



# Local Government Association Mental Health Training Part 2

- Developed from LGA workbook for Thrive LDN
- Delivered to over 700 councillors in about 50 authorities
- Evaluated by NIHR: 93% rate it Excellent/Good – 68% change their behaviours – 48% change their council's policies



## In this session

### **Do I know what I'm on about?**

- Senior councillor for 12 years
- 11 years Local Government Association (LGA) Expert Peer
- Four years LGA Boards
- 15 years national health charities
- Visiting Public Health Lecturer at King's College London
- Lived experience of mental ill health

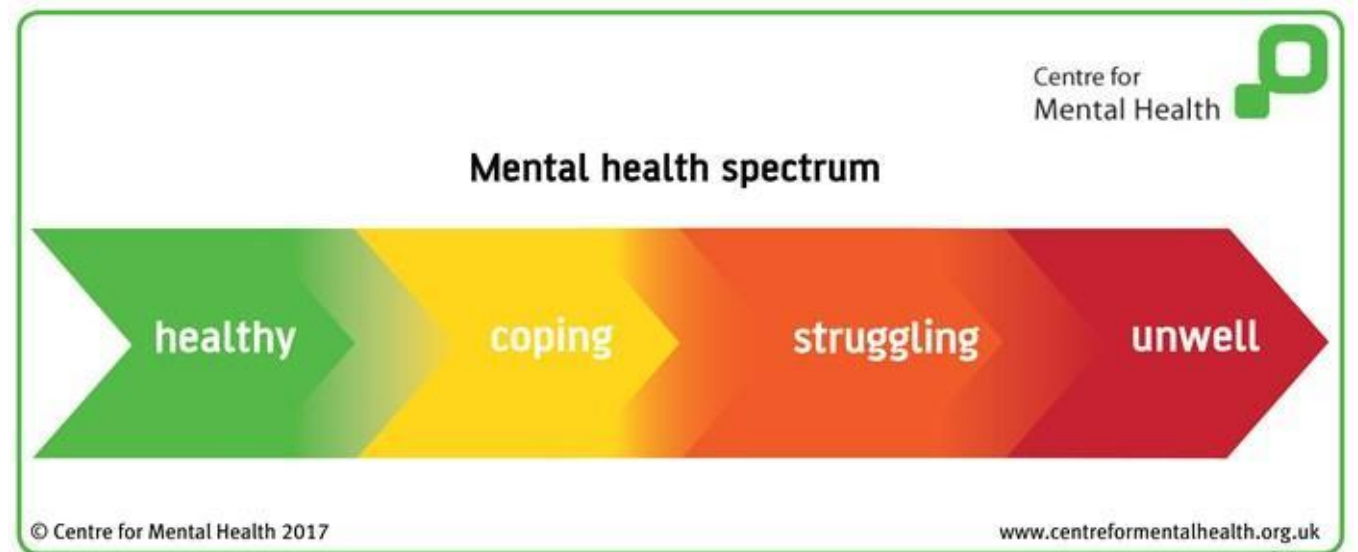
- Definitions of mental health and illness
- Where to get support
- Causes
- Causes of the causes
- Social determinants
- Environmental factors
- Commercial and physical factors

# Mental health



The World Health Organisation says mental health is a state of well-being enabling people to cope with stress, realize potential, learn and work well, and contribute to their community.

Our mental health fluctuates according to our circumstances with 80% people experiencing a diagnosable mental health condition at least once in their lifetime:



# Mental ill health

Some people will become mentally unwell even if they do all 'right' things.

Depression and anxiety are the most common (affecting about one on four people) mental health disorders.

Talking Therapies and medicines are effective.

Severe mental illnesses affect about one in 100.

Effective talking therapies and drug treatments exist for these conditions too.

Anyone experiencing mental illness should seek professional help as quickly as possible.

Be aware of local services and support people to access them



**All upper tier councils must  
have a suicide reduction  
strategy**

# Self-refer for NHS talking therapies



There's a range of confidential and effective support available that can help you feel better sooner.

Better Health every mind matters

NHS

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NHS

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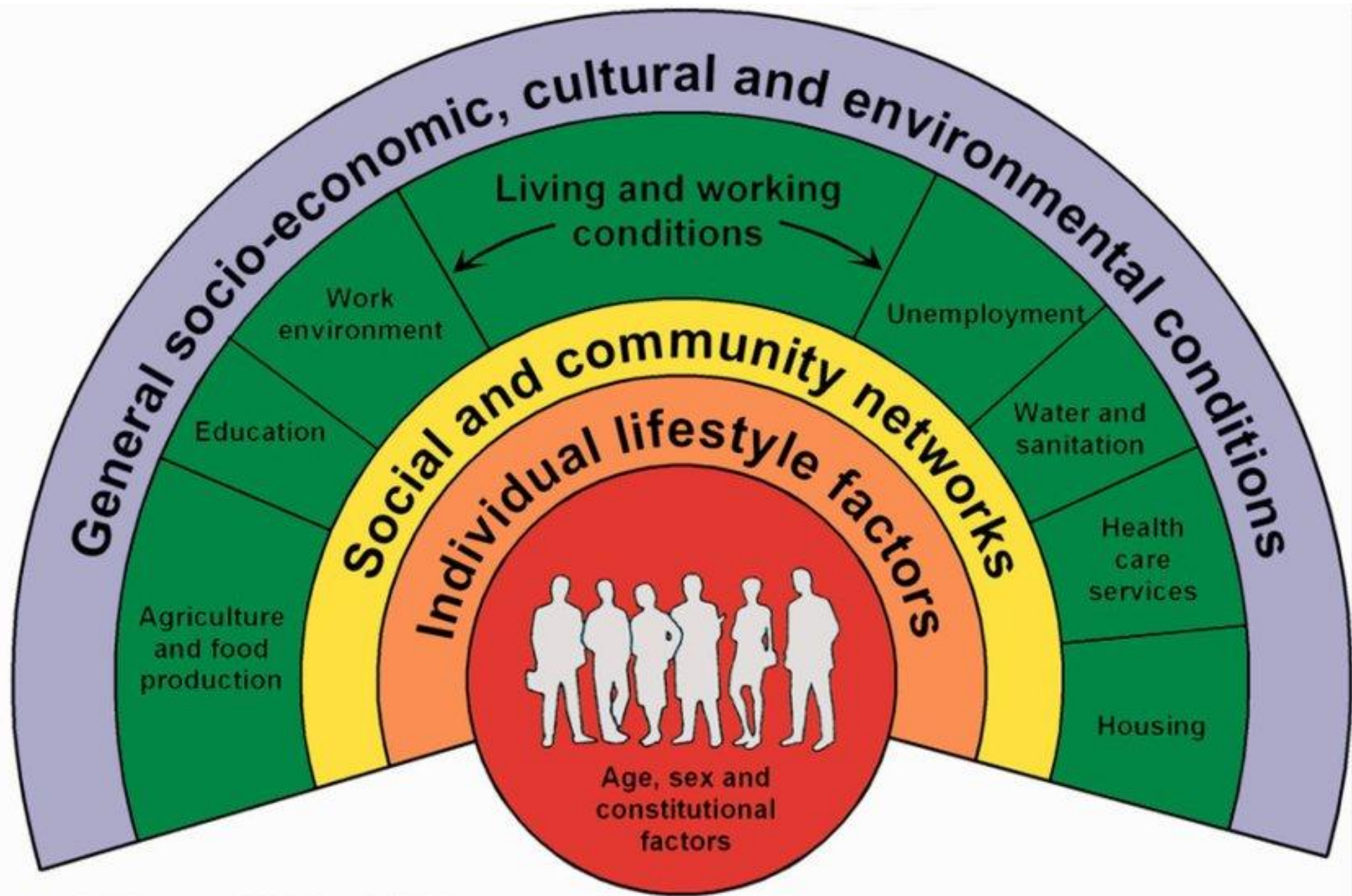


