

Celebrating later life in Telford and Wrekin

A proactive, preventative approach to active ageing

Our strategy 2023 - 2033



Protect, care and invest to create a better borough





Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the members of the **Ageing Well Partnership Board** who helped shape the themes of this strategy and provided feedback on the draft objectives.

Age UK Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin

Diverse Communities Representative

Experts by experience/Involved Residents

Forum 50+

Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin

Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust

NHS Shropshire Telford & Wrekin

Shropshire Partners in Care

Telford & Wrekin Council

Forewords

I am very pleased to support the **Ageing Well Strategy for Telford and Wrekin**. We are proud of our partnership working to support the lives of older people in the borough. This strategy will enable us to focus on the areas that really matter and support our residents to live well for longer.

Councillor Andy Burford

Telford & Wrekin Council

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin have welcomed the opportunity to work with Telford & Wrekin Council and other stakeholders to develop this **Ageing Well Strategy**. We support and endorse the desire and drive to make Telford and Wrekin a great place to grow older in. There is much to do to make this ambition a reality and we look forward to working with all the partners, and local older people to drive this forward.

Heather Osborne, Chief Executive

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin

We want older people to enjoy Telford as a place where they have the freedom to do what they value the most in good health for as long as possible, with community activities that are inclusive and welcoming. We will continue to actively support Ageing Well initiatives with our partners and will consider the findings and recommendations as we continue to evolve our joint approach to supporting people to live long, healthy and independent lives across Telford and Wrekin. The Integrated Care Board for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin is committed to being a strong partner in this work and is fully supportive of an approach that is both evidence based and ambitious.

Simon Whitehouse, Chief Executive Officer

NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin

“Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you’ve got to start young”

Theodore Roosevelt



Why we need an Ageing Well Strategy

Living longer brings opportunities, not only for older people and their families but also for society as a whole. More mature years provide the chance to pursue new activities such as further education, a new career or pursuing a long neglected passion. Older people contribute in many ways to their families and communities.

However, the extent of opportunities and contributions depends heavily on two factors; health (both physical and mental health) and being financially secure. By planning for the future, we can celebrate the advances that enable more of us to live longer lives while maximising independence for as long as possible so that people in Telford and Wrekin can live well for longer.

Our population is becoming more diverse and ageing

The borough saw one of the **largest increases in population aged 65 plus** in England between the 2011 and 2021 Census, with an increase of 35.7% compared to the national England increase at 20.1%

Telford had the highest increase in the over 65 population of all West Midlands upper tier local authorities and the second highest of all 151 upper tier authorities in England (source: ONS Census data).

We are an ageing society

People are living longer and statistics are showing that the number of older people is growing both locally, nationally and across the world. Increases in our population would suggest that demand for services in the future will increase. We need to start planning now to ensure that we use our limited resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for people. We want people in the borough to live well for longer.

In Telford and Wrekin we want to celebrate the advances that enable more of us to live longer lives and ensure we maximise independence for as long as possible.

This strategy will build on existing initiatives and links closely to the themes of Telford & Wrekin Council's plan to protect, care and invest to create a better borough with the priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live in
- A community-focussed, innovate council providing efficient, effective and quality services
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy
- Our natural environment is protected and the council has a leading role in address the climate emergency.

The strategy will also align with the priorities of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) and the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System's four key purposes:

- Improving outcomes in population health and healthcare
- Tackling inequalities in outcomes, experience and access
- Enhancing productivity and value for money
- Supporting broader social and economic development.

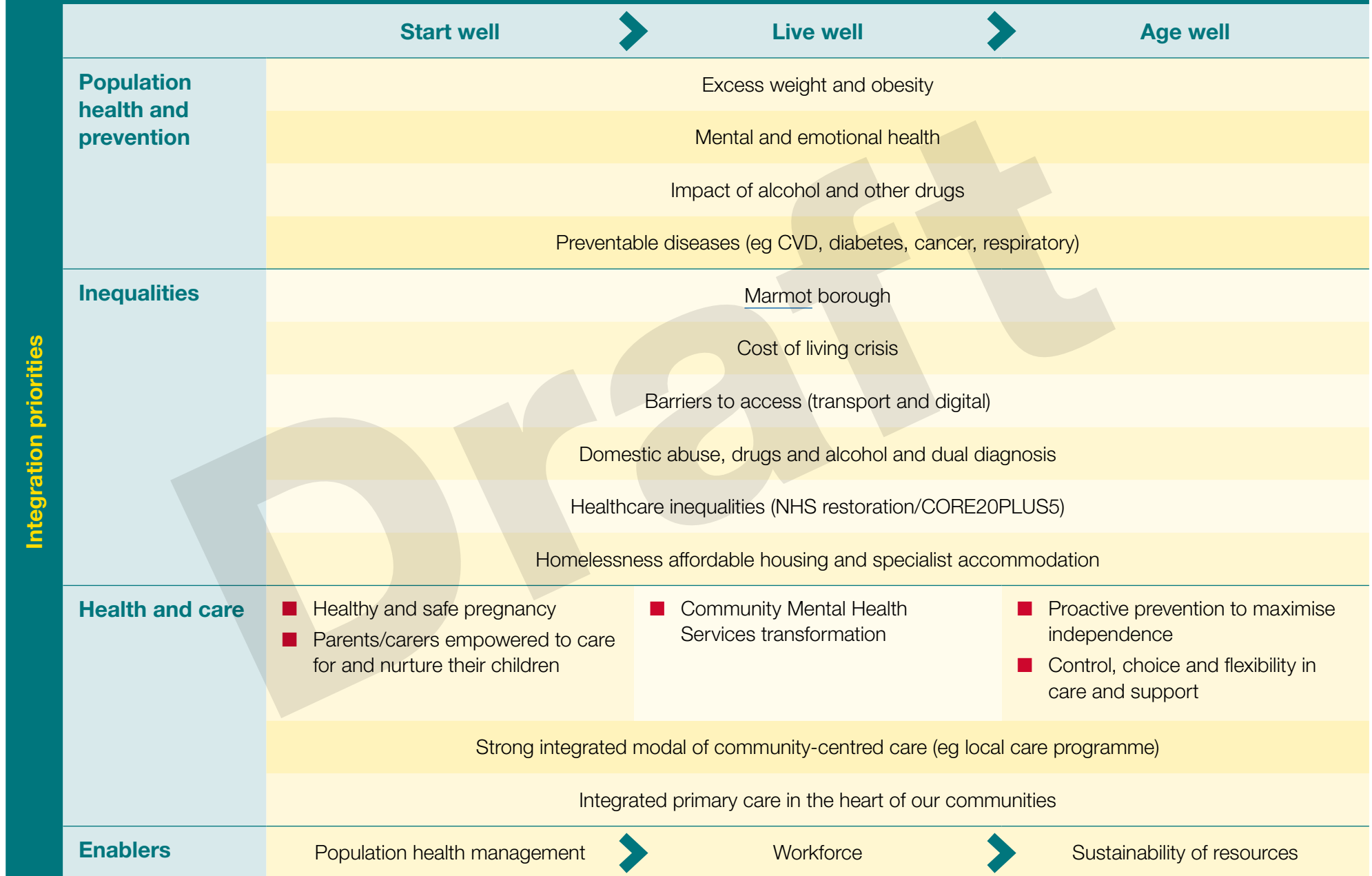
This plan will also support the delivery of the [Borough Vision 2032](#) ambition to support local people to live inclusive, healthy, independent lives.



