

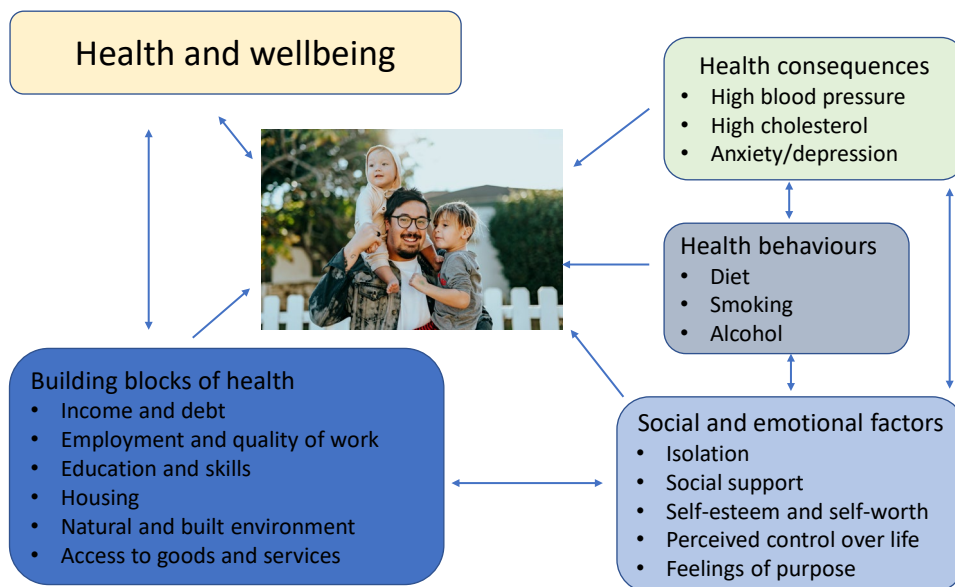
## Suffolk Public Health advice on Planning and Wellbeing

The places we are born, live, play, work and grow old shape our health, happiness and even influence how long we live.

The information on this website has been put together by Suffolk County Council Public Health and Communities Directorate as a resource for developers and decision-makers; to show how and why it is important to consider people's physical and mental health when developing plans to build houses and communities. It builds on available evidence and examples of ongoing work from other local authority Public Health Teams in the UK including [Hertfordshire](#) and [Wakefield Council](#).

What makes us healthy? The places we live - and the conditions we live in - are crucial for good health.

The following diagram illustrates some of the complex factors that interact to shape our health and happiness. The wider determinants of health – or building blocks of health – are heavily influenced by where - and the conditions in which - we live. Planning developments that allow everyone to thrive are an essential part of ironing out unfair differences in people's opportunity to live long, healthy lives.



Source: adapted Labonte model<sup>1</sup> and Public Health England Place-based approaches for reducing health inequalities<sup>2</sup>

Photo: [Nathan Dumlao](#) on [Unsplash](#)

<sup>1</sup> Labonte R. Health promotion and empowerment: Practice Frameworks: Centre for Health promotion. University of Toronto. 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Public Health England. Place-based approaches for reducing health inequalities: main report. 29 July 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-inequalities-place-based-approaches-to-reduce-inequalities/place-based-approaches-for-reducing-health-inequalities-main-report> (accessed 30.09.22)

## Our dream

All future developments across Suffolk have considerations for the health and wellbeing of their future residents at their core. The decisions made about planning houses, developments and communities now will have repercussions for the health and happiness of people in Suffolk over the coming decades.

## Supporting decisions with data

Understanding the issues that shape communities in Suffolk now will help to plan future developments. The Public Health and Communities Directorate draw together information from a variety of sources to produce the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#). It contains reports and data dashboards on a whole range of issues such as the cost of living, number of smokers in a particular area, the type of houses people live in, air quality etc. It is a useful first port of call to answer any questions about what we know now about people in Suffolk. It is updated regularly.

We are working on ways to provide data and information for planners and developers in a way that is easy to access and relevant to the local communities in Suffolk, highlighting any issues that are especially important in those areas. Watch this space.

## Role of public health in supporting planning decisions

Public Health is seeking to promote a 'health in all policies' approach to the formation of planning policy across Suffolk. Essentially, this means putting people and their health at the heart of placemaking. Alongside providing data to enable planners and developers to understand local health challenges, Public Health can be consulted during the planning process. At the pre-application stage of major developments, we recommend the use of a Healthy Urban Planning checklist or Health Impact Assessment (see links below). This will identify the key health issues and impacts specific to an area or development and help developers and decision makers to maximise the health benefits of a development at an early stage.

