

# Devon Sustainable Community Strategy

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## Health Theme Priority

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This paper sets out the reasoning for supporting 'Tackling Health Inequalities' as the main health priority for inclusion in the Devon Sustainable Community Strategy.

### 2. Rationale

2.1 The 1984 World Health Organisation defines Health as; **"The extent to which an individual or a group is able to realise aspirations and satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities (WHO, 1984)**

2.2 The determinants of health stretch beyond provision of and access to health services, or exposure to infectious diseases. They include elements of personal lifestyle such as smoking, activity and diet, social and environmental factors such as education, housing, and social support, to structural social and economic issues such as poverty and unemployment.

2.3 A detailed breakdown of health determinants has been developed by Lalonde (1974) and Lebonté (1993) and is shown in the table below. From this, it is clear that access to public services (including healthcare) is a necessary but not sufficient objective within the overall aim of improving the well being of communities and individuals within them.

<b>Determinants of Health</b>	
<b>Biological factors</b>	Age, sex, genetic factors
<b>Personal family circumstances and lifestyle</b>	Including family structure and functioning, education, occupation, unemployment, income, behaviour, diet, smoking, alcohol, substance misuse, exercise, recreation, transportation.
<b>Social environment factors</b>	Including culture, community participation, cultural participation, spiritual participation, peer pressure, discrimination and social support.
<b>Public service factors</b>	Housing, leisure, employment, social security, public transport, policing, access, primary care, community care, secondary health care, child care, social services.
<b>Public policy</b>	National and local priorities, economic, social environment and health trends.

### 3. Health Status in Devon

3.1 The issue of health inequalities highlights that although the health of people in Devon is generally good there are geographical communities and some groups of people who because of their social, environmental and economic circumstances they experience poorer health.

3.2 Analysis of the Direct Standardised Rate for All Age All Cause Mortality (DSR AAACM) identifies inequities when comparisons are made based on deprivation indices between the 20% most deprived super output areas and the rest of Devon.

<b>All Age All Cause Mortality Rate</b> (Direct Standardised per 100,000 population 2003-05)	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Devon (all people)	458.31	652.34
Lowest 20% Super Output Areas (based on deprivation)	535.59	806.15
Rest of Devon Super Output Areas	441.44	619.70
Difference in Rate	<b>94.15</b>	<b>186.45</b>

Source: Office for National Statistics 2006, Devon PCT

3.3 Whilst analysis of deprivation by geographical area identifies health needs it is also the case that are other communities and groups in Devon whose health experience is persistently far worse than the general population finds acceptable. The groups include some members of the Black Minority Ethnic community, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transexuals (LGBT), Travellers and the homeless.

### 4. Effective action

4.1 The Tackling Health Inequalities A programme for action (Department of Health 2003) plan identified four key themes for service development:

- Supporting families, mothers and children
- Engaging communities and individuals
- Preventing illness and providing effective treatment and care
- Addressing the underlying determinants of health

4.2 Within each theme a series of evidence base actions have been set out and were subsequently reinforced in the Choosing Health White Paper (Dept of Health 2004).

### 5. The Challenge

5.1 The Sustainable Communities Strategy offers the opportunity to further develop policy into action by ensuring it is 'joined up' and effective. The response to health inequalities truly becomes an integrated, coherent response which is based on where known need is greatest, not demand, and efforts and services are targeted effectively.

## **6. Recommendation**

6.1 The Devon Strategic Partnership endorses the reduction of health inequalities as a key objective for the Sustainable Community Strategy and requires effective actions to be included in relation to the wider determinants of health as set out in the Choosing Health White Paper

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