“The Health & Wellbeing Board in Telford and Wrekin are taking a life course approach as part of their strategy refresh and ageing well is a key element”

Telford & Wrekin Council

Telford & Wrekin Health & Wellbeing strategy refresh proposals



In Telford and Wrekin we are proud of the work we do to improve the lives of people to ensure growing older is a positive experience. However as we face significant challenges in the coming years, we need to plan and work differently, focusing on prevention and integration across organisations.

Productive healthy ageing can include:

- improved health and wellbeing
- increased independence and resilience to adversity
- the ability to be financially secure through work and build resources
- engagement in social activities
- being socially connected with enhanced friendships and support
- enjoying life in good health.



“Our aspiration for the future is to develop a proactive, preventative approach to active ageing in Telford and Wrekin”

**Health & Wellbeing Board
in Telford and Wrekin**



Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786248/a_menu_of_interventions_for_productive_healthy_ageing.pdf



Ageing Well in Telford and Wrekin

Telford and Wrekin is growing, we have more people in the borough now than ten years ago and the population continues to increase. The latest census (2021) told us that there are 76,500 households in Telford and Wrekin with a total estimated borough population of 185,600 people. This is an increase of 11.4% since the 2011 Census (166,641)* a larger increase than seen nationally (6.6%).

The aim of this strategy is that people in the borough will live well for longer but we face some key challenges, these include a lower life expectancy, higher rates of long term illness and disability, high obesity rates and high rates of admissions to hospital for a variety of conditions. As the older population increases it is reasonable to assume that the number of people using services will increase.

Life expectancy for people in Telford and Wrekin is currently below the England average, it is 78.2 years for men (England 79.4) and 81.9 years for women. (England 83.1 years) (source: PHE Fingertips life expectancy 2018-20).

Healthy life expectancy, the age at which people may expect to live in good health in the borough is **57.6 years for men and 60.3 years for women**, this is significantly worse than the national average of 63.1 years for men and 63.9 years for women (PHE Fingertips 2018-2020)

People living in the most **deprived areas have a notably lower life expectancy than those living in more affluent areas of the borough; 7.3 years less for men and 4.1 years less for women.** (Source PHE 2018-20)

The **mortality rate for people aged under 75 is worse than the national ratio for a number of causes considered preventable** including cardiovascular disease and cancer. (PHE Fingertips mortality rates 2020)

We know there are avoidable, and unfair differences in health between different groups of people, such as people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds

*Source ONS Census data

Around 7000 people over the age of 65 live alone in Telford and Wrekin

There were 3250 people aged over 65 in the 2011 census who reported as being carers

There are 3601 Adult carers registered with the Telford and Wrekin Carers Centre

There are 1254 people (aged 65+) living with dementia in Telford and Wrekin

The DWP estimates that up to one million people who are entitled to pension credit do not claim it.



Co-producing the strategy - setting the agenda

The development of this strategy has been informed by engaging with people aged 50+ and various stakeholders, across Telford and Wrekin, starting with stakeholder workshops in May and October 2021 to form a vision to work towards, the key messages from the early engagement told us:

- Telford is the best place to grow old
- an age friendly place, where people can age well and infrastructure is there for that to happen
- seamless transition for all, whatever needs are
- accessible for all
- more in the community – independent as long as we can, live at home, people should have a choice in what, access health services and remaining healthy
- community place infrastructure, people feeling supported through social connections
- people should have a choice on how they choose to live, eat well, exercise, medicate, hydrate, warm and safe are the main things
- integrated working across Telford and Wrekin.

In winter 2021 the **Ageing Well Partnership Board** was formed. The partnership took on the themes from the early engagement and co-produced a questionnaire which was used in the pre-engagement consultation which took place between July and September 2022. The pre-engagement consultation received over 2,800 responses providing feedback on the following themes:

- where we live
- health and wellbeing
- the impact of the pandemic
- transport
- digital Inclusion
- financial Security
- carers.