We believe developments can support the health of new residents and existing communities in seven key ways: promoting and providing opportunities for active travel, improving air quality, provision of high quality and well-designed homes, supporting access to healthy food, provision of quality open spaces for play and recreation, supporting access to education and employment and supporting access to services and community spaces. These key considerations will form the basis of our engagement with both policy making and development management as we seek to promote health through planning. Each of these key areas are considered in detail.

- [NHS Healthy Urban Planning checklist](#)
- [NHS Health impact Assessments](#)

## Sections

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[Neighbourhood and community spaces](#)

[Food and healthy choices](#)

## Active travel

### Our dream

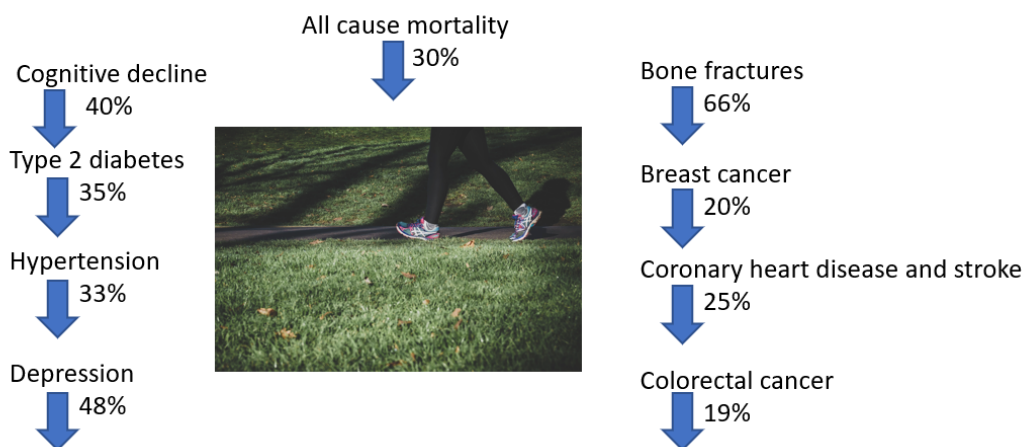


Photo by [Kelly Sikkema](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- Children will grow up in a place where they can walk and cycle to the places they want to go.
- The children and their parents feel confident the routes on roads and pavements are safe.
- Members of their family can get to school, shops, the library and access leisure facilities, work and most other services by foot, scooting, on their bikes or by using public transport.
- The family rarely travels by car.

### Why is it important?

Being physically active is beneficial to our physical and mental well-being and it can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases. The following diagram illustrates how physically active people have lower health risks:



Adapted from: Health Matters: Physical Activity – prevention and management of long-term conditions<sup>3</sup>.

Photo by [Arek Adeoye](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Active travel is a good way to include physical activity in our daily lives. Most trips undertaken in the UK are short and therefore could be undertaken by walking or cycling by many people.

<sup>3</sup> Public Health England. Health matters: physical activity – prevention and management of long-term conditions. 2020. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-physical-activity/health-matters-physical-activity-prevention-and-management-of-long-term-conditions> (accessed 12.10.22)

**Reduced car journeys:** More active travel can reduce traffic congestion, carbon emissions and road casualties. It can also improve the local air quality, social cohesion and enhance quality of life.

### What's happening in Suffolk?

- In 2021 over half of local travel-survey respondents in Suffolk travelled to work by car.
- Only around a quarter of respondents used active travel to get to work for at least part of their journey (8% cycling, 19% walking).

### Local information

- [Suffolk annual travel to work survey](#)
- Suffolk JSNA [State of Suffolk: How we travel](#)

### What can development do for active transport: promoting walking and cycling?

Examples of positive impacts on health	Examples of negative impacts on health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic calming and other speed reduction measures can decrease road traffic injuries and create a safer environment that promotes greater participation in walking and cycling.</li> <li>• Developments located close to local services and amenities encourage people to visit them using sustainable transport methods.</li> <li>• Developments with good links to the local public transport network act to reduce social isolation and promote participation in physical activity.</li> <li>• Residential streets (e.g. HomeZones) where the road space is shared between drivers of motor vehicles and other road users (e.g. walkers, cyclists and playing children) can encourage greater use of residential streets as a venue for physical activity.</li> <li>• The integration of a variety of services (e.g. community centre, library, doctors and pharmacy) in a single location can reduce the need to travel and so impact on congestion, noise and air pollution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developments that are totally anti-car can have a negative health impact on those people who are unavoidably car dependant (e.g. due to illness or mobility problems).</li> <li>• Isolated developments without adequate public or sustainable transport links can increase car dependence and contribute to increased congestion, road traffic accidents, noise and air pollution. It can also increase the chances of people living in those developments who do not have access to a car becoming socially isolated.</li> <li>• Giving cars and other motor vehicles priority can create an environment that is intimidating to walkers and cyclists so discouraging physical activity and social interaction.</li> </ul>

