



Dudley Health & Wellbeing Board

working together for  
**longer, safer,  
healthier lives**

Our vision for Dudley in 2028





# Working together for longer, safer, healthier lives

OUR VISION FOR DUDLEY IN 2028



‘Our vision for Dudley in 2028 is that it is a place where everyone lives longer, safer and healthier lives.’

**Councillor Ian Bevan**  
CHAIR OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic caused disruption across society and within services, negatively impacting on many people’s physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing. Subsequent cost-of-living pressures have made it much more challenging for lots of people and families on lower incomes – including those in work – to be able to live a healthy life. As elsewhere, increasing poverty is widening the gaps in physical, mental and emotional health between communities in Dudley with long term impacts on people’s life chances, and particularly for our children and young people.

During these challenging times, however, we have seen our communities pull together to support each other, the strength of our voluntary organisations, and the ability of our services to respond, react, and to work differently. There has been a better understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of those who live and work in Dudley, the need to work together, and a renewed focus on tackling health inequalities – the difference in health status that exists between different communities.



Our 2023-2028 health, wellbeing and inequalities strategy for Dudley is about how we (individuals, families, communities, organisations and local politicians) can build upon our strengths and work together to improve health and wellbeing, going further and fastest in our most disadvantaged communities.



# First, we need to keep doing things differently

We have identified 4 principles that will continue to inform the way we all work together and what we do to improve health and wellbeing:

## 01.

### Building community capacity and resilience

improving and sustaining good health and positive wellbeing by building people's social support networks; enabling people to support each other, making best use of individual and community resources and assets; and making sure that people who use services get a chance to pursue their own interests and contribute to community life.

## 02.

### A shift to prevention

challenging our organisations to invest in prevention and early intervention across services and ensuring a focus on addressing the wider determinants of health. Making it easier to make healthier choices in Dudley, enabling people and families to take an active role in looking after themselves and their family.

## 03.

### A stronger focus on family

recognising that people do not live in isolation and taking an approach that focuses on the family will have a bigger impact. Looking at how we can better embed a family approach throughout our policies and services.

## 04.

### Services that work with and for everyone

making more effective use of the complementary skills and assets of people, communities, and practitioners. Shifting the focus from practitioner-led service design to co-design of services with the people who use them. Ensuring that services are in places where people and families can easily access them and making it easy to find out what support is there to help.

Information about people's lives in Dudley since the COVID-19 pandemic tells us that focussing our resources and energy on **3 goals** will have the biggest impacts on people's health and wellbeing:

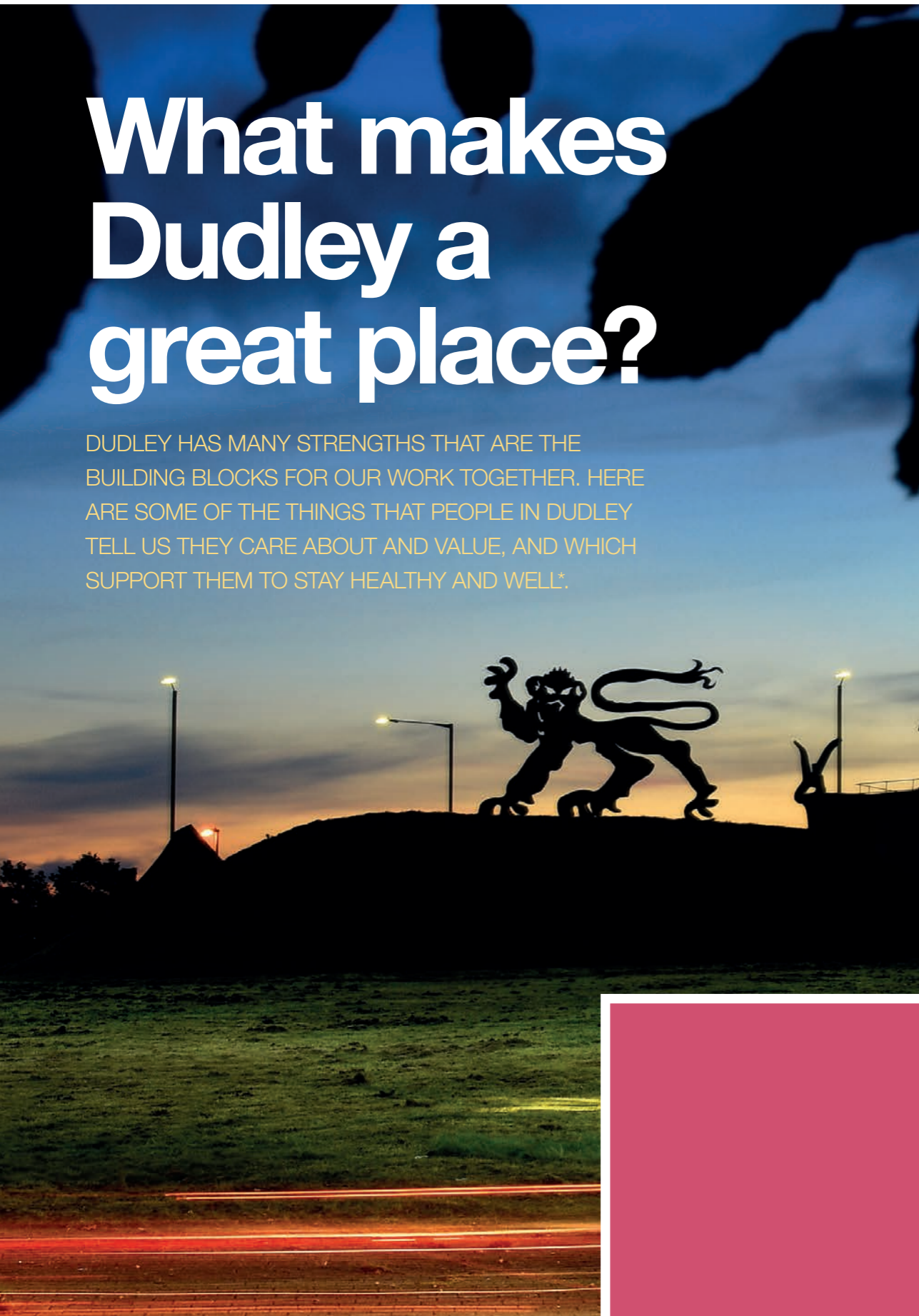
1. **Children are ready for school**
2. **Fewer people die from circulatory disease**
3. **More women are screened for breast cancer**

Across all of these 3 goals we will embed an approach to reduce health inequalities – to close the gap in health and wellbeing for the most disadvantaged families and communities. Across our plans, we will ensure a focus on the wider determinants of health such as income and employment, unleash the potential of our communities, and deliver services furthest and fastest to those who need them most. We all have a role to play in helping to achieve these goals – individuals, families, communities, organisations and local politicians. We are inviting everyone to play an active part in making Dudley borough a place where everyone can live longer, safer and healthier lives.



# What makes Dudley a great place?

DUDLEY HAS MANY STRENGTHS THAT ARE THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR OUR WORK TOGETHER. HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT PEOPLE IN DUDLEY TELL US THEY CARE ABOUT AND VALUE, AND WHICH SUPPORT THEM TO STAY HEALTHY AND WELL\*.



\*Taken from: Dudley, A Story of Stories, April 2018, Stories of Lye, 2019 and Looking Backwards, Moving Forwards - Stories from COVID times, May 2022

## The people

time and again local people are described as being very friendly, helping each other out and always having a story to tell, so many people report positive relationships and connections with others.

*"The people round here are first class; they do things – they just help you and they don't expect anything back."*

*"There's an inherent pride in Dudley folk – they're the salt of the earth!"*

*"I value having good neighbours to rely on when needed. I feel protected. It makes me feel happy."*

## Access to amenities and transport

good local amenities and things to do within close proximity of where people live provide a sense of place and purpose.

*"I feel safe and secure in my area. I enjoy access to parks, walks, nature reserves. I am able to access shops and libraries where I can then access local services. I value this access. It makes you feel that you have some control over your environment and life."*

*"This (Daybreak service) is the only thing I do all week. The rest of the time I'm on my own. I love coming here; it's my lifeline."*

## The green spaces

parks, canals, countryside; being able to reach the countryside quickly, cycle the canals and visit bluebell woods and fossil grounds.