## Our services

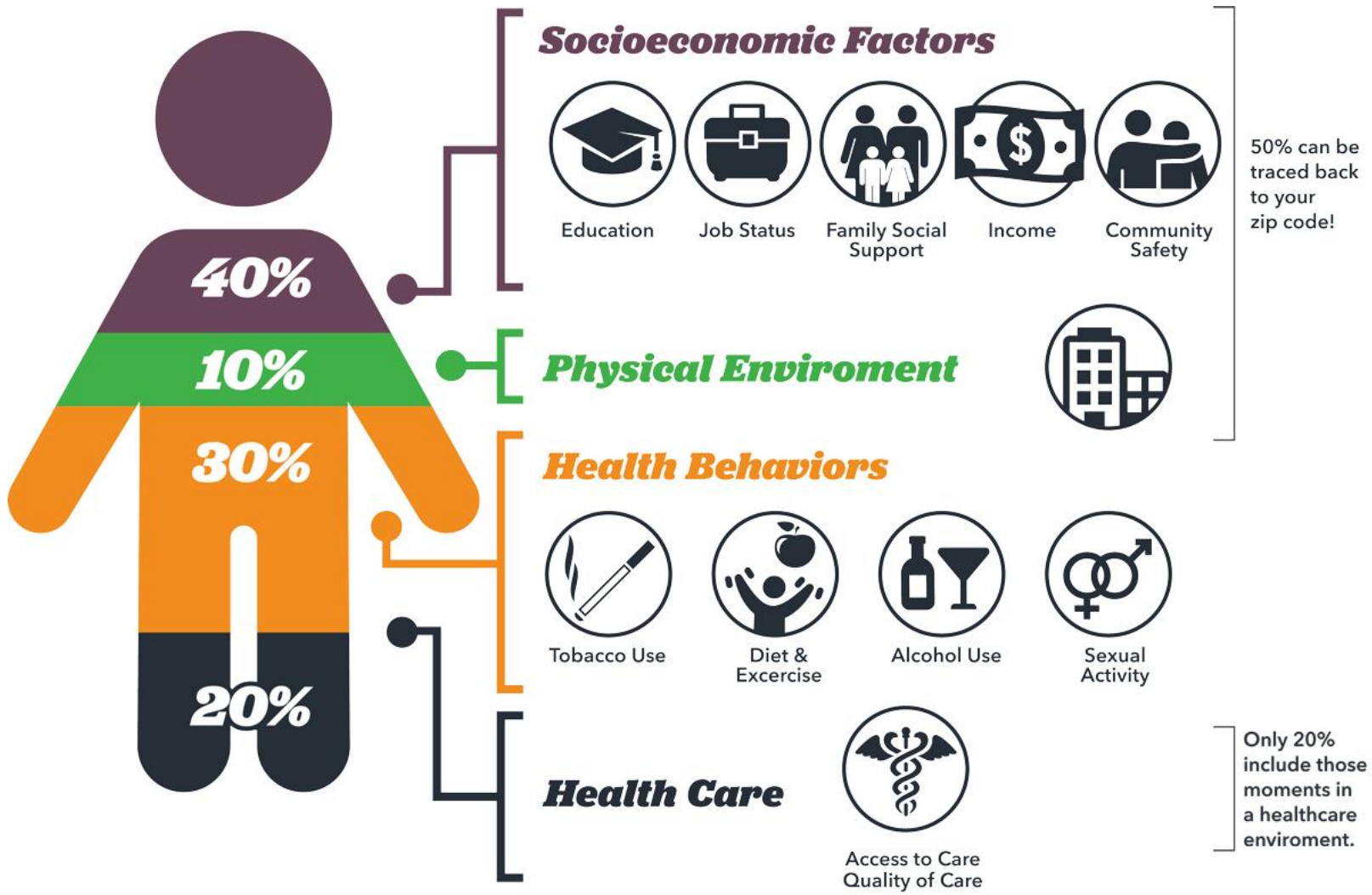
- GPs
- NHS Talking Therapies
- NHS Every Mind Matters
- NHS secondary care
- NHS CAMHS
- Mind
- Rethink
- Smaller local charities
- Remember often mental health problems are linked to social and physical conditions and alleviating those can often help mental health problems

▼ Mental health initiatives

- ▶ Halton Borough Council: Contractors must include mental health and wellbeing statement in bids for council contracts
- ▶ Hampshire County Council: 'Chat about' – using libraries to reduce social isolation
- ▶ Leeds City Council: Establishing 'care experienced' as a protected characteristic
- ▶ North West Leicestershire City Council: Wellbeing roadshow – connecting people with services
- ▶ Warrington Borough Council: Community in Mind
- ▶ Worcestershire County Council: Mental health first strategy – no health without mental health



Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991

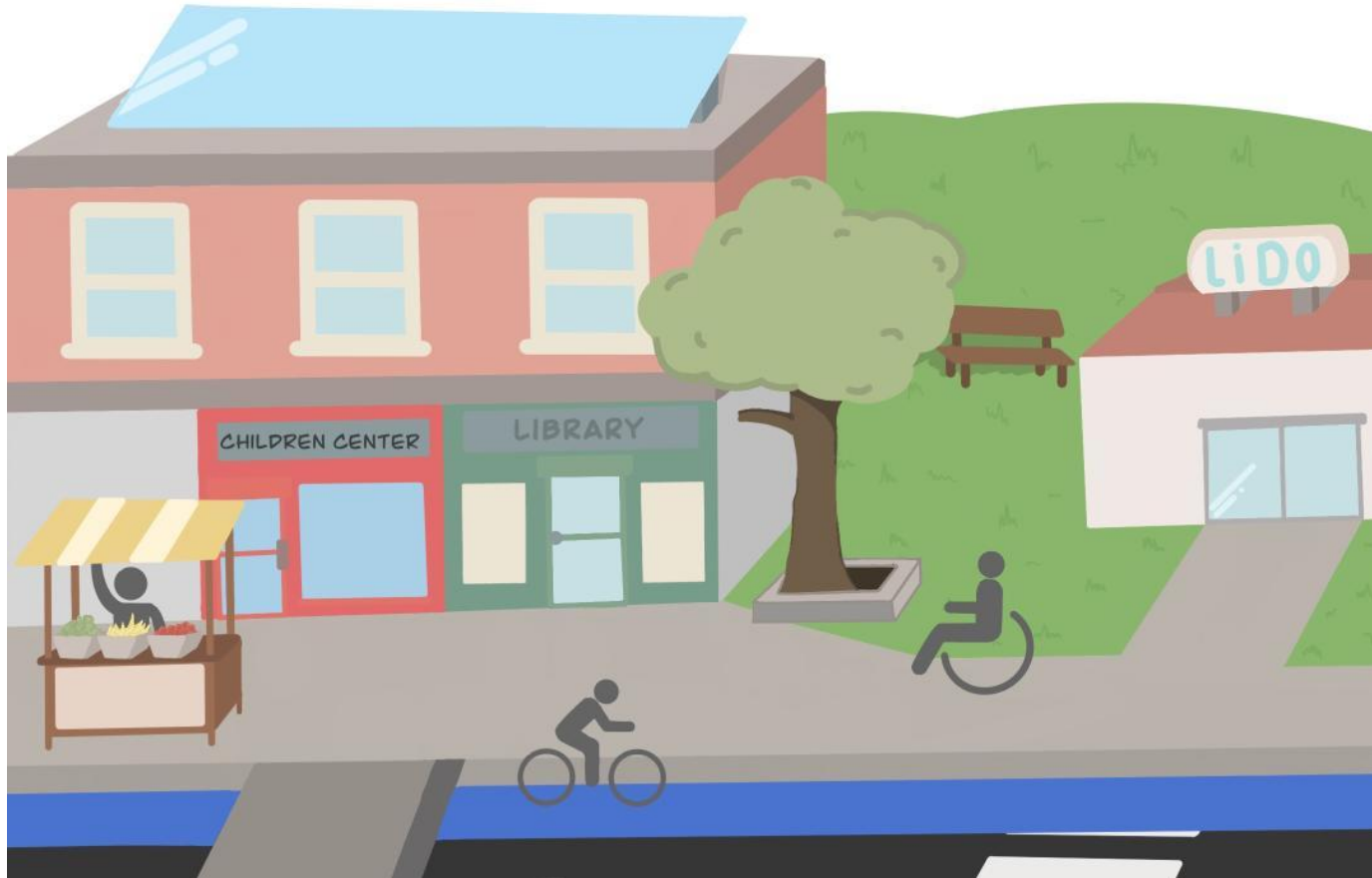


Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)

**80% of health outcomes are more to do with councils than the NHS**



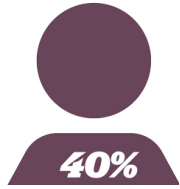
# Councils and mental health



- Education, major economic actor, influencer, convener
- Planning – housing, retail, transport
- Housing – social landlord
- Parks and green spaces
- Leisure centres, libraries community centres
- Alcohol/gambling licensing
- Public health
- Social care

# Circumstances create thoughts and hormonal responses

**Socio economic**



**Work, Money  
Relationships  
Fair treatment  
Support  
Childhood**

**Physical & commercial**



**Exercise  
Food, Sleep  
Alcohol/Drugs  
Gambling  
Tobacco**

**Environment**

**10%**

**Housing  
Nature  
Communal space  
Adverts/outlets  
Air quality  
Noise**

**Thoughts and hormonal responses contribute to mental health which in turn can influence circumstances**



**For example, debt causes excess stress hormone cortisol harming sleep, relationships, physical and mental health and increases likelihood of reaching for 'comfort' products like cigarettes, alcohol and gambling (which poorer neighbourhoods have more ads/outlets for) – worsening debt, worry and health.**

### **Change circumstances:**

- Debt advice/consolidation
- New better paid job

### **Change thoughts:**

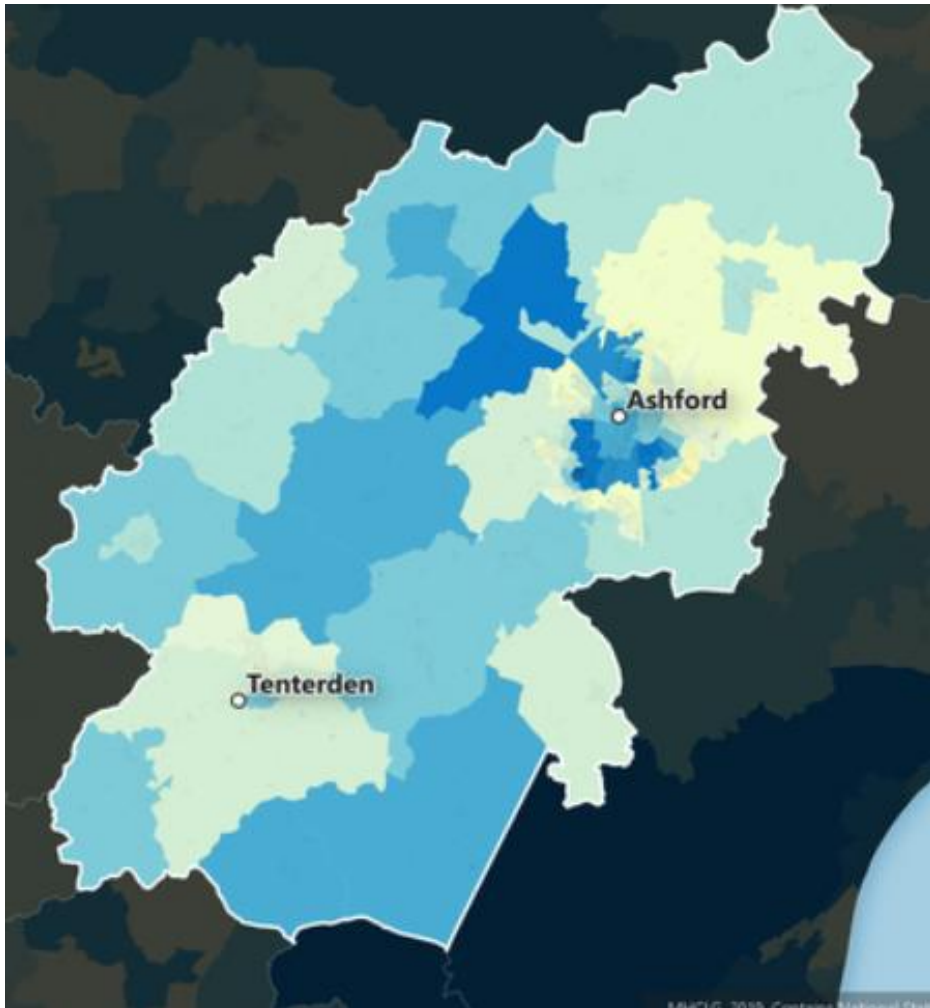
- Cognitive behaviour techniques to reduce negative thinking about situation

