

Adult Social Care Strategies Annual Report April 2023 – March 2024

Caring Well / Living Well / Ageing Well

Author: Strategic Commissioning Team
Version: FINAL Version 4
Review / Revision Date: June 2024

CONTENTS

Adult Social Care Strategies Annual Report	1
Background	3
Caring Well	5
Living Well	14
Ageing Well	20
The Year Ahead	31

1. Background

Transforming Care and Support

The council's overall direction for adult social care is built on three core strategies named ['Ageing Well'](#), ['Caring Well'](#), and ['Living Well'](#), setting out priorities until 2027. The three strategies were co-designed with people who use services and their friends and families. They focus on how the council will support people across the city, whether they are older people, those with a care and support need with learning disabilities, mental health challenges, autism, living with additional physical or sensory difficulty, or the friends and family of people with additional needs.

We have annual action plans to move forward the delivery of each strategy and take us to where we want to be by 2027. Partnership groups have been formed to manage the development, delivery, and monitoring of the yearly action plans for each strategy. These will build on the work of the previous year and in reaction to emerging needs and trends.

All action plans contain a desire to further develop co-production and ensure links across services and other department plans and strategies to reduce duplication and make efficient use of available resources.

The first year of work was focused on gaining a clear understanding of what was already in place which could be further developed and measured for progress, alongside what could be done within the first year to give us a starting point to measure progress in oncoming years. Year 2 has looked at setting priority tasks and achievable outcomes clearly outlined in each Strategy's action plan.

2. Common Priority Areas

Links to Other Priorities and Strategies

The aim to optimise resources and minimise duplication by collaborating with other health and local authority strategies and projects has continued.

To achieve this, the three primary partnership groups: Living Well, Caring Well, and Ageing Well meet typically every 6 weeks to review and discuss each Action Plan and provide updates. These groups consist of representatives from various sectors, including council, health and service providers. The members of these partnership groups gather input and updates from different forums in Southend, Mid & South Essex, Greater Essex, and the wider region. This effective process ensures strong connections throughout the system. It has also identified other strategies both internally at SCC and wider which have potential links to the Action Plans – e.g. a new Economic Development project and a Domestic Abuse strategy. A key update for 2023-2024 is the Accelerated Reform Fund, provided by the Department of Health and Social Care. Southend Council will be working closely with Essex County Council and Thurrock Council to increase the identification and support offer for carers.

Coproduction and Engagement Development

Across all Strategies and Partnership groups, there is a continued commitment to include local voices. To achieve this outcome, we have produced:

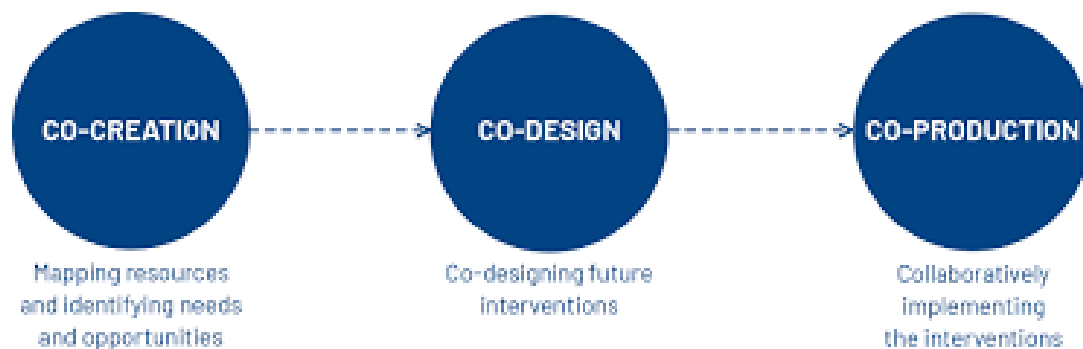
- A new SCC coproduction Framework was published in December 2024. This is available on the Intranet and Your Say Southend.

- Our coproduction lead has supported the setting up of the Learning Disability User Voice Group in partnership with Project 49.
- An Over 55's User Voice Group is now regularly meeting, in collaboration with SAVS.
- Co-design and co-production have started with these groups. For example:
 - The LD User Voice Group had input into the council's new Complaints Policy in terms of reasonable adjustments and directly affected changes to the Voter Passport document created to help individuals with LD vote.
 - The LD Group is starting to prepare to vote for a Chair and Co-chair and these individuals will be invited to attend Strategic Partnership and Livewell meetings.
- A Carers User Voice Group also takes place, typically monthly, and they have fed into projects such as the Carers Relief Fund, reviewing financial assessment forms, corporate website updates and the Caring Well Your Say Southend engagement page.
- Plans are in place to create a Mental Health User Voice Group and a similar Group for individuals with Autism and Neurodivergence.

Initially hesitant to be part of a more formal board structure, trust has been gradually building – particularly in this second year. Confidence in the process is now evident with the desire that over time they will be happy to be part of more formal partnership groups.

The online resident engagement platform 'Your Say Southend' has specific areas for each Strategy – Ageing Well, Caring Well and Living Well are live, with an area for Surveys to be completed as part of consultation activity. These pages will be further updated in line with any revisions made to the core Strategies.

These platforms will remain open throughout the duration of the strategies, providing a blend of online engagement and consultation alongside face-to-face sessions and coproduction to ensure to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities for all.



3. Caring Well

Our 'Caring Well' strategy is a joint strategy with health colleagues that focuses on the needs of unpaid carers, sometimes called 'hidden carers', which can be children or adults that find themselves in a position caring for a family member, partner or friend. These carers play a significant role in preventing the need for a more formal care provision, and the health and social care system relies on this unpaid support.

Priorities and action plans within this strategy focus on the priority areas of:

1. identifying, respecting and valuing carers
2. providing suitable information and support
3. developing carers voice, knowledge and understanding
4. assessing carers needs
5. maintaining carers balance by connecting with communities and being able to take a break
6. recognising health and wellbeing needs,
7. helping carers stay in, enter or return to work education or training (if appropriate)
8. being prepared for changes and encouraging integration and partnership working to meet people's needs.

Priority Areas (Total 10)

3.1. Links to Other Priorities and Strategies, covered above as part of 2.1 (Page 3 and Page 4)

3.2. Coproduction and Engagement Development, covered above as part of 2.2 (Page 3 and Page 4)

3.3 Identifying, Respect and Valuing Carers

Identifying carers and encouraging them to come forward and to self-identify as a carer is an important step in preventing them from developing needs of their own and enabling them to remain safe and well.

A number of activities were undertaken and measured for effect, these focused on:

Increasing the number of registered carers:

- There has been an increase from 1,442 to 1,755 registered with Carers First.
- There has been an increase from 7,000 to over 9,000 registered with a GP (circa 5.7%).

Increase in Carers GP health check:

- Due to capacity issues in Primary Care, this work has not progressed consistently however, the offer for health checks has been based on acute need. A new Carers Health check template has been developed in collaboration with EPUT (Essex Partnership University Trust) with the intention to offer health check as an enhanced service offer for local practices and Primary Care Networks (PCN) increasing ability to resource and offer this service. Due to financial capacity this has been put on hold to review in 24/25. The template developed is in use by EPUTS Carers Intensive Support Wellbeing offer roles.

Increasing health checks:

- Carers Intensive Support team have received 495 referrals, for Southeast Essex, with a total of 207 referrals from Southend residents. All carers were responded to within 5 working days, all carers were also responded to within 24 hours for immediate risk, all carers had their health check and Freda assessment completed and all carers were supported face to face. The service has received referrals from local carer organisations, Health Teams, Social Prescribers and Council led services.

Increased awareness of young carers:

- Carers referrals have now been updated to a children's single point of contact (C-SPOC) and all referrals including from children's social care are made through this. School census data shows an increased number of young carers being identified. 38 referrals have been made by two schools. Contact has been made with all registered young carers to update records and to identify if they are still in a caring role and whether further support is needed.

