

September 2019

Health & Wellbeing

Background Topic Paper for Policy Development

Introduction

Health and Wellbeing covers a wide range of issues, all of which impact on the quality of life for the City's residents and visitors.

The City faces a number of health challenges and inequalities in which planning and place making has an important role to play. The level of these health challenges is significant and it is of the utmost importance that the Local Plan (City Plan) includes meaningful policies that can help to influence positive future change.

The health and wellbeing of the City's residents should be a consideration in all policy making and in the determination of planning applications.

Nationally

Across the country there are significant health inequalities which result in people living a poorer quality of life, and often reducing life expectancy.

*"Health inequalities are unjust disparities in health outcomes between individuals or groups. They arise from differences in social and economic conditions that influence people's behaviours and lifestyle choices, their risk of illness and actions taken to deal with illness when it occurs. Inequalities in these social determinants of health are not inevitable, and are therefore considered avoidable and unfair."*¹

The Marmot Review and the Public Health White Paper *Healthier Lives, Healthier People* (2010) recommended that planning, transport, housing, environment and health systems should be fully integrated to address the social determinants of health. The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) brought with it the return of responsibility for health and wellbeing back to the planning system.

Historically the origins of the planning system have always been rooted in improving public health and reducing social inequalities. Planning and health has obviously changed immensely since the times of mass slum clearance and the devastating spread of communicable diseases that once swept through cities. There are now new health and wellbeing challenges facing modern towns and cities, including:

- An ageing population²
- Increasing levels of obesity³
- Increasing levels of non-communicable disease⁴ (cardiovascular, cancer, respiratory, and diabetes)

¹ London Health Observatory (now part of Public Health England)

http://www.lho.org.uk/LHO_Topics/National_Lead_Areas/HealthInequalitiesOverview.aspx

² Future of Ageing Government Office for Science Published 4th November 2013, updated 28th September 2015

³ Public Health England Adult Weight Data Factsheet October 2015

⁴ World Health Organisation – Non-communicable disease Fact sheet January 2015

- Significant issues of mental health and wellbeing⁵

The majority of health issues have a strong preventable component that is significantly influenced by the places and spaces in which people live. For example, reducing inactivity could prevent up to 40% of many common long term conditions, such as diabetes.

“If being active was a pill we would be rushing to prescribe it. Physical activity is essential for health and reduces the risk of many preventable diseases and conditions from cancer to depression.” *Public Health England, Everybody Active, Every Day (PHE, 2014)*.

The Role of Environment in Health and Wellbeing

The environments in which people live, work and play influence their choices and behaviour. Planning, in being able to shape the urban environment and provide the infrastructure required for a healthy lifestyle, has a significant role to play in the creation of healthier places.

The quality of the urban environment can influence:

How often people are active – through access to open space, the quality, safety and ease of use of walking and cycling routes, the distance to local services – are they walkable, is walking more convenient than using the car? Are there secure cycle storage facilities?

What people eat – through access to shops selling affordable fresh food, the number and proximity of fast food outlets, space to grow food at home, provision of allotments and community gardens.

