

Health, Wellbeing and Sustainable Development

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Introduction

Health, wellbeing and sustainable development are essential foundations of modern healthcare. These concepts emphasise the need for holistic approaches that support physical, mental and social wellbeing while ensuring that healthcare systems remain effective and sustainable for future generations. Guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, healthcare providers increasingly focus on prevention, integrated care and equitable access to improve population health and long-term outcomes.

Key Concepts

Health refers to a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, going beyond the simple absence of disease (Bradley et al., 2018).

Wellbeing describes a holistic condition in which physical, mental, emotional and social aspects of a person's life are balanced and positively supported (Simons, 2021).

Sustainable Development means meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Agbedahin, 2019).

Relevance

SD3

Focuses on improving global health by reducing illness, promoting wellbeing and ensuring that all people have access to safe, effective and sustainable healthcare services.



SDG10

Aims to reduce social and economic inequalities, which strengthens fair access to healthcare and supports improved health and wellbeing for disadvantaged groups.



SD11

Focuses on creating safe, healthy and sustainable environments, ensuring clean air, green spaces and community services that promote better population health. (GOV.UK,2021)

(United Nations, N/A)



Integration of health and wellbeing approaches

WHO- Health in All Policies

- Integrates health considerations into policies across sectors such as housing, education and transport. (World Health Organisation, 2026)

UK Integration Care Systems

- Brings together NHS, local authorities and community organisations.
- Promotes prevention and coordinated patient-centred care. (The King's Fund, 2022)

Advantages

- Reduced fragmentation
- Improved patient experience
- More efficient use of healthcare resources
- Better health outcomes

The integration of holistic health and wellbeing approaches strengthens healthcare by addressing physical, mental and social needs together, leading to more coordinated and effective support for individuals (Health Hero, 2025).

Theoretical Perspectives

The Biopsychosocial Model (Engel, 1977) suggests that the interaction among biological, psychological, and social factors influences health and well-being (Bolton, 2023).



This model provides a holistic understanding of health, recognising that biological, psychological, and social factors are interconnected and collectively influence health and well-being (Marschall, 2026).

Policy and Governance

Supporting Policies	Challenges
The NHS Long Term Plan 2019 promotes holistic care by expanding preventive services, improving community support and strengthening personalised care (Cheater, 2019). NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20–2023/24 enhances wellbeing by increasing access to psychological therapies and prioritising early intervention (NHS, 2019). The Health and Care Act 2022 improves holistic care by joining NHS, local authority and community services through Integrated Care Systems to deliver coordinated and integrated support (Legislation.GOV.UK, 2022).	• Rising demand for healthcare services due to an ageing population. • Persistent workforce shortages across clinical and support roles. • Increasing financial pressures and escalating healthcare costs. Barriers • Limited cross-sector collaboration and communication. • Regulatory constraints that slow policy implementation. • Organisational fragmentation between health and social care services.

Service Delivery

- **Community health initiatives:** Support wellbeing by linking NHS services with local organisations, charities and social care teams (Online learning college, 2024).
- **Holistic care models:** In hospitals, improve patient outcomes by combining medical treatment with mental, social and lifestyle support (Mukumbang et al., 2026).
- **Telehealth services:** Strengthen access by allowing remote consultations, monitoring and follow-up care (Mayo Clinic, 2024).

Case Example: Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust uses multidisciplinary teams to deliver coordinated physical, mental, and social care, improving patient outcomes (CQC, 2016)

Public Health Initiatives

Promotion of healthy lifestyles

National campaigns such as Change4life promote healthy eating and physical activity, while Stoptober encourages smoking cessation to improve lung health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. (NHS, n/d).

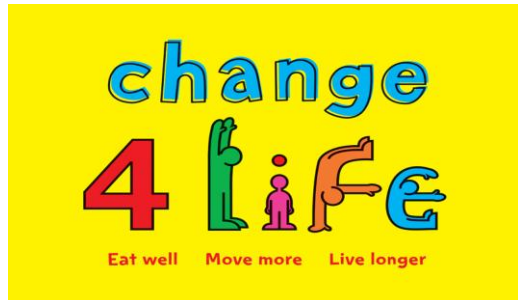
Healthy Environments

Clean air and access to green spaces reduce respiratory illnesses, improve mental well-being, and support healthier communities (WHO, 2023).

Societal well-being

Public Health Initiatives increase health awareness, leading to long-term behaviour change and better self-management of health (NHS England, n/d).

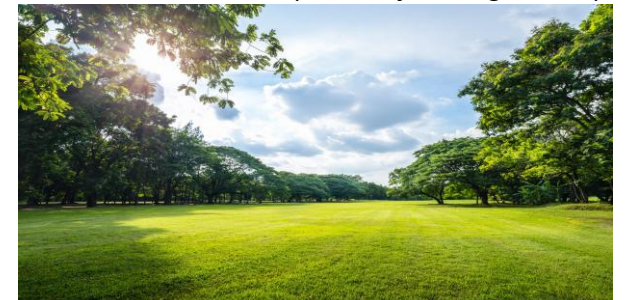
(NSMC, 2026)



(Southview, 2022)



(Country Living, 2026)



Equity and Access

Disparities

- Socioeconomic inequalities
- Ethnic and regional differences
- Barriers to mental health services

(GOV.UK, 2018)

Initiatives

- Community outreach programmes
- Universal healthcare systems
- Targeted interventions for vulnerable groups

(Care Quality Commission, 2024)



**EQUITABLE ACCESS
TO RESOURCES**

(Vecteezy, 2026)

Recommendations

Healthcare organisations should continue to strengthen integrated, person-centred care by investing in preventive healthcare, expanding digital technologies such as telehealth, and enhancing collaborative working between health and social care services. Policymakers should also prioritise equitable access to healthcare and embed sustainable practices within service delivery. These combined efforts will support improved population health, reduce inequalities, and promote long-term wellbeing for future generations.

Conclusion

Health, wellbeing and sustainable development are closely interconnected and play a vital role in improving population health. Holistic and integrated approaches, supported by effective policies, public health initiatives and equitable access to healthcare, improve patient outcomes and quality of life. Continued collaboration between healthcare professionals, communities and policymakers is essential to deliver sustainable, person-centred healthcare for current and future generations.

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