Carer registration will further develop in the next year to fully embed a standard operating procedure in all GPs, PCNs, Carers Support agencies and Local Authorities. Within the health settings, Mid-South Essex Foundation Trust (MSEFT) are working towards adopting similar IT systems, to identify carers across hospital and GP settings, with the aim for community hubs and other agencies to embed the same operating procedure for adults and young carers.

To increase carers health checks as a proactive measure, financial ability to enable practices and PCNs will be reviewed to provide this service.

Future plans to increase health checks includes continuation of funding to advertise CIS team with more professionals and continued working relationships across health and social care. As well as continuation of opportunities for EPUT to work with all partners to re-engage carers with out of home activities.

The future plans to increase young carer awareness include understanding the barriers and challenges schools face due to the lack of referrals being made. Young carers referred from schools will be tracked after enquires and referrals are made to ensure referrals into service. In the next year school assemblies and training offer will also continue to be offered. In the coming financial year, we will also be commissioning a Young Carers Service as part of our contract with Carers First.

3.4 Information and Support for Carers: Access to information

In the 2020 Southend-on-Sea Family Carers Survey, 44% of carers said they were not able to access the information, advice and guidance they needed to support them in their caring role.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Improving advice and guidance on discharge from hospital:

- As part of the Accelerated Reform Fund, Southend Council are working with Thurrock to develop a Carers Identification Card, which will be available to carers to register. The card will help blue light services to identify those who are carers, and provide a standard approach across both local authorities, improving patient experience.
- Carers Hospital Discharge information booklet developed by Carers First remains available on the Your Say Southend – Caring Well engagement page.

Young Carers access to information and advice:

- The training offer has been on going. For example, training session with Children's Society took place on April 13th, with attendance from schools, school nursing and children's social care. All schools within the borough were invited, with 9 schools attending.

- In terms of young support in schools, young Carers school groups have started at Prince Avenue and Barons Court, other carers group continue ongoing include Milton Hall, Chase High, Shoebury High.
- Carers First now has a whole family approach, supporting young carers to link in with the young carers service and supporting young carers with transition to Carers First offers at 17 years old.

Transitions young Carers 17+:

- There is ongoing discussion between children's social care and Carers First to improve transitions support offer, however due to capacity issues, this hasn't progressed at pace. SCC young carers team are engaging with Southend Carers Young Carers group, to see whether a joint approach can be achieved to increase transitions support and share best practice.

Updates to the council website and information for carers:

- The new Livewell digital platform was launched in June 2023. Local service directories were reviewed and updated by using user friendly format to make it easier for residents and professionals to search for information and advice on events and wellbeing topics and local services. Since June 2023, 47,125 residents have used the site, with positive feedback received. New features on the website show events, increasing public engagement, such as the Youth Mental Health Week and Measles vaccination clinic. The website offers monthly newsletter to keep subscribers up to date.
- The Livewell platform remains one of the main communication channels for Public Health messages as well as its social media account. During the year 2023/24, 32 campaigns took place which focused on Mental Health & Wellbeing, Healthy Weight & Physical Activity, Harm Reduction & Disease Prevention as well as LGBT, Women's & Men's health.
- Information pages are continuously audited for quality purposes and future enhancements. The Livewell digital platform meets accessibility requirements, which was also validated by a recent random audit in March 2024 undertaken by the Government Digital Service.

Updates to the Council's Corporate Website:

- Following consultation with carers on information they would like to access and topics that are important to them, the corporate website has been updated to reflect this, providing information on defining, who is an unpaid carer, what a carers assessment is and how they can access information, advice and guidance.

The accelerated reform fund projects will be implemented in the next year, with a part time role recruited in to organise the delivery of the carers cards, as well as working with GPs and health colleagues to improve the communication and collaboration on identification of carers in Southend.

To increase access to information and advice for young carers, assemblies will be offered to schools, to emphasise the importance of carers identification. School forums will be supported to be established to help come together once a term, to discuss things that have been going well and how young carers can be further supported by SCC and schools.

To improve transitions, SCC and Carers First will be working together, providing resources and increase Carers First collaboration at 16+ youth groups to help build relationship and rapport with young people.

Future work on the Livewell platform will look to introduce a social prescribing tool, improve the quality of the directory content through feedback, promote public health events and campaigns and overall improve the Livewell offer in Southend. With regards to the corporate website, information will be reviewed at intervals, to update with relevant information for carers.

3.5 Carers Voice Knowledge and Understanding

Many carers have told us they do not feel listened to and are often cut out of conversations between health and care professionals. We were also told that they needed help in navigating the systems and in developing their understanding and resilience.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Ensuring carers know what support they can access:

- Following feedback from carers, a carers resources booklet has been created by ICB team detailing the service offer to carers, along with contact details of organisations who are able to support carers. The document has been shared with the partnership group members to share with their network and also, uploaded onto the Caring Well Engagement page for Carers to access online.

Developing carers understanding and resilience:

- Caring confidently courses have been delivered by Carers First. In 2023-2024, 124 carers have taken up the Caring Confidently course.

People attending peer support:

- Groups and events have been embedded into the Carers First programme, carers regularly attend and feedback from these groups have been positive. There are 4 regular groups held over a month. Coffee morning in particular is used to increase knowledge and understanding of caring role, guest speakers are regularly invited to attend to share information and practical tips on services they offer, guest speakers have included Everyone Health, financial assessment team, fire brigade etc. Male carers support groups support men in Southend and help them engage and take a break from the caring role.

Helping to measure carers progress:

- Progress Report from Carers First (Year 2023/2024), Carers First conducted an assessment of carers' experiences. The findings indicate positive developments in their caring roles, as reflected in the Carers STAR ratings. Specifically:
 - 86% of carers reported an improvement in their caring responsibilities.
 - 100% of carers experienced an enhanced caring role.
- Several factors contributed to these improved scores:
 - Increased Personal Time: Carers benefited from breaks for appointments and special occasions, allowing them more time for themselves.
 - Statutory Assessments: Enhanced assessments helped identify specific needs, leading to better support for both carers and those they care for.
 - Day Services: Identification and utilisation of day services further improved the overall caregiving experience.
- Despite these positive trends, financial concerns persist among carers. The rising cost of living remains a significant challenge. However, Carers First has provided support through the Southend Emergency Fund, including benefits checks and grants.
- Looking at the support offered by the Carers Intensive Support team. Carers are better informed on looking after their health and wellbeing, supporting them in their caring role. Carers are being informed of what they are entitled to from both health

and care system. Carers intensive support team facilitate monthly carers drop-in group in partnership with Southend Adult Community College, and they have a weekly drop in at Queensway Surgery. The Shoebury Health Inequalities Carers Support Worker has joined SCC Poverty Strategy Group, is working with SECH on a carers digital programme, as well as linking with Housing to establish a carers support group within sheltered housing schemes.

Carers Relief Fund:

- Carers Relief Fund distributed by Carers First and SAVs supported carers living with their adult cared for person at home. A total of 49 carers were supported between November 2023 to March 2024 to access equipment to help them in their caring role. This included 11 air fryers, 8 laptops, 4 washing machines, 10 household items, 3 hoovers, 3 garden items, 9 household electricals, 1 epilepsy monitor, and an osteopath payment. SAVs distributed the funds to support establish carers groups in the community. Of the 6 applications made, 4 of these projects were successful, including a men's breakfast club, heritage upholstery group, wellbeing activities with live music, and a brew, biscuit, and banter social group.

Partnership work will continue with the ICB, to review the information contained within the carers resource document being downloaded, it will be reviewed and updated at intervals to ensure the information is up to date.

Caring confidently courses will be promoted to increase uptake and include a combination of online and face-to-face session to include those who are digitally excluded.

Carers First will continue to support groups of carers including parent carers, and work to reach hard to reach minority groups in Southend.