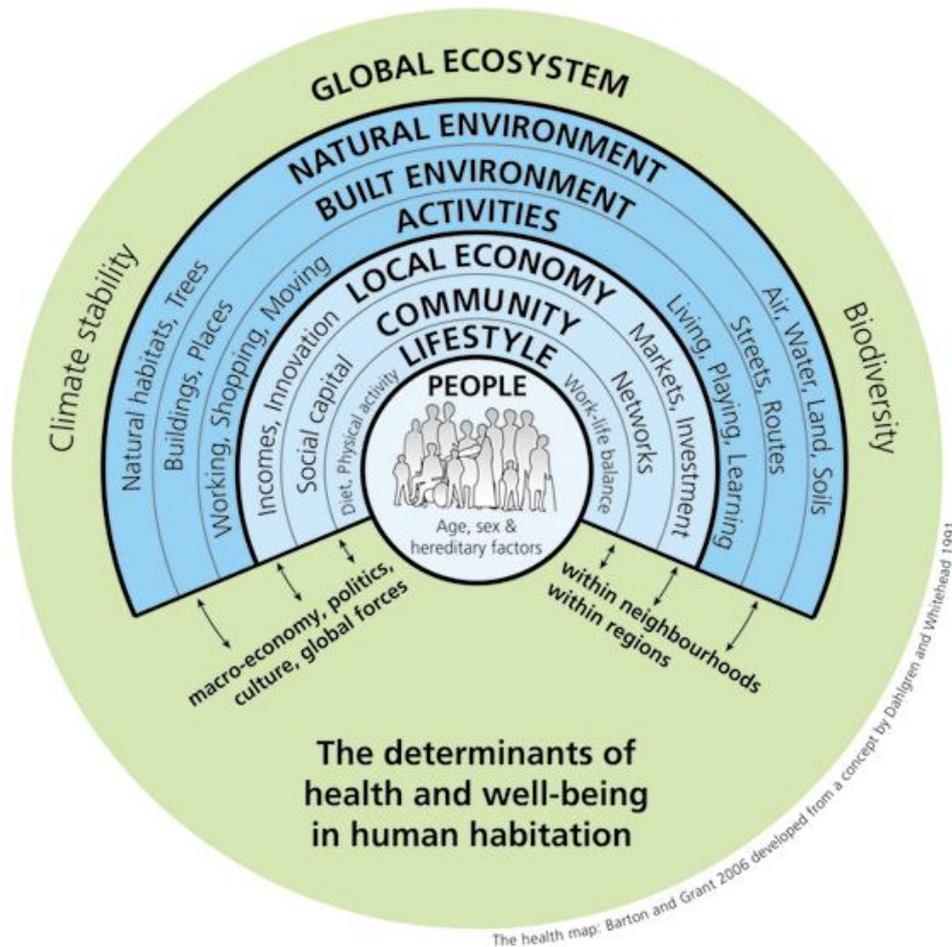
How people feel – through the quality of urban spaces and how these affect people’s mood, do they feel safe, the size and outlook of residential properties, access to open green (and blue) spaces, connections to local services and places of support.

How people make social connections – through the provision of community facilities, the availability of places to meet up such as high-quality open spaces, ease of access to neighbours and integration with existing communities. Simple things like the busyness of a road can influence how likely people are to engage with their neighbours.

The built environment forms an important part of the schema in which people make choices about their lives.

⁵ No Health Without Mental Health: A Cross-Government Mental Health Outcomes Strategy for People of All Ages, Department of Health, 2011

Figure 1 - The determinants of health and wellbeing



Imagine the following scenarios:

Your school or workplace is next to a street that contains many takeaway restaurants. On your lunch break there is limited time to walk to another part of town. The smell of the food is very tempting. The only other shop on this street is a newsagent which only sells confectionary and snacks. What food choices are you likely to be making?

You live in a small flat that is located out of town and you have no car. The bus service is expensive and infrequent and there are no supermarkets within walking distance. There are no allotments and you have no garden of your own. There is a small parade of shops in your area that contains a takeaway, an estate agent and a convenience store that has a very limited range of fresh food. What food choices are you likely to be making for you and your family? How could your living environment influence your wellbeing?

You live in a 1990's housing development in a suburban location. You are heavily reliant on your car to access work, shops and services. How could this affect your physical activity levels and travel choices?

You live in the centre of a densely populated city. You have access to many shops and services and your friends and family live nearby. However, the air quality is poor and noise levels are high. There is a lack of open green spaces. How could this environment affect your health and wellbeing?

Access to a high quality built and natural environment undoubtedly impacts the health and wellbeing of those people who live or work in that place. Planning has an important role to play in delivering places and spaces that have a positive impact on how people feel and provide the best opportunities for people to make positive lifestyle choices.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF commits Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to promote healthy communities. It identifies that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities. It also identifies the social role of planning and health in creating opportunities for communities to have places and spaces to meet and interact.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that LPAs should ensure that health and wellbeing, and health infrastructure are considered in local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decision making. It suggests that Public Health organisations, health service organisations, commissioners and providers, and local communities should use the NPPG to help them work effectively with local planning authorities in order to promote healthy communities and support appropriate health infrastructure.

