

# Improving health and wellbeing

*This is the first in a twice-yearly series of newsletters which aim to keep people informed about health improvement issues and activities in Highland.*



## Improving health is “everybody’s business”

### What influences our health? ... Many factors....

for example....

*poverty... our experience of crime or disadvantage ... housing ... education ... the environment in which we live ... our opportunities for leisure, social and cultural activities ... our lifestyle ... our genetic inheritance.*

***Someone living in one of our most deprived areas is 60% more likely to die prematurely than a person living in one of our least deprived areas.***

***A child aged under 15 years from one of our most deprived areas is over 60% more likely to be admitted to hospital as a result of an accident than a child from one of our least deprived areas***

### How do Scotland and Highland compare?

By almost all health measures, both Highland and Scotland lag behind our western European neighbours and continue to be considerably less healthy than our neighbours in Scandinavia. In addition, while life expectancy and prosperity have increased in Scotland in recent years and overall death rates from major diseases have fallen, the gap between the most and least affluent groups has widened - reflecting inequalities in health.

### How can the health of our population be improved?

The policies which are most successful in improving the health of the population are those which deal with economic growth, human development and health in an integrated way. The **Highland Wellbeing Alliance** is the community planning partnership for Highland. Its aim is to improve public services through joined-up planning and working. Central to the work of all Alliance members is a commitment to improve the health and wellbeing of people and communities across Highland.

### **The Joint Health Improvement Plan for Highland**

The Wellbeing Alliance’s *Joint Health Improvement Plan* (JHIP) for 2004-2007 has two aims:

- to improve the health of the Highland population
- to reduce inequalities in health within Highland

The JHIP can be found at: <http://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/Publications/JHIP/jhip2004-07.pdf>  
For more information contact Moira Paton, Head of Community and Health Improvement Planning, NHS Highland, Assynt House, Beechwood Park, Inverness; 01463 704929.

## Improving health and wellbeing ... some examples of what is happening across Highland...

... for older people:

- ◆ Age Concern's popular **Befriending Scheme and Contact the Elderly Project** aim to reduce loneliness among older people [contact Alan Michael, 01463 790410; email alan@contact-the-elderly.org]
- ◆ **'Movin About'** courses to train people to lead exercise sessions with older people [contact Eileen Wilson, Age Concern, 01463 713160; email Eileen.Wilson@ascot.org.uk]
- ◆ **Retired and Senior Volunteers Programme (RSVP)** encourages and supports older people to become involved in volunteering. Current projects include: volunteering in schools, knitting 'trauma teddies' for young children involved in emergencies or potentially stressful situations such as hospital appointments. Further projects are under development [contact Linda Skinner, 01463 713549; email lskinner@csv.org.uk]

... for local communities:

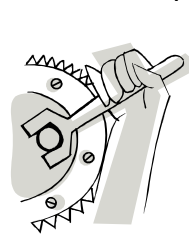
- ◆ **Healthways**, Ross & Cromarty's healthy living centre, works with communities and individuals to promote good health and wellbeing, reduce health inequalities and promote social inclusion. Its wide range of activities for all ages includes: walking, cycling, healthy eating, fitness groups, dancing, parenting support groups and 'green gym' projects where people can take part in environmental and gardening activities.
- ◆ [www.healthways-rossandcromarty.co.uk; tel 01349 868688]

... for children and young people:

- ◆ All schools in Highland are now officially **"Health Promoting Schools"**. An accredited system for assessing schools' health has been developed. The National Accreditation Panel consider it to be an excellent example of joint work. [contact Louise Thomas, 01463 704959 email louise.thomas@hnb.scot.nhs.uk]

... for safe and healthy workplaces:

- ◆ **Safe and healthy working** is a new occupational health and safety service for small and medium enterprises (with fewer than 250 employees) throughout Scotland.



It provides free and confidential information, advice and support on workplace



health and safety issues [contact 0800 019 2211; www.safeandhealthyworking.com]

- ◆ **Highland's Healthy Working Lives Network:** formed by partners from the public and private sectors, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, this network will support and promote workplace health [contact Cathy Steer, NHS Highland, 01463 704945, email cathy.steer@hnb.scot.nhs.uk]

... for people who wish to stop smoking:

- ◆ **Highland's Smoking Cessation Service** provides free confidential advice and support. Contact the helpline on 0845 757 3077



Highland Wellbeing Alliance members include:

- ◆ The Highland Council
- ◆ NHS Highland
- ◆ Highlands & Islands Fire and Rescue Service
- ◆ Northern Constabulary
- ◆ Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- ◆ Scottish Natural Heritage
- ◆ Communities Scotland
- ◆ Representatives from the voluntary and private sectors