Carers First will continue to measure progress to increase the number of Carers having a Carers STAR outcome and increase the outcomes and engage with more carers at events and increase the number of breaks provided. EPUT will look at the continuation of funding to enable CIS to facilitate an Ageing Well Carers Education Programme with bespoke information to Southeast Essex.

The carers relief fund will be reviewed to gain feedback from those who received the funding.

3.6 Assessing Carers Needs

The feedback from carers is that they do not understand what the carer's assessment is for, with many viewing it as an assessment of their finances or their ability to care for the person.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Online screening questions and self-referral for a care act assessment for carers:

- Updated Southend Council webpage has been launched, providing information on the care act assessment and requirements.
- Completed carers assessments are being shared across the LA and Carers First, to reducing duplication and simplifying the information pathway to carers.
- Carers First have been working with carers to identify those who require carers information.

Pilot with Carers First completing carers assessments:

- Through a joint partnership with the Council, Carers First have been delivering carer assessments.

- 22 assessments and 17 reviews have been completed so far, there is currently no waiting list for carers assessments.

Feedback from Carers on experience with assessment process:

- A dedicated member of staff was employed to complete SCA on behalf of Southend. From her starting these in September 2023 to end of year 22 were completed along with 16 reviews.
- Positive feedback from carers received around the process and outcomes. Good working relationships built with social care teams and support teams, leading to a more joined up informed service.

Streamlined referrals for young carers:

- Young carers are now referred through C-SPOC system, ensuring referrals are made within the same way in children's service.
- Schools and other providers requesting children's services are able to request services on one form, which is known by all. Everyone being referred into Young Carer services is contacted within a timely manner. To enhance transitions, we have developed and finalised the transition assessment.

Carers First pilot assessment will be reviewed for the following year, to look at how assessments and reviews can be increased along with a formal feedback process for carers to provide feedback on their experience of a carers assessment.

Transitions assessments will be rolled out in the next year and look to increase young carers referred into COOL (younger age carers) and CHIL (Teenage carers) sessions.

3.7 Maintaining Balance including connecting with communities, taking a break and Health and Wellbeing

From the 2011 census we know that carers have worse general health than those who do not provide care and that generally their health deteriorates the more hours of care they provide. Similarly, carers have told us that their role can often feel all-encompassing, meaning they lose their sense of self and are no longer able to do the things they used to do or continue with the relationships they once had.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Ensuring carers receive quality time to be themselves, able to consider their own health and wellbeing needs and increasing carers connection to the wider community:

- Carers First continues to support carers in accessing breaks to attend medical appointments and special occasions with friends and family. 136 breaks have been provided over 23/24.
- Carers have been able to attend their own medical appointments but alongside this, carers have been to family celebrations, had lunches with friends and attended music concerts.
- Peer support groups and guest speakers offer increased support and increased knowledge to carers, this supports their emotional and physical wellbeing. Carers have accessed Everyone Health for gym memberships and exercise classes. Carers have also attended falls prevention classes with their cared for.
- Using the Carers STAR 82% of carers feel this has improved in the last 3 months.

Utilising Community Builders / Connectors to identify and support carers needs:

- Community Builders, working in specific Southend wards have regular liaison with Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS) and frequently meet local people with skills, interests, businesses.
- Promoting and signposting carers to the Your Say Southend Engagement page and relevant support / services.

Exploring digital and technological solutions to understand how this could help deliver care and provide support and reassurance to carers:

- Assistive Technology – a new project is underway to identify assistive technology and how the disabilities facilities grant can be better utilised to assist families.

Development of Carers Experience Days

- Carers days are being arranged with museums colleagues to showcase different areas of Southend.
- Carers Week events held by Carers First, involved professionals, organisations and carers from across the city.
- Wellbeing referral programme year 1 pilot ended in October 2023, the system is now embedded with partnership working with Fusion Lifestyle and Everyone Health. Waiting times for courses are minimal with high standards in course delivery.

Future work will focus on continuing the Community Builders relationships in the community to increase awareness and engagement with services. Carers First will continue to increase the number of breaks provided and the amount of care agencies worked with to widen reach.

The Assistive Technology project is ongoing with commissioning looking at options for use of assistive technology moving forward.

Carers Experience Days will be progressing with monthly sessions with museums colleagues to attend SUFC and RNLI. the Carers Lived Experience group also will be continuing on a monthly basis. Along with Annual Carers Week events. Wellbeing referral program will continue with fusion lifestyle, working to promote the programme and maintain engagement.

3.8 Helping Carers

The carers we spoke to told us that whilst they recognised how important being active was for both their mental and physical health, it was just not a priority due the demands placed on them. Many carers also told us it was important to have something to keep them going and to help them maintain their personal identity. This could be work, volunteering, pursuing an interest, or anything that is not directly related to their caring role.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Stakeholder engagement with a view to change:

- Carers were involved in the supported living tender, attending and reviewing presentations from prospective providers of supported living and providing their feedback.

Better Employee Offer:

- Workplace health offer has been promoted in the community to support businesses and organisations to sign up. Public Health Team are working with neighbouring Local Authorities on Work Well Partnership strategy to support people into work.

Employer engagement and understanding:

- Carers First continue to attend events to build recognition of carers in employment and training.

Building links with employers and considering employment carer recognition:

- Carers First have attended Southend Business Partnership Breakfast event and also South Essex College Breakfast forum aimed at employers in the Care Sector.

Future work will focus on supporting carers to identify leisure and employment offers to improve their outcomes and assist with their care plans. Plans are in place to review if Southend should join the Employers for Carers membership, which will offer training support and policy advice for SCC and for SME organisation in Southend.

3.9 Prepared for Changes

In the Southend-on-Sea Family Carers Survey 2020, 72% of carers said they did not feel prepared for changes in their caring role.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Contingency planning – increase the number and quality of contingency plans:

- Contingency planning is being included as part of the Accelerated Reform Fund bid, as is the introduction of carers cards, to help blue light services identify carers in an emergency and provide support measures.
- All carers completing a carers assessment are offered Contingency planning session to help them plan for an emergency.

Increase the number and quality of contingency and change plans for young carers:

- SCC Young carers workers are attending meetings with health colleagues to help identify how young carers can be identified and sharing contingency plans across systems.

Ensure carers are better prepared for changes in the future, both for the carer and cared for:

- The Local Authority is working with Health colleagues to share contingency plans for carers across the system through shared data.
- 71 respite breaks, year to date for appointments provided through Carers First.

Conversations are ongoing in the health area to create standardised contingency planning for young carers.

3.10 Integration & Partnership

When we spoke to carers, they told us they found the health and social care system to be very complex and it was hard to understand the roles of the different councils and health systems.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Contingency plans shared with relevant organisations, working to ensure saved on GPS system one:

- Carers First register all carers with their GP as a carer (if they want to be) or are supported to do this independently if they wish following the process set.
- Carers as a result have greater support from GP services, carers have reported they received a text from GP surgery checking if they are a carer and offering support.

Identify and create “Champions” within departments across health and social care:

- Adult Social Care Social Team have identified Carers champions and identified other partnership group members who would like to be a part of the Champions network.

Future plans include increased carers recognition in Primary Health Care to ensure carers receive greater support.

In terms of Carers Champions, a Terms of Reference will be developed, and a group will set up to coordinate the role and feedback loop from Carers Champions to the partnership group.

4. Living Well

The 'Living Well' strategy focuses on the needs and well-being of working-age adults with additional requirements, including physical, sensory, learning difficulties, mental health challenges, and autism. Research on best practices has demonstrated that our residents facing these challenges would benefit from a person-centred approach to care, enabling them to live independently and actively participate in their local community.

Priorities and action plans within this strategy focus on the priority areas of:

1. improving people's health and wellbeing promoting health lifestyles
2. preventing the number of hospital and care home admissions.
3. developing suitable housing and principles of housing support.
4. delivering health, care, support, and housing in a more joined up way.
5. enabling people to remain part of and active in their communities and to be digitally included.
6. encouraging community inclusion and ensuring integrated person-centred services that enable people to take control of their care and focus on their strengths.

