

# Building a healthy society: the role of local government

10 elements of a whole-council  
approach to building health

## A local council approach to building health requires:

### 1 Leadership and momentum

Elected members set an ambitious agenda for the whole council to improve health, starting where there is momentum. Experience and leadership from senior officers are also crucial.

### 2 Focus and strategy

Staff at all levels understand their contribution to improving health. Public health acts as a strategic service within the council and is involved in shaping strategies and outcomes, from the start of all key projects.

### 3 Partnerships

Councils build partnerships with those key to improving health in their areas including local businesses, the voluntary and community sector and local delivery partners.

### 4 Community collaboration

Communities are at the heart of all work to improve health. Solutions are co-designed to ensure they meet the needs of local people.

### 5 Evidence-based communications to build support

Communications with communities and partners build understanding about the causes of ill health and the role local authorities play in improving health.

### 6 Evidence-based action and action-based evidence

Action is informed and inspired by evidence, data and intelligence from national, academic and local sources, including the voices of citizens. Further work learns and iterates from previous approaches to continually improve.

### 7 Anchor institutions

Councils are also 'anchor' institutions who, as large employers, procurers and service providers can positively influence the health of their employees and residents.



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**Central government can  
enable this by delivering:**

## 8 A whole-government approach

A whole-government approach makes building a healthy society the responsibility of all government departments and decision makers who can influence the building blocks of health, not just the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS. This approach also recognises the crucial role that local authorities and devolved administrations play in improving health.

## 9 Sufficient support

Long-term certainty on funding is needed to enable appropriate and effective long-term action to address the building blocks of health, and support workforce planning and development.

## 10 Fair and efficient funding

Funding should be regularly updated to reflect changing needs, increased with additional responsibilities, and equitably distributed in an efficient way.

For more information visit:

**[health.org.uk/local-government](https://health.org.uk/local-government)**

The Health Foundation is an independent charitable organisation working to build a healthier UK.

