

The Wellbeing Self-Assessment Framework



This Wellbeing Self-Assessment Framework (SAF) has been developed to support the introduction of the County Durham Approach to Wellbeing. It poses questions that can help to structure conversations and inform future decisions about how local work and activities can support the wellbeing of people living in communities.

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What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing includes everything that is important to people and their lives. In economic terms, wellbeing, or its absence, can be responsible for things such as levels of productivity, benefit dependence and absenteeism. In human terms, it can simply be described as ‘how we are doing’, and ‘how satisfied we are with our lives’.

Everyone faces challenges to their wellbeing as part of everyday life. Coping with stress at school, home or at work; having to deal with poor health or disability; and dealing with transitions in life such as leaving school, facing retirement or experiencing bereavement.



When we face these challenges, our ability to cope with them is dependent on many things. They include the strength and quality of our relationships; the support available within our neighbourhoods and the places we grow up in, work and play; where we live and how safe we feel; our sense of belonging; our health and levels of participation in sport, culture and community events; our work and finances; our feelings of being in control of our lives; and the services we can access.

Such factors often operate on a continuum and can change over time. For example, at some points in our life, we may have a number of strong relationships which make us feel positive and from which we can garner support if needed. At other times, the quality of our relationships may not be so strong, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Similarly, our financial security, our health, our homes and jobs will change over time, each bringing with it either challenges to our wellbeing or helping to build our resilience.



Sometimes, the challenges we face can be such difficult, prolonged or isolating experiences that we are simply unable to cope. As a result, we may feel stressed, low in mood and experience feelings of hopelessness. We may also try to cope by turning to unhealthy behaviours such as drinking, overeating or smoking which may then compound those feelings with ones of low self esteem. At such times, it is important to know where to get help; help which is supportive and non-stigmatising, and enables us to build our resilience for the future. Whilst such help may include services offered by statutory agencies, it can also be found where we live, and amongst supportive communities themselves; communities that have identified ways in which its members can be protected from such challenges to wellbeing and have put in place the right support that is available at the right time.

In the past two decades, the health and wellbeing of people living in Durham has greatly improved. However, the information collected as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Insight database, highlight the fact that more can be done. Almost a quarter of adults in Durham report having levels of high anxiety; 11% of adults are reported as having a 'low happiness' score; and the healthy life expectancy for women in Durham is 58 years and for men 60 years.

If adopted, our Approach to Wellbeing could help to improve each of these things.



Things affecting resilience and wellbeing



People with knowledge and key skills



Levels of educational attainment and school life



Availability of places such as parks, clubs and leisure facilities

Work and home environments



Levels of community participation and a sense of belonging



Housing and jobs



Financial security

Levels of health and access to health care services



Relationships and social networks



How has the County Durham Approach to Wellbeing been developed?

Our Approach to Wellbeing has seven guiding principles, each of which is underpinned by a strong evidence base. These principles affirm the key role that communities can play in supporting their own citizens, and the significant improvements in health and wellbeing outcomes that can result from involving communities more in decisions that affect them.

Our Approach has **'people and place'** at its heart. Working with communities, building on the assets of those communities, supporting the positive development of the neighbourhoods that people live in, and fostering the resilience and empowerment of those communities through the support offered to everyone, and importantly to those who are most vulnerable. Such communities include groups of people that are linked by geography and place, but also groups that may be linked by characteristics such as being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.

Our Approach highlights the importance of **'supporting systems'**, encouraging alignment of activities across agencies and sectors and ensuring that services are commissioned and delivered in a way that is collaborative and supportive. For those who require more formal interventions and perhaps NHS treatment, our Approach supports person-centred interventions that are empowering rather than stigmatising.

Finally, our actions need to be informed by local conversations with people and communities, using their knowledge, and learning from their experience. It is important that conversations are held with communities about what is important to them and in doing so, recognising that this model must be a dynamic one, adapting, changing and being shaped over time by County Durham residents.



The County Durham Approach to Wellbeing

People and Places

Empowering communities
working with communities to support their development and empowerment

Being asset focused
acknowledging the different needs of communities and the potential of their assets

Building resilience
helping the most disadvantaged and vulnerable and building up their future resilience

Supporting Systems

Working better together
working together across sectors to reduce duplication and ensure greater impact

Sharing decision making
designing and developing services and initiatives with the people who need them

Doing with, not to
making our interventions empowering and centred around you as an individual

Using what works

everything we do is supported by evidence informed by local conversations



How is the Wellbeing Self-Assessment Framework (SAF) used?