Priority Areas (Total 11)

- 4.1. Links to Other Priorities and Strategies, covered above as part of 2.1 (Page 3 and Page 4)
- 4.2. Coproduction and Engagement Development, all aligned priority areas covered above as part of 2.2 (Page 3 and Page 4)

4.2 Coproduction and Engagement Development (Living Well only)

In Southend, we have recognised the need to develop a specific Action Plan for Autism and Neurodivergence. Our aim is to evaluate the current areas which work well and identify key areas of improvement. This review will result in the formation of a new Autism and Neurodivergence User Voice Group, who will feed into the Action Plan and will form part of the wider the Living Well strategy.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Work collaboratively to establish an Action Plan for Autism and Neurodivergence:

- A two-day workshop was held last year to identify the key areas of improvement.
- Four priority areas were identified: lack of training, services, mental health support and social inclusion.
- Some online workshops have already taken place in 2024 around lack of training and the services currently available, with specific speakers attending to explain their involvement / provider offer.

Future plans will be to complete the remaining online workshops, establish a Partnership / Stakeholder group and use co-production to formulate a dedicated Action Plan for this.

4.3 Health & Wellbeing – Promoting healthy lifestyles for the adult population

Recognising the significance of promoting healthy and active lifestyles among Southend's adult population is crucial. Individuals dealing with mental and physical health conditions often experience poorer health outcomes compared to the general population. Therefore, it is essential to provide supportive services that focus on promoting good health and overall well-being.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Initiate local hubs at venues such as day opportunities, links to Everyone Health, Sexual Health and NHS:

- This programme of work is still in development and forms part of the offer being discussed with Southend Care.

Increase in uptake of NHS Health Checks:

- We have already mentioned the Carers Health Check work in section Caring Well Section 3.3. This section will focus on working age adults who are not carers.
- For general NHS Health Checks, we have taken an approach to reduce intra-locality as well as intra-city health inequalities across Southend. This requires more targeted efforts in areas of higher deprivation and/or lower uptake as part of place-based commissioning to ensure that Health Checks reach those with the highest health risk and need.
- There has been introduced higher incentives to Health Checks delivered to patients living in Southend's most deprived communities and introduced higher targets for 13 GPs who are in the most deprived areas. As a result, 48% of Health Checks have been delivered to residents in more deprived areas (this figure was only 37% for the previous year).
- 23 practices out of the 24 delivered NHS Health Checks in 2023/24 compared to 16 GPs delivered Health Checks the previous year.
- Health Check uptake has increased this year by 471 compared to last year (3,444 Health Checks in 2023 / 2024 vs 2,866 in 2022 / 2023).

The focus for Year 2 will be to continue to see significant increase in the delivery and uptake of the NHS Health Checks and reach our target in 24/25. There will be a special focus on the 10 GP practices in the most deprived wards to reduce intra-city health inequalities across Southend. Ensure that all GPs are signed up and deliver the service and focus on increasing men's uptake on NHS Health Checks.

Increase Health Checks for Learning Disabilities and Mental Health:

- Approaches to promote an increase in the uptake of Health Checks for Learning Disabilities and Mental Health remains part of the community-based support services. Providers are continuing to support residents with their health checks and wider health appointments including sexual health, female health and dentistry.
- As at 30/04/24, the uptake of completed LD health checks has increased to 1,083, (87% of those on the register), and the uptake of SMI MH health checks has increased to 1,928 (80 of the target for completion).

Increasing awareness and referrals to the new Drug and Alcohol service and increasing joint working between Drug and Alcohol and Statutory Social Care Delivery Services:

- The Drug & Alcohol Treatment Service contract, during its second year, has increased the number of successful completions and exit from the service.
- 187 successful completions during January 23 to December 23, out of 948 in the service, an increase on 2022 / 2023.
- The aim to increase the number of people accessing the Drug & Alcohol Treatment Service has been challenging, due to recruitment issues, but this is now an improving picture and numbers have increased during the early part of 2024.

During 2024/25 to the drug and Alcohol service will continue with recruitment to develop a full system complement which should result in increased service capacity and continue to refine pathways, including pathways for older adults, so that rates of successful completion continue to rise.

Joint working with Department of Work and Pensions and economic development teams to consider opportunities:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 28).

Ensure that the IAG offer is accessible to a range of residents, meets the needs of those most vulnerable and meets the service outcomes:

- This is a joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 29).

Future work will focus on continuing to consider our Day Opportunities offer. Also, a focus on recruitment within the Drug & Alcohol Team to ensure capacity is able to meet the increased number of referrals.

4.4 Prevention – Preventing people from going into hospitals and care homes

We want to reduce the number of hospital and residential care admissions in Southend. We recognise that our current offer of support for people in their own homes needs modernisation.

Feedback from residents on preventing admission to care home and hospitals included positive experiences with Mental Health support whilst in hospital however once they returned home, there was a lack of support – and residents wanted to see this improved. The focus on this year has been focused on supporting people in their discharge process, by increasing awareness of the support offered through the information and guidance service when they return are back home.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Ensure the IAG offer is accessible to a range of residents, meets the needs of most vulnerable and meets the service outcomes:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 29).

Learning Disability transformation work, refining pathways:

- The Learning Disabilities pathway projects have been working in improving awareness of clients' pathway and a refined service delivery, through ensuring organisational policies and procedures reflect duties, laws and allow people to have choice and control.
- During 23/24 this has been reviewed and amended by Adult Social Care and a learning disabilities lived experience user voice group has been established.
- During 21/22, 38 individuals assessed LD supported living, which increased to 50 in 22/23 and reduced to 24 in 23/24. Those leaving the service during 2021/22 were 29, during 22/23 were 42 and 14 in 23/24.

Mental health transformation:

- The return of the Social Care Adult Mental Health Team was completed on Monday 20 November 2023, bringing the team back within the Council.
- Social Care are now able to engage with people experiencing mental health at an earlier stage, developing alignment with our health colleagues within primary MH Health services and supporting the individuals who do not meet the threshold for specialist mental health services.
- Adult Social Care now have direct access to the specialist mental health knowledge, advice and information for all social work teams, and to ensure the right support at the right time.
- The Southend Essex and Thurrock Strategies both for Mental Health and Dementia have been completed and agreed with a wider strategy implementation group in place to progress work across the areas with targeted work groups looking at a range of topics.

Therapy led projects that have a focus on prevention/wellbeing to keep people safe at home:

- Assistive Technology – a new project is underway to identify assistive technology. Several innovative initiatives are being explored to identify services and equipment to support people's needs using digital approaches.
- The Council is looking to create a self-assessment tool to allow faster access to minor equipment to keep people safe and well at home.

The focus for the coming year continues to be prevention, supported by a range of positive initiatives including Falls Prevention, "Slipper Swap" and "Able Like Mabel". We will be looking to introduce a new Digital Maturity Toolkit to help providers identify where digital and system improvements can be made.

4.5 To establish an Action Plan for Autism and Neurodivergence - Co-Production & Engagement

An initial all age Autism workshop was held including all partners during the Autumn of 2023 that identified 4 main focussed areas of concern to be considered for the Autism action plan, training, lack of services, mental health and social isolation. Separate workshops for each theme are being held during 2024. The findings of the workshops will feed into a wider discussion to develop an Autism action plan moving forward. An autism user voice group is being explored and will be set up by 30/10/24.

More widely, the LD User Voice Group is increasing in membership and feedback from the Group has impacted around services via Health (hospital admissions), Tourism & Culture, developing services on Southend Pier and wider system engagement via Shields. An Autism & Neurodiversity group and a Mental Health user voice group are also being developed during Summer / Autumn 2024.

