



**Epping Forest  
Health & Wellbeing Strategy  
2022 - 2026**

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# Foreword

As a lifelong resident of the Epping Forest District, I am proud to represent the people and place where I live. We have the benefit of easy access into London via the Underground, along with direct access to one of the most beautiful natural forests in the country, from which our district takes its name. Much of our area is rural with green open spaces, protected wildlife habitats and outstanding historic buildings, and all this helps to make Epping Forest a great place to live, work, study and do business.



**Cllr Chris Whitbread**  
Leader, Epping Forest District Council

In the majority of our wards people enjoy good health with life expectancy above the national average. However, we do recognise that there are health inequalities in some of our wards and we are working collaboratively with partners such as Essex County Council, the NHS, Essex Police, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and local third sector organisations to address this and reduce the impact of disadvantage on residents' health and wellbeing.

We know that we need to do what we can to encourage more people to take part in regular, physical activity. Equally, we recognise the importance of good mental health and the need to address issues such as loneliness and social isolation, and worries relating to rising living costs. By supporting our residents to improve their health and wellbeing we will help reduce the pressure on our local GPs and hospitals. Ultimately, we want all our residents to flourish, reach their full potential and live happy, fulfilled, healthy lives.

Having listened closely to local peoples' views, along with those of professionals, the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 sets out the district's vision and priorities for the next four years. The Strategy explains how we will address the health inequalities that exist in our area including working better with our wider health and third sector partners and, most importantly, with our communities themselves.

Our Council and partners are committed to ensuring this Strategy is implemented across the Epping Forest district and, consequently, health and wellbeing is a key focus in our Corporate Plan 2023-2027.



## Background

**This strategy sets out the aims and aspirations of the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone living in the Epping Forest district.**

The Board is made up of representatives from Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, the West Essex Health & Care Partnership, the NHS and a wide range of local health and voluntary sector organisations.

The Board published its original ten-year strategy back in 2018 however, as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the decision was taken to review and refresh the strategy early to ensure the district has a robust and meaningful roadmap to maximise resources and expertise to support the best possible outcomes for residents.

More than ever before, the Covid-19 pandemic called for organisations to come together to work collaboratively. This strategy aims to build on the momentum of positive partnership working in the district. The strategy also takes into account the growing self-awareness of things that we can do for ourselves to take care of our own health and wellbeing.

Refreshed themed multi-agency Action Groups will be established to support the delivery of the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy. Annual action plans will be developed, and a range of projects and initiatives will be delivered to tackle the Strategy's identified priorities.



# Our District

## Life expectancy

Life expectancy can be 13 years lower for men and 11 years lower for females in the most deprived areas of Epping Forest.



## Employment & income

84% 16-64 year olds are economically active however 4% of working age adults are unemployed.

2nd worst housing affordability in Essex.



## Physical activity & lifestyle

56% of children and young people do not meet the recommended physical activity guidelines.

21% of adults are physically inactive, do less than 30 minutes physical activity per week.



## Deprivation

12% of children are living in poverty.

11% of older adults are living in poverty.

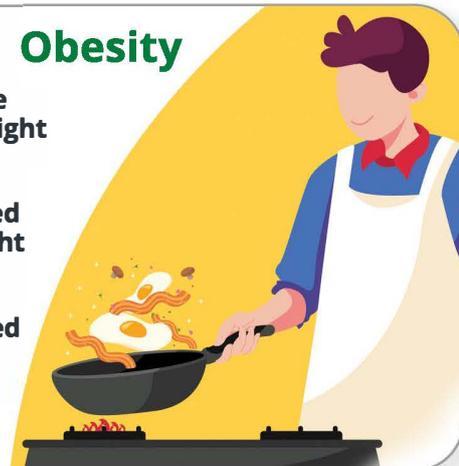


## Obesity

58% of adults in the district are overweight or obese.

21% of children aged 4 to 5 are overweight or obese.

32% of children aged 10 to 11 are overweight or obese.



## Mental health

15% of adults 16+ are estimated to have a common mental health disorder.

15% of adult population are estimated to be suffering from loneliness.



# Our vision

## Our vision is:

**“Working together to improve the health and wellbeing of Epping Forest residents by promoting a culture and environment that encourages health equity.”**

Our Epping Forest vision aligns with that of the Joint Essex Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the West Essex Health & Care Partnership 10-year Plan.



