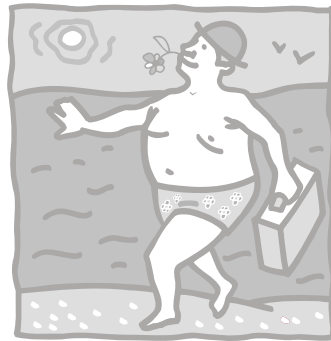
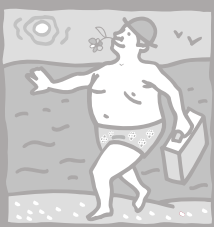


Theme 1: Health & Well-being

A Sustainable Future
for the South West



The Regional Sustainable Development Framework
for the South West of England



Theme 1: Health & Well-being

Theme 1: Health & Well-being

Headline Indicator:

Gap in infant and early childhood death and illness between socio-economic groups

Setting the Scene

Maintaining and improving the health and well-being of all people living in the South West, and reducing the inequalities in health and well-being experienced by many disadvantaged groups, are both essential for progressing sustainable development in the region.

This does not mean everyone must or could have the same "level of health". That is clearly impossible as many factors such as age, gender, and genetic inheritance can have profound effects on the health and well-being of the individuals, families and communities concerned, quite apart from the wider determinants of health, which can impact unequally on everyone. In addition an individual's sense of health and well-being can be influenced by their spiritual beliefs, their sense of empowerment, and their inclusion and participation in local communities. Helping everyone to maximise their health and well-being will benefit the individuals themselves, the communities they live in and the region as a whole.

Achieving health and well-being for all will require concerted action at individual, community, sub-regional, regional, national and international levels. For example, all policies, strategies and activities, at whatever level, should be directed towards:

- eliminating poverty,
- ensuring that everyone has access to safe, warm, energy efficient and affordable accommodation,
- reducing pollution,
- providing safe, affordable and sustainable forms of transport,
- ensuring that everyone has a balanced, affordable and nutritious diet,
- ensuring safe environments for people to work in, live in, and enjoy through leisure and recreation activities,

- promoting crime free and sustainable communities which foster community networks and local support mechanisms for all who live in them,
 - putting local communities wherever possible at the centre of local decisions affecting their health and well-being,
 - encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyles
- and
- ensuring that everyone has access to the health and other services they need to maximise their well-being and independence.

In comparison with the rest of the United Kingdom the health and well-being of people who live in the South West is very good. However this picture does mask some very real inequalities in health between different sectors of the population. Many of our large towns are blighted by areas of high deprivation where local people live in an environment of high unemployment, high crime, poor housing and poor access to important amenities and services. Likewise, many of the rural areas of the South West can hide intense pockets of deprivation and isolation amid wealth and affluence. Taking these factors into account there are across the region wide differences in many health indicators, including death rates from heart disease and cancer, accident rates, teenage pregnancies and smoking (see Theme 5: Regional Inequality).

(Note: When the definition of the national targets has been agreed then we will be in a position to ascertain the regional picture)

What are the opportunities for improving sustainability?

In the South West there are 3 key opportunities to improve health sustainability:

Promoting rural social inclusion -

Poor housing, unemployment, mental health problems, especially amongst agricultural workers, and drug abuse all impact on rural communities. In addition, the dispersed nature of many rural communities, and the problems of adequate transportation, can pose problems for statutory agencies, voluntary and community organisations to provide affordable and accessible services to meet these needs. Cornwall is a Health Action Zone and a central part of its programme for improving health is to improve access to health and health promoting services for people in rural areas. A sustainable South West means that the rural areas of the region are integrated, economically and socially into the wider infrastructure of the region without compromising the environmental benefits that these areas contribute.

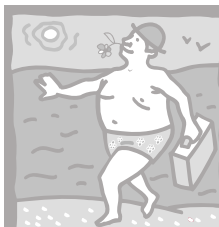
Improving urban housing estates and reducing inner city poverty-

A vigorous programme for the regeneration of the deprived urban areas in the South West will bring major health benefits to many people. Poor housing, unemployment, mental health problems and drug abuse feature high in the list of health concerns for many people living in these areas. A sustainable South West means tackling the often longstanding environmental problems in these areas and ensuring that they are integrated, economically and socially into the wider infrastructure of the surrounding towns and cities (see Theme 2: Economic Development).