The pre-engagement consultation received a consistent spread of responses across the age range of people aged between 50 and 79 years at around 30% for each age category.

There were 169 responses from people aged above 80 years. The use of both electronic and paper questionnaires gave more people the opportunity to give their feedback.

Healthier, happier, longer lives

Our ambition	Key principles	Aims/Goals	Barriers
<p>Integrated working across Telford and Wrekin</p> <p>Prevention rather than cure to inform the vision</p> <p>People will be part of and feel safe in their community</p> <p>Data is joined up so people do not have to tell their story twice</p> <p>People are empowered to make their own decisions</p> <p>People will have a choice of where they access health services to support them to remain healthy</p> <p>People will feel supported through social connections in their community</p> <p>The most vulnerable members of the community will receive good quality support</p>	<p>Educating communities pre-old age of how they can future proof their support</p> <p>Respect lifestyles, values, cultures</p> <p>Deter from using the word ‘frail’</p> <p>Being positive about what being older means</p> <p>Maintaining health and wellbeing</p> <p>Aligning strategies</p> <p>Using where people live and environment as a starting point, creative connected communities</p> <p>Reducing loneliness and isolation</p>	<p>Innovative ways of working</p> <p>Integrated partnership working across all organisations</p> <p>Whole workforce, including volunteers and the community are advocates for older people providing information and guidance</p> <p>Engagement with voluntary sector to support integrated partnership working</p> <p>Engaging with people who are younger so that they start to make healthy choices earlier and understand what is available for them when they get older and might need access to services/help</p> <p>Build on community response to the pandemic and the willingness of people to help others</p>	<p>Organisational and bureaucratic barriers</p> <p>Understanding of services and access to Primary Care</p> <p>Understanding people’s roles</p> <p>Use of language and impact on the person, their confidence and ambitions</p> <p>Financial and health inequalities</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about what is available</p> <p>Poor communication</p> <p>Housing and accommodation – homes for later life</p> <p>Managing risk positively</p> <p>Employment opportunities</p> <p>Digital exclusion and access to the internet</p>



Where we live

Aspirations:

- People will **feel safe**
- People **will be positive** about what being older means
- **Positive risk taking** will be encouraged
- **Seamless transition for all**, whatever their needs are
- People living with dementia and their carers will **feel included** as equal members of our community
- Older people will be **part of their community**
- People will be **supported to stay in their own homes** as long as they wish to
- People will feel **supported through social connections**
- People will be **aware of community support** that assists them in not feeling lonely and isolated
- **Differences will be celebrated** and any forms of discrimination not tolerated.

Aspirations

A decent place to live is the foundation on which people build their lives. Telford & Wrekin Council's housing strategies support this aspiration. The Housing and Support in Later Life Survey took place in winter 2022, will influence future housing available to older people in the borough and the full

findings will be included in [Telford & Wrekin Council's Housing Strategies](#).

Early responses reveal that most of respondents are thinking about their housing needs for older age, with accessibility, maintenance and current home being too big for older age as the main reasons:

- people are considering moving house within the next ten years
- reasons unsuitability of current property and access to care and their social community
- people do not fully understand the housing choices available to them.

For older people who need a higher level of care and can no longer live in their own home there are 22 care homes in the borough providing care for people living with dementia needs and those who have nursing care. The majority of our borough care homes are rated as Good by the Care Quality Commission. Keeping people well living in their own homes is a key priority and evidence of this is that there are less people moving into residential care, this is a trend that is set to continue (MPS 2021-2025.)

Telford and Wrekin is a safe place to live, people report they feel both safe inside and outside of their homes. People in the borough enjoy the outdoor spaces of parks and the green spaces locally.

Improved green space access to improve mental wellbeing.

Many people do not know about local activities that are available for them to attend and feel better publicity is needed so people know what is going on locally to them. In addition some people feel that many activities in the borough are more geared up for younger people and families and not suitable for people aged over 50.

Availability of activities were identified as the main intervention that would help combat loneliness.

Being connected with other people matters for your health

Research shows that **lacking social connections** is bad for our mental and physical health

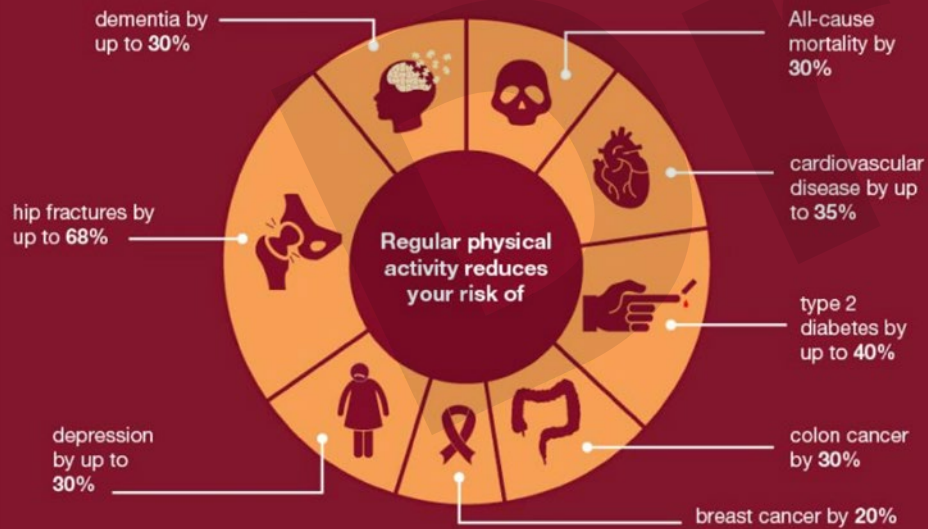


Loneliness increases the likelihood of premature mortality

by **26%**



What are the health benefits of physical activity?



