

Stockton-on-Tees

Area Assessment

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Stockton-on-Tees at a glance

This independent assessment by six inspectorates sets out how well local public services are tackling the major issues in Stockton-on-Tees. It says how well they are delivering better results for local people and how likely these are to improve in future. If, and only if, our assessment shows that the following special circumstances are met in relation to a major issue, we use flags to highlight our judgements. We use a green flag to highlight where others can learn from outstanding achievements or improvements or an innovation that has very promising prospects of success. We use a red flag to highlight where we have significant concerns about results and future prospects that are not being tackled adequately. This means that local partners need to do something more or different to improve these prospects.

Green flags - exceptional performance or innovation that others can learn from

No green flags have been identified for Stockton-on-Tees

Red flags - significant concerns, action needed

No red flags have been identified for Stockton-on-Tees

The local area

Stockton-on-Tees is located at the heart of the Tees Valley in the North East of England. The area is within easy reach of city shopping and leisure facilities, the coast and rural North Yorkshire as well as being home to industrial areas. There is a mixture of urban centres, market towns and villages and an expanding University.

The population of the Borough is increasing and is now 191,500 (up from 175,000 in 1991), and this rise should continue to 219,100 in 2029 (and 221,100 in 2031). The Borough is a unique social and economic mix, with areas of severe disadvantage alongside areas of affluence.

Almost 5 per cent of the total population is from a black or minority ethnic community, but this too is expected to increase. Most of the people in Stockton who identify themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group are of Asian/Asian British origin.

Stockton-on-Tees has a history of manufacturing industries. The petro-chemical industries have strong roots in the Borough.

As the traditional industries have changed, the partnership has invested in transforming the physical environment and growing a more varied economy. Major financial, research and environmental companies now base themselves

in the Borough, along with the growth of Durham University's Stockton campus.

The Borough forms part of the Tees Valley City Region, home to some 662,100 people living mainly around the lower Tees. It includes Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, Darlington and Hartlepool.

The next section tells you how Stockton-on-Tees's public services are doing in each of their local priority areas.

How is Stockton-on-Tees doing?

Economic Regeneration and Transport

People can see the impact of regeneration in Stockton. High-quality improvements have been made to the towns of the Borough, especially Thornaby, Billingham, Yarm and Stockton Riverside. Significant government and private money has been secured to support high-profile projects. The improvements to the river are important to the wider region. The new footbridge over the Tees between Stockton and Thornaby and major arts and culture events demonstrate the improvements made.

The current economic recession poses significant threats to Stockton's economy. The potential loss of jobs at Corus and the risks to the petro-chemical industry pose major challenges that could seriously weaken the economy of the Tees Valley. Stockton-on-Tees is part of a joint response to these difficulties. While part of a bigger problem, how well Stockton and its partners work together will have a significant impact on future improvements.

Fewer adults take part in voluntary activities in Stockton-on-Tees than elsewhere. Voluntary and community organisations have weaknesses. The Council has put arrangements in place to support them but it will take time to see the difference this is making.

Neighbourhood regeneration is progressing well. Stockton has a good track record. Many initiatives are now in place to support those in the community who most need support, improving skills and employment as a result. Inequalities persist, though the gap between the most and least deprived parts of the Borough is narrowing.

More people are using public transport and satisfaction with bus services is above average. Discretionary schemes have helped older and vulnerable people access transport. However people are less satisfied than in other areas with the quality of bus information. The Council continues to reduce the number of road networks needing repairs.

Environment and Housing

Public agencies have plans in place to use natural resources carefully so they meet national standards to do with sustainability. The area has made one of the largest cuts in carbon dioxide emissions in the country. People are

producing fewer carbon emissions in their homes. Private industry still needs to do more to reduce how much carbon dioxide it makes.

The area is clean and the Partnership is improving the environment. The Council maintains the roads well. There is little derelict land. The River Tees is very important to Stockton's environment. It is clean and widely used for leisure. However, local residents are less satisfied with their local area than in other places.

The Council has invested in street cleaning and parks and open spaces in response to local people's priorities, but people still want to see further improvements.

People in Stockton-on-Tees produce more waste and recycle less than in other places. Stockton Council has invested in refuse collection and disposal in response to local community priorities. Residents are satisfied with the service. The area faces challenges with changing national priorities around waste disposal.