### **Change hormones:**

- Exercise flushes cortisol and stimulates endorphins, serotonin, even cannabinoids

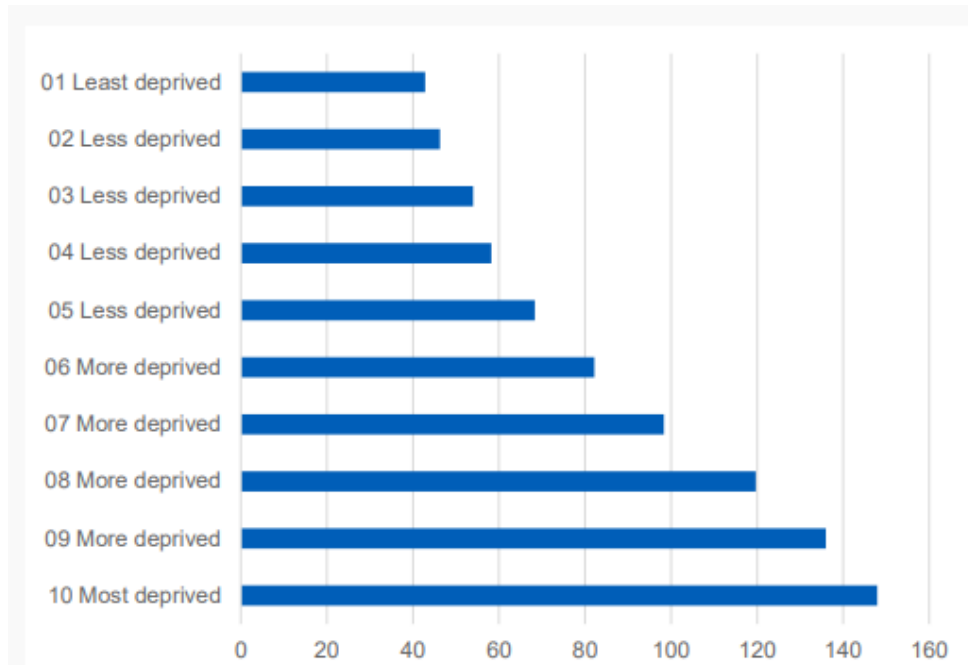


# Change circumstances

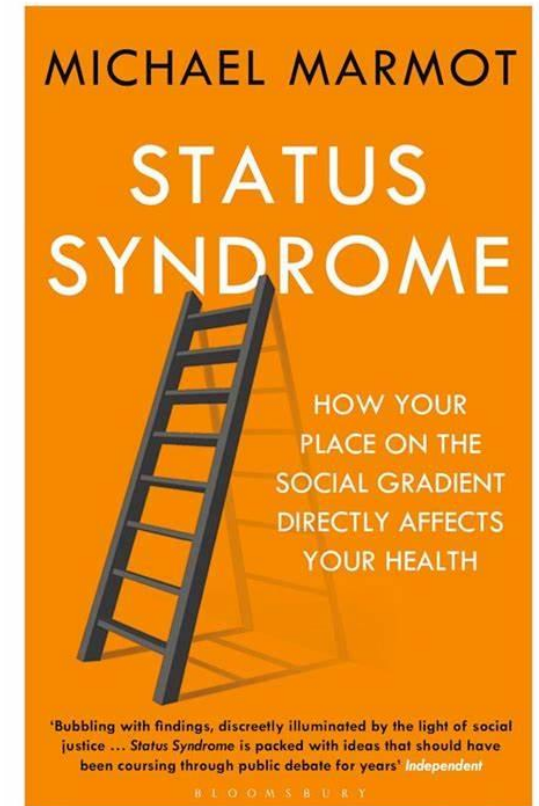
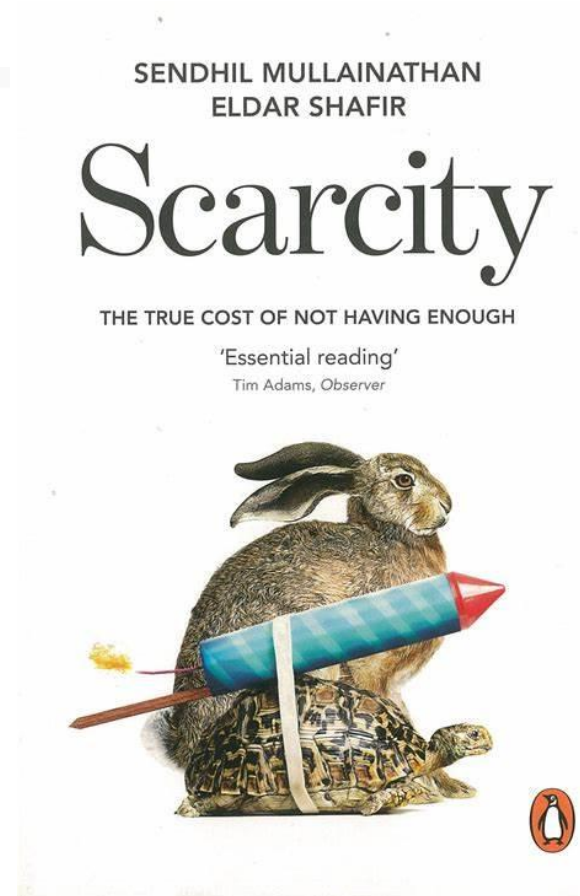


- Income (22.5%)
- Employment (22.5%)
- Education, skills and training (13.5%)
- Health and disability (13.5%)
- Crime (9.3%)
- Barriers to housing and services (9.3%)
- Living environment (9.3%)

# Poverty (and economic inequality) is toxic



Sections under Mental Health Act



# HOW POVERTY HARMS MENTAL HEALTH



## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

- ⊙ People with the lowest incomes are harmed the most by economic inequality, as it increases risk factors and reduces protective ones while damaging self-esteem and control
- ⊙ Increases the risk of adverse childhood experiences
- ⊙ Intersects with discrimination including structural racism leading to worse outcomes for racialised communities.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- ⊙ Reduces access to healthy food
- ⊙ Makes living in overcrowded, insecure housing more likely
- ⊙ Lessens access to green space & exercise
- ⊙ Increases exposure to air pollution
- ⊙ Deprived areas more likely to be saturated by unhealthy products like fast food, betting shops, cheap illicit tobacco.



## INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

- ⊙ Makes genetic risk more likely to convert to illness
- ⊙ Increases stress
- ⊙ Reduces sense of control, self-esteem & confidence
- ⊙ Cuts 'mental bandwidth' for 'good' health choices (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013)
- ⊙ Creates vulnerabilities to unhealthy consumption such as smoking, substance misuse, unhealthy foods & alcohol.

## ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND OTHER SUPPORT

- ⊙ Deprived communities have less access to quality health care and other support services, as these areas are often underserved and under-resourced compared to more wealthy areas.
- ⊙ This phenomenon is described by Tudor Hart as the 'inverse care law'.

# Increase incomes

## Reduce costs

- Ensure excellent financial, social security, housing, childcare **advice**
- Create as many decent Living Wage+ **jobs** and apprenticeships as possible. Social value procurement
- Invest in education and training
- Ensure genuinely **affordable housing**
- **Support free childcare** – 30% of free childcare for two and three-year-olds is unused
- Sheffield default Free School Meal scheme



ARTICLES | [VOLUME 8, ISSUE 6, E403-E410, JUNE 2023](#)

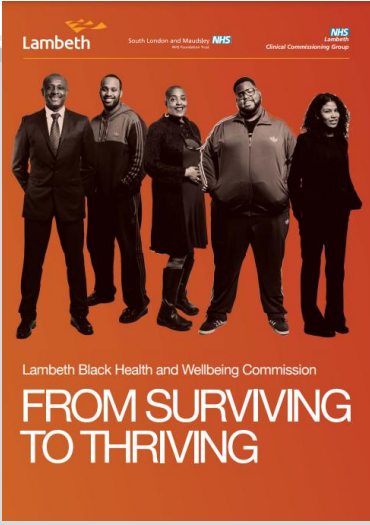
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## The mental health and wellbeing impact of a Community Wealth Building programme in England: a difference-in-differences study

[Tanith C Rose, PhD](#)   • [Konstantinos Daras, PhD](#) • [Julian Manley, PhD](#) • [Prof Mick McKeown, PhD](#) •

[Emma Halliday, PhD](#) • [Tom Lloyd Goodwin, PhD](#) • et al. [Show all authors](#)

[Open Access](#) • Published: April 21, 2023 • DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(23\)00059-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(23)00059-2) •



# Change circumstances

## Address discrimination

- Check you are carrying out your Public Sector Equalities Duties under the Equalities Act 2010
- Check data for disproportionality
- Ensure representation at all levels and in public representation of all kinds
- Co-produce solutions with people and communities
- Invest in quality anti-discriminatory practice
- Educate yourselves and others





# Change circumstances

'No ball games' signs replaced with basketball hoops in London



## Nurture children

- Make child safeguarding and development everyone's business
- Create child-friendly environments
- Try to positively influence your schools
- Support child poverty mitigations – refresh your child poverty strategy

▼ Children and young people initiatives

- ▶ Brighton & Hove City Council: Counselling in secondary schools
- ▶ Brighton & Hove City Council: Free swimming
- ▶ Havant Council: Real impact, real value: Securing a better future for young people
- ▶ Leeds City Council: Child-friendly built environments
- ▶ London Borough of Barnet: Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing strategy
- ▶ Wandsworth Council: Mobile youth centre



- A mental health crisis costing thousands of lives and over £2bn a year for each borough
- An obesity crisis with 60% of UK adults and a third of children overweight or obese
- An alcohol crisis – 25% drink harmfully
- An environmental crisis – air pollution kills 40k in UK a year, climate change, habitat loss