**Inequality**  
Unequal access to opportunities



**Equality?**  
Evenly distributed tools and assistance



**Justice**  
Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities



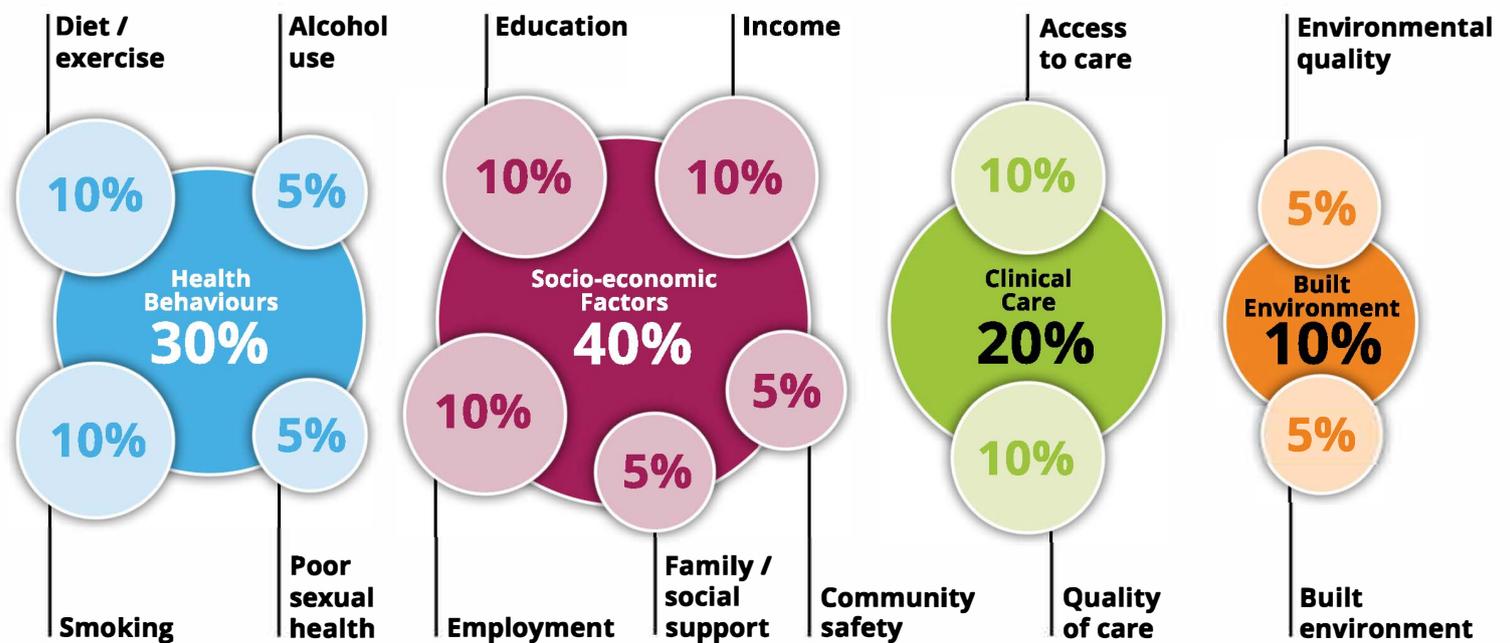
**Equity**  
Custom tools that identify and address inequality

# Our principles

## A whole system approach

We recognise that health and wellbeing is impacted upon by more than just the food we eat or how active we are. Our health is affected by numerous factors including our education, our job, how much money we have and where we live. These factors are known as the “social determinants of health”. These determinants influence each other via a complex web of interconnected factors.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation approach to the social determinants of health provides a framework which illustrates all the factors that contribute to our health and wellbeing.



SOURCE: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

We are committed to ensuring local organisations work together in partnership as a whole system to collectively tackle issues relating to the social determinants of health. Together we are greater than the sum of our parts. By sharing an agreed set of priorities and objectives we can have the most impact.

# Our principles

## Prevention and early intervention

By improving the social determinants of health collectively we will prevent problems occurring.

However, should problems arise, working in partnership will enable us to deal with them at the earliest possible stage, through improved signposting and access to support services so that they don't get worse.

## Self-care and management of own wellbeing

Wherever possible we want to support individuals and communities to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

Partners will actively help to build knowledge, skills and confidence so that people can make healthy lifestyle choices.

We will work to champion peer support and foster a culture of care.

## Place based approach

We recognise that there are areas of our district that have a higher level of need than others. By targeting our collective efforts and resources on tackling the needs in specific geographic areas, and by working with our communities using an asset-based community development approach (ABCD), we aim to reduce the inequalities that exist in our district.