The guidance also states that the range of issues that could be considered through the plan-making and decision-making processes, in respect of health and healthcare infrastructure, include how:

- development proposals can support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and help create healthy living environments which should, where possible, include making physical activity easy to do and create places and spaces to meet to support community engagement and social capital;
- the local plan promotes health, social and cultural wellbeing and supports the reduction of health inequalities;
- the local plan considers the local health and wellbeing strategy and other relevant health improvement strategies in the area;
- the healthcare infrastructure implications of any relevant proposed local development have been considered;
- opportunities for healthy lifestyles have been considered (e.g. planning for an environment that supports people of all ages in making healthy choices, helps to promote active travel and physical activity, and promotes access to healthier food, high quality open spaces and opportunities for play, sport and recreation);
- potential pollution and other environmental hazards, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, are accounted for in the consideration of new development proposals; and
- access to the whole community by all sections of the community, whether able-bodied or disabled, has been promoted.⁶

⁶ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 002 Reference ID: 53-002-20140306

A healthy community is a good place to grow up and grow old in. It is one which supports healthy behaviours and supports reductions in health inequalities. It should enhance the physical and mental health of the community and, where appropriate, encourage:

- Active healthy lifestyles that are made easy through the pattern of development, good urban design, good access to local services and facilities; green open space and safe places for active play and food growing, and is accessible by walking and cycling and public transport.
- The creation of healthy living environments for people of all ages which supports social interaction. It meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.⁷

The role of LPA in promoting health and wellbeing has been clearly set out by the Government through the NPPF and NPPG, and also through Public Health England (PHE) (the Government's executive agency of the Department of Health).

PHE have published a series of documents alongside other planning agencies to raise the profile of health and wellbeing in plan and decision making. These documents include:

- "Planning Healthier Places – report from the reuniting health with planning project", *PHE and Town and Country Planning Association*, November 2013
- "Planning Healthy Weight Environments", *PHE and Town and County Planning Association*, December 2014
- "Obesity and the Environment: Increasing Physical Activity and Active Travel", *PHE and the Local Government Association*, November 2013
- "Obesity and the Environment: Regulating the Growth of Fast Food Outlets", *PHE, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Local Government Association*, March 2014
- "Improving Access to Green Space", *PHE, UCL Institute of Health Equity*, September 2014
- "Everybody Active, Every Day – An Evidence-Based Approach to Physical Activity", *PHE*, September 2014
- "Everybody Active, Every Day – What Works – The Evidence", *PHE*, October 2014

Research into the inclusion of health policies in Local Plans shows that despite the requirements for LPAs to promote health and wellbeing in their areas, the mention of health in Local Plan is variable. Where health is mentioned it tends to be 'warm words' rather than an effective policy.⁸ Given Gloucester's local health issues it is important that this is translated in to tangible locally-relevant policy.

⁷ Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph 005 Reference ID: 53-005-20140306

⁸ Research by Janice Morphet, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL

The Joint Core Strategy

It is an “Ambition” and “Strategic Objective” of the Joint Core Strategy⁹ to create “a healthy safe and inclusive community” and to “promote healthy communities”. Policy SD15 states the following with regard to health:

“Policy SD15 Health and Environmental Quality

- 4.5.7 Design plays an important role in shaping a healthy and safe environment and can contribute to healthy and active lifestyles. This is not only through the construction of high quality buildings and public realm but also through the provision of open spaces ‘soft’ or ‘green’ infrastructure.
- 4.5.8 To promote healthier lifestyles...new development...should be designed to promote the use of alternatives to the car.
- 4.11.12 Ensure that proposals have no detrimental impacts, including any impact... on the health of current or future residents.
- 4.15.7 District plans will provide detailed policies, as required, for the protection and promotion of human and environmental health, for example specific standards or criteria relating to noise pollution and air quality management. Local authorities will also give consideration to whether there are any areas of tranquillity that ought to be identified and protected through district plans.”