# How do we create environments more sympathetic to our minds, bodies and communities?



Copenhagen

1 Medium density quality, affordable homes and mixed use

Plentiful green, waterway play space

Pro-social space – where people can meet others freely

Homes close to jobs, schools, shops and other amenities

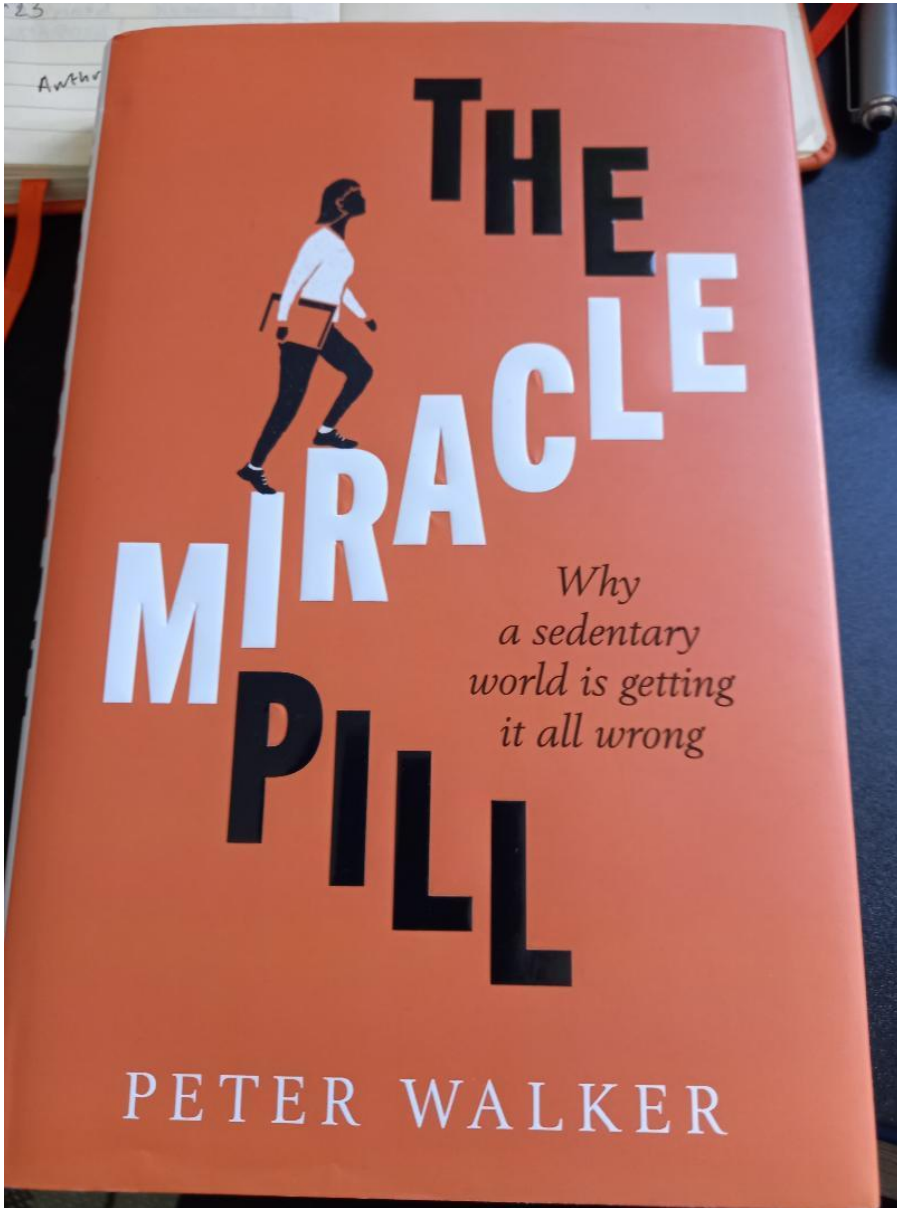


£20 min wage  
Free childcare  
Generous social security

Walking, cycling, public transport prioritised

Clean air, healthy food, restricted alcohol/gambling

Regularly tops UN/WHO Healthy/Happy City Indexes



# What are the benefits of exercise on mental health?



## Reduce stress levels

Exercise can help to reduce your cortisol levels



## Improves social well be

Whilst exercising you might meet new people and develop more friendships



## Reduced anxiety

When you exercise your brain releases endorphins which can help to calm you down



## Increased self esteem

As you become faster, fitter and stronger you start to improve your self confidence



## Reduced risk of depression

Exercise can help to improve your mood



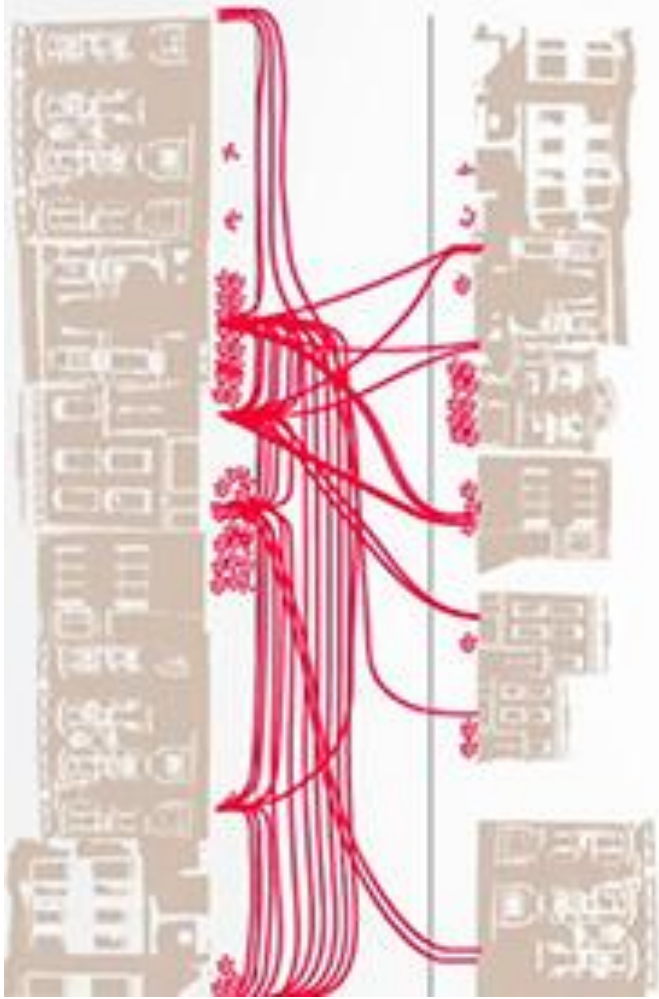
## Boost Brainpower

Exercise can help to improve cognitive functioning including decision making and learning

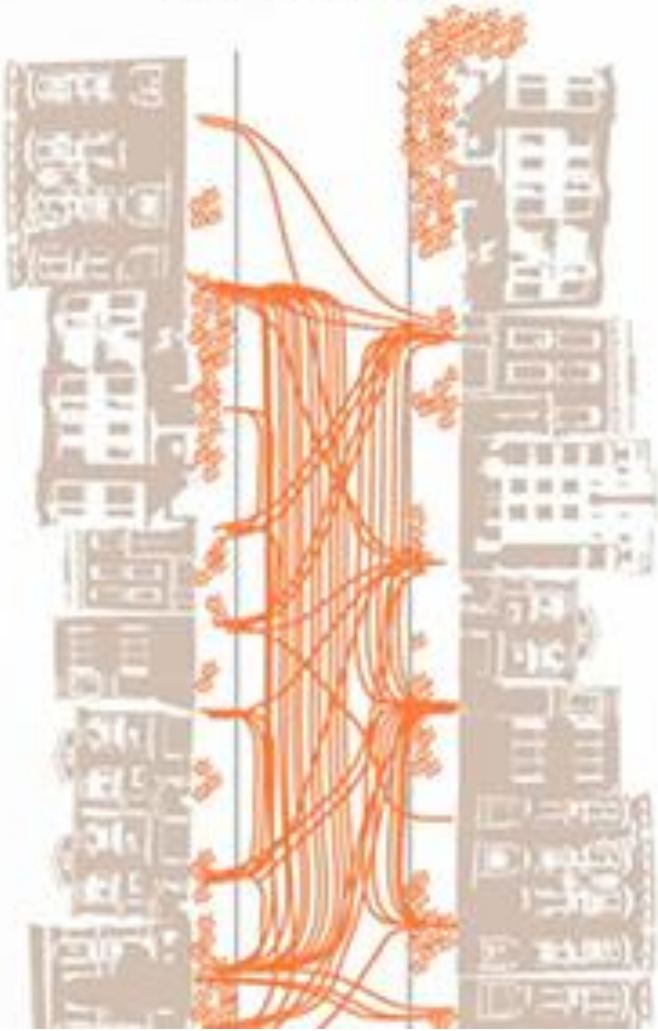
Statistics from PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STATISTICS, 2015 BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION



