Draft Southampton Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2026-2035 – accessible version

What do we want Southampton to be?

A place where everyone can live healthy and active lives, connect with others and have enough money to live well.

Introduction

What is this document about?

This document describes a plan to help people who live in Southampton to stay healthy. The plan starts in the year 2026 and lasts for ten years.

What is the Southampton Health and Wellbeing Board?

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a group of people who work together to make Southampton a healthier place. They have members from the local council, NHS, and community leaders.

How has the board developed the Southampton Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

The board looked at lots of information and talked to many people to understand the health needs of the city. They used this information to create the plan to improve our health.

An approach that covers people's lives from birth onwards

The strategy has 4 main areas:

1. Starting Well

When we are young, it's important to be as healthy as we can. This means eating good food, staying active, and learning new things. Getting a good start in life is important because we are then more likely to be healthy as we grow up.

2. Staying Well

As we grow up, we need to stay well. This means continuing to eat healthy food, being active, and taking care of our bodies. It helps us stay strong and feel good. When we need extra help, it is important that we can get this easily and it is the right type of help for us.

3. Connecting Well

It's also important to connect well with others. This might mean making friends and helping each other. This is good for our health and also can help us to feel good.

4. Financially Well

Being financially well means having enough money to buy the things we need. It helps us feel safe and secure and is good for our health.

What enables good health and wellbeing?

Health is not just about seeing a doctor when we feel unwell. It's also about things like having a job, a home, clean air to breathe, healthy food to eat, places to meet other people and activities we enjoy doing. All of this helps us to stay healthy.

The role of the Health and Wellbeing Board within the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System

The board works with other groups across the whole of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to make sure everyone gets the care they need. This teamwork helps use money and people wisely, and means that services are easy for everyone to access.

Core ideas we will need to show in our work

We have nine important ideas that will guide our work:

Collaborative: Working together with local council, NHS, community leaders and charities to improve health.

Co-produced: Listening to and working with the community to understand what is important to them.

Equitable: Making sure everyone, regardless of their background, gets the care they need.

Balanced: Treating mental health as important as physical health and providing support for both.

Preventative: Stopping health problems before they start by promoting healthy lives and offering early support.

Holistic: Providing care that considers all aspects of a person's life.

Sensitive: Respecting backgrounds and differences and ensuring that actions and services are compassionate and understanding.

Evidence-based: Using good information and research to help improve things.

Sustainable: Thinking about the effects of our health and wellbeing plan on the natural world around us.

Key areas of focus

1. Starting Well

Ensuring Every Child Has the Best Start in Life

Area of focus: A Whole System Approach to Childhood Obesity

We want to ensure that every child in Southampton grows up healthy. This means looking at how we can help children eat better and be more active. We will work with schools, parents, and local organisations to create an environment that supports healthy options and makes it easier for families to live well. This includes providing teaching on nutrition, making it easier to get healthy food, and creating safe spaces to be active.

Why is childhood obesity important?

Childhood obesity or overweight means children having more body fat than is healthy. It is a big health problem in the UK. More children are becoming overweight, and this is also true in Southampton. Children in poorer areas are also more likely to be overweight.

Why do children become overweight?

There are many reasons why children can become overweight:

If their mother was overweight when they were born.
If their mother smoked during pregnancy.

If they were born with a high birth weight.
If they grew very quickly as babies.

Why is being overweight not good for health?

Overweight children can have other health problems. They are also likely to stay overweight as they grow up. Being overweight as an adult can cause:

Heart disease
Stroke
High blood pressure
Diabetes
Some cancers
Early death

What is the national government doing?

The national government wants to help children be healthier. They have a plan to:

Stop junk food ads aimed at children.
Ban energy drinks for children under 16.
Give local councils more power to stop new fast-food places from opening.

What do we know about healthy weight in Southampton?

Healthy weight in school Year R (Ages 4-5)

Less children in Year R in Southampton have a healthy weight compared with the average in England.

Healthy weight in school Year 6 (Ages 10-11)

Less children in Year 6 in Southampton have a healthy weight compared with the average in England.

Weight and neighbourhoods

Children living in poorer neighbourhoods are less likely to have a healthy weight compared to children living in less poor neighbourhoods.

Most children who are overweight or obese in Year 6 had a healthy weight when they were in Year R.

What do we hope to do?

Help everyone work together

Everyone needs to work together to help children stay healthy. This includes the local authority, NHS, schools, parents, and the community.

Help more children have a healthy weight

We want more children to have a healthy weight. This means eating healthy food and being more active.

Help all children

We want to help all children, especially those who live in areas where it is harder to stay healthy.

Help people stay healthy as they grow

We want children to stay healthy as they grow from school Year R (ages 4-5) to Year 6 (ages 10-11).

Have healthier schools

We want more schools and early years settings to be recognised as healthy places.

Have healthier food

We want to make sure there is healthy, affordable, and good food available in the city.

2. Staying Well

Ensuring people are supported to live healthy lives and keep health as they get older

Area of focus: Keeping independence through joined-up, early and personalised care and support

As people get older, we want to help them stay healthy and be able to live with minimal help. We need to provide the right care and support at the right time to help people stay well and manage any long-term health conditions they have. The care offered needs to be right for each person.