*"The thing I like is that it's (Stourbridge) on the edge of the countryside. Best of both worlds, city and country activities."*

*"Our garden and allotment and woodland walks got me through the seasons of lockdown!"*

## Activities and groups

provide many opportunities for people to contribute and learn new things – being involved and helping out, being able to share information with each other, provide peer support as well as try new things, learn new skills and enjoy activities with others who have a shared interest.

*"Volunteering is my 'get up and go!'"*

*"At the forum we find out about so many things that are going on."*

*"The best thing about Queens Cross Network is that I can help there."*

## The history

from the steelworks to mining, chain making, the extinct volcano, the canals, museums, and castle. Many people feel that the local history provides a sense of identity and belonging and a source of pride.

*"All of the people who worked at the steelworks used to live in close proximity and you were always welcome into anybody's house for a tea or coffee."*

*"I've lived in Lye since 1960 and am proud of Lye."*



# The goal: Children are ready for school

In 2021/22, 1,415 Dudley children were not school ready at age five. This will impact on their future educational attainment and life chances, including life expectancy.

**School readiness is a measure of how prepared a child is to succeed in school cognitively, socially, and emotionally. It means that a child can make the most of school so that they can learn, develop relationships, know how to behave, and reach their full potential.**

Being school ready starts from before birth with the First 1,001 days providing a critical opportunity to build the foundations of emotional wellbeing, communication, resilience and adaptability.

Things that help to improve school readiness include parents having good mental health, parents speaking to their baby and reading with their child, being physically active, evidence-based parenting support programmes and access to high-quality early education.

Wider family circumstances have a big impact on a child being ready for school. Families in poverty and debt find it more challenging to support their child to be school ready, as do those with children with additional support needs.

These issues result in inequalities in levels of school readiness in different parts of our communities. Neglect, unsuitable accommodation, domestic violence, and substance misuse also need to be addressed where children are experiencing this.

## What will we do?

- Provide shared leadership to set the vision and 10-year strategic plan for whole-system early years transformation — it takes a whole village to raise a child, not just one organisation or service.
- Increase integration of early years health, education and local authority services, so that parents and children do not have to repeat their stories. This means improving links both between services and between commissioning responsibilities.
- Work to keep the best parts of Family Hubs & Start for Life programme, by supporting the longevity of priority commitments and activities beyond the programme's 3-year funding period (ending on 31 March 2025).

## How will we know if this goal has been achieved?

Children across Dudley will achieve a good level of development at the end of reception that is at least similar, if not higher, than the average for the West Midlands.

*While it has been improving, Dudley has consistently had a lower percentage (62% in 21/22) of children that are achieving a good level of development at the end of reception compared to the West Midlands (64%) and England averages (65%).*

The gap between children on free school meals who have a good level of development at the end of reception and those who are not eligible for free school meals will have narrowed.

*Only 45% of Dudley children on free school meals were school ready in 21/22 compared to 66% of children who were not eligible for free school meals.*







# The goal: Fewer people die of circulatory disease

In 2022, 959 people died from circulatory disease in Dudley, of which 244 (25%) were under 75 - an early death.

**Circulatory disease is a general term for conditions affecting the heart, blood vessels or the blood. It can often largely be prevented by having a healthy lifestyle, which can be enabled by the wider determinants of health such as having a good income. Once somebody has circulatory disease it can be managed using medications if detected and adopting a healthier lifestyle can prevent further deterioration.**

Circulatory disease is the biggest cause of early deaths in Dudley and the borough has, for many years, had a consistently higher death rate from circulatory disease compared to England. Men in Dudley have a higher death rate than men across England. It is the largest contributor to the life expectancy gap between the richest and poorest parts of Dudley, fuelling health inequalities.

Deaths from circulatory disease have been increasing since the COVID pandemic. Higher death rates from circulatory disease are likely to persist. This is because fewer people were diagnosed and treated for circulatory disease during COVID and with ongoing pressures it has been difficult for the NHS to catch up. Some people have also been less active and have gained weight. For families struggling with the cost of living, stress, poor mental health, and the inability to buy healthier foods, will also increase their circulatory disease risks.