Responses to Previous Consultations

Below is a selection of responses from residents and key stakeholders to previous City Plan consultations. A full schedule of responses can be found on the City Council’s website <http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/cityplan>.

City Plan Scope Consultation Responses

“Housing developments need social/cultural amenities like Libraries Museums and Art Galleries, to help the construction of some community spirit.”

“Protect green spaces from development.”

“Need sufficient additional doctors, dentists, schools to support the amount of people living in and around Quedgeley.”

⁹ Joint Core Strategy Pre-submission Draft November 2014 Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council.

“More play areas, green sites”

City Plan Part 1 – Context and Key Development Principles Consultation Document Responses

“...I would like to see Gloucester as a healthy city with low pollution in the air and waterways, with lots of opportunity for exercise, green areas, parks, and an athletics track to be proud of that could double as a stadium for events and concerts.”

“Areas of open space and allotment provision will be improved to encourage healthier communities and protect biodiversity.”

“If there is no reference then I would suggest that these important community issues, which should include provision of other community facilities, health services etc. should be included. With the level of development envisaged, it will be absolutely vital for such facilities to be supported and enhanced if the City residents are to enjoy a better quality of life.”

“Trees offer so many benefits to our citizens. They capture carbon and hold soils together, prevent flooding and help control our climate. They also add immeasurably to our quality of life by making areas more attractive and healthier places to live. In recent years the number of trees being planted annually across the country has declined, and could decrease further, unless action is taken to reverse this trend.”

“Promote the important link between improved health and accessible green space like woodland. The Public Health white paper (Healthy Lives, Healthy People; Nov 2010) states that: "Access to green spaces is associated with better mental and physical health across socioeconomic groups." and that “Defra will lead a national campaign to increase tree planting throughout England, particularly in areas where tree cover would help to improve residents' quality of life and reduce the negative effects of deprivation, including health inequalities.”

“The Woodland Trust believes that proximity and access to woodland is a key issue linking the environment with health and other social and economic issues that can be addressed by green infrastructure provision in urban design.”

“Gloucester shows below average woodland accessibility compared to the South West as a whole in the smaller wood size category. This presents an excellent opportunity for improving small scale accessible woodland through new tree planting for health and wellbeing benefits in Gloucester.”

“We would like to see an increase in accessible urban tree planting supported in the City Plan in order to deliver health & wellbeing benefits for Gloucester.”

“The availability of safe, affordable, warm housing is essential for health and wellbeing and we welcome sustainable infrastructure and housing growth to support the needs of a growing population in Gloucestershire.”

“Developing strong, health and vibrant communities is vital to ensuring the physical and mental well-being of local people. The City Plan provides the opportunity to ensure that: green spaces, public transport and community facilities are high quality, easily available and well located. Communities should be created which are cohesive and amenable to healthier lives.”

City Plan Part 2 – Places, Sites, City Centre Strategy Consultation Responses

“There are many examples of good quality urban design principles and practices that make it easy for communities to be more active and healthy. Increasingly this approach is known as Active Design which focuses on improving accessibility; enhancing amenity and increasing awareness.”

“Restoration of the Canal will bring significant benefits to the City and in the sustainability of its Plan. These will be in the areas of tourism, recreation, employment, health and wellbeing of residents through walking and cycling along the Canal, the provision of a substantial green corridor for wildlife, and in biodiversity, etc.. Make reference to the Canal under tourism, open spaces, sustainability, etc..”

“New housing development will create new demand for sport and physical activity facilities. Not anticipating or meeting this demand or being able to model supply will have a negative impact on sport and physical activity participation. In order to exert a positive and significant impact on the physical, mental and social health of these new communities we believe that all new housing proposals in Gloucester should provide for new, or enhance existing, sport and physical activity facilities and use planning obligations to secure and maintain such provision.”

“All new dwellings in Gloucester in the plan period (up to 2031 and beyond) should provide for new or enhance existing sport and recreation facilities to help create opportunities for physical activity whilst having a major positive impact on health and mental wellbeing.”