Reduce the risk of dementia by:



Actions to improve:

- Using where people live and environment as a starting point, we will continue to co-produce with people to find out what support they need to stay in their own home and community
- We will support people with information to enable them to make informed choices about where they live as they age and keep people connected to their own communities
- We will use the feedback from the Housing survey and the updated Census results to look at how we support people to maintain and adapt their own accommodation so it remains accessible for all of their life, either through adaptations, advice and support, applying for grants, planning or influencing developers to build what is needed
- We will continue to consult with people living in care homes to find out what is important to them and ensure future commissioning reflects this
- We will continue to collate data on people whose discharge from hospital is delayed due to accessibility issues to inform future commissioning and housing strategies
- We will continue to work with current care providers and developers to ensure there is sufficiency of care provision in the borough, including people with dementia and their families
- We will continue to publicise activities and events to people by a variety of methods
- All local partners endeavour to ensure that plans and strategies for future activities will take into account the need for a range of activities for all ages, taking into account diversity, age, ability and preferences so that people will benefit from opportunities for intergenerational activities
- We will continue to work with providers of health care services to make them equitably accessible for all our population recognising and adapting to challenges that older adults may face in being active participants in their own care.



Health and wellbeing and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

Aspirations:

- People will **stay healthy** and **maintain good physical and mental health**
- The gap in life expectancy will be reduced, **people will live longer in better quality health**
- People **will not be socially isolated**
- People will be supported to **eat well and drink sensibly**
- People will be **encouraged to participate** whatever their challenges
- People will be supported to **take regular exercise**
- People with dementia will have **greater independence.**

Aspirations

Access to Health Services and Health Checks

Access to primary care was felt to be a positive contributing factor to health and wellbeing, including access to health checks and mental health support acknowledged as a need. Access to support groups is also seen as a valuable component to health and wellbeing. Findings from the Ageing Well consultation include:

- people would be like to attend outpatient appointments locally in the community rather than in hospital or to have the choice of both options

- availability of appointments was rated highly in peoples feedback, people were more likely to prefer a community setting if it resulted in them being seen sooner
- contrasting views on using technology for health appointments – most feeling a physical appointment would be more productive
- people would like to go back to seeing their GP face to face
- people reported access to GP appointments, contacting the GP practice and waiting times for appointments need to be improved as this was not always a positive experience for everyone
- people reported that they had not been offered screening appointments or struggled to attend, some people commented they felt screening opportunities had reduced since the Covid outbreak
- many reported taking up the offer of Covid and flu vaccinations
- a third of people reported they do not know where to find or ask for information
- the majority of people (over 90%) would go their GP for help if they had a health issue
- almost half of respondents reported they would use the NHS website
- people also use their Pharmacy or call 111 for advice.

Access to Health Screening and Vaccinations:

- The percentage uptake for the Covid vaccination in Telford and Wrekin is generally higher than the national average, however, there remain inequalities in the uptake of vaccine, with lower than average rates in our most deprived and ethnically diverse communities. We have an opportunity to continue to target areas and groups with lower than average uptake through successful community initiatives such as Betty the Bus which takes vaccinations to people's doorsteps

- Flu vaccinations are the second highest take ups, statistically the population coverage for Flu vaccination for people aged 65+ is 82.1%, slightly lower than the national rate of 82.3% but well above the national benchmark goal of 75%. (source PHE Fingertips 2021/22)
- Cardiovascular Checks – the level of people aged 45+ years who have a record of blood pressure in the last five years has been declining in recent years and Abdominal Aortic Screening coverage in men aged 65-74 has also decreased (which is likely to be due to the pandemic) these need checking out
- Cancer screening programmes.
- Cancer screening programmes – Approximately 3570 people in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin are diagnosed with cancer each year. Evidence base shows that 4 in 10 cancers are preventable. The [Integrated Cancer Strategy for Shropshire Telford and Wrekin 2022/2027](#) details how the local NHS will restore the work that was paused during the Covid-19 pandemic with targeted health checks and screening.

Falls:

- In Telford and Wrekin emergency hospital admissions due to falls is better than the national average for people aged over 80 and similar to the national average for people aged 65-79 (PHJE Fingertips 2020-2021) However according to national data, in the first quarter of 2022, 3105 people aged 65 and over on GP's registers across Shropshire and Telford fell and attended Accident and Emergency department, of these 472 people were admitted into a hospital bed. This means a significant number of people needed only minor treatment or investigation and could have been treated at home rather than being conveyed to hospital
- The local rate for hip fractures in people aged 65-79 years during 2021-22 was significantly higher than the England average.

The number of people being admitted to hospital is increasing and in turn impacting on the number of people coming out of hospital into council funded social care services. This is evidenced by data that shows the increased demand on discharge of medically fit patients between 2019 and 2022, has increased by 89.3%. As the population increases we are likely to see a continued increased demand on these services.

Telford & Wrekin Council work alongside Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust and other health professionals to prevent people going into hospital and to support those who have an unplanned hospital stay. For those who are discharged from hospital but still need some level of care and support, the percentage of people aged 65+ who are admitted to residential and nursing care, and those who are offered enablement services following discharge from hospital, are both better than the national rates (source: PHE Fingertips 2020/21).


Take control of your health:


Supporting falls prevention


Thirty percent of people aged 65 and over will fall at least once a year. For those aged 80 and over it is 50%.