4.6 Housing – Deliver health, care and housing in a more joined up way

We need to ensure suitable accommodation and care or support if needed is available across the city to enable people to live as independently as possible. Other care models are being explored such as Extra Care, Supported Living or Shared Lives to reduce the overuse of residential provision.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Review of individual accommodation without associated care:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 21 and 22).

Refine and deliver commissioned Transitional Supported Housing and Housing First:

- The Transitional Supported Housing contract was reviewed and renewed following a procurement process going live in June 2022,
- A further short extension is being sought to allow a further review of the current offer across all cohorts during 2024 to ensure the provision is fit for purpose and meeting the outcomes required.

Investigate use of assistive technology:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 21 and 22).
- In addition, a new Digital Relationship Manager role was created in February 2024. They have subsequently been liaising with care providers to help utilise funding available from NHS England, which aims to make the most of digital technology to enable better person-centred care.

The Strategic Commissioning team continues to work collaboratively with the housing team to evaluate upcoming properties, ensuring they align with the specific needs of individuals. Additionally, they work together to establish guiding principles for property management and home development. We will be investigating a different approach to older people's housing, with a view to testing this once a site has been identified.

4.7 Community – Involved and digitally included

Digital literacy and connectivity empower individuals to stay informed, access benefits, find employment and connect with others. However, there is currently insufficient training and equipment available, potentially leading to feelings of exclusion. It is crucial to ensure that people are well-informed, connected to opportunities and provided with necessary assistance.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Develop the work of Community Builders and the schemes they promote e.g. Small Sparks Fund:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 24).

Digital inclusion included in Tackling Poverty strategy:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 27 and 28).

Promote and raise awareness of the offer of Social Prescribers and Community Connectors based in Locality Integrated Networks:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 24).

Livewell digital platform review and refresh:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 29).

Monitor the Wellbeing Referral Programme (delivered by Fusion Lifestyle and Everyone Health):

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 23).

Increase engagement of older adults in sport and physical activity opportunities and understand wider outcomes surrounding social connection:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 23).

The future focus of work will be implementing the Social Prescribing Digital Tool and continued support of Social Prescribers and Community Connectors in the council. Further work with local organisations to target specific groups such as over 50s. Understand how digital and AI could potentially support residents.

4.8 Integrated Strengths-based Person-Centred Care – enable people to take control of their care and focus on their strengths

Use a strengths-based approach to support the persons individual resilience and focus on what they can achieve. It is crucial that individuals need only share their story once. Our aim is to engage with people holistically, understanding them as unique individuals and addressing the needs of both the individual and their carer(s), enabling them to achieve outcomes that are important to them.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

New more defined model of delivery for social care:

- This is joint priority area and is detailed within Ageing Well (Page 25 and 26).

Use of contracts and brokerage for a strength-based approach:

- New contracts for service provision have now been put in place during 2023 and 2024, such as the Supported Living contract. This Framework Agreement has been developed via co-production and has been implemented following a successful tender in late 2023. The use of strength-based and person centred approached was both an area for specific evaluation within the tender and is a key component oof the new contract management.

The future focus of work will be to continue to implement new framework agreements for other Adult Social Care services for homecare, residential and nursing which follow a similar principle as described above.

5. Ageing Well

This Ageing Well strategy considers the needs of people as they get older. Whilst similar strategies are typically aimed at people who are 65 and over, which has traditionally been when people have retired, many people may not regard themselves as 'old' at this age. It is for this reason that the Ageing Well Strategy does not limit its ambition to an arbitrary age but instead aims to create an environment and a community that embraces ageing and allows people of all ages to live well together in Southend.

The age range covered by the strategy includes a wide variety of needs from the active and well to those who will have significant care needs. The strategy builds on the priorities set out in the Adult Social Care Milestone Recovery Plans 2020-2022. Projects taken forward under these plans have already begun to address long-standing inequalities. It is important to recognise that this strategy was just the starting point in an ongoing conversation with people and we will continue to review this strategy based on those conversations. The Ageing Well Strategy includes a delivery plan which is updated annually and co-produced through engagement with support groups across Southend.

Priorities and action plans within this strategy focus on the priority areas of:

1. World Health Organisation (WHO) 'Age Friendly City'
2. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
3. Transport – Transport that is age-friendly
4. Housing – Bring housing up to modern standards
5. Social Participation – connecting communities
6. Respect and social inclusion
7. Civic Participation and employment
8. Communication and information
9. Community Support and health and social care services – focus on keeping older people physically active to maintain their strength and mobility and promote positive mental health

Priority Areas (Total 11)

5.1. Links to Other Priorities and Strategies, covered above as part of 2.1 (Page 3 and Page 4)

5.2. Coproduction and Engagement Development, covered above as part of 2.2 (Page 3 and Page 4)

5.3. World Health Organisation (WHO) 'Age Friendly City'

The World Health Organisation (WHO Age-friendly Cities network connects cities and organisations with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in. The focus is on local level action that fosters the full participation of older people in community life and promotes healthy and active ageing. It is the ambition that within the five-year Ageing Well strategy period, Southend will become a member of the Age Friendly Communities network.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

To finalise consultation with residents against the WHO checklist to use as a baseline for Southend:

- Feedback has already been gained from previous resident consultation activity. Meetings have been held with Ageing Better and other Local Authorities who are already part of the Age Friendly City network (eg Kirklees and Barnsley).
- Southend City Council is currently considering a new Age Friendly internal strategy linked to The Age-friendly Employer Action Framework from The Centre for Ageing Better.

- Southend remains committed to embed the age-friendly approach and join the UK Network.

The future focus of work will be to continue to work on Southend becoming an Age Friendly city in the future by securing senior officer and cabinet approval to actively progress this ambition.

5.4. Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people. Work continues to ensure that there is good design process in place for older people and future plans will incorporate their views.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Accessible public spaces including parks, seating and public toilets:

- Work continues with the parks in Southend with more new benches now put in place.
- There are no more spaces on the seafront to place additional seating now with existing seating regularly maintained.
- More benches will be available in the parks across the city.

This action set will be continuing into the next year, as there is still a need to establish the baseline for Southend in terms of how residents currently feel about the city's outdoor spaces and buildings. We need to liaise more with the Infrastructure and Environment teams, as well as using the new Older People User Voice Group to support our ageing community.

5.5. Transport – Transport that is age-friendly.

For individuals aged 65 and over, the primary reasons for not utilising public transport are its lack of convenience and limited coverage of desired destinations. As driving rates tend to decline with age, it becomes crucial to improve transportation options within age-friendly communities. To address this, we will work with the Infrastructure and Environmental teams on transport availability.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

All transportation options are safe and comfortable:

- Work has continued to ensure all transportation is accessible, supported by the promotion of public transport in the city.
- Bus Shelters have had work on them to ensure they are not on grass banks and support the ageing population.
- Ensuring robust bus routes is more challenging, as that is a decision made by the private bus companies.

Awareness of concessionary fares:

- Partnership group suggestions of areas to investigate have included a transport-accessible solution for older people such as door-to-door transport services, taxi card, capital card or dial-a-ride, which are offered in other areas. There is a current dial a ride service within Southend but it is not widely known or utilised.
- A key bus route to Hamlet Court Road in Westcliff has now stopped and parking nearby has been changed to resident permits so parking is restricted in this location. This makes it more difficult to attend The Haven Community Hub which is a key

centre providing support, advice and services to older people in Southend and the surrounding communities.

Feedback has been limited from the relevant Team therefore more positive engagement will be required for Year 3 to understand this area fully and the potential options available.

Ensuring accessible parking standards:

- Accessible parking spaces have been relined at car parks and additional disabled parking bays created in the Seaway car park.
- SCC remains consistent with ensuring parking remains free for those with a valid disabled blue badge.

For the Transport team, the focus for next year will be to consider and implement accessible parking spaces for those with accessibility issues, particularly along the central seafront area. The exploration of “Park Access” a new accreditation which will enable everyone, regardless of their accessibility needs, to identify car parks and facilities when they plan their journeys. We will continue addressing these issues, to secure more information from the Transport team and to seek more resident opinion to gain the latest feedback. The relatively new Older People User Voice Group will also help to support this.