Why is joined-up, early and personalised care and support important?

In the next few years, there will be more older people in Southampton than there are now.

Why are there more older people?

People are living longer and having fewer children. This means the number of older people is growing faster than the number of younger people.

What does this mean?

There will be fewer people who can work.
It might be harder to find people to help take care of others.

Health problems

More people are living with long-term health problems. People who live in poorer areas often have more health problems and live shorter lives. The

main health problems are heart disease, lung disease, and cancer. Smoking is a big reason for these health problems.

What can we do?

We need to help people live healthier lives. This means eating well, not smoking, and staying active.

What do we know about protecting independence in Southampton?

Falls and health problems

More older people in Southampton have falls that make them go to the hospital or get sick from heart and lung problems compared to the average in England

6 in every 10 people over 65 in Southampton are considered frail. This means they may need more help.

Neighbourhoods and health

People living in poorer neighbourhoods are more likely to have falls, hip fractures, and die from accidental falls compared to those in less poor neighbourhoods.

People in poorer neighbourhoods are also more likely to die early from heart and lung problems that can be prevented.

Mental health and early death

People with severe mental illness are more likely to die early from heart and lung problems compared to those without severe mental illness.

What do we hope to do?

Help people to live at home

We want to help people live in their own homes and with the people and things they love. This means giving them the care they need when they need it.

Offer more NHS health checks

We want more people in Southampton to go for NHS health checks, especially those living in poorer areas.

Help people be active

We want to help people who find it hard to be active to find ways to move more.

Help people feeling less lonely

We want to help people feel less lonely.

Help reduce harm from smoking

We want to help people to stop smoking. This includes helping people in poorer areas, those with mental illness, and those with long-term health problems.

Help reduce harm from drugs and alcohol

We want to reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol for people of all ages.

Help frail people

We want to find people who are frail and help them stay healthy.

Help prevent health problems

We want to stop people from getting long-term health problems and help them stay healthy for longer.

Have less hospital admissions

We want to reduce the number of people going to the hospital for preventable reasons.

Have less falls

We want to reduce the number of older adults who fall.

Help prevent early deaths

We want to reduce the number of people dying early from heart and lung problems.

3. Connecting Well

Ensuring people enjoy social connection in safe and healthy spaces

Area of focus: Supporting communities to be physically active and enjoy being creative

Being active and creative is important for our mental and physical health. We want to make sure everyone can take part in activities that keep them healthy and connected to their community.

Why is supporting communities to be physically and creatively active important?

Why being active is good

Being active means moving your body. It helps everyone stay healthy and feel good.

For children, it helps bones grow strong, muscles get bigger, and brains work better. It also helps kids feel good, sleep better, and make friends.

For adults, being active helps keep their hearts and minds healthy, and their bodies strong. It can stop them from getting unwell and help them feel better if they do get unwell.

Why not being active is not good

If you don't move around much, you can get sick more easily. As people get older, it's important to stay active so they can stay healthy and need less help.

How many people have health problems

In the UK, one out of every four adults have two or more health problems. People who live in poorer areas are more likely to have these problems, and they can start when they are younger.

How being active helps

Being active can help stop you from being unwell. It can also help you feel better if you do become unwell. For older people, staying strong can help them not fall down and get hurt.

Why being creative is good

Being creative means doing things like drawing, painting, or making music. Different people enjoy different types of creative activities, but we know that being creative helps you feel good and connected to other people. This is especially important for people who feel lonely or can have a hard time with how they feel.

What do we know about being active in Southampton?

Being Physically Active

A similar number of adults in Southampton are considered active compared to the average in England but there are still a lot of people who could be healthier by being more active

A similar number of adults in Southampton are not active enough compared to the average in England but there are still a lot of people who could be healthier by being more active

People in poorer neighbourhoods are less active compared to those in less poor neighbourhoods.

Children and Young People

About half of all children and young people (aged 5 to 18 years) are considered physically active enough in Southampton. This is similar to the average in England.

Fewer children and young people from Asian and Black ethnic groups are considered active enough compared to those from White British, White Other, and Mixed ethnic groups.

Feeling Lonely

About 1 in 10 adults in Southampton feel lonely. This is higher than the average in England.

Some people are more likely to feel lonely such as:

People who do not have a job
People living in poorer neighbourhoods
Disabled people
Younger or older adults
People from different ethnic backgrounds

Creative Activities

Over 9 in every 10 people in Southampton take part in creative activities like drawing, painting, visiting the cinema, or making music in any year. This is higher than the average in England.

About 1 in 4 people in Southampton visited a library in the past year. This is lower than the average in England.

Feeling Safe

About 3 in 4 people in Southampton feel safe during the day, but fewer people feel safe at night.

People feel less safe in the city centre and in parks, especially at night.

What do we hope to do?

Help children move more every day

We want children and young people to move more every day. This means doing things like playing, running, or dancing.

Help adults be active

We want adults to be more active too. This means doing things like gardening, walking, cycling, or playing sports.