More people are moving to Stockton-on-Tees. Many more new houses are being built, although the recession could reduce the number. There are not enough low-cost homes available in the borough but the Council is taking action to ensure more are available. Demand for services from people on low incomes and those with particular needs is increasing. There are fewer homeless people, especially young people without somewhere to live. But some people have to stay too long in temporary accommodation. Demand for adaptations to properties is high and the Council has invested heavily to reduce waiting times.

Safer Communities

The area is becoming safer for local people. Crime has fallen and is lower than in similar areas in England.

Most areas of crime have shown lasting improvement including burglaries, violent crime, car crime and arson. Although the level is still too high, fewer young people are committing crimes.

In common with other areas, incidents of domestic violence have increased since 2007. The partnership's services cannot fully meet this increased demand. We will be looking at how well they respond to this in the coming year.

Community safety continues to be a priority for local people but they believe the Council and police are dealing with their concerns. Crime is more of an issue for some communities in Stockton than others.

Overall, three-quarters of people in Stockton are satisfied with their area. Although this is worse than the national average, it is better than in places similar to Stockton. Fewer people than in many other places think that people from different backgrounds get on well together, or treat one another with respect in Stockton.

Children & Young People

The Children's Trust and Stockton Renaissance are doing well at improving the achievements and the well-being of children and young people.

Children do well at school. GCSE results have improved and are in line with national averages. More young people than before in the Borough are going on to higher education. But some groups perform less well. Two secondary schools do not perform well enough. More 16 to 18 year olds are not in education, employment or training compared to similar areas and nationally.

Teenage pregnancies rates are still too high and more children than in similar areas are overweight.

The Council ensures that children and young people are safe. Support for children in need is good. Families get help so they can cope with issues by themselves. Overall, outcomes for looked after children are good, supported by relatively stable care arrangements.

Healthier Communities and Adults

Health and support for people is variable. Death rates, including premature deaths from major illnesses, are above the national average. The gap has closed significantly for women but got worse for men in the area. Importantly, death rates from the 'big killer' diseases in Stockton (heart disease, strokes and cancer) have fallen faster than the national average but there is more to do to close the gap further (the public agencies have introduced plans recently). Stockton-on-Tees is good at getting people to give up smoking and to take physical activity. However, it is less good at tackling alcohol misuse and child obesity, though it is improving these services. Teenage pregnancies, which often lead to poor health, are increasing more than the partnership expected. They have now developed additional improvement plans.

About Stockton-on-Tees

A recent survey shows that in Stockton-on-Tees 78 per cent of people are satisfied with their immediate local area as a place to live. This is higher than the average for similar areas and broadly the same as the national average of 81 per cent.

Stockton-on-Tees is a diverse Borough located at the heart of the Tees Valley. The area has a thriving population of more than 191,500 people and is within easy reach of city shopping and leisure facilities, the coast and rural North Yorkshire as well as being home to industrial areas. There is a mixture of urban centres, market towns and villages and an expanding University.

The population of the Borough is increasing (up from 175,000 in 1991), and this rise should continue to 219,100 in 2029 (and 221,100 in 2031). There is a unique social and economic mix, with areas of quite acute disadvantage alongside areas of affluence. While 15 per cent of the population live some of the most affluent areas of England, over one-third live in some of the poorest.

Almost 5 per cent of the total population is from a black or minority ethnic community, but this too is expected to increase. Most of the people in Stockton who identify themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group are of Asian/Asian British origin.

Stockton-on-Tees has a history of manufacturing industries. The petro-chemical industries have strong roots in the borough.

As the traditional industries have changed, the partnership has invested in transforming the physical environment and growing a more varied economy. Major financial, research and environmental companies now base themselves in the borough, along with the growth of Durham University's Stockton campus.

The Borough forms part of the Tees Valley City Region, home to some 662,100 people living mainly around the lower Tees. It includes Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland, Darlington and Hartlepool.

The Local Strategic Partnership - Stockton Renaissance - is made up of representatives from Stockton's business, community, voluntary sector and public sector agencies.

The main partnership board meets monthly, supported by a network of Thematic Partnerships, which deliver key themes in the Sustainable Community Strategy 'Shaping Our Future' and four Area Partnership boards which monitor and challenge progress.

How well do priorities for Stockton-on-Tees express community needs and aspirations?

The Stockton Renaissance Partnership has a clear vision of what Stockton-on-Tees needs. Local communities have told the partnership what is important to them and it is making a difference on these priorities.