The framework uses questions and prompts that encourage you to reflect on the work you are undertaking and the impact it could have on community wellbeing. It is flexible enough to be used in strategy and policy development, and the commissioning and delivery of services. The framework has also been used to review processes and procedures, helping with future planning and decision making.

The questions can be used prospectively, to help you develop strategy, policy, processes or services; and also retrospectively, to help evaluate the work you are doing.

The framework and its questions can also be used by communities themselves, (whether these are geographic communities, or communities of interest), to consider and evaluate how well their needs and wishes are being met.

Those working in specific settings, for example, in schools, pharmacies or early years, might also wish to explore the use of the [County Durham Healthy Settings](#) approach. The Healthy Settings approach assists in the design and development of an environment that maximises opportunities for improving health. The approach is underpinned by the Wellbeing Principles and aims to further embed the evidence base and quality into your work to improve the health of the population. This can include looking at the health needs of your setting/community, reviewing any policies you may have, or looking at how better to support your workforce.

If you would like to discuss how you can adopt the Healthy Settings approach, please contact publichealth@durham.gov.uk for more information.

How do I use the Self-Assessment Framework?

The framework sets out a number of questions based around the use of the evidence base and each of the seven Wellbeing Principles in an interactive PDF form.

The framework also asks those undertaking the review to summarise key areas and priorities for action, and to make decisions about who will do what, and when.

Whilst we have numbered the Wellbeing Principles, the questions do not need to be used sequentially, and you are encouraged to read through all the principles before deciding initially, which is most relevant to you. For example, if you are involved in commissioning services, then principle 5 might seem most relevant for you to start with. If you are a provider, then principle number 1 or 3 might seem most relevant. For those people who are in the early stages of developing a project or service, it can sometimes help to start with principle 7 and to think about clearly defining the group of people or the community you are working with, as well as being clear about the evidence base for your work.

Case studies are being developed to demonstrate how different people have been using the framework, with some using the questions to review their strategy or service and then making changes. Others have used the questions to consider changes to the way in which they commission services or build requirements into their contracts.



We have found that the framework is best used in a group or workshop setting to encourage discussion, challenge and a shared understanding of the questions and conclusions and resources are being developed to support you with this. If you have any queries, please contact approachtowellbeing@durham.gov.uk

Making a Commitment to Change

At the end of the framework there is a section for you to summarise what you feel are the main priorities for change and the actions needed to address them. This is a final element of the wellbeing model, seeking a commitment from you to change the way in which you work.

Adopting the Approach to Wellbeing will challenge everyone to deliver services and programmes in a different way. It will mean developing services and assets with people rather than simply consulting them during, or after the event. It will mean sharing decision making, devolving power and enabling others to take a lead. Doing so is not easy, and in some cases may not feel comfortable. But doing so will result in improved outcomes for our communities.

Evaluating the Wellbeing Framework Implementation

The implementation of our Approach to Wellbeing has been evaluated by Teesside University and we are continually learning about the range of ways in which people can use the tool. If you are using the framework to review your service or activity we would welcome feedback on how helpful it has been, what has worked well for you and what hasn't.

If you have any queries, or comments you would like to feedback which could help in its development, please contact approachtowellbeing@durham.gov.uk



Approach to Wellbeing Self Assessment Form

Name:

Email address:

Date: dd/mm/yyyy

What service or activity does this self-assessment focus on?

Wellbeing Principle 1: Empowering Communities

Working with communities to support their development and empowerment

Applying the Principle

Do you work with communities to support their development and empowerment?

Things to Consider

- What have you done to engage communities?
- How will you / have you worked with communities to support their development and their leadership role?
- How will you / have you work with communities to support their empowerment?
- How will you / can you demonstrate how you have devolved power to communities or supported a shared decision making approach with them?

Response and explanation

Possible next steps



Wellbeing Principle 2: Being Asset Focused

Acknowledging the different needs of communities as well as the potential of their assets

Applying the Principle

Have you acknowledged the differing needs and assets of communities in your day to day work?