## A life course approach

We acknowledge that health and wellbeing needs change as we move through the various stages of our lives. The following whole life course themes show how we will adopt and reference "Live Well" domains as part of our Strategy:

- Start Well – Children and young people have the best start in life
- Feel Well – People enjoy mental wellbeing throughout their lives
- Be Well – Adults are empowered to make healthy choices
- Age Well – People live safely and independently as they age
- Stay Well – Adults with health or care concerns are supported to maintain healthy productive and fulfilling lives



## Our priorities

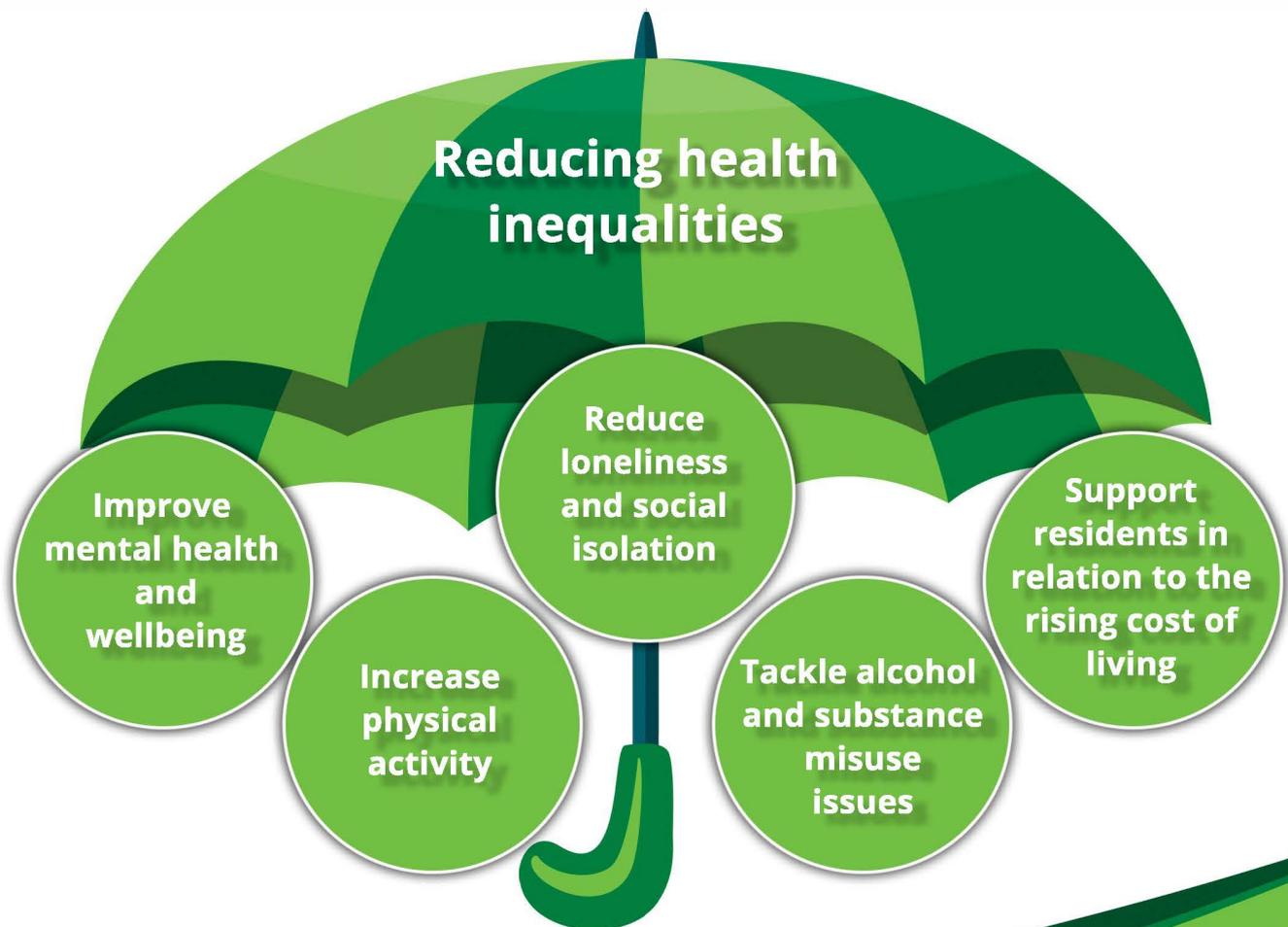
Our strategic priorities have been developed through the careful analysis of data alongside detailed insight from partner organisations and colleagues who work with our residents on a daily basis. Additionally, there has been extensive consultation with the community themselves and a broad range of wider stakeholders.

The five strategic priorities which have been identified are:

- **Improve mental health and wellbeing**
- **Reduce loneliness and social isolation**
- **Increase physical activity**
- **Support residents in relation to the rising cost of living**
- **Tackle alcohol and substance misuse issues**

Fundamentally, partners and stakeholders acknowledge the inequalities that exist in the Epping Forest district. These inequalities have a huge impact on residents' health and wellbeing, so much so that the difference in life expectancy between our most affluent and deprived wards can be as much as 13 years for males 11 years for females.