The partnership understands the different communities in the area. There are many examples of local people getting involved and taking part to help shape local strategies. This has been the case across a range of issues. Consultations have helped local people influence decision making.

The Partnership has used different ways to involve people including the Primary Care Trust Local Involvement Network and Stockton Viewpoint, a residents' panel that allows different groups to be heard - such as children and young people, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minorities. The way the Council involves adults in planning the social care services they receive is excellent.

Stockton-on-Tees is a diverse borough with some neighbourhoods among the most well-off in the country, and some others with the biggest problems because of poor health, low levels of skills and educational qualifications, and low incomes. Stockton-on-Tees has some of the most extreme contrasts in the country.

In a recent survey we learned that one in four people think people from different backgrounds do not get on well together. This is below the average for England, but better than other similar places to Stockton. One third of residents think that people don't treat one another with respect.

The Sustainable Community Strategy has a clear focus on promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage: addressing inequality within the Borough and between Stockton-on-Tees and the rest of England. Local Strategic Partnership priorities and arrangements are flexible enough to respond to key local issues. Partners' work focuses on tackling these priorities. Partners share resources and work together, increasing the value they get for their money. For example, Working Neighbourhoods Fund, a government grant, is used through the voluntary sector to support employment programmes in the most-deprived areas.

Public bodies make a big effort to involve communities in neighbourhood regeneration schemes and in setting service priorities. The Council is making services for residents available more locally. It is not clear that this is making a difference for all disadvantaged groups or minority communities. The gap between the most well-off and most deprived areas of the Borough is decreasing but is still very marked.

Partners gather information to help them make good decisions. They share information with each other. There are examples where this has shaped services. But there is room for improvement. They still need a fuller picture of what local information each partner has. They do not always have enough information about local communities to make sure their projects are as useful as they expect, and get the outcomes they are hoping for. This is a common problem in many other places. The Partnership is trying to improve on this and we will look again at the way they use information to support local decisions in the next year.

Economic Regeneration and Transport

People can see the impact of regeneration in Stockton-on-Tees. High-quality improvements have been made in areas like Thornaby, Billingham, Yarm and Stockton. Much government and private money has been attracted to support high-profile projects. This brings added value for money to projects. The new footbridge over the Tees between Stockton and Thornaby and major arts and culture events are all successful parts of this regeneration.

Neighbourhood regeneration is making good progress in areas such as Mandale, Hardwick and Parkfield. Stockton-on-Tees has a good track record on this kind of work. Support is being given to people in the community who need it most. The Communities Fund is being used to improve individual's opportunities by developing skills and supporting employment. There are still long-standing inequalities, but the gap between the most and least deprived parts of the borough is narrowing.

More people use public transport and satisfaction with bus services is better here than in many other places. Improvements to the Tees Valley Bus Network and schemes like free bus travel for older people are giving older and vulnerable people better access to transport. People would like more

information on when and where buses run. Partners across Tees Valley have put the case to government for funds to develop the Tees Valley Metro and the first phase has been approved.

The current economic recession poses serious threats to the local economy in Stockton-on-Tees. Some industries are doing well. But the potential loss of jobs at Corus and the risks to the petro-chemical industry could seriously weaken the economy of the whole of the Tees Valley. Stockton-on-Tees is working with other areas to tackle these problems and the success of this partnership working will be crucial to the region's future. We will look closely at this next year.

The Council and its partners are working together across Tees Valley to tackle problems with the economy. They share information and offer businesses advice and guidance. They need to find out whether their work is helping businesses through the current situation. A redundancy support group works with employers to help prevent job cuts or lessen their impact on the workforce. This includes providing staff with careers advice and guidance, training, and information about other help on offer. The number of people claiming out of work benefits grew in line with the national picture. But the gap between people claiming these benefits in the worst affected neighbourhoods and the whole of the borough has narrowed. Job Centre information shows that employment in the area is improving despite the recession, but is still below the national average

Local services like the Council, Learning and Skills Council, Job Centre Plus and voluntary agencies work well together to improve people's skills and qualifications. They have focused their work and targeted money on the neighbourhoods with the worst problems. People who are not in work or have low skills can get help, for example, from new job and training opportunities on major construction projects. High numbers of people have taken up training, gained qualifications and found work despite some well known difficulties because of travel routes and transport services. The Council helps develop business-minded people from a young age through school enterprise programmes.