### Further information

- Public Health England (replaced by OHID and UKHSA, 2021): [Cycling and walking for individual and population health benefits 2018](#)
- Suffolk County Council [Travel plan guidance](#)
- Suffolk County Council [Suffolk Design Streets guide](#)
- Sustrans [Active travel toolkits](#)
- CEDAR [Active travel](#)
- NICE [Physical activity guidance](#)
- Sport England and Public Health England (replaced by OHID and UKHSA, 2021): [Active Design. Planning for health and wellbeing through sport and physical activity. October 2015](#)
- [The 20 minute neighbourhood](#), TCPA 2021

## Air quality

### Our dream



Photo by [Camylla Battani](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- No one, no matter where they live or who they are, is exposed to unhealthy levels of air pollution that could impact their health in Suffolk.

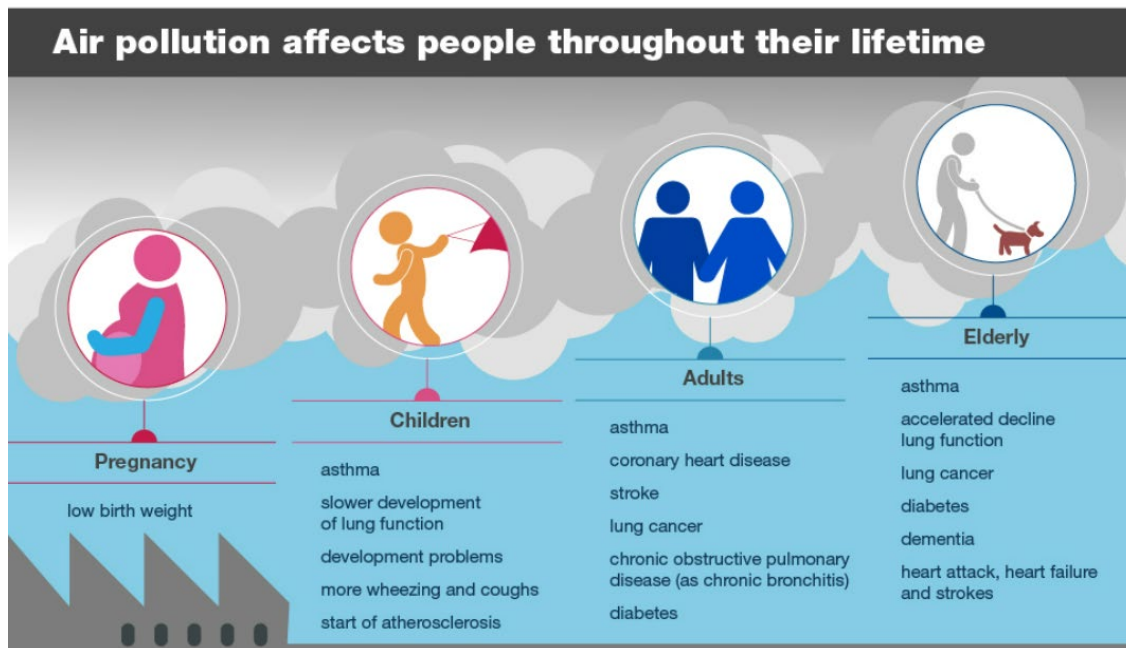
### Why is it important?

Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Studies show that long-term exposure to air pollution (over years or lifetimes) reduces lifespan, mainly due to heart and lung diseases and lung cancer. Short-term exposure (over hours or days) can cause a range of health problems, especially for those with pre-existing conditions such as asthma. Increased levels of pollution in the air are linked to higher admissions to hospital for heart and lung problems and higher rates of death.<sup>4</sup>

Some groups of people are more vulnerable to the effects of air pollution, as shown in the following diagram:

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<sup>4</sup> Public Health England. Health matters: air pollution. 2018. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-air-pollution/health-matters-air-pollution> (accessed 12.10.22)



From Health Matters Public Health England (replaced by OHID and UKHSA, 2021) 2018 ([content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0](#))

### What's happening in Suffolk?

Although overall air quality in Suffolk is reasonably good currently, there are areas that tend to have high air pollutant concentrations, particularly in and around Ipswich<sup>5</sup>. Some people, such as children, pregnant women, the elderly, people with chronic (especially heart or lung) conditions and people living in more deprived areas are more vulnerable to the effects of air pollution. This means all developments across Suffolk need to consider the impact of the development on air quality.