Support everyone to move

We want to help everyone find ways to move that they enjoy. This means helping people who might find it hard to be active, like disabled people, or those who live in poorer areas.

Make activities easy to join

We want to make it easy for everyone to be active. This means making it easier for people to get involved and take part.

Help people feel connected

We want people to feel as connected to others as much as they would like to be. This might mean making friends and being part of a community. It might mean taking part in a physical activity, or doing something creative that they enjoy.

Have more active schools

We want schools to help children be active and healthy.

Have more safe and fun places

We want to make local spaces and travel routes safe and fun for being active. This means making parks, playgrounds, and paths better for everyone.

Promote healthy travel choices

We want to help people choose healthy and clean ways to travel. This means walking, cycling, or using public transport.

Help everyone work together

We want everyone to work together to create communities that support health and wellbeing. This means people and organisations working as a team.

4. Financially Well

Ensuring people are supported to have enough money to buy the things they need

Area of focus: Maximising opportunities for skills, training, and employment

Having a good job and being able to manage money is important for our health. We want to support people to get the skills and training they need to find good jobs.

Why are skills, training and employment important?

How health affects money

Being unwell can affect how much money you have. We know that people are unwell sometimes have to pay for medicine and other things to help them get better. Being unwell also means that people might not be able to work and earn money. This can make it hard to pay for things they need.

How money affects health

Not having enough money can make people feel very stressed. Stress in itself can make people unwell. If people don't have enough money, they might not be able to buy healthy food or stay active. They might also find it hard to stop smoking or drinking alcohol, which can cost a lot of money and make them unwell.

Gambling and money problems

Gambling can also cause money problems. Some people might spend too much money on gambling, which can make them stressed and feel unwell.

Sometimes gambling can lead to other problems with money, such as keeping their job.

What do we know about skills, training and employment in Southampton?

Young people and school

1 in 14 young people aged 16 to 17 years in Southampton are not in school, work, or training. This is higher than the average in England.

The average grades at the end of school (GCSE) are lower than the average in England.

Jobs in Southampton

There are **2 jobs for every 3 people** who can work (aged 16 to 64). This is lower than the average in England.

8 in every 10 people who can work are either working or looking for work. This is similar to the average in England.

2 in every 10 people who can work are not working and not looking for work. This is similar to the average in England.

4 in every 100 people cannot work because they are sick or have a disability.

Health and jobs

Fewer people with long-term physical or mental health conditions work compared to the average. This is similar to the rest of England.

Many fewer people with learning disabilities work compared to the average. This is similar to the rest of England.

1 in 10 people in contact with mental health services have paid jobs. This is lower than the average in England.

Unemployment in Southampton

4 in every 100 people who can work are not working but are looking for work. This is similar to the average in England.

7 in every 100 people in the poorest neighbourhoods are not working but are looking for work. This is higher than **2 in every 100 people** in the less poor neighbourhoods.

Earnings and Fuel Poverty

People working in the city (who may live outside the city) earn **£26** more per week than people living in the city (who may work outside the city).

12 in every 100 people in Southampton have trouble paying for heating. This is similar to the average in England.

What do we hope to do?

Help people find jobs

We want to help everyone who wants to work find a job. This means giving them the support they need.

Help people get the right benefits

We want to make sure everyone gets the benefits they are allowed to have, especially people who have many problems.

Help young people

We want to help more young people to stay in school, get jobs, or go for training. This will help them have a better future.

Support people with special needs

We want employers to hire people with special needs, like those with learning disabilities, long-term mental health conditions, or who are neurodiverse. This means giving them the right support and making changes to the job if needed.

Help people stay in jobs

We want employers to help people who have big life changes for example they may get a long term health problem. This means being flexible and giving them the support they need to stay in their jobs.

Improve work experience for young people

We want more work experience opportunities for young people in different sectors and organisations. This means making sure the work experience meets the needs of young people today.

Improve flexible working

We want to increase flexible working opportunities in different sectors. This means finding new ways to make jobs flexible, even in roles that usually are not.

Support small businesses

We want to help small and medium-sized businesses in the city grow. This means giving them the support they need to succeed.

Support jobs linked to the natural environment

We want to create jobs by supporting ideas that improve the natural environment. The natural environment means our surroundings that are not made by humans. They exist naturally (for example air, water, plants and animals). This means finding ways to help the environment and create jobs at the same time.

Reduce problems caused by gambling harm

We want to reduce the problems that people can experience from gambling in Southampton.

Making this all happen

Our plan to make Southampton healthier

We want Southampton to be a place where everyone can live healthy and active lives and stay that way as they grow older. We want to help everyone stay healthy and feel good throughout their lives. When people need help, we want to make sure they get it quickly and easily and that it is right for them. We want people to have places to connect with others and have enough money to be able to buy the things they need and do the things that help keep them healthy.

How will we do it?

We can't do this alone. We need help from different groups:

Healthy Child Board: They will help children and young people get off to a good start.

Health and Care Partnership Board: They will help people stay healthy as they grow older.

Connecting Well Forum: They will help people stay active and connect with others.

Renaissance Board: They will help create good jobs and training

These groups will work together to make our plan happen.