

## A programme to improve health and reduce inequalities

An exciting and innovative new programme has been launched to address the ailing health of Barnsley's residents.

National research has shown Barnsley has tremendous health challenges and is currently lagging far behind the rest of the country. This reflects the level of social and economic deprivation in the borough. We want to enhance health and well-being across the borough ensuring the people of Barnsley enjoy good physical and mental health.

Good health can only be achieved through partnerships which work to increase education, training and employment opportunities, improve the environment, and increase opportunities for people to socialise and live healthy lifestyles. Fit for the Future will work as part of the overall strategy to regenerate Barnsley, through the community plan.

Improving health in Barnsley will be everybody's responsibility.

Fit for the Future is a new initiative which has been developed in response to Barnsley's need for immediate improvement in tackling health problems and inequalities across the borough. The campaign aims to tackle the consequences of decades of deprivation and a culture of ill-health in Barnsley and its surrounding villages.

The Fit for the Future steering group includes members from the PCT, Local Authority, Barnsley College, the Community Partnerships, VAB, Barnsley Premier Leisure, the Barnsley Chronicle and Barnsley Development Agency.

The programme groups are beginning to get established - these offer more opportunities for local residents and workers to get involved in areas which are important to them.

Fit for the Future will use interventions which have been shown to work to improve health. There are six programme areas based on what works for individuals to improve their health such as stopping smoking. They are: SNAP (smoking, nutrition, alcohol and physical activities), children and young people, family support, helping disadvantaged communities, tackling the root causes of ill health, improving primary care services and increasing the contribution of the NHS to the local economy. Fit for the Future will encourage people to feel more in control of their lives and therefore improve their quality of life.

There are already a number of community-based projects under way in Barnsley that positively impact on health and well-being. Fit for the Future will build on these foundations with seven key priorities which it will tackle by setting up projects and initiatives to encourage local people to improve their health.

We will be trying to involve local people in every level of the campaign - we need their knowledge, ideas and creativity.

We will be building on what we have already discovered works well in Barnsley.

We will be looking for local champions, celebrating their achievements, and trying to encourage other people to become Fit for the Future Champions through a media campaign to make sure that everyone in Barnsley knows about Fit for the Future and understands that they have a part to play.

Tackling health inequalities on such a grand scale requires the determination, commitment and effort of all people in the borough in order to transform the future of Barnsley and its communities.