## What will we do?

- Take action on the wider determinants of health, such as improving air quality, use of green and blue space to promote active travel, and town planning and regeneration to enable people and families to be more active.
- Make it easier to access services to support people and families to adopt a healthier lifestyle, including mental health support to enable people to make a change, and support for cost-of-living to reduce stress.
- Increase detection and ensure better management of high blood pressure within the NHS, and support for people when they have had a cardiac event to increase their chances of living a longer life.

## How will we know if this goal has been achieved?

Reduce circulatory disease deaths in Dudley so that the rate is similar or lower than the national average.

*In 2021, the mortality rate from circulatory disease in Dudley was 248.5 per 100,000 people significantly higher than the 230.4 per 100,000 for England*

The gap in early deaths from circulatory disease between the most deprived and least deprived areas of Dudley will have narrowed.

*Between 2016-2020, mortality from circulatory disease among people under 75 years was 42% higher than the Dudley average in Dudley Central but 20% lower in Stourbridge.*





# The goal: More women are screened for breast cancer

Nearly 14,000 (38%) Dudley women aged 50-70 years have not been screened for breast cancer putting them at risk of developing more serious disease and avoidable death.

**Dudley's breast cancer screening service was particularly impacted by COVID-19, with a bigger drop in coverage than other areas. Before COVID-19, the borough's screening rate was higher than the West Midlands and England averages.**

While women in Dudley currently have similar rates of new diagnoses of breast cancer and death compared to the West Midlands and England averages, the drop in breast screening coverage may result in more Dudley women experiencing more serious disease and avoidable deaths from breast cancer in the coming years.

Women from Dudley's more deprived communities have much lower breast cancer screening rates and based on national statistics, are more likely to die from breast cancer.

As well as personal suffering from more serious breast cancer disease and early death, there are also wider impacts on women's families including grief and bereavement. Intergenerational impacts include grandchildren missing out on a relationship which is important in providing grounding and security, and their parents may miss out on emotional support and help.

## What will we do?

- Work with local communities where fewer women are being screened, to increase awareness of the benefits of breast screening and understand the barriers that stop them going for screening to ensure that the service is offered in a culturally sensitive, accessible, and meaningful way.
- Identify additional locations for the breast screening van in communities with lower uptake.
- Work with GP practices with lower uptake, to make sure their patients are aware of their opportunity to be screened and train more cancer screening champions within GP practices to encourage uptake.

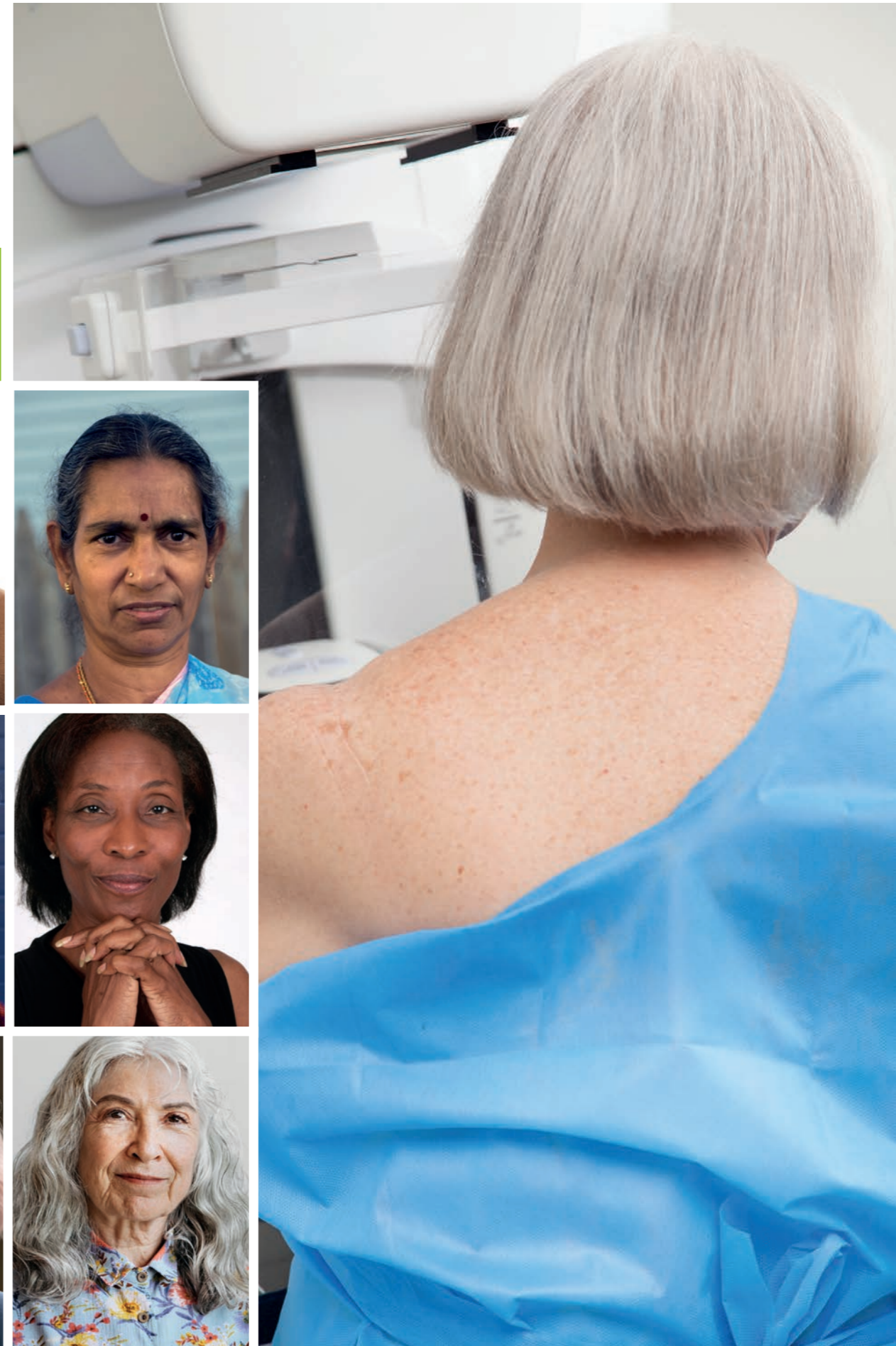
## How will we know if this goal has been achieved?

Breast cancer screening coverage for women aged 50-70 years in Dudley will increase to reach at least pre-pandemic levels which were better than West Midlands and national averages.

In 2022, Dudley's breast cancer screening coverage was 62% compared to 76% in 2018. Regional and national averages in 2022 were 74% and 75%, respectively.

The gap between breast cancer screening coverage in the most and least deprived primary care networks will have narrowed.

*Only 43% of women aged 50-70 years in Sedgley, Coseley and Gornal and 48% of women in Dudley and Netherton primary care networks had been screened for breast cancer in 2021/22 compared to nearly 70% in Halesowen primary care network.*





# Everyone in Dudley can play their part in working together for longer, safer, healthier lives



## Dudley Health & Wellbeing Board

Dudley Health and Wellbeing Board will put local people at the centre of their work. We will listen, act, feedback and be accountable for our actions.

### What Dudley's Health and Wellbeing Board partner organisations will do:

- Inspire and enable people, businesses and communities to get involved
- To achieve our main outcomes we will provide easily accessible support whilst supporting services for those needing help.
- Share our progress, be honest, admit mistakes and share learning.

### What organisations and communities will do together:

- Talk, listen and recognise difference whilst keeping in mind the identity of Dudley
- Use our respective resources, skills and assets to achieve our priority outcomes
- Develop and deliver community-based plans. Achieve and communicate our priority outcomes for Dudley.

### What Dudley residents and communities can do:

- Live the Vision for Dudley
- Become involved in your local community
- Look after your loved ones' health and wellbeing and strive to improve it

*Health and Wellbeing Boards were established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to act as a formal committee of the local authority charged with promoting greater integration and partnership between bodies from the NHS, public health and local government. Health and Wellbeing Boards have a statutory duty to produce a joint strategic needs assessment and a joint health and wellbeing strategy for their local population to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. Dudley's Health and Wellbeing Board is a wide partnership including the local authority, NHS commissioners and providers, community and voluntary sector and the emergency services. The Health and Wellbeing Board fits under Dudley's Forging the Future Vision providing a focus on health and wellbeing and working collaboratively with other strategic boards including the Integrated Health and Care Partnership to improve the lives of residents.*





## Dudley Health & Wellbeing Board

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