huge influence on our children's future relationship with alcohol.

Growing up in Grampian today means growing up in a world where alcohol is affordable and easily available. Aberdeen city has the third highest density of licensed premises in Scotland. It is likely that many children in Grampian will pass alcohol outlets on their way to and from school. If they want to buy some snacks, it is likely they will have to go to a shop that also sells alcohol to do so. Everyday activities like going to the cinema, watching a football match or a music festival can expose children in the North East to alcohol marketing.

Even when children are not in the shops, they are subjected and susceptible to the powerful messages

of alcohol marketing, through the sponsorship of sporting or music events. Interacting with alcohol brands via social networking sites is a new form of advertising, and particularly powerful given the importance of social media to a young person's developing identity⁵⁸.

NHS Grampian signed up to Alcohol Focus Scotland's campaign to end alcohol marketing to children and we would encourage our partners and anyone concerned about this issue to do the same.

Levels of alcohol consumption among Grampian teenagers have decreased in recent years and are



amongst the lowest in Scotland with 14% of 15 year olds reporting that they regularly drink alcohol⁵⁹. However, we should not be falsely reassured that the small number of teenagers who do drink, drink heavily.

There is no safe limit of alcohol for the developing brain and body of an adolescent⁶⁰. We should be very concerned about the fact that on average, fifteen year olds who drink exceed the recommended safe drinking guidelines for adults. Alcohol, bought legally by adults and given to children, can contribute to the exploitation of vulnerable young people⁶¹. Best practice recommendations to protect people from exploitation require us to look beyond the point of sale of alcohol.



Case Studies

In Moray, the Child Protection Committee and Licensing Board raised awareness of child sexual exploitation among people involved in the licensed trade. Moray child protection officers work with people who work in bars, pubs and restaurants, as well with as taxi drivers to help them spot the warning signs and know what to do if they suspect that a child is a victim of sexual exploitation.

It is no coincidence that the highest densities of licensed premises are close to areas of highest harm which are also the areas of Grampian which bear the brunt of inequality. Decisions about the size, location and number of licensed premises operating in Grampian must be informed by local knowledge about the effects of alcohol on communities. The clear explanation produced by Alcohol Focus Scotland on how to get involved in the complex legal process of licensing is helpful. There is also support available from locally based public health teams.

Alcohol has become so embedded in our day to day life that we feel that regular drinking is normal, that it does not harm us and that it is what we need

There is no safe limit of alcohol for the developing brain and body of an adolescent

to relax when stressed. This is the message that children in the North East are growing up with. This message about alcohol is not true and increases their chances of being harmed.

Prevention of alcohol related health harm requires all of us to drink in a safer way. It is important that children and young people are supported to understand the risks of alcohol and develop a healthy relationship with alcohol as an adult. Doing so will have a powerful effect on their wellbeing, and consequently on the future prospects of the North East of Scotland.

Case Studies

Dyce and Stoneywood community council in Aberdeen were concerned about the amount of problems alcohol misuse was causing in their community. They got involved in the licensing process to try to make sure that local businesses did not add to these problems by selling alcohol in a way that encouraged people to drink harmfully or cause a nuisance to residents. Speaking up for the community at a licensing board can be intimidating and frustrating when the ruling does not go in favour of the community. Dyce and Stoneywood community council did not succeed but continue to try to protect their community from alcohol harms.



Conclusion: Making the most of every opportunity to improve children's wellbeing

Inequality, poverty and disadvantage, to some extent, affect all our communities in Grampian, touch our children's lives and impact on their wellbeing. The best start for them and future generations is about providing opportunity, equality, improving health and being sustainable.

Prevention is a central theme in the NHS Grampian Clinical Strategy as well as being core to the strategic direction and programmes of the three health and social care partnerships. Our challenge is to balance the competing demands of providing essential services against the need to act to prevent demand for those services. This challenge becomes greater each day as we are faced with growing demands and finite resources. In this report we wanted to raise the profile of the value of local prevention to us all. Putting prevention into practice requires us to consider a wider perspective of viewpoints and evidence from communities, individuals, public, private and third sector organisations and elected members. We have tried to reflect some of those in this report.

We hope that this report has provided more understanding about the local opportunities to influence children's wellbeing in Grampian. Through the Aberdeen Children of the 1950s study has made a huge contribution to understanding the link between childhood experiences and how getting a good start in life sets us up for good health in later life.

There are numerous examples of existing and consolidating partnerships that are working together to improve the wellbeing of North East communities and the children who live in them. The Directorate of Public Health commits to:

- Strengthening the role of communities and individuals to engage with health issues and identify local solutions
- Supporting our local partners to find evidence about what might work and generate evidence about what works here
- Being the champion for issues of health and wellbeing

- Capitalising on the opportunities to improve health and wellbeing in every local policy and plan

For simplicity, we have not included detailed information about health in specific areas in Grampian nor made comparisons between areas. We would refer readers interested in child health to the three Joint Strategic Needs Assessments produced as part of the development of integrated children's service plans for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray. More general population health information at a local level can be obtained through the NHS Grampian Health and Wellbeing compendium (see link below).

<http://www.hi-netgrampian.org/information-resources/key-documents/>



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