“Being active should be built in to everyday life. There are many examples of good quality urban design principles and practices that make it easy for communities to be more active and healthy. Increasingly this approach is known as Active Design which focuses on improving accessibility; enhancing amenity and increasing awareness.”

“Through an analysis of the current health agenda and urban design principles and good practice, the term ACTIVE DESIGN has been adopted to describe ways in which master planning can promote healthy environments through creating healthy environments through creating conditions for participation in sport and physical activity and the use of active travel modes (walking and cycling). Three overlapping Active Design objectives have been identified that should be promoted by master plans: improving accessibility; enhancing amenity and increasing awareness. Sport England would encourage the developers to design future proposals in Gloucester in line with the Active Design principles.”

Local Challenges and Issues Facing Gloucester

While many of Gloucester’s residents enjoy good health and long lives, there are a number of local health issues that affect many of the City’s residents. Many of these issues can be linked to deprivation.

Gloucester is facing a number of significant health issues that all public sector services, including planning, have a role in addressing.

The headline facts as reported by Public Health England are¹⁰:

- Gloucester City has 10 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are among the 10% most deprived areas nationally. These are (most deprived first): Westgate 1; Podsmead 1; Matson and Robinswood 1; Kingsholm and Wotton; Westgate 5; Moreland 4; Barton and Tredworth 4; Matson and Robinswood 5; Barton and Tredworth 2; Westgate 4.
- 16% (4,100) children living in low income families. Children living in poverty are more likely to be obese, and have tooth decay, ear infections and asthma. Children living in poverty are 13 times more likely to die from injury than the least disadvantaged children.
- Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. The difference in life expectancy between those living in the most deprived areas of Gloucester and those living in the least deprived areas is 11.9 years lower for men and 10.5 years lower for women.
- 36.8% of children (in year 6) are classified as obese, worse than the average for England. The level of excess weight (overweight and obesity) among adults is 66.3%.¹¹
- Hospital stays per year for self-harm are significantly worse than the England average.
- Prevalence of opiate and/or crack cocaine use is significantly worse than the England average.
- Long term unemployment is significantly worse in Gloucester than the England average.
- Employment rates are better than the England average yet educational attainment is significantly worse than the England average.
- Dementia and diabetes diagnoses are higher than the England average.
- Under 75 mortality rates from cardiovascular disease is significantly worse than the England average.
- For Gloucester City, the 2014-16 suicide rate is 13.6 per 100,000 population, compared with a Gloucestershire rate of 10.8 per 100,000 population and an England rate of 9.9 per 100,000.
- The rate of people killed and seriously injured on roads in Gloucester is significantly better than the average for England.

¹⁰ Gloucester District Health Profile 2018, Public Health England, 2018

¹¹ <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/health-profiles>

The Structure of Health in Gloucester

With Gloucestershire being a two-tier authority the responsibility for public health sits with the County Council, under the Director of Public Health. Planning is delivered at the District Level, therefore forming and maintaining a good working relationship between the Public Health and Planning team is considered an essential component of delivering meaningful change.

There are many documents covering the topic of health. The main ones from a local perspective for the purposes of developing planning policies are considered to be:

Understanding Gloucestershire - A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Produced on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2017

Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012 – 2032 Fit for the Future, Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board

The Gloucestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (2016-2021)
<http://www.gloucestershireccg.nhs.uk/the-gloucestershire-sustainability-and-transformation-plan/>

Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2016 – 2026

The Gloucester Cultural Strategy identifies that culture can be an important tool in community regeneration projects. It can bring communities together, attract investment and help to foster a strong sense of place and identity. Culture can also help to improve health and education. Increasingly the arts and cultural are used to foster social inclusion and promote mental health and wellbeing. The City Plan will refer to the Strategy and support its aims and objectives.

Proposed Policies for City Plan

The City Plan will contain policies that will help to tackle the health issues identified within this paper and national health objectives. This will include policies to tackle obesity and allow for the creation of active places that encourage physical activity. Policies will also allow for the provision of suitable housing to meet need and be designed to be practical, comfortable and not negatively impact on mental health.