### Local information

- Suffolk JSNA [Air quality profile](#) (2021)
- [Respiratory disease and air quality in Suffolk & North East Essex Integrated Care System](#)

District councils' air quality management:

- Ipswich: [Air quality management](#), [low emissions supplementary planning document](#)
- [West Suffolk](#)
- [East Suffolk](#)
- [Babergh Mid Suffolk](#)

<sup>5</sup> Suffolk Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Suffolk Air Quality Profile 2021. Available at: <https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/advice-services/planning/planning-air-quality> (accessed 20th September 2022)



## What can development do for air quality?

Examples of positive impacts on health	Examples of negative impacts on health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Measures to minimise and control the impacts of construction traffic (e.g. dust, noise, and congestion) can limit noise and air pollution and their associated health impacts.</li><li>• The creation and safeguarding of areas of green space safeguarded and trees can create “green lungs” in local areas with poor air quality.</li><li>• Measures to deter car use and/or restrict HGVs from specific routes (e.g. outside schools or hospitals) can improve air quality and prevent excessive noise.</li><li>• Assessments of air pollution and excessive noise can help to identify potential problem areas where certain types of development could be avoided or specific controls be put in place.</li><li>• The integration of a variety of services (e.g. community centre, library, doctors and pharmacy) in a single location can reduce the need to travel and so impact on congestion, noise and air pollution.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developments that create excessive noise, dust or air pollution located close to residential areas.</li><li>• Residential areas located close to busy roads or sites that create excessive noise, air pollution or unpleasant odours.</li></ul>

### Further information

- Public Health England (replaced by OHID and UKHSA, 2021) [Health Matters: Air Pollution \(2018\)](#)

## Housing development and design

### Our dream



Photo by [National Cancer Institute](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- The family live in a good quality, warm home that is affordable.
- Their home is heated from a sustainable source.
- The home is light and adequately ventilated.
- There is enough space for everyone to lead their lives happily.

### Why is it important?

The link between poor housing conditions and poor health is well established. Poor quality housing harms both physical and mental health.

[The Marmot Review 10 Years On – Health Equity in England](#) (2020)<sup>6</sup> states the following:

*Poor-quality housing harms health and evidence shows that exposure to poor housing conditions (including damp, cold, mould, noise) is strongly associated with poor health, both physical and mental. The longer the exposure to poor conditions, including cold, the greater the impact on mental and physical health. Specific physical effects are morbidity including respiratory conditions, cardiovascular disease and communicable disease transmission, and increased mortality. In terms of mental health impacts, living in non-decent, cold or overcrowded housing and in unaffordable housing has been associated with increased stress and a reduction in a sense of empowerment and control over one's life and with depression and anxiety. Children living in overcrowded homes are more likely to be stressed, anxious and depressed, have poorer physical health, attain less well at school and have a greater risk of behavioural problems than those in uncrowded homes.*

During the recent pandemic, poorer housing conditions such as overcrowding and high-density housing were associated with greater spread of covid-19<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Health Foundation. Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On. 2020. Available at: [https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on?gclid=Cj0KCQiA\\_c-OBhDFARIsAIFg3ezLkuf8jh\\_H84t5ardOLQHzfiiRJsolGNxM7eKyZ08Nw2JTcJFVXQkaAn87EALw\\_wcB](https://www.health.org.uk/publications/reports/the-marmot-review-10-years-on?gclid=Cj0KCQiA_c-OBhDFARIsAIFg3ezLkuf8jh_H84t5ardOLQHzfiiRJsolGNxM7eKyZ08Nw2JTcJFVXQkaAn87EALw_wcB) (accessed 12.10.22)

<sup>7</sup> Health Foundation. Better housing is crucial for our health and the COVID-19 recovery (2020). Available from: <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/better-housing-is-crucial-for-our-health-and-the-covid-19-recovery> (accessed 22.09.22)



Well-designed housing and developments are crucial to overcoming these problems.

### What's happening in Suffolk?

It was estimated that as many as 1,230 excess winter deaths in Suffolk may have been due to cold homes in the years from 2005-2015<sup>8</sup>.