- 1** Falls are the number one reason older people are taken to the emergency department in a hospital
- 2** In around **5%** of cases a fall leads to a fracture and hospitalisation
- 3** Unaddressed fall hazards in the home are estimated to cost the NHS in England **£435 million**

All adults should undertake muscle strengthening activity, such as



yoga


exercising with weights





carrying heavy shopping

at least 2 days a week

Minimise the amount of time spent sedentary (sitting) for extended periods



Adults (19 to 64) should aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate intensity activity, in bouts of 10 minutes or more, each week

This can also be achieved by 75 minutes of vigorous activity across the week or a mixture of moderate and vigorous activity

Actions:

- Through the Telford and Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership, health, social care and voluntary organisations will continue to commit to developing and implementing integrated approaches in the borough.
- We continue to monitor the processes involved in the hospital discharge process to inform future commissioning and strategies
- We will encourage community health providers, GP surgeries and hospitals to ensure older people alongside the wider population can access appointment systems and consider impacts of changes on systems for older people
- GP access will be fed into the ICT Primary Care Strategy
- Information and support will be available to support people to make healthy lifestyle choices to enable them to live well for longer, with an emphasis on prevention rather than cure
- Older people will be encouraged to participate in cardiovascular checks and cancer screening programmes and vaccinations. Engagement will be undertaken to understand barriers to access for health checks and cancer screening
- We will implement a Falls pilot project in early 2023, for people who have fallen they will be supported at home and monitored to prevent admission to Accident and Emergency departments
- All partners in Telford and Wrekin will work together to ensure work is joined up to ensure older people at risk of loneliness are reached out to and social participation is promoted
- Older people will be supported through social prescribing to enable them to be socially connected through community activities beneficial to their health and wellbeing, i.e. physical, creative, recreational, eating well
- People who have a diagnosis of dementia will receive support on a pathway led by a whole-team approach, including memory assessment, diagnosis and treatment
- We will work with a variety of stakeholders (leisure, active travel, energize etc.), partners and the voluntary sector to encourage physical activity that is fundamental to ageing well
- We will work with the voluntary sector to develop a community centred approach and support provision of a range of activities that benefit health and wellbeing.



Transport

Aspirations

- Public transport links should be available and affordable
- Transport black spots should be considered when planning how people travel around the borough
- Transport links with places people need to travel to, such as GP surgeries, hospital appointments, leisure activities etc.

Aspirations

Telford & Wrekin Council have produced a Local Transport Plan which sets out a strategy and action plan for improving local transport and supports the community strategy. There are good link roads in the borough however there is a move towards shaping the infrastructure that is more conducive for cycling and walking. It is acknowledged that for some people the car will remain essential for many journeys. Driving remains the most common form of transport for older people in the UK, in Telford and Wrekin a high number of wards have low car ownership levels and a reliance on public transport.

The vision adopted for the plan is the long term 'Vision 2026' developed for the Community Strategy, which is to create:

'A successful, prosperous and healthy community which offers a good quality of life for all the people of Telford and Wrekin.'

The plan aims to make travel more reliable and efficient, maintain highways effectively and efficiently, reduce carbon emissions to help tackle climate change, improve safety and security on the transport network while promoting active travel choices which encourage people to be healthier. This

will improve the quality of life by reducing the visual, noise, air quality and other impacts of transport of people and the local environment.

In Telford and Wrekin there has been a significant change in active travel habits, there has been an increase in cycling and walking largely due to infrastructure improvements. Being more active is a way of improving health and wellbeing, including maintaining a healthier weight. It also reduces our carbon footprint and air pollution and is a more cost effective method of travel when household budgets are tight. A small number of people reported that limited bus routes and times of public transport impacts on their ability to join in local activities.

Over three quarters of respondents to the Ageing Well survey told us they drive themselves in their own car to travel around, a quarter said they are driven by a family member with a similar amount travelling by bus.

Eligibility for free bus passes impacted for those not yet at pension age but not working.

Transport black spots for those without a car impacted on isolation and loneliness, including access to banks, post offices, GP's etc.

Almost half of respondents said they walk to where they need to go.