Fewer adults say that they take part in voluntary work in Stockton than almost anywhere else in England. Stockton does not have a volunteering bureau yet. Voluntary and community organisations work well with the Council. But they have weaknesses, with limited capacity and volunteers and need to build their skills. The partnership has put arrangements in place to support them but it will take time to see the difference this is making.

The Council has ambitious plans to improve its arts and cultural offering for the people of Stockton-on-Tees. The Council promotes many high-profile events, including the Stockton International Riverside Festival and community programmes, including through Stockton Arc, to support arts and culture in the borough.

Partners have spent more on public transport and more people are using it. Cheap fare and rural bus schemes have boosted use, including by young and older people, and people with disabilities. Improvements to the rail network have resulted in many more people using the borough's six railway stations. People are fairly satisfied with public transport, but less so with the quality of information provided about buses. The Council and Highways Agency

maintain roads to a good standard.

Tees-wide working:

Partners across the Tees Valley have worked together well - including through the development of Tees Valley Unlimited - to raise the profile of the area and develop a good case for investing in it. As a result Tees Valley was one of the first Multi Area Agreements signed off by government. By working together strategically they have succeeded in getting more money for the sub-region from government to support some key projects which will help to improve the area in future. The planned metro system is one example of this.

But not all partnership working has been as successful. Joint work to improve employment and skills in the longer term has not progressed well. The group which leads this has not been meeting regularly and is now being re-shaped. Sub-groups to work on specific themes are being put in place. The local authorities and partners in Tees Valley Unlimited recognise that more work is needed to develop a good enough understanding of what works well and what Tees Valley needs to do to compete better in a global economy.

We will be looking closely at this aspect of joint working in Year 2 of CAA, and report on how well the partners' are making progress against their long term plans to enable people and businesses in Tees Valley to compete.

Environment and Housing

The environment in Stockton-on-Tees is improving. It is a place where people are choosing to come and live. The area is clean and winning awards - in 2009 Stockton has won the Britain in Bloom award. The Council maintains the roads well. There are few problems from litter, graffiti or fly-tipping and there is little derelict land. The River Tees is clean and is used for sport and fishing. Stockton Renaissance has worked to make the most of the river as a valuable asset, as a focus both for regeneration and for culture and the arts.

The Council has invested in street cleaning and parks and open spaces in response to what local people said about them. Thornaby and Billingham town centres and the worst neighbourhoods in the borough have got better. Previous surveys showed levels of satisfaction were improving, but this did not come through strongly in the recent Place Survey.

The area has made one of the largest cuts in carbon dioxide emissions in the country. Homes in the area produced fewer carbon emissions than in the past, but local industry needs to do more to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions.

People in Stockton produce more waste and recycle less than in other places. People wanted better refuse collection and disposal services and the Council has provided them. Rubbish collected has gone down year on year. But people in Stockton-on-Tees throw away more rubbish and recycle less than in other areas. Last year, the Council collected almost 800kg for every house, more than in other places. Most of the rubbish is burned to produce energy. Only 8 per cent of waste is buried. Over the last two years the Council has brought in new recycling schemes and now recycles almost one-third of all the waste. Although residents are pleased with what it has done already, the Council has

plans to improve on the amount of waste that people recycle. We will be looking again at how well the plans for waste disposal are progressing next year.

More people are moving to Stockton-on-Tees. New houses are being built to encourage people to move there, although the recession could slow this down. There are still not enough low cost homes but the Council is trying to make more available. Local services face growing demand for support from people on low incomes and those with particular needs. There are fewer homeless people, especially young people, but some people have to stay too long in temporary accommodation. Demand for adaptations to properties is high and the Council has invested heavily to reduce waiting times.

Stockton-on-Tees has achieved the national Green Flag Award for six of its green spaces in 2009. In 2009, Stockton won Best City in Britain in Bloom.

In June 2009, Stockton Borough Council became the first council in the North of England to meet the Carbon Trust Standard for reducing carbon emissions. Stockton was just the tenth local authority and one of less than 100 organisations to achieve the Standard. The Carbon Trust says Stockton-on-Tees' 'Small Steps, Big Strides' campaign is an example of best practice.

The area cut carbon dioxide emissions by more than one-fifth, one of the three biggest reductions in the United Kingdom. Energy use has been massively reduced in both public and private housing. The Council and its partners are now planning to tackle emissions from non-domestic properties and industry, which are among the poorest in the country.

Some 16,000 new houses - including executive homes - are due to be built by 2021. Stockton-on-Tees has attracted wealthier people to move into the area. But targets for additional homes might not be hit because of the current recession.