Open spaces, sports facilities, community facilities and allotments will be protected. Green infrastructure will be enhanced and utilised to provide active travel routes that connect people with nature and enhance positive mental health and wellbeing.

Objectives Met

Joint Core Strategy

Strategic Objective 4

Require that all new developments, wherever possible, support green infrastructure and improve existing green infrastructure within urban and rural areas to provide movement corridors for people and wildlife.

Strategic Objective 5 – Delivering excellent design in new developments

Ensure that all new developments are valued by residents by: Integrating them well with existing communities and provide well-located infrastructure which meets the needs of residents.

Strategic Objective 7 – Promoting sustainable transport

Reduce the need to travel and the reliance on the car by:

- Improving opportunities for public transport, walking and cycling by making routes more convenient, safe and attractive.
- Improving existing and providing new frequent public transport links and safe walking and cycling routes in all new developments.

Strategic Objective 9 – Promoting healthy communities

Promote development that contributes to a healthy population by:

- Providing for good access to the countryside and all open spaces through the retention and development of a comprehensive green infrastructure network
- In partnership with others, creating stronger communities by reducing inequality and social exclusion and thereby increasing social well-being
- In partnership with others, encouraging healthy lifestyles and a well society through access to key community facilities and services, open spaces and sustainable transport, including public transport.
- Ensuring that environmental quality and air quality is protected.

City Plan

Key Development Principles:

To ensure that delivery of growth is supported by necessary infrastructure provision including transport, schools, medical and health centres, community facilities and youth provision.

To improve the health of Gloucester's residents by improving access to informal and formal green spaces thereby providing opportunities for people to pursue healthy activities and lifestyles.

The Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework
- National Planning Practice Guidance
- Joint Core Strategy

Gloucester City Plan

Topic Paper – September 2019

- Gloucester City Plan Scope
- Gloucester City Plan Part 1
- Gloucester City Plan Part 2 – Places, Sites and City Centre Strategy
- Gloucestershire Manual for Streets
- Local Transport Plan
- Active by Design
- Active Planning Toolkit 2 – Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity, *Gloucestershire NHS, February 2014*
- London Health Observatory (now part of Public Health England)
http://www.lho.org.uk/LHO_Topics/National_Lead_Areas/HealthInequalitiesOverview.aspx
- Future of Ageing, *Government Office for Science Published 4th November 2013, updated 28th September 2015*
- Public Health England Adult Weight Data Factsheet, *October 2015*
- World Health Organisation – Non-communicable disease Fact sheet, *January 2015*
- Public Health England Gloucester District Health Profile, *June 2018*
- Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012 – 2032 Fit for the Future, *Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board*
- Gloucestershire Suicide Prevention Strategy, *Gloucestershire County Council and Partners, July 2015*
- Understanding Gloucestershire - A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), *Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, 2017*
- Planning Healthier Places – report from the reuniting health with planning project, *PHE and Town and Country Planning Association, November 2013*
- Planning Healthy Weight Environments, *PHE and Town and Country Planning Association, December 2014*
- Obesity and the Environment: Increasing Physical Activity and Active Travel, *PHE and the Local Government Association, November 2013*
- Obesity and the Environment: Regulating the Growth of Fast Food Outlets, *PHE, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Local Government Association, March 2014*
- Improving Access to Green Space, *PHE, UCL Institute of Health Equity, September 2014*
- Everybody Active, Every Day – An Evidence-Based Approach to Physical Activity, *PHE, September 2014*
- Everybody Active, Every Day – What Works – The Evidence, *PHE, October 2014*
- Preventing Suicide in England, A cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives, *HM Government Best Practice Guide, September 2012*
- Gloucester’s Cultural Vision and Strategy 2016 – 2026, *Gloucester City Council, 2016*
- Gloucestershire’s Prevention and Self-Care Plan: Scaling up prevention through empowering individuals and enabling active communities, *Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Trust, 2016*
- Preventing suicides in public places: A practice resource, *Public Health England*