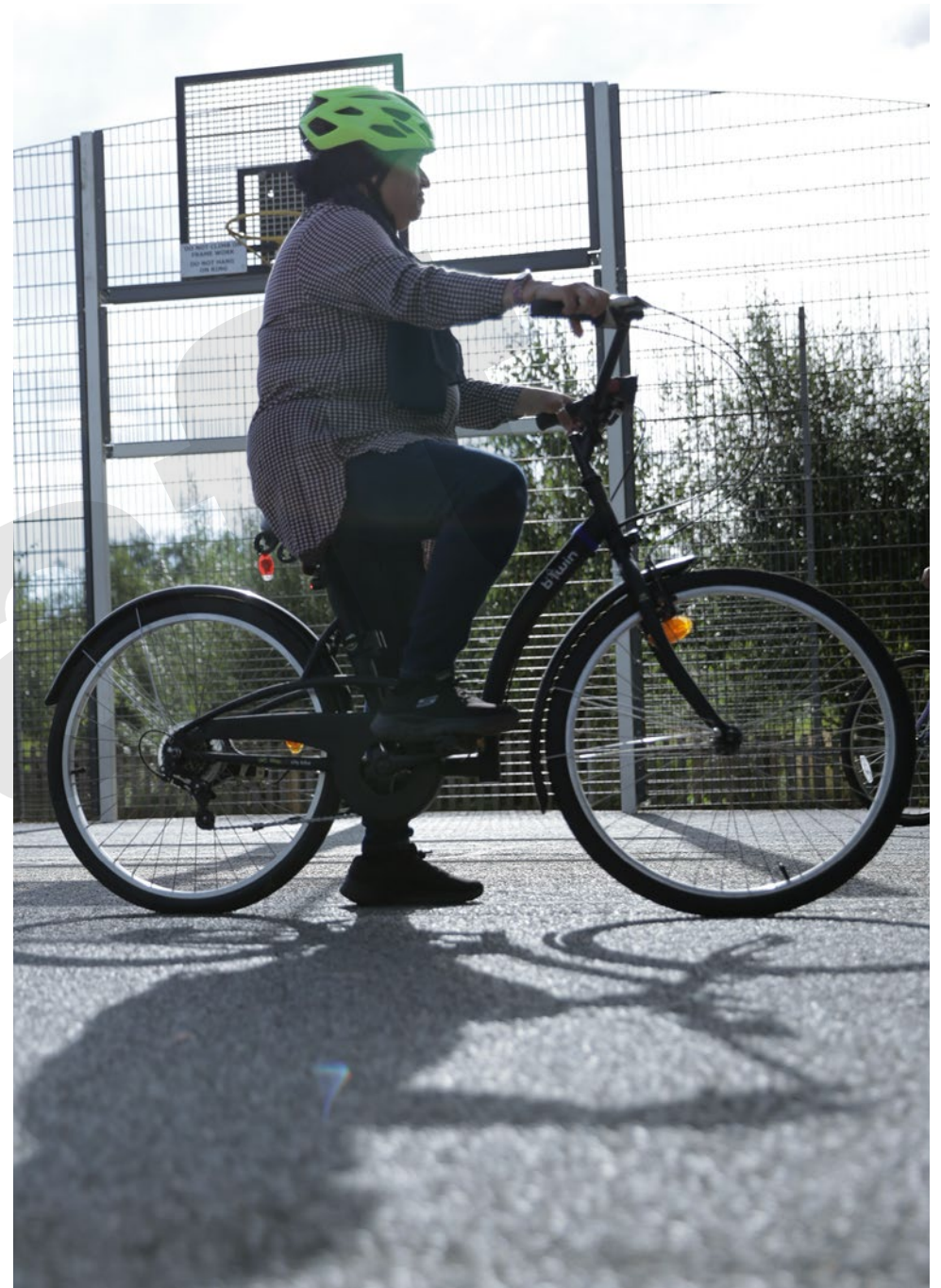
A tenth of overall respondents said they have reduced mobility and are afraid of falling, this was preventing them from getting out and about.

The loss of the Red Bus service is significant and has been raised consistently by the public as this is an obstacle for residents to access activities and shopping. Loss of independence as people rely on a family member or someone taking them. People say that public transport links need to be available and affordable, especially for those who do not yet qualify for a free bus pass. Residents without a car in 'transport black spots' are particularly prone to isolation and lack capability to access services, including banks, post offices, GP practice and hospital appointments.

Actions

- Local Transport plans need to support people so that they can travel to the places they need and want to go to
- **The cycling and walking strategy** vision is 'to provide a safe and attractive network of cycling and walking routes to support successful, prosperous and healthy communities'
- People will have access to the information they need to support them to travel around the borough
- The Dial-a-Ride service will be expanded to enable more people to book door to door transport for residents who cannot access conventional transport due to mobility problems or are over the age of 70.

Actions



Digital Inclusion

Aspirations

- Support older people to embrace technology
- Digital workshops for older people to learn about technology
- Opportunities for the digitally excluded to access the internet.

Aspirations

Digital inclusion is a key inequalities issue and access to technology can improve health & wellbeing on a number of levels, including interaction with health and care services and support. Telford & Wrekin Council's online resource [LiveWell Telford](#) is one of a number of local online community directories people can access.

The Ageing Well pre-engagement consultation asked people **if they would describe themselves as digital connected:**

- the majority of people expressed a desire to be digitally connected
- more people would use technology if it was lower priced
- access to training included face to face training is needed
- how do you find out about things if you are not online?
- broadband speeds in rural areas
- most people use digital technology for email, connecting with family and friends came a close second in responses followed by online banking
- lack of confidence using technology.

People would like accessible training courses and basic advice for every day help for things like online shopping, more research is needed in whether this could be online or whether face to face training is needed. People need to know how to find out about local digital training and this is difficult if you are not already online. A smaller percentage reported they would need help and support to access technology, in addition cost might be a barrier, this includes the purchase of devices, connection costs (broadband) and the cost of data usage.

“I don't think it's a question about technology, it's about maintaining access to banks face to face, having physical cash and cheque books. Older people don't trust or understand and they worry about online scams/fraudsters.”

People wanted information about technology presented to them in a way that takes into account that individuals have very different needs, circumstances, fears, preferences and wishes with regards to how they use technology. A few respondents commented that they found it patronising to imply that older people found technology frightening and difficult.

People want improved broadband and data access across the borough, particularly in areas with poor signal and for digital systems to be developed that can help the over 50s to access information, support and opportunities.

For those choosing not to become digital users, or individuals whose physical impairments or disability prevents them from using digital technology, provision needs to be in place for them. This includes telephone access for enquiries, getting help and support, reporting issues, paying bills, making appointments and develop support for helping people with applications and form filling.

Consideration should be given to **effective promotion of digital training and support including through non digital means** and continue to **develop web-based resources and digital toolkits, as well as directories and communication channels** which list opportunities to learn/enhance digital skills.