There is not enough low-cost housing in Stockton-on-Tees. The Council and partners including private and social housing developers are planning to make more, decent-quality low-cost homes available.

An affordable home ownership register has been launched to promote rent to buy schemes. It acts as the local Homebuy Agent - a government scheme to enable tenants, key workers and first-time buyers to buy a share of a home and get a first step on the property ladder.

Council housing is in reasonable condition, and will meet the minimum government standards for Decent Homes by the 2011 deadline. However, tenants expect a higher standard than the Decent Homes standard.

Stockton is good at finding homes for young people and is recognised throughout the North East for its excellent record of helping homeless young people.

The current economic climate means more people are going into temporary accommodation. Some homeless people are staying in bed and breakfast accommodation too long.

More than 470 people requested equipment and adaptations in 2008/09 but despite increasing the budget to over £1.2 million, the Council can only improve 300 properties per year. There is not enough funding to adapt properties for all the people with disabilities who need it. People developing a disability may wait for improvements for some time. The Council has introduced a loan scheme for ramps and stair lifts which will speed up the help available.

Since 2005, the Council has worked with Gypsies and travellers to look at their housing and support needs and to improve the permanent site. More permanent and transit pitches, housing support and improvements to the existing site are still needed and the Council has been promised some government funding to do this. However, no clear plans are in place to carry out the work.

In common with other areas, more people are reporting domestic violence to the police. Reports were up by almost one-fifth in the first half of 2009 compared to 2007. Stockton has many services available including a women's refuge, a sanctuary scheme, and adult and children's outreach and counselling. As a result, some people may not get the help they need. New services are being provided. We will follow up this issue during 2010.

Safer Communities

Stockton-on-Tees is getting safer for local people and is safer than other similar places.

Crime has fallen - by almost one-fifth in the year April 2008 to March 2009 - and is lower than in similar areas in England. The Partnership has had lasting success in cutting burglaries, violent crime, car crime and arson. Car crimes are down by two-thirds, with about one crime for every 1,500 residents. The number of arson incidents fell by over a quarter. In 2007, burglaries were at their lowest level since the 1970s.

Community safety is still a priority for local people but they believe the Council and police are dealing with their concerns. Crime is more of an issue for some communities in Stockton-on-Tees than others, especially in the town centres.

Some areas suffer more crime than others, especially the town centres. Almost half of all crimes are committed in just five areas while other parts of the Borough have relatively low crime. This pattern of crime is not unusual for towns and cities.

Fewer young people are committing crimes, but still too many. The Safer Stockton partnership is working to cut the number of young people who go to prison or young offenders institutes. This is because it is harder to turn someone away from crime once they have gone into the criminal justice system. They are succeeding. In 2007, of about 450 young people who committed a crime for the first time only 13 got custodial sentences. Re-offending by young people in Stockton is lower than in similar areas although it increased slightly last year.

Despite the low crime levels, people still have a fear of crime. Young people

and people from ethnic minorities are more likely to be victims of crime, and they are more worried about their safety. Partners including the police and Council ran a campaign giving away purse bells to older women to help tackle their fear of street robbery - if someone tries to take their purse when they are not looking the tinkling of the bell raises the alarm.

In common with other areas, more domestic violence incidents have been reported to the police since 2007 - almost a fifth more were reported in the first half of 2009 than in 2007. The partnership is providing new services to tackle this growing problem to make sure there are the right services when victims need them. (See our section on environment and housing for details). We will be looking closely at how they are doing next year.

The Safer Stockton Partnership works closely with communities to deal with anti-social behaviour. It understands what is important to local residents. Results from the Place Survey show that only one in four residents felt that anti-social behaviour was a problem. They also believed the police and Council were dealing with the issues.

The Partnership is also tackling drug and alcohol abuse, although the support available is not reaching some drug users.

Apart from crime, there are other challenges. Fewer people think that people from different backgrounds get on well together, or treat one another with respect than in many other places.

Giving children and young people opportunities is seen as crucial. The Council, police and fire service target groups of young people who are more likely to get into trouble, giving them the chance to take part in different activities including sports such as rugby and football.

The Partnership knows that more work is needed to make local voluntary and community groups stronger and more effective. It is investing to give the sector more support, but it is too early to see any results.

Children & Young People

The Children's Trust and Stockton Renaissance are doing well at improving the achievements and well-being of children and young people.