### Local information

- Suffolk JSNA [cost of living dashboard](#)
- Suffolk JSNA [Housing and Health Needs Assessment](#) (2018)

### What can development do for housing development and design?

Examples of positive impacts on health	Examples of negative impacts on health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of housing in appropriate locations (e.g. close to services and amenities appropriate to the needs of people living there and away from sources of noise and air pollution).</li> <li>• The provision of quality affordable housing can result in people have a greater proportion of their income available to spend on their other health needs (e.g. heating, healthy food, leisure activities).</li> <li>• Homes constructed using materials which help to reduce noise pollution, energy waste, fuel poverty and flood damage risk.</li> <li>• Homes that are well orientated (e.g. to maximise natural light and to minimise overheating risk).</li> <li>• Homes constructed with good ventilation which allows passive cooling and adequate air exchange. This will manage overheating risk and promote good indoor air quality.</li> <li>• The inclusion of green infrastructure can have a number of positive benefits including helping to manage and improve the external environment around homes (e.g. promote cooling, manage air and noise pollution) and providing an attractive venue for leisure and physical activity.</li> <li>• The use of passivhaus standards to maximise occupant comfort using very low energy cooling and heating.</li> <li>• Homes that are accessible, adaptable and which support care in the community and independent living enable people to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of housing in an inappropriate location (e.g. in an isolated location with poor access to local services and amenities).</li> <li>• A lack of quality, affordable housing provision can result in people, especially those on lower incomes, spending a greater proportion of their income on housing costs and less on their other health needs (e.g. heating, healthy food, leisure activities).</li> <li>• Homes with poor insulation are more difficult to keep warm in cold weather or cool in hot weather. This can exacerbate some health problems and contribute to fuel poverty, in addition to having an increased environmental impact.</li> <li>• Lack of soundproofing can result in noise pollution which can impact on health by interrupting sleep and contributing to mental health problems.</li> <li>• Overcrowded housing can contribute to poor mental health and an increase in accidents.</li> <li>• Homes built with an inappropriate aspect combined with lack of shading on windows and lack of ventilation in air-tight properties may lead to a risk of overheating. This may increase underlying health problems in people living within</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Suffolk County Council. Suffolk Housing and Health Needs Assessment. 2018. Available at: [https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/Suffolk\\_Housing\\_and\\_Health\\_Final\\_Mar18HWB.pdf](https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/Suffolk_Housing_and_Health_Final_Mar18HWB.pdf) (accessed 12.10.22)

Examples of positive impacts on health	Examples of negative impacts on health
<p>remain in their homes despite changing requirements caused by age, disability or illness (e.g. Mobility problems or mental health problems such as dementia).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of a range of housing tenures with access to a range of good basic services and local amenities (e.g. shops, schools, health services) that can create diverse, sustainable communities and promote social interaction.</li> </ul>	<p>them, in particular vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly or very young).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes located near sources of noise and air pollution (e.g. busy roads and commercial or industrial uses) can contribute to overheating risk (e.g. people are discouraged from opening windows.)</li> </ul>

### Further information

- Health Foundation [Better housing is crucial for our health and the COVID-19 recovery](#) (2020)
- Homes England [Building for a Healthy Life](#) (2020)

## Food and healthy choices

### Our dream



Photo by [Rumman Amin](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- People can buy healthy food in their neighbourhood that meets their needs.
- There is a range of food outlets and retailers available within walking or cycling distance of their homes with a choice of healthy products.
- They can get to shops by walking, cycling, or using public transport and don't need to rely on cars to get to the shops.
- There are no fast-food outlets close to schools or play/leisure facilities.
- They can grow their own food in community spaces, allotments, or gardens.

### Why is it important?

The opportunities for buying and growing food where people live can influence how healthily they eat. Studies show that living near to fast food takeaway outlets has been associated with rates of obesity and weight gain<sup>9</sup>. This may be especially important for vulnerable groups such as those on <sup>10</sup>[\[OBJ\]](#).

Some people may not have access to transport or to food storage and therefore need to buy affordable food within easy reach of their homes.

Community growing can have benefits for mental health and wellbeing, levels of physical activity and may also improve access to local healthy food. There are wider environmental and social benefits from engaging local groups in food growing as well as enhancing the local environment when unused space is brought into productive cultivation.

Planning can play a part in promoting and protecting the food environment, for instance by protecting land for local food production, supporting local retail infrastructure and encouraging spaces for community food-growing.

### What's happening in Suffolk?

Up to date information on the cost of living, including the proportion of their income that people spend on food in Suffolk is available on: Suffolk JSNA [Cost of Living](#).