Therefore, tackling health inequalities is the **overarching** umbrella strategic priority.



# Our objectives

For each of the five priorities key objectives have been identified. Partners will work together to develop and deliver projects, initiatives, and interventions in line with the agreed objectives.

## We will improve the mental health and wellbeing of residents by:

- Increasing access to services that can enable positive mental health in the community and workplace.
- Supporting residents to access and sustain good quality housing, which allows for healthy living conditions, stability and enables good mental health and wellbeing.
- Ensuring early intervention through supporting our communities with more training and awareness to encourage signposting to services.
- Supporting our education settings to offer more services that can enable positive mental health in schools.
- Promoting and increasing the use of alternative therapies (art, poetry, physical activity, being in nature etc..).



## We will reduce loneliness and social isolation by:

- Supporting communities to care for one another and encouraging volunteering.
- Improving knowledge, training and awareness of loneliness and social isolation to increase recognition and signposting to support services.
- Expanding access to digital resources for residents of all ages, including digital literacy training.
- Helping residents feel safer in their communities through effective partnership working to meet emerging local threats and issues.
- Identifying change and action needed to protect women and girls against violence in our communities and to reduce the fear of violence.

# Our objectives

## We will support residents in relation to the rising cost of living by:

- Increasing access to available resources which support residents with the rising cost of fuel and food.
- Working with employers and anchor institutions to enhance employment opportunities for residents.
- Helping residents of all ages access education, training, skills development and volunteering opportunities to enable them to fulfil their potential.
- Increasing knowledge and awareness of financial skills and support amongst children, young people and adults.

## We will support residents to increase their physical activity levels by:

- Supporting residents of all ages to be more physically active as part of their daily lives.
- Helping residents with long term conditions and disabilities have the same equitable access to services as other residents.
- Supporting weight loss by increasing access to services, increasing nutritional awareness, improving access to healthier food options.
- Healthier designed places that promote better lifestyles and improved access to green spaces.



## We will tackle alcohol and substance misuse issues by:

- Improving access to advice and support for residents experiencing alcohol or substance use issues and co-existing conditions within the community.
- Addressing the challenges of County Lines, drugs related criminality and the exploitation of vulnerable people.
- Educating children, young people, adults and families on the risks associated with alcohol and substance misuse.
- Increasing knowledge, training, and awareness in our communities in order to reduce the stigma associated with alcohol and substance misuse, enabling more person-centred solutions.

## How will we measure our success?

- ✓ For every action, intervention and project developed specific impact targets will be agreed with stakeholders, partners and deliverers.
- ✓ Partners will regularly report on progress to the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board. The Board will be responsible for overseeing the delivery and successful implementation of the Strategy through the themed multi-agency Action Groups and partnership working.
- ✓ We will regularly consult with our communities to seek their feedback on our progress and ensure we are responding to emerging needs.



## Strategic context

The Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2026 is aligned to the following associated strategies:

**Epping Forest District Council Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027**

**Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2026**

**West Essex Health and Care Partnership 10-year plan**

**Fit for the Future Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Essex, Southend and Thurrock 2021-2031**

**Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust Five Year Strategy 2019 - 2024**

**Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment**

**Southend, Essex and Thurrock Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

**Epping Forest District Council Housing Strategy**

**Essex Crime Prevention Strategy 2021-2025**

**Digital Strategy for Essex**

**Levelling Up Essex**



## District map



- |                         |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| 1) Roydon               | 11) Theydon Garnon   | 19) Stanford Rivers                                       |
| 2) Nazeing              | 12) Theydon Mount  | 20) Ongar   |
| 3) Epping Upland        | 13) Stapleford Tawney                                      | 21) Abbess Roding,<br>Beauchamp Roding,<br>Berners Roding |
| 4) Epping               | 14) Lambourne  | 22) Fyfield   |
| 5) Waltham Abbey        | 15) Stapleford Abbotts                                     | 23) Willingale  |
| 6) Theydon Bois         | 16) Sheering   | 24) High Ongar  |
| 7) Loughton             | 17) Matching   |   |
| 8) Buckhurst Hill       | 18) High Laver, Little Laver<br>Magdalen Laver,<br>Moreton |   |
| 9) Chigwell             |  |   |
| 10) North Weald Bassett |  |   |



If you are interested in being more involved with promoting health and wellbeing in the Epping Forest district, please contact the Council Community, Culture & Wellbeing Team at:

Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, 323 High Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BZ

[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)