Things to Consider

- How will you / have you worked with communities to determine their needs?
- How will you / have you worked with communities to determine their assets?
- As well as buildings and services, what other assets have you considered (for example, have these included assets such as people, skills, social groups, networks, transport links, green space, opportunities for education and employment and activities)?
- How will you / have you compared and responded to the needs of differing communities?
- Has your work considered how assets could be mobilised, or mobilised differently?
- Has your work identified gaps between needs and assets?
- Have you considered testing your activities and proposals against the [Place standard](#)?
- What approach will you/ have you taken to reach out and seek those voices that aren't ordinarily heard?

Response and explanation

Possible next steps



Wellbeing Principle 3: Building Resilience

Helping the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and helping to build up their future resilience

Applying the Principle

Do you focus your activities to support the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, helping to build their future resilience?

Things to Consider

- How will you / have you identified the most vulnerable or disadvantaged people in the communities that your work relates to?
- Can you demonstrate how your services or initiatives are accessible to everyone, whatever their age, mobility, disability, sex, ethnic group, religious belief or sexuality?
- How could / does your initiative reduce inequalities in health?
- How will / does your initiative target the most vulnerable or disadvantaged people in communities, for example children or older people?

Response and explanation

Possible next steps



Wellbeing Principle 4: Working Better Together

Working together across sectors to reduce duplication and ensure greater impact

Applying the Principle

Are your strategies/ policies, services and initiatives aligned with those of other sectors to ensure waste and duplication are reduced, and ensuring greater impact?

Things to Consider

- Are you aware of similar initiatives or projects working with your community of interest?
- Is your work aligned with similar work, with the aim of reducing duplication and maximising impact?
- How does your work support the delivery of the County Durham Vision, and/or the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy?
- Can you demonstrate that any new strategy or policy you develop is aligned with the County Durham Vision, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy or any additional strategy that may have primacy?
- Can you demonstrate that any new strategy or policy you develop supports County Durham's Approach to Wellbeing and its principles of devolution, asset-based community development, engagement and co production.
- Are your strategies and policies developed in consultation with communities or representative groups?

Response and explanation

Possible next steps



Wellbeing Principle 5: Sharing Decision Making

Designing and developing services and initiatives with the people who need them

Applying the Principle

Are your services or initiatives co-designed and co-produced with the people who need them, as well as their carers?

A co-production toolkit, with training, is available to help guide you through the process of co production. Further details can be obtained through publichealth@durham.gov.uk

Things to Consider

- How will you / do you ensure that people are able to contribute to decisions and developments that affect them?
- How will you / do you ensure that everyone is able to contribute, whatever their age, sex, ethnic group, religious belief, sexuality or disability?
- Can you demonstrate how people will be / have been involved in co designing and/or co-producing any new services, assets or initiatives you develop and provide?
- Can you demonstrate how people will be/ have been involved in the evaluation or development of current services, assets or activities you develop and provide?
- Are your strategies and policies developed in consultation with communities or representative groups?

Response and explanation

Possible next steps



Wellbeing Principle 6: Doing With

Making sure our interventions are empowering and centred around you as an individual

Applying the Principle

Are your services or interventions person-centred and do they empower rather than stigmatise?

Things to Consider

Can you demonstrate that your services or interventions:

- are person-centred
- empowering
- foster independence

Response and explanation

Possible next steps



Wellbeing Principle 7: Using what works

Using evidence supported by local conversations

Applying the Principle

Are your activities evidence based and informed by conversations with local communities?

Things to Consider

- Are you clear about the community of people you are working with (ie communities of interest such as LGBTQ, over 60s; schools or other settings; locations such as towns, villages, neighbourhoods)?
- Have you identified what the key issues are facing that community (ie information such as the Durham Insight, the JSNA or local surveys)?
- Have you identified a set of activities that you would like to use or introduce to that community?
- Are your activities and interventions based on evidence of what works and/or known best practice?
- Have these activities been discussed with, and shaped by the community you are working with?
- Are you clear about the goals or outcomes you are hoping to achieve in your work with those communities?
- Does anything need to happen to help you in applying the evidence?

Response and explanation

Possible next steps



Your Commitments for Change

Based on the above responses, what are the main issues and priorities for change?

What actions or next steps could be taken to deal with these issues and priorities? Who could take these forward and when?

Action

Click on the submit button to share your self-assessment framework with the Approach to Wellbeing team. This will help us to monitor impact and we may contact you about developing a case study.

If you have any difficulty saving and submitting the form, you might need to download [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) or alternatively email approachtowellbeing@durham.gov.uk