### Local information

- Suffolk JSNA [Food insecurity in Suffolk](#) (2021)
- Suffolk JSNA [Tackling Obesity in Suffolk](#) (2021)

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<sup>9</sup> [CEDAR evidence](#)

<sup>10</sup> Spatial Planning for Health, PHE, July 2017

## What can development do for food and healthy choices?

Examples of positive impacts on health	Examples of negative impacts on health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating mixed use places to create opportunities for a range of food retailers, thus allowing a more diverse and sustainable food offer.</li><li>• The promotion and support of small-scale community projects can enable people to locally access affordable, fresh, healthy food and gain the skills to make this food into healthy meals (e.g. food coops, community allotments, community cafes).</li><li>• The provision of appropriately sized gardens and allotment sites where people can grow their own fresh food has been shown to promote both healthy eating and physical activity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Centralised shopping areas and the dominance of large supermarkets can act to reduce local food choice.</li><li>• The proliferation of fast-food takeaways and unhealthy food vendors in a particular area can make it harder for people to make healthy choices.</li><li>• The redevelopment of allotments, gardens and other similar facilities can result in people having no local place where they can grow their own food.</li></ul>

### Further information

- [National Food Strategy recommendations](#) (2021)
- [Food environment assessment tool \(Feat\)](#):map access to food retail outlets
- CEDAR [Are takeaways adding pounds?](#)
- [Fast food outlets: density by local authority](#)

## Quality open space, play and recreation

### Our dream



Photo by [Annie Spratt](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- Children have space to play.
- People have access to high quality open spaces for recreation within easy access of their homes.
- Open space is inclusive and accessible to all members of the community and feels safe.
- Physical activity in all age groups is encouraged.
- Developments are adaptable to climate change and minimise the impact for residents.
- The natural environment is enhanced by developments and native flora and fauna flourish.

### Why is it important?

There are many examples of greenspace including parks, gardens, sports areas, woodlands, allotments, and burial grounds. Living in a greener environment can promote and protect good health, and aid in recovery from illness. People who have greater exposure to greenspace have better mental health and wellbeing outcomes including reduced levels of depression, anxiety, and fatigue and enhanced quality of life for both children and adults<sup>11</sup>.



This diagram illustrates ways in which greenspace may be linked to positive health outcomes (source: Public Health England Improving access to greenspace).

Blue space, space near water including the sea, coastlines, rivers, lakes, canals, waterfalls and fountains, may also benefit health<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Public Health England. Improving access to greenspace. A new review for 2020. 2020. Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904439/improving\\_access\\_to\\_greenspace\\_2020\\_review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf) (accessed 28/09/22)

<sup>12</sup> Gascon M, Zijlema W, Vert C, White MP, Nieuwenhuijsen MJ. Outdoor blue spaces, human health and well-being: A systematic review of quantitative studies. International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health. 2017;220(8):1207-21

**No one left out:** Being physically active is beneficial to the well-being of everyone and it can help to prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions and diseases<sup>3</sup>. There are differences in physical activity levels in certain groups. For example, lower levels of physical activity are linked to socioeconomic status, age, gender, disability, race, and sexual orientation. It is important to consider how to provide facilities and access for everyone.

This is a quote from Katie, a wheelchair user, highlighting some of the benefits and barriers for her:

*“Walking has always been my favourite way to get around (I use the term walking in a broad sense. I use a wheelchair and have never set foot on the ground!). The freedom, joy, spontaneity and independence it affords is something I don’t experience often as a wheelchair user while travelling. Other modes of transport require meticulous planning (e.g. booking assistance or enquiring about ramps) whereas walking allows me to open the door and go. It is not without challenges. The pavements are often cluttered with bollards, bins, A-boards and lampposts. Sometimes e-scooters and dockless bikes are strewn on the ground, or a car is parked over the pavement. Other times the paving tiles are too uneven or bumpy to wheel over, or the pavement is simply too narrow to pass”*

Source: [Walking for Everyone: A guide for inclusive walking in cities and towns \(sustrans.org.uk\)](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/walking-for-everyone)

**Play:** Opportunities for play are important to children and recognised as essential for healthy development<sup>13</sup>. In 2021 there was a national survey of children’s views in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most frequent words in the children’s responses was play. They spoke about wanting “places to play and have fun things to do”. They wanted places to see their friends, to take part in community activities and feel safe. They wanted to be healthy, physically and mentally. They loved having parks, places to swim, games to play, open spaces and fun<sup>14</sup>.

## What’s happening in Suffolk?

Around 1 in 3 men, 1 in 2 women, and over half of Suffolk’s children are not physically active enough for good health<sup>15</sup>.