5.6. Housing – Bring housing up to modern standards.

We need to move away from an over-reliance on residential and nursing care homes for older people. This will significantly reduce council commissioned care home use. The shift will continue to be towards a home first model and an ambition to increase Extra Care Housing over the coming years. This will be realised by an increased investment in reablement and short-term care, a significant increase in care at home and a programme of cultural and practice changes to be embedded into Adult Social Care operations. With the new aspirations of homecare covered and supplied by the upcoming Homecare Framework Agreement it is anticipated that the coming year will support more people at home.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Using feedback from the Older Person’s Needs Assessment and the WHO Survey to understand the needs in Southend and develop priorities:

- A notice of motion was raised last year by Councillors around the use of sheltered accommodation. SCC has been working jointly with South Essex Homes to respond to members and consider options for better use of sheltered accommodation and managing it with emerging need.
- Engagement with adult social care and commissioning on accommodation for older people, especially older people who are homeless and facing hospital discharge or need step down from a high support bed.

The focus for the next year will include the embedding of the Supported Housing Act 2023 – by 2025, including a Supported Housing strategy which a number of Council departments will need to work together on. We will also continue to move forward on potential sites through our housing pipeline where it is felt a 'later life' living type development could work.

Review of individual accommodation without associated care:

- We are in a much clearer position on understanding the changing needs/wants of older people and how housing stock may need to reflect this. This has been backed by data analysis and shared understanding from many partners.
- Pipeline developments and developments outside of the Council are progressing. Consideration of later life living/older people’s housing and how we may want to

already adapt what we have, is a running agenda item within many different projects. This includes the Stock Optimisation Group, a workstream that reviews all of our Council stock; temporary accommodation, sheltered and general needs housing, to look at how we make best use of it.

- The development of housing to meet changing needs is by nature a long-term programme. Therefore, it is difficult to realise significant achievements each year. Furthermore, a proportion of this work forms part of wider development/pipeline activity with many competing priorities.

Undertake further engagement to understand the wider population in Southend, including homeowners:

For the coming year, a key aim for Year 3 will be to produce a proposal for a site offering a different approach to older people's housing, even if just an example. This will help us to understand what possible and what costs and commitments may be required.

Investigate the use of Assistive Technology:

- The Assistive Technology paper was completed, and recommendations made at a Senior level.
- The review found that SCC underutilises certain types of Assistive Technology and its Disabled Facilities Grant.
- Commissioning options and opportunities for use in social care are now being considered by the Director of Commissioning. This will likely be seen as a new workstream and there will be specific outcomes to match.
- A new Digital Relationship Manager role was created in February 2024. They have subsequently been liaising with care providers to help utilise funding available from NHS England, which aims to make the most of digital technology to enable better person-centred care.
- The grant has allowed 80% of care providers to adopt a Digital Social Care Record system of their choice from an approved supplier list. These new systems capture real time information and have allowed providers to move away from paper-based care planning.
- Further funding will be made available for sensors and remote monitoring technology to alert care providers to falls. This allows for care to be transformed thanks to digital innovation by using technology to monitor a person to support their social care needs.

The future focus of work will include understanding of SCC's digital maturity, working in line with 'what good looks like'. The Digital Relationship Manager will be launching an online Survey for care providers to self-assess their own digital maturity level. This will generate a score which will allow us to work closer with those providers who need more support with digital innovation. The rating generated will also provide links to help the provider better themselves.

5.7 Social Participation – Connecting communities.

People over 50 who volunteer or actively participate in their community tend to be happier as a result. Interacting with people is essential to help prevent loneliness. Circa 10,000 older people living alone at home in Southend will be supported to connect with well-established Southend social networks.

This will be via referrals from their GP or other contacts to 'Community Connectors' – people living in the Borough who volunteer to help through their local knowledge and networking skills.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Review the leisure activities and clubs available for older people:

- Between April 2023 and March 2024, 541 people completed the wellbeing referral programme. This number was well below the annual target of 2,250 course completions. However, it should be noted that the target was established without a benchmarked baseline for this type of service activity.
- Embedding the Programme has taken some time, including establishing referral mechanisms and engaging with the necessary partners.
- Referrals were lower initially and due to delays in mobilisation, there was a waiting list for courses through Fusion which was subsequently reduced later in the year.
- Whilst the number of people completing the Programme was short of the annual target, the benefits realised are:
 - The system is now embedded, meaning that partnerships are established for referrals.
 - There is a good relationship between Fusion Lifestyle and Everyone Health.
 - Triaging takes place more efficiently, waiting times for courses are minimal and course delivery is of a high standard.
 - The Programme is still operational, and this is likely to remain the case.
- A suitable business model will be available to ensure that this Programme continues at a reduced rate to participants.

The future focus of work will be for Programme provider Fusion Lifestyle to further promote the course (individuals and groups). The aim is to increase new participation and to contact those that have dropped out of the programme to support their return.

Ensuring participation in social activities helps to prevent social isolation:

- “In Conversations With” – neighbourhood meetings continue to take place across Southend, Rochford and Castle Point. With support from the Southeast Essex Alliance, groups have been visited to hear the voice from the community and share news and views.
- Several user groups have been set-up over the last year which will ensure that information on specific services and activities are shared with residents.

Consider additional funding to be able to develop a ‘gold standard’ volunteer hub:

- SAVS has been awarded a Shared Prosperity Grant (notified in February 2024) so this task will be carried over and achieved in 2024 / 2025. This will lead to the employment of a dedicated Volunteer Hub Co-ordinator, who will be able to increase the volunteering hubs’ capacity to attract more opportunities and match more volunteers.

For the coming year, a Volunteer Passport will also be developed with support from the new Co-ordinator to allow volunteers to demonstrate their experience and training. This will allow them to move easily between volunteer placements.

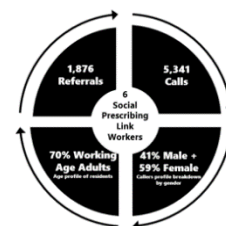
Develop the work of the Community Builders and the schemes they promote – e.g. the Small Sparks Fund:

- The Community Builders are in place until June 2024 and we are looking to have their funding extended, along with allocating some more funding for the Small Sparks Fund.
- The Small Sparks Fund provided grants of up to £100 to residents, businesses and community groups who wanted to make positive change within their communities. A total of £3,300 was available in the Southend areas of Milton, Shoebury and Victoria. The fund has helped to support 64 community projects.
- Some examples of the projects the fund has helped to support are:

- The Hungry Cupboard, a programme to highlight and reduce the stigma of food poverty. The Hungry Cupboard was designed and made using 3d printing and this was supported by a book which follows a story for children to understand.
- The Renew and Wellbeing Café, a wellbeing Café at Shoeburyness and Thorpe Bay Baptist Church. The funding enabled them to purchase craft supplies for wellbeing activities.
- The fund also enabled Yoga4Recovery to run free yoga classes and purchase yoga mats they could provide to residents for free.
- The EAL Homework Club by Welcome to the UK. An ongoing project offering a weekly 1-hour session where children aged 6-15 come into the hub and receive help with their homework. Volunteers from South Essex University tutor children in Maths and English. They have used the fund to purchase stationery, as well as workbooks suitable for students they currently support. Each week, they are supporting between 4 and 8 children with their homework.