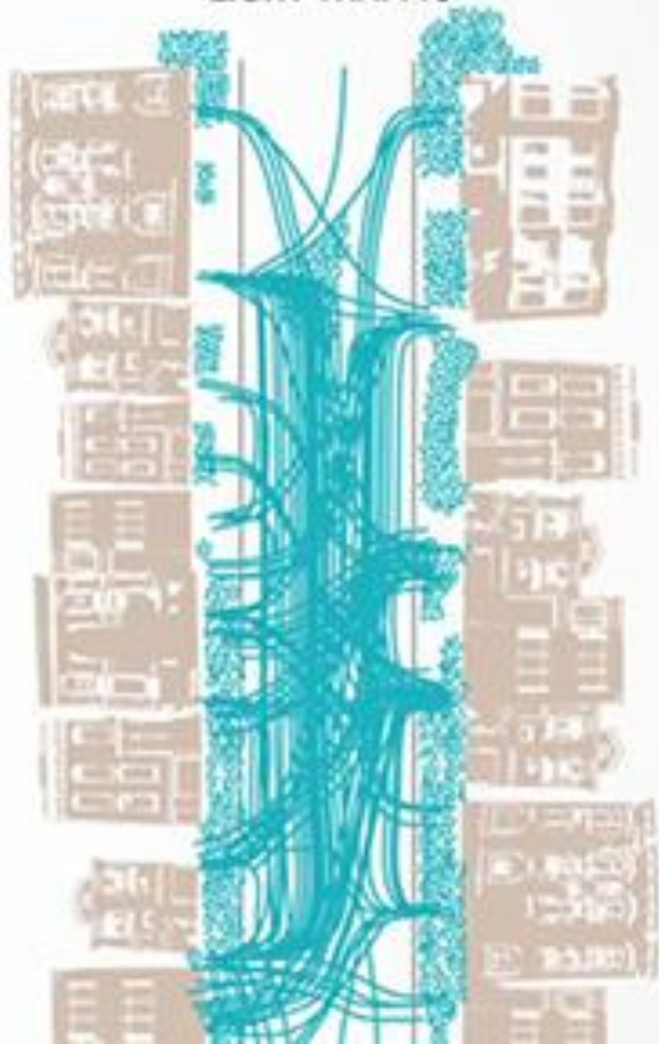
**HEAVY TRAFFIC**



**MODERATE TRAFFIC**



**LIGHT TRAFFIC**



# Mini Holland schemes in Waltham Forest



- increased walking (115 mins/wk)
- cycling (20 mins/wk)
- Vehicle ownership decreased by 7% after three years,
- No increase in emergency service response times,
- 18% reduction in crime after three years,
- 75% reduction in road injury collision risk.
- Opposition decreased from 40% to 1.7%. All pro-LTN cllrs re-elected!
- Health economic benefit of £724 m from interventions costing £80 m.





 **GOV.UK**

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Department  
for Transport



Active Travel England

Guidance

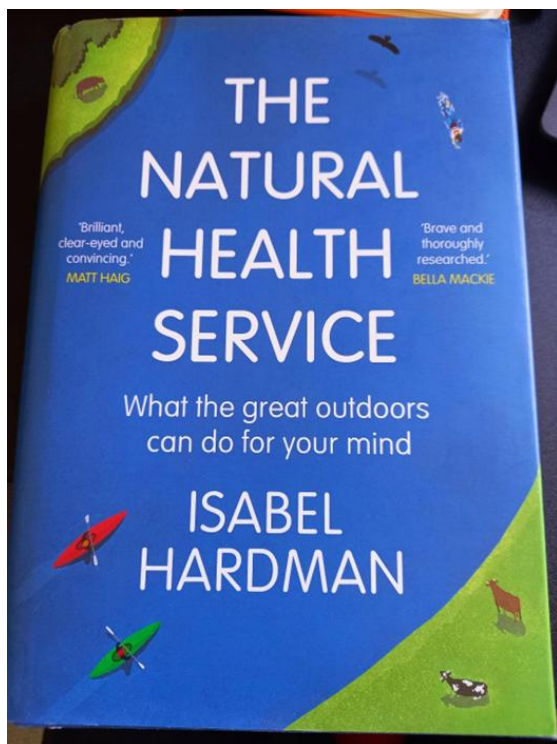
# School Streets: how to set up and manage a scheme

Published 19 November 2024





# Support everyone to use your parks



- Improve mood
- Reduce stress levels
- Increase productivity
- Reduce blood pressure
- Reduce fatigue
- Decreased pain





# A new play area in Chelmsford is designed by local schoolgirls

What can be done about boys dominating playground space? Ask girls to help design public parks



by [Jenny Rhodes](#) — 14 July 2025 in [Community](#), [Essex](#), [Featured](#), [Local government](#) Reading Time: 6 mins

AA





GP food growing beds

1 Health & leisure centre



Social housing mixed with other tenures



Shops, library, pubs, cafes, cinema

Park, with play and walking and cycle access – lots of trees

Train, bus connectivity



School

Council and NHS Living Wage accredited  
Business Improvement District  
Strict off licensing regime  
West Norwood Feast monthly festival  
Friends of parks groups  
L'Arche learning disabled community



▼ Environment, green spaces and transport initiatives

- ▶ Cornwall Council: Encouraging adults to choose 'active travel'
- ▶ East Suffolk Council: Grow for it! Residents encouraged to grow their own
- ▶ Greater London: Healthy Streets
- ▶ Leeds City Council: Child-friendly built environments
- ▶ West Suffolk Council: Air quality action plan agreement to tackle village pollution


# Supporting residents to eat more healthily

- Planning powers to control take aways near schools
- Junk food advertising bans
- Sugar reduction in council vending machines
- Water fountains in schools and streets
- Holiday activities and food schemes
- Harm reduction with take aways





[DIET, OBESITY AND NUTRITION](#) | 03.08.22 | doi: [10.3310/nihrevidence.52264](https://doi.org/10.3310/nihrevidence.52264)

*This is a plain English summary of an [original research](#)  article*

Sales of unhealthy food and drinks were lower than expected after Transport for London (TfL) restricted advertising of these products. Average weekly household purchases of energy were 7% lower than predicted without the ban. Reductions were seen in fat, saturated fat, and sugar content. The largest reductions were seen for energy content from chocolate and sweets.