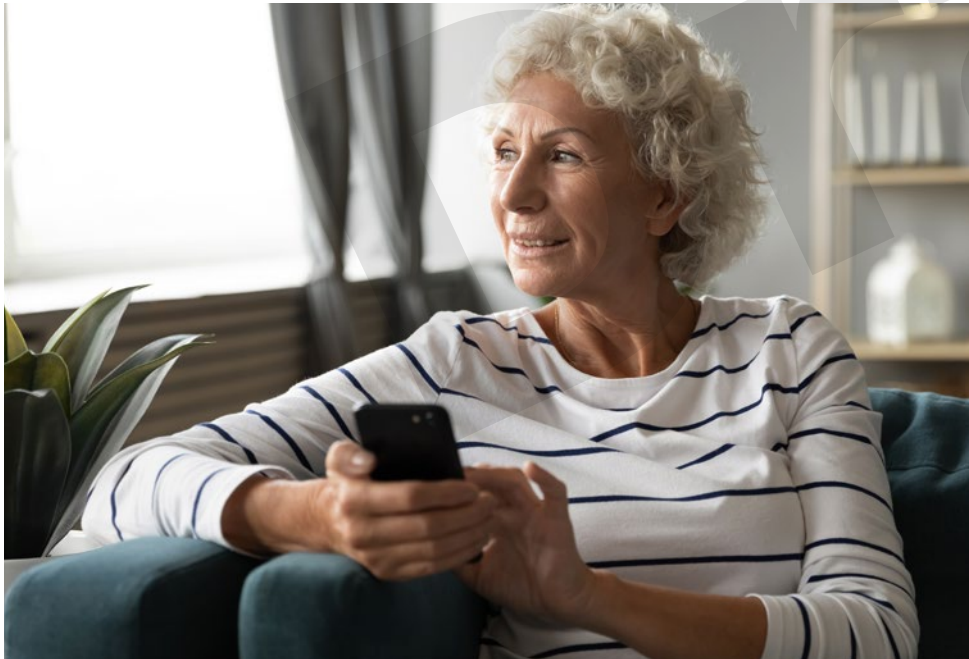
Access to a 'What's On' website and messaging service with digital access at all public buildings along with training, advertising of jobs for the older generation.

Plans for **more easily available assisted access to technology**, with **basic step by step clear instructions** about carrying out digital tasks.

Consideration to **providing a more interactive information billboards** with information.

Provision of **decent and fast broadband in every area of Telford**.

Opportunity of **provision to upcycle items** such as reconditioned laptops and phones, charging stations for mobility scooters, ensuring that for instance that websites and hyperlink trails are **smart phone compatible**, and **help with information to avoid scams**.



Digital Switch Over

By 2025 analogue telephone services will be switched off as the UK's telecoms infrastructure is upgraded to digital connectivity. This shift has urgent implications for the digital care technology sector and the people who rely on telecare in the borough. The transition has already started with many telecom exchanges converted over fully to digital. This is starting to affect functionality and connectivity and the risk increased from 2023 when BT will no longer sell analogue devices. The council has already begun planning to ensure that telecare and social alarm service reliability and safety are not compromised and that lives are not put at risk.

Actions

- We will communicate with people across the borough to ensure they are well informed about the digital switch over.
- We will build on existing services and link with key partners to ensure that older people and older people who are carers in the borough are able to access technology and support to use technology.
- We will ensure that people who do not have access to digital methods of communication are supported to access technology or supported through other methods to communicate their views/ make contact with services.
- We will consider a wide range of approaches to understanding and tackling the barriers to digital use for older people, including the need for regular refreshment and updates as technology advances and focusing on the specific tasks that people mostly want and need technology to perform.

Actions

Financial Security – Cost of Living

Aspirations

- Good information to help people plan for the future/retirement
- Good information about what benefits or additional income older people are entitled to
- Whole workforce, including volunteers and the community are advocates for older people providing information and guidance
- Engagement with voluntary sector/public to ensure information and advice is shared across a wide variety of sources

Aspirations

The Centre for Ageing Better Report from November 2021; Boom and bust? The last baby boomers and their prospects for later life research reports that people in their 50's and 60's today are facing worse circumstances than people who were at the same age in 2002. Around one in five people are likely to experience an old age marred by multiple, chronic problems such as poor health, poor finances and poor social connections.

Older generations are becoming not only greater in number, but also increasingly diverse in terms of health, wealth and life circumstances.

Nationally, financial inequality in later life is increasing, the richest people are twice as wealthy as 16 years ago, but the poorer are almost a third poorer. Societal shifts have taken place, such as longer working lives and the growth of a labour market made up of freelance or part-time jobs as opposed to full-time, fixed contracts, a crisis of housing supply and demand for caring for family and loved ones.

Telford and Wrekin is a place of socio-economic contrasts. Parts of the borough are amongst the most deprived in England, with deprivation rates comparable to inner cities, whilst other areas are amongst the least deprived in England.

Around 24.9% of the population of Telford and Wrekin **live in areas in the 20% most deprived nationally**, around 45,100 people (source: 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation).

A research report by the University of Edinburgh **Older Worker, Later Lives** – August 2022 set out to investigate the risk of financial vulnerability amongst those in their 50s and 60s to understand what changes could be made to improve financial security later in life. The report highlights:

- a single person would need an **annual income of £10,900 to maintain a modest standard of living**, the state pension of £9627 leaves a gap of over £1000 to fill
- 20% of UK individuals aged 55-64 **have no retirement savings** at all
- income shocks through job loss or barriers to getting back into work is **forcing some people to draw lump sums from their pension pots**
- the number of individuals withdrawing their entire pension in one lump sum **doubled in the latter half of 2020**
- there is **widespread lack of understanding** about the benefits system and **confusion about how to claim**.

Age UK report (May 2022) highlighted increasing concern about how the rising cost of living is affecting older people on low and modest incomes. Locally, Age UK STW have also raised concerns about the cost of living/ financial crisis and its likely impact on older people. They feel this will impact

on older people's health and wellbeing, both physical and mental health.

Key themes from the consultation when people were asked if there are things they like to do but cannot afford were access and costs, predominately around access/cost of gym and leisure facilities.