Promote the offer of Social Prescribers and Community Connectors based in Locality Integrated Networks:

- During 2023/24, social prescribing has been an integral resident offer in General Practice through dedicated Social Prescribing Link Worker roles.
- Eight social prescribing link workers have supported general practice in four Primary Care Networks (PCNs).
- Resident outcomes for social prescribing for three PCNs have been reported by SAVS in quarterly reports and biannual long reports. The full year data (2023/2024 annual report) is currently being collated and will be published in Spring 2024. Data from the PCN that host their own social prescribing link workers is under review and development for reporting from spring 2024.
- Presented right is the SAVS social prescribing link worker data for the period April 2023 to December 2023:
- The Public Health Team working in partnership with Council IT Business Support; the Digital Tool Supplier; Social Prescribing Link Workers; SAVS; Everyone Health Lifestyle Service; and wider partners has developed a social prescribing digital tool. From April 2024 this has been running in test phase.
- The Southeast Essex Alliance has drafted a new social prescribing delivery plan.
- The Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System took a systems-led approach to social prescribing.
- The Social Prescribing Maturity Matrix (a quality improvement tool to support leaders at System, Place and Neighbourhood levels to work together strategically to embed social prescribing and enable it to be as effective as possible) has been reviewed and completed.



The key objectives for the coming year will be for the Social Prescribing Digital Tool to be 'live' and in operational use by all Social Prescribing Link Workers based in the four Primary Care Networks. This Tool will also be an integral embedded offer within the Livewell Southend digital platform. Data will be collated and presented for all four Primary Care Networks through one new streamlined process.

Increase engagement of older adults in sport and physical activity opportunities and understand wider outcomes surrounding social connection:

- The Wellbeing Service provided by Everyone Health has had an increase in people aged 65+ accessing the service since last year.
- The number of adults aged 65+ engaging with a physical activity offer via the Wellbeing Service increased from 101 in 2022-23 to 239 in 2023-24. The programmes and locations are varied through the community, increasing community accessibility.

- The wellbeing service also runs a Falls Prevention programme, which consists of a 36-week strength and balance course. One measure of success is the 'CONFbal' scale, which is used to assess balance confidence in an individual. Percentage of service users with an improved reading on Confbal test increased from 77% in 2022-23 to 81.54% in 2023-24. The service has received positive feedback from individuals about how they are moving better and have improved circulation, feel more confident to live their everyday lives.

The focus for Year 3 will be to increase on the baseline the number of individuals aged 65+ engaging with a physical activity and further increase the percentage of individuals with an improved reading on the CONFbal scale. This ties in with wider ambitions to get people more active at an earlier age. The council is also looking to increase the funding for falls prevention with an aim for extra sessions to be delivered within Care home and sheltered housing settings.

5.7. Respect & Social Inclusion

The World Health Organisation defines respect and social inclusion as 'enhancing the opportunities for people of all ages to (i) cultivate social relationships, (ii) have access to resources and support, (iii) feel valued and respected and (iv) feel part of their community'. Our continued priority will be to promote intergenerational understanding and respect through positive messages about the value of older people in Southend and their community contribution. Also, by increasing the opportunity for older and younger people to work together in the City including reviewing SCC's own internal policies.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Embed the strengths-based approach through the 3-conversation model and social care intervention rollout via Innovation Hubs:

- The 3-conversation model is no longer in use and has been replaced by a new delivery and approach under the new "Connected Southend" model.
- The Councils 'Adults and Communities' directorate continues to work together across Adult Social Care, Commissioning, Culture/Tourism/Leisure and Heritage to embed the Connected Southend Approach.
- This is a whole service approach to community practice, personalised enablement, new models of commissioning and social care support across the city.
- Connected Southend was actively launched to SCC staff at the beginning of 2024 and roll out will continue across the next two years.
- Bringing together practitioners, commissioners and providers, as well as our wider culture, arts and leisure services, we aim to change the way we support and enable people to live the lives they choose to live.
- Connected Southend is underpinned by the core concepts of the Care Act, ensuring community opportunities, citizenship and personalised outcomes and is now core to Southend's Social Services plans for the future.
- The model itself sets out standards, principles and approaches for staff delivering services. It places more emphasis on prevention and enablement, and supporting people to live the life they want. It can be applied to every area of work in adult social care – from frontline social work to the systems we develop, our leadership and commissioning to our library staff, our care providers to the way in which we support our neighbourhoods and work alongside communities. This systemic approach will be underpinned by a culture change and a learning and development programme to ensure sustainability, action and real change for the better.
- Key principles include:

- A model at the heart of every commissioning stage, from strategic planning designing pathways, procurement, contract management and monitoring.
- Working together with people, care providers, social care workers and partners to agree and deliver good outcomes for people and communities.
- Understanding what is available locally and empower communities to make the most of their local assets.
- Giving people a choice by developing and stimulating all sectors of the market to make the most of resources available.
- Being risk-positive and trying new things – co-producing services with people that use them.
- To support practice, SCC has invested in and launched the new Practice Governance and Information Service, to support quality assurance in social work and occupational therapy practice.
- SCC has also launched and continues to develop a range of new Connected Southend practice guidance documents and governance approaches, focusing on several areas, for example:
 - Redesign of Adult Social Care (Operations and Commissioning Services) to align with the Council's three core strategies and to aid the rollout of Connected Southend with further work ongoing to maximise the experience of people upon first approach to the Council.
 - The launch of the new Practice Governance Board & Ethics Panel.
 - Launch of the Strategic Workforce Development Board to oversee the development and refinement of our Connected Southend Internal Workforce Plan and the development of an external provider workforce development plan.
 - Development and launch of a range of Connected Southend practice guides:
 - Working Positively with Risk Enablement (Risk Assessments)
 - Concerns for Welfare process.
 - Transport Policy.
 - Accessible Information Standards.
 - Adoption and rollout of the pan-Essex PSW Network Anti-Racist Practice Standards across Adults and Children's Social Care
 - Overhaul of our Transition pathway, supporting young people and their carers, as they move from childhood to adulthood.
 - Development and launch of new Carers' Offer in partnership with Carers First

The future focus will be to continue the plans for rollout and embedding this service model. This will include a Connected Southend Festival of Practice in November 2024 for internal staff and partners. The revitalisation of all assessment and care provision documentation on the Liquid Logic client database to align approach with the Connected Southend ethos and to maximise practitioner time with people. Working between Operations and Commissioning to ensure synergies in terms of intelligence leading to robust market shaping. Overhauling the Livewell site as the Council's website for information, advice, guidance and intervention to support the best experience for people and to support self-determination. The implementation of portals for people, carers and families who wish to self-refer and to support professionals referring into the Council.

5.8. Civic Participation & Employment

Good quality volunteering in later life has a measurable positive impact on mental health and paid work can have a positive impact on wellbeing, as well as finances. The opportunities for this diminish with age: 72.3% of people aged 50-64 are in work, compared to 85% of people aged 25-49. We continue to work with the existing VCSE sector, such as Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS) and Volunteering Matters, to coordinate a volunteering bureau and expand the range of opportunities for older people to get involved in volunteering.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Review current contracts and subsequent activities (to expand the range of opportunities for older people to get involved in volunteering or paid work):

- SCC's Economic Development team has a number of activities that link to this task area:
 - "Halo" – a Training Support Programme funded by the NHS with different cohorts. Aim to place people into care roles to work for a local care provider/NHS. SCC works with Job Centre Plus and the Southend Adult Community College to offer this. Signing up provides an "Introduction to Health and Social Care" online programme which lasts 5 weeks.
 - A Better Start Southend Work Skills – assists parents by delivering courses and events based on gaps in sectors and workforce, including understanding parents' needs/wants. This also links to Livewell.
 - "Multiply". Fully funded events and classes for ages 19+ aimed at all persons who do not hold a GCSE A-C in Maths. For employers and individuals. In Year 2 of a 3 Year Programme. Funded directly from Government and largely delivered by the Adult Community College.
- This task area also directly links to the Volunteering Hub model (see Page 23).

The focus for next year will be to link with the new Volunteer Hub Co-ordinator, who will be looking to increase the Volunteering Hub's capacity to attract more opportunities and match more volunteers. Wider funding opportunities still also need to be considered to expand the Volunteer Hub model.

5.9. Communication & Information

While most information is now shared online, digital exclusion is a reality for many people. Less than half of those aged 75+ use the internet regularly, and out of the four million people who have never used the internet in the UK, 3.7 million of those are over the age of 55. Southend has a diverse range of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services targeting older people in Southend. A streamlined IAG service offer has targeted those most at need and the Livewell Southend digital platform has been extensively reviewed and enhanced.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Digital Investigation as to what is on offer in the local areas to aid people learning to use "online":

- Our new Tackling Poverty Manager has worked closely with SAVS, Essex County Council and other community partners to map the current digital inclusion provision available in the City.
- A draft digital map on One Southend has been created to detail the digital inclusion provision. Local organisations can indicate the digital support they offer and update any details via an online submission form on the webpage. This ensures the information stays up to date.

Digital inclusion included in Tackling Poverty strategy:

- A list of funding opportunities to improve the universal digital offer in Southend has been shared with all community partners involved in the Tackling Poverty Forum. This includes The Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund, Hubbub and Virgin Media O2 Tech Circular Economy Funding, HMRC Funding for VCS organisations and the Public Health Accelerator Bids (PHAB).

- Relevant data is also now collected from the South Essex Community Hub who provide digital learning support through their Learn My Way sessions and Digital Support sessions.

In Year 3, our priority is to ensure that residents have clear access to support for enhancing their digital skills and knowledge, enabling them to navigate the online world effectively. To achieve this, we will undertake the following:

- Online Map of Digital Support: We will publish an online map detailing digital support services available through One Southend.
- Community Partners: We will ensure that all local community partners receive a comprehensive list of local digital support resources in paper format. This will enable them to guide residents toward relevant assistance, including services provided by our libraries.
- Expanded Support: Our goal is to increase the availability of digital support options for residents across the city.

Ensure that the IAG offer is accessible to a range of residents, meets the needs of those most vulnerable and meets the service outcomes:

- SCC's improved IAG offer provides outreach hubs across the city to deliver a holistic offer to support people to live independently.
- There has been a significant increase in clients seen and an increase in those who report having their primary need met.
- The Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) service delivered by Citizens Advice Southend supported 20,450 clients in 2023-24, which is a significant increase on 13,884 clients seen in 2022-23. The number of cases and issues increased proportionately with the number of clients seen.
- The service has maximised peoples' income, supporting clients to access a total of £8,342,626 in 2023-24 across various streams, including Personal Independence Payment, Pension Credits, Attendance Allowance, Relief Funds and more. This is an increase on £3,586,664 income accrued by the service for residents in 2022-23.
- The IAG service supported residents to access £213,954 in Warm Home Discounts in 2023-24 and increase on £19,375 in 2022-23.
- The IAG service supported residents to receive £778,661 in Universal Credit and other benefits.
- During 2023-24, on average, 75% of people using the service reported having their primary need met by the service, and 81.5% reported high levels of satisfaction with the service. 84 people received a home visit. 2,081 people were engaged at community events and 8,700 people were engaged via the website.

For Year 3, we would like to review our IAG offer to identify any further commissioning opportunities to improve this service for residents. We would also like to see an increase in the percentage of people reporting primary needs met and reporting high satisfaction, as well as the income maximised for residents.

Ensure the Livewell digital platform is reviewed and up to date:

- The new Livewell digital platform was launched in June 2023. All local service directories were reviewed and updated using an improved user-friendly format, making it easier for the residents and professionals to search for information and advice on various health and wellbeing topics and local services. There have been 47,125 individuals who have visited the Livewell website between June 2023 and the end of March 2024. Positive feedback has also been received by a SEND parent support group.
- New features have been embedded, such as the events function which has strengthened public engagement and support across all ages. Examples include

various well attended local events such as the Youth Mental Health week and the Measles Vaccination Clinic during February 2024.

- A monthly Livewell Newsletter shares valuable information with the subscribers while keeping them informed on what is happening locally. There are currently 4,310 people who are signed up to receive this communication (as at year end March 2024).
- The Livewell platform remains one of the main communication channels for Public Health messages, as well as its social media account. During the year 2023/24, 32 campaigns took place which focused on Mental Health & Wellbeing, Healthy Weight & Physical Activity, Harm Reduction & Disease Prevention as well as LGBT, Women's & Men's Health.
- Information pages are continuously audited for quality purposes and future enhancements. The Livewell digital platform meets accessibility requirements, which was also validated by a random audit in March 2024 undertaken by the Government Digital Service.

For 2023 to 2024, the focus of work will be to continue working on further enhancements to the Livewell digital platform and to introduce a new digital social prescribing tool. To improve and sustain the quality of the directory content by actively seeking to gain public and professionals' feedback. To continue promoting Public Health events and campaigns through the Livewell platform and related social media accounts. To continue improving links to the Livewell offer across all services in Southend.

5.10. Community Support & Health and Social Care Services

Increased investment in falls prevention will lead to longer-term savings and promote better outcomes for older people. Existing physical activity programmes should continue to target the more deprived areas in Southend and communities with poorer health outcomes and the existing frailty pathway should be further developed. A stronger assessment / early identification of people likely to fall is continuing with a review of the current offer, placing a stronger emphasis on preventing falls, rather than just the fall recovery.

To achieve this outcome, the actions set included:

Improved information and promotion of: Falls Prevention, Physical Activity and Make Every Contact Count (MECC):

- In the last year, the Wellbeing Service attended more community events – 6,974 residents were engaged with at face-to-face events in 2023-24, a significant increase on 3,665 in 2022-23. The total number of people engaged in person through referrals and events in 2023-24 was 10,660, an increase from 6,312 in 2022-23. The number of engagements via the Everyone Health wellbeing service website and social media channels increased to 25,614 from 17,608 last year.

Reshape of the homecare style services into supporting independence services:

- Work is well underway to review and implement a new Homecare Framework Agreement with a target tender live date of from October 2024.

Redesign of the short-term assessment and reablement pathways and support models:

- A redesign of the short-term assessments and reablement model is currently underway between SCC and partners – the Mid & South Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Mid & South Essex NHS Foundation Trust (MSEFT).
- A 3-month pilot is now in place for the Southend Enhanced Discharge Service (SEDS) which involves Southend Care Limited acting as a third-party provider.
- Further work is in progress for long-term care as part of our Care at Home Aspirations and new Homecare Framework.

The focus for next year is to implement the homecare provider framework and to ensure short-term assessments along with reablement pathways have a clear flow for patients to remain independent in their own homes. We will continue to use feedback from engagement with homecare providers to help reshape the service to support independence.

6. The Year Ahead

Throughout the second year of these strategies, it has been recognised how far the local system has moved and changed since their implementation, therefore in May 2024 a decision was made at adults and communities DMT to move forward with a review/refresh of all 3 current Strategies, Ageing Well, Living Well and Caring Well.

This will allow us to align them to current organisational changes, evolving priorities and wider change in the political climate. We are currently in a position where we are scoping the required activities and building a project plan which interacts along with the Year 3 action plans.

Action Plans are detailed work plans that shape and guide the most important part of the Strategic Commissioning process.

The overall focus for Year 3 will be to:

- Maintain existing Caring Well / Living Well / Aging Well partnership groups to further develop and manage each of the Action Plans, ensuring Health, Social Care, Providers and people with lived experience are accurately represented.
- Review the strategy documents based upon local changes and updated good practice.
- Work to regularly review where we are now against the established baseline, to allow us to monitor progress on where we want to get to by 2027.
- Use a standardised process for ongoing engagement and co-production and continue to build on these open discussions.
- Ensure that co-production is at the heart of what we do – “Nothing about me, without me” was a powerful statement used at one of our User Group Forums by a resident with Autism and Neurodivergence.
- Continue to provide Annual Reports demonstrating the progress of the Action Plans for Caring Well / Living Well / Ageing Well in Southend and the future focus of work.



Note: All information has been provided by stakeholder partners and is not audited by the Strategic Commissioning Team.