

# District Councils' Network

## District councils' contribution to public health

Our health is primarily determined by factors beyond just health care. These slides illustrate the ways in which district councils influence the health of local people through their key functions and in their wider role supporting communities and influencing other bodies.

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## Recommendations

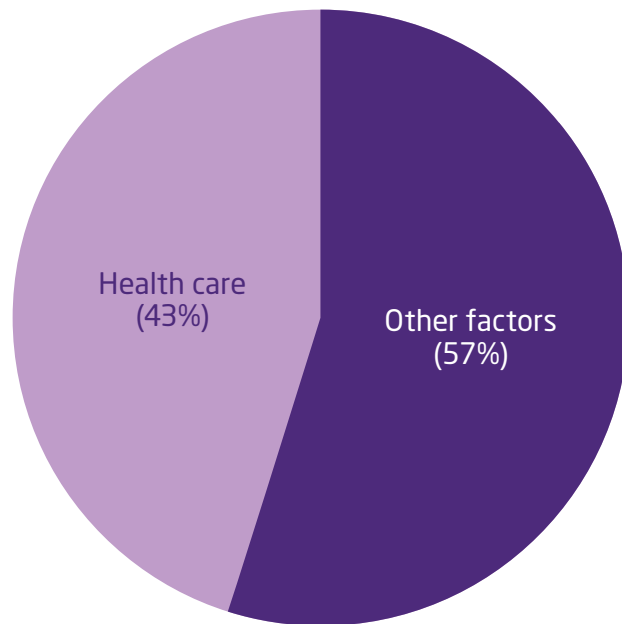
District councils make a major, but often under-recognised, contribution to the health of their citizens and communities. As English devolution and the move towards integrated place-based public services gathers pace they will be critical partners for the NHS and other tiers of local government seeking to develop population health systems.

See the full report and all 10 recommendations at  
**[www.districtcouncils.info](http://www.districtcouncils.info)**

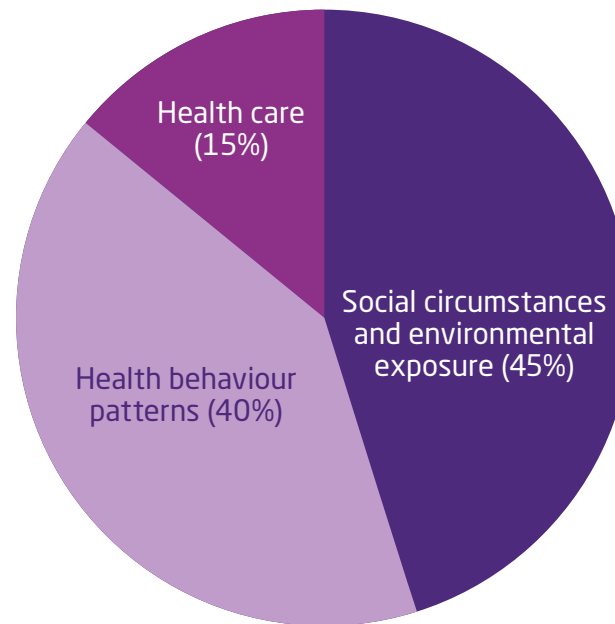
## The importance of public health

Our health is determined by our genetics, lifestyle, the health care we receive and our wider economic, physical and social environment. Although estimates vary, the wider environment has the largest impact.