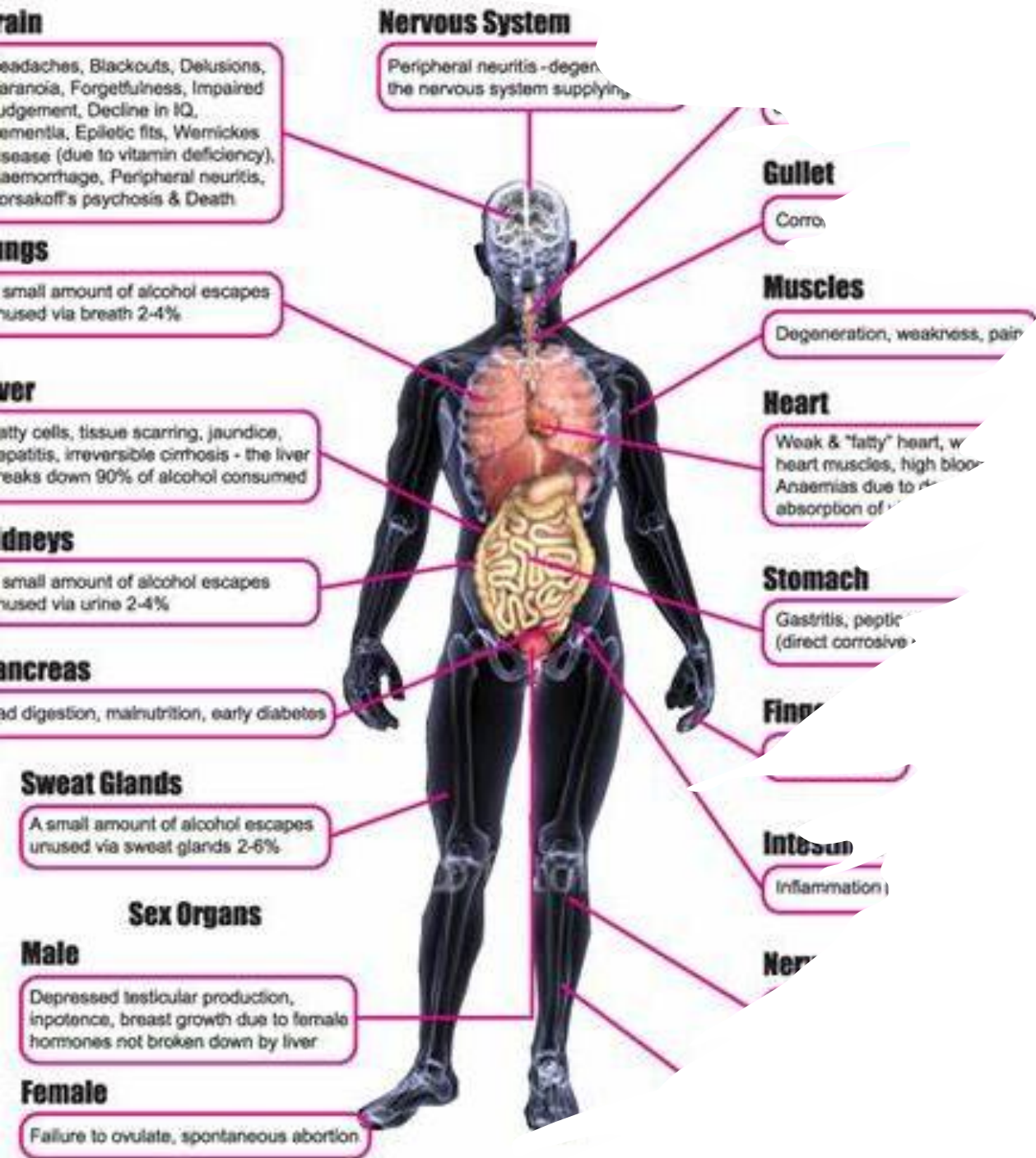
Obesity levels are rising, and many governments are considering advertising bans as part of strategies to prevent obesity. In February 2019, the transport network TfL introduced a policy to ban the advertising of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS) on its space. This included underground tubes, bus stops, and railway stations.

Modelling work by the research team predicts that this policy could lead to 5% fewer individuals living with obesity, reduce the incidence of diabetes and heart disease, and save £218 million for the NHS and social



# Alcohol

- Drinking linked to poor health, violence, crime, abuse
- Restrict off licences hours 10-10
- Banning 'super-strengths', single cans, spirit miniatures bottles
- 'saturation zones'
- Newcastle has introduced MUP
- Advert bans
- Substance misuse services





# Smoking cessation is a public health silver bullet

- Smoking is linked to mental health problems from depression to psychosis
- Higher rates of smoking among those with serious mental illness
- Poorest people four times more likely to smoke
- Over a million people would be lifted out of poverty if everyone quit
- Restrict space for smoking: playgrounds, public spaces, council housing
- Invest in smoking cessations services and trading standards

▼ Diet and lifestyle initiatives

- ▶ Knowsley Council: Restricting unhealthy food advertising
- ▶ Norfolk City Council: Stop Before 14
- ▶ Somerset Council: Think about your drink
- ▶ Walsall Council: Local Government Tobacco Control Declaration
- ▶ Warwickshire County Council: Living Well to boost your health and wellbeing!



Common mental health conditions										
Depression: QOF prevalence - retired after 2022/23	2022/23	↑	202,265	15.5%	13.2%	6.4%				21.6%
Depression: QOF incidence - new diagnosis (18+ yrs)	2023/24	↑	26,767	2.0%	1.5%	0.6%				3.1%
Estimated prevalence of common mental disorders: % of population aged 16 & over	2017	–	198,285	15.8%*	16.9%*	24.4%				11.6%
Severe mental illness										
Mental Health: QOF prevalence (All ages)	2023/24	↑	14,907	0.9%	1.0%	0.6%				1.6%
New referrals to secondary mental health services, per 100,000 (All ages) <span>New data</span>	2022/23	↑	134,175	8,535	8,117	4,108				20,500
Attended contacts with community and outpatient mental health services, per 100,000 (All ages) <span>New data</span>	2022/23	↑	505,535	32,137	32,170	9,208				67,395
Inpatient stays in secondary mental health services, per 100,000 (All ages) <span>New data</span>	2022/23	↓	2,250	146	204	468				70
Premature mortality in adults with severe mental illness (SMI)	2021 - 23	–	3,700	109.2	110.8	232.5				55.2
Excess under 75 mortality rate in adults with severe mental illness (SMI)	2021 - 23	–	-	357.7%	383.7%	644.7%				158.6%
Low personal wellbeing										
Self reported wellbeing: people with a low satisfaction score	2022/23	–	-	5.4%	5.6%	12.5%				1.9%
Self reported wellbeing: people with a low worthwhile score	2022/23	–	-	2.6%	4.4%	9.8%				1.6%
Self reported wellbeing: people with a low happiness score	2022/23	–	-	5.9%	8.9%	17.1%				3.5%
Self reported wellbeing: people with a high anxiety score	2022/23	–	-	20.0%	23.3%	33.8%				10.4%
Supporting indicators										
Deprivation score (IMD 2019)	2019	–	-	19.5	21.7	45.0				5.8



# In summary

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- Remember social determinants – poverty, discrimination and adverse childhood events – are the most influential factors for health and people's circumstances, thinking and hormones
- Support Living Wage accreditation, social value procurement, education, advice and council tax relief
- Environmental factors are also important and intersect with the above – prioritise people over vehicles and density for affordable and decent homes not suburban sprawl or out of town development
- Encourage better relationships with events, spaces, support
- Sign up to Centre for Mental Health Mentally Healthier Councils Network