## Local information

- Suffolk JSNA [State of Suffolk: How we sustain Suffolk](#) (2022)
- Suffolk JSNA [Health Needs Assessment: physical activity](#) (2022)

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<sup>13</sup> World Health Organisation. Improving early childhood development. 2020. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/97892400020986> (accessed 28.09.22)

<sup>14</sup> Children’s Commissioner. The Big Ask. The Big Answer. 2021. Available at: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/the-big-answer/> (accessed 28/09/22)

<sup>15</sup> Suffolk JSNA. Health Behaviours in Suffolk. Health Needs Assessment: physical activity. 2022. Available at: [https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/Health\\_Behaviours\\_in\\_Suffolk\\_-\\_PHYSICAL\\_ACTIVITY.pdf](https://www.healthysuffolk.org.uk/uploads/Health_Behaviours_in_Suffolk_-_PHYSICAL_ACTIVITY.pdf) (accessed 28/09/22)



## What can development do for open space, play and recreation?

Examples of positive impacts on health	Examples of negative impacts on health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing measures to sustain or enhance biodiversity.</li> <li>• Making best use of existing land and green spaces (e.g. to reduce pollution, provide shade and cooling during hot weather and reduce flood risk).</li> <li>• Effective lighting in places for recreation can limit the opportunities for antisocial behaviour.</li> <li>• Pedestrianised areas act to encourage walking and social interaction by making people feel safer.</li> <li>• Formal and informal play and recreation areas can help divert people from crime and antisocial behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of greenspace reduces opportunities for people to be physically active and, some evidence suggests, has a negative impact on people’s mental wellbeing.</li> <li>• Excluding certain individuals or groups from using certain public spaces can create feelings of alienation, inequality and isolation that can lead to antisocial behaviour.</li> <li>• Areas that are unsafe or that feel unsafe are less likely to be used, this can further increase the perception that they are unsafe.</li> </ul>

### Further information:

- Public Health England, [Spatial Planning for Health](#) (2017)
- NICE [guidance on physical activity: Public open spaces](#) (2018)
- Public Health England, [Improving access to greenspace](#) (2020)
- NICE, [Physical activity guidance](#)
- UK Chief Medical Officer, [Physical Activity guidelines](#) (2019)
- Homes England, [Building for a Healthy Life. A Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces](#) (2020)

## Local economy and employment

### Our dream



- A range of work opportunities is available locally.
- There is easy access to local jobs, training, and educational establishments.
- There is a thriving local economy.

Photo by [Eliott Reyna](#) on [Unsplash](#)

### Why is it important?

There is clear evidence that good work improves health and wellbeing across people's lives, not only from an economic standpoint but also in terms of quality of life. There is also evidence that good quality work boosts wellbeing through the provision of: income, social interaction, a core role, identity and purpose. Employment promotes recovery and rehabilitation for those with long-term conditions and reduces the chances of chronic disability.

Unemployment is bad for health with an increased risk of certain illnesses, for example cardiovascular disease and poor mental health), health-damaging behaviours and suicide <sup>16</sup>

Planning can support economic development and employment by providing short- and long-term employment opportunities and stimulate the local economy by bringing new people into an area and providing transport and digital infrastructure to enable wider employment opportunities.

### What's happening in Suffolk?

Figures suggest that overall employment in Suffolk is higher than the England average. However, average pay is less, suggesting a lot of people are not doing highly-skilled jobs. Fewer students progress into Higher Education in Suffolk than national and regional averages <sup>17</sup>.

### Local information

- Suffolk JSNA: [Suffolk Employment, Economy and Skills dashboard](#)

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<sup>16</sup> Public Health England. Health matters: health and work. 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-health-and-work/health-matters-health-and-work> (accessed 21.09.22)

<sup>17</sup> Suffolk County Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Suffolk Employment, Economy and Skills dashboard. Available at: <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMDQ4NThkZDktY2ZhOS00ZjY4LTg1MjYtZGQ4YzExZTc5ZWlyliwidCI6IjEwOVM2YWVjLTUwNDYtNGE5NS04ZjNjLTg0ZjYzYmExOGFmNCJ9> (accessed 12.10.22)