Children are doing better at school. Achievement at GCSE has risen year on year - by 7.2 per cent over the three years up to 2008. This trend has enabled Stockton-on-Tees to reach the national average. Most schools are good or better, which is a strength, though a small number of primary and secondary schools are not good enough.

Many 17 year olds take part in education or training. The number of young people going into higher education is increasing but not enough young people from low-income backgrounds progress to higher education. However, the number of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training is above similar areas and above the national figure. The Council does well with some vulnerable young people. For example, most young offenders and care leavers are in employment, education or training. (see safer community

section)

A high proportion of schools have achieved healthy schools status - which recognises their work on promoting healthy lifestyles. More young people take part in physical education and sport than the average for England. Young people who have emotional and mental health needs receive good support. There had been a drop in the number of pregnant teenage young women but this has recently gone back up. The Partnership has been working with national advisors to look at how it is tackling teenage pregnancy (see health section).

There are too many overweight children in Stockton-on-Tees compared to similar places, and this is well above the England average.

The Children's Trust supports children well, including vulnerable children. Fewer numbers of children are living in households with low incomes. Most children and young people report feeling safe in their school and in the community. The Council completes assessments on time for children in need.

Overall outcomes for looked after children are good, supported by relatively stable care arrangements. They are encouraged to participate in a range of leisure activities, with the help of free leisure passes.

Healthier Communities and Adults

The health of people in Stockton is mixed. Services to improve the health of local people get mixed results.

Some people's health is very poor. Importantly, death rates from the 'big killer' diseases in Stockton - heart disease, strokes and cancer - have fallen faster than the national average. But death rates, including early deaths from major illnesses, are above the national average. The situation is getting better for women but it has got even worse for men.

Stockton is good at getting people to give up smoking and to take physical activity. It has not been as successful at tackling alcohol misuse, child obesity, and teenage pregnancies though it is improving services to tackle these. So there is more to do to close the gap further with the rest of England.

The Council provides good social care services. People who need social care are involved in planning the services that are provided. But more people could take control of their own care through personal budgets than are doing at the moment.

The Council and its health partners have reviewed and put in place changes to assessment processes, but although assessments for most people were completed more quickly this year, they were not completed as promptly as in similar councils.

People are supported to stay at home and do not stay in hospital for longer than necessary. Many older people receive services such as home care to help them live in their own homes, and there is now a Home Improvement Agency to help them with small tasks in their houses.

More people who care for their family or friends received support this year, and the Council worked with more people who were vulnerable to help keep them safe.

The state of people's health differs in different parts of the Borough. Life expectancy varies by seven years for women and by 11 years for men across Stockton-on-Tees.

The Partnership has a good understanding of local inequality. It has identified the main illnesses which cause early death for some people such as heart disease, strokes, cancer and respiratory disease.

Local services plan to tackle the causes of early death - such as smoking, obesity, lack of exercise and excess drinking - especially in the areas where health is worst. Health partners are going into these communities to target specific groups of people and encourage them to live healthier lifestyles. Local services talk about health issues to help the communities that need it most.

For example, they give advice on stopping smoking through pharmacies in deprived areas and there are healthy workplace schemes in large organisations and ones with more manual workers. Personal health advisers run sessions in deprived areas.

'The Big Drink Debate' helped make people think more about alcohol and its effects on them. Feedback from young people helped to change the sexual health services on offer.

A year-long project led to a better response to child obesity. The Partnership now has new plans for tackling this problem. Research showed that too many reception-year children are obese and the number is increasing - a major problem. Public services aim to target children in their Early Years and pre-school by encouraging more breastfeeding and developing more Sure Start schemes. By age 11, things improve and children's rates of obesity are not much higher (or getting worse) than other places.

There are problems in reaching the people who still do not see unhealthy lifestyles as a risk to them.

Cutting the number of early deaths in high-risk people depends on them adopting healthier lifestyles. People in more deprived parts of the Borough tend to have lower life expectancy. They also tend to see smoking, drinking, obesity or teenage pregnancy as less of a problem. Encouraging people to think differently or make different choices will take time.

We will examine the Partnership's work to reduce health inequalities in the next year. We will look closely at whether the action now being taken is getting results.

In year one of the Comprehensive Area Assessment we have not reported in detail either on the mental health issues affecting local people or on the range of mental health services in Tees Valley.

In year two we will explore this theme in more depth. We will report on what the local partnerships are doing to address the range of issues that are linked

to mental health.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>



for an independent overview
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