Reducing the health gap between the most and least advantaged people and communities in the South West -

This will mean addressing the many and varied determinants of health which can impact at all stages of life from prenatal, through childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. In addition to the above there are other population groups many of whom have disproportionately poor health, including

people who are homeless, people with poor mental health, people with physical disabilities, elderly people, gypsies, travellers and ethnic minorities. A sustainable South West would ensure that the reducing inequalities in health is a top priority in improving the lives of all people in the region.



Theme 1: Health & Well-being

What are the objectives for improving sustainability in the South West?

Objective	Examples of how it might be achieved	Links to potential partners and processes
To improve the health and well-being of the population of the South West.	1 Promote a culture of health promotion, and ensure that health and well-being considerations are included wherever possible in all planning and other decision making processes	Public & private sector organisations, charitable institutions, community groups and voluntary bodies working individually though their own business and development planning processes, as well as jointly where required e.g. Health Improvement Plans, Community Plans, other local, subregional and regional strategies and policies etc. Also by encouraging the use of health impact assessments or by incorporating health matters to a scoping exercise for environmental impact assessments where relevant and appropriate
	2 Support the empowerment of local communities in decision making processes relevant to promoting local health and well-being	All organisations and partnerships. Involvement of local people in developing Health Improvement Plans, Community Plans etc.
	3 Support the development of the role that all sectors (public, charitable, private, voluntary and community) can make in improving the health and well-being of local people through influencing policies and strategies, providing services, and involving people themselves in voluntary activities	All organisations and partnerships
	4 Ensure local people have easy access to information on services, facilities, local groups etc that can promote health and well-being	All organisations, libraries, the media, Citizens Advice Bureaux
To reduce the inequalities in health between the least and most advantaged people and communities in the region by improving the health of the least healthy people.	1 Ensure that activities contribute to improving the health of the most disadvantaged groups in the region	All partners as above linking into Health Improvement Plans, Community Plans etc.
	2 Promote and support community development work in deprived areas	Local Authorities, Health Authorities, and community groups
	3 Ensure accessibility to services for deprived communities	Statutory Agencies
	4 Target prevention and treatment resources to the identified health needs of disadvantaged and isolated communities e.g. for heart disease, cancer, drug abuse, mental health, injury smoking and teenage pregnancy.	Health Authorities, Primary Care Groups/Trusts, local Hospitals. Local Authority services
To improve the key determinants of health	1 Work towards improving air quality and water quality	All agencies
	2 Improve housing quality and insulation especially of disadvantaged families who may have difficulty affording proper heating	The Housing Corporation, Local Authority Housing Depts, Housing Associations, the building industry etc
	3 Increase uptake of benefits by people from disadvantaged communities	Local Authorities, Primary Care, CAB etc
	4 Reduce crime and make local communities safer places for people to live and work in	Local Authorities, police, community groups etc. Link to Community Safety Plans.
	5 Help everyone make healthy choices in their day to day lives and encourage the uptake of a more healthy lifestyle	Everyone
	6 Improve education on the importance of proper nutrition, food preparation and food hygiene. Increase the accessibility, affordability and range of quality food for all people but especially those in deprived areas	Schools, Primary Care, health visitors, community groups
	7 Develop and support sporting and recreation infrastructure locally and encourage people to live more active lifestyles. For example, "Walking the Way to Health Initiative" developed by the Countryside Agency and the British Heart Foundation. Highlighting walking and cycling as alternative transport modes.	Local Authority Leisure and Recreation Departments, Schools, private organisations etc



Sustainability South West

4th Floor, 100 Temple Street, Bristol, BS1 6AE
Tel. 0117 933 0249 Fax. 0117 933 0240
sustainabilitysouthwest@yahoo.co.uk



South West Regional Assembly

Dennet House, 11 Middle Street, Taunton, TA1 1SH
Tel. 01823 425219 Fax. 01823 425200
Sue.Watts@swemployers.gov.uk