## What can development do for local employment?

Examples of positive impacts on health	Examples of negative impacts on health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a range of varied jobs appropriate to the skills present in local communities can ensure those local communities derive maximum economic benefit from those opportunities.</li> <li>• Childcare and other support services located close to workplaces can make available job opportunities more accessible to a wider range of people.</li> <li>• Safe, attractive, and pleasant workplaces can have a significant positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the people who work there.</li> <li>• The creation of employment opportunities in accessible locations results in a wider range of people being able to access those opportunities (e.g. with good public and sustainable transport links to nearby communities).</li> <li>• Support for new start-up businesses can help to generate a greater variety of employment opportunities and support entrepreneurship.</li> <li>• Ensuring areas are not dominated by a single large employer but have access to range of varied employment opportunities can create a more vibrant and sustainable local economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The creation of employment opportunities in inaccessible locations with poor transport links can greatly limit who is able to access those opportunities.</li> <li>• Areas that are too reliant on a single employer or lacking in job variety can stifle the aspiration and limit employment opportunities of the local workforce and as a result have a negative impact on health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Developments in areas with poor infrastructure can make less competitive or attractive business locations, discouraging investment in an area.</li> <li>• A lack of new business start-up facilities in an area can hinder entrepreneurship and limit investment.</li> <li>• The creation of employment opportunities that are inappropriate to the skills of the local resident workforce results in that workforce deriving little economic benefit from those opportunities.</li> <li>• The loss of potential employment sites or opportunities (e.g. replacing an industrial site with housing) can have a negative impact on the supply of jobs in a specific area.</li> </ul>

### Further information

- Public Health England (replaced by OHID and UKHSA, 2021) [Health Matters: Health and work](#) (2019)
- Local Government Association/Public Health England (replaced by OHID and UKHSA, 2021): [Health, work and health-related worklessness](#) (2016)

## Neighbourhood and community spaces

### Our dream



Photo by [micheile dot com](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- People can get to shops, their local GP, and other services including their local GP surgery and grocery shops on foot or by using public transport.
- They know their neighbours and are supported by them when needed.
- They feel safe.
- They can meet with friends and have places to go.
- They are not lonely.

### Why is it important?

The social and community network is essential for people's health: it can help to build resilience, encourage health-seeking behaviour, reduce loneliness, and improve health and wellbeing. Village and neighbourhood centres therefore are an important part of local community health and wellbeing, often providing essential and accessible services and a community hub.

The community environment is not just about the homes but is also about the surrounding neighbourhood areas. As the population ages, the neighbourhood becomes even more important in the quality of everyday life<sup>18</sup>.

There are five key areas particularly relevant to active ageing and the built environment<sup>19</sup>:

- pedestrian infrastructure
- crime and safety
- access to amenities and services such as shops and open space
- aesthetics
- environmental conditions, air pollution and noise.

The built environment and well-designed outdoor spaces can enhance the long-term health and wellbeing of those who use them regularly, reduce the risk of falls, promote physical activity, and reduce social isolation<sup>19</sup>.

Less user-friendly environments are often perceived by older people and other generations as posing an increased risk of falling or heightened fears about crime, nuisance, and traffic, and make going

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<sup>18</sup> Local Government Association. Ageing: the silver lining. The opportunities and challenges of an ageing society for local government. Available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/ageing-silver-lining-oppo-1cd.pdf> (accessed 28/09/22)

<sup>19</sup> Housing Learning and Improvement Network. Active Ageing and the Built Environment. 2016. Available at: [https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support\\_materials/Practice\\_briefings/HLIN\\_PracticeBriefing\\_PHE\\_ActiveAgeing.pdf](https://www.housinglin.org.uk/assets/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Practice_briefings/HLIN_PracticeBriefing_PHE_ActiveAgeing.pdf) (accessed 12.10.22)

outdoors less attractive reinforcing feelings of being isolated. It is therefore important to focus on both the role of the built environment in removing these barriers and how it might promote social and community participation.<sup>19</sup>

### What's happening in Suffolk?

Place-based needs assessments are available for areas across Suffolk, including all sorts of information on the health of different members of the community in those areas.

#### Local information

- Suffolk JSNA [Place-based needs assessments for small areas in Suffolk](#)

### What can development do for neighbourhood and community spaces?

Examples of positive impacts on health	Examples of negative impacts on health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings and spaces where people can meet formally and informally can help to stimulate the creation of social networks</li> <li>• Social cohesion builds capacity to prepare and respond to emergencies such as extreme weather and the associated impacts.</li> <li>• Mixed use developments can stimulate interaction between different social groups with a community (e.g. Parent and Toddler Group and Older Peoples group based in same space)</li> <li>• Encouraging people to walk to local facilities rather than travelling by car encourages them to interact more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placing a busy road or other development through the middle of a community can act to split that community in two and hinder social interaction between the severed parts</li> <li>• Removing facilities (e.g. library, post office, community hall) from a community can remove opportunities for social interaction and the creation of social networks within communities.</li> </ul>

#### Further information

- WHO [Age-friendly cities and communities](#)
- TCPA [The 20 minute neighbourhood](#) (2021)
- Homes England [Building for a Healthy Life. A Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces](#) (2020)