The **cost of living crisis is a key factor impacting on residents' ability to take part in leisure activities, recreation and holidays.**

Some people have **given up work or reduced their hours to care for family members, this causes them to worry this will impact on their future pension** as they are not earning as much.

People **want help to plan for the future**, rather than waiting until funds run out.

Further feedback from the Ageing Well pre-engagement consultation told us that just over a tenth of people who responded have chosen to retire early. Health problems are the reason a small percentage of people had to give up work and for those not working or able to find employment, they cited that employers will not take on an older person or someone with health concerns.

For people who have had a family member move into a care home and are paying for the support themselves, they felt that they need help to plan for the future, rather than having to wait for the funds to run out. Clear information and advice on paying for your care is provided on [LiveWell Telford](#), advice can also be found by visiting the [Independent Living Centre](#). However people need to know where to look to find this information. Local free newspapers were a good source for people to find out information.

Actions

- People will receive advice and support to ensure their income is maximised and receive the financial support they are entitled to.
- Information and advice will be available to ensure people stay warm in their homes [Help and advice with household bills and affordable warmth - Telford & Wrekin Council](#).
- Information, advice and support will be available to support people on low incomes [Cost of living - Telford & Wrekin Council](#).



Carers

Aspirations

- Carers are supported in their caring role
- Carers have the information they need to support them financially
- Carers will have access to a range of support options, including respite
- Carers or people with dementia will receive support tailored to their specific needs

Aspirations

A carer is someone who looks after someone who could not manage without their help in their daily living. There were 3250 people aged over 65 in the 2011 census, who reported as being carers.

People in the borough care for a variety of family members and also their neighbours for example by cooking them a dinner to ensure they have a balanced meal. While people told us they are more than happy being a carer and 'it was a joy', others felt they need more support.

Information from the [Ageing Well pre-engagement consultation](#) tells us:

- majority are husbands and wives caring for each other or supporting ageing parents (who may well be in the 70s-90s)
- a high percentage care for older family members while also working full time
- support not always in the same house means travelling, sometimes across the country

- financial impact on carers, especially for those of working age and balancing working with caring responsibilities

- childcare for grandchildren, or adult disabled children.

The [Telford & Wrekin CVS All Age Carers Centre](#) supports carers in a variety of ways including emotional and practical support. They report that there are a variety of aspects of how the caring role impacts on the lives of family carers. Often it has been feedback that there is a huge impact on the physical and emotional health of carers and they sometimes have less time for themselves outside of their caring tasks. To gain a break from their caring role they may seek some respite themselves in the form of activities where they can meet other family carers and gain some mutual support as peers, but sometimes this may be difficult in the daytime/ pressures are too great to be able to take that break.

Telford & Wrekin Council's [Market position statement 2021-2025](#) states that our carers in the borough want a range of locally accessible and flexible support. It is important that there is consistency of services and support for all parties, including person centred services for people who have memory loss, complex physical conditions, and neurological needs as well as people who need end of life support.

The financial impact brings challenges in working lives as carers make changes to be able to support the person that they are caring for within the daytime and at night. In addition people who have given up work or reduced their hours to care for family members worry this will impact on their future pension as they are not earning as much. People would like to know where they can get help and support from and understand if they qualify for financial support.

“I am an unpaid carer looking after my mother, I earn too much to claim carers allowance. Maybe there should be a card or something that I could be given to show that I am an unpaid carer, It was not a problem for the Covid jobs they accepted what I said, but I think there might be a time when I would need proof I am a carer.”

The feedback received is comparable to what was collated back in 2019 through work that Healthwatch carried out around dementia support. It has been recognised that there is a definite requirement to improve access to support groups, carers support and build confidence for this cohort of people. These elements are included in the new dementia vision and work has commenced locally to address this need.

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin ICS have produced a Dementia Vision to support people across Shropshire and Telford. The model aims to provide people living with dementia with the support and resources they need to live life to the fullest and as they choose to:

Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (STW) Dementia Vision - NHS



Pick your own
Dementia Support

The [Carer's wellbeing guide](#) offers a wealth of information, advice and guidance for people who are caring for someone, including help and support for carers, health and wellbeing information with contacts, tips and links to support, including how to prepare for Winter and Summer and keeping safe. There is a whole section on maximising benefits and ensuring carers know how to claim what they are entitled to.

Actions

- Information will be available to enable carers to find the right financial support and general support in a timely manner.
- A dementia vision will include the implementation of specific support roles to help carers of people with dementia with what they feel they need to support them in their caring role
- Dementia link workers who will ensure that people living with dementia and their carers can access groups/activities in their community and help them to maintain the confidence to continue to attend for as long as they can.
- The dementia navigator role will provide that vital link person for those living with a dementia and their families. Their role is to provide information and support – this can be face to face or over the telephone. They will also provide vital sign-posting to other services to make sure people living with dementia can live as full a life as possible.

Actions

Conclusion

The Ageing Well Partnership Board are vital in promoting dignity and challenging stereotypes of older people, as well as overseeing this strategy and acting as the steering group for an Age Friendly Telford and Wrekin. We are grateful for the level of support given to this important piece of work. This strategy is only as valuable as the commitment of key partners involved. During the development of this strategy the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care Board are developing their own organisational strategy. We recognise that the priorities will need to be aligned. During the next twelve months of this strategy more detailed Action Plans will be developed for each theme. The final section of the strategy document will be revised and reviewed as the Actions Plans are developed, setting out our priorities:

- What we will do
- When we will do it by
- Who will be responsible for doing it
- How we will know what we have done has worked

The Ageing Well Partnership Board will be responsible for continuing to monitor the development, progress and impact of this strategy to ensure key partners are delivering on the Action Plans. Updates will be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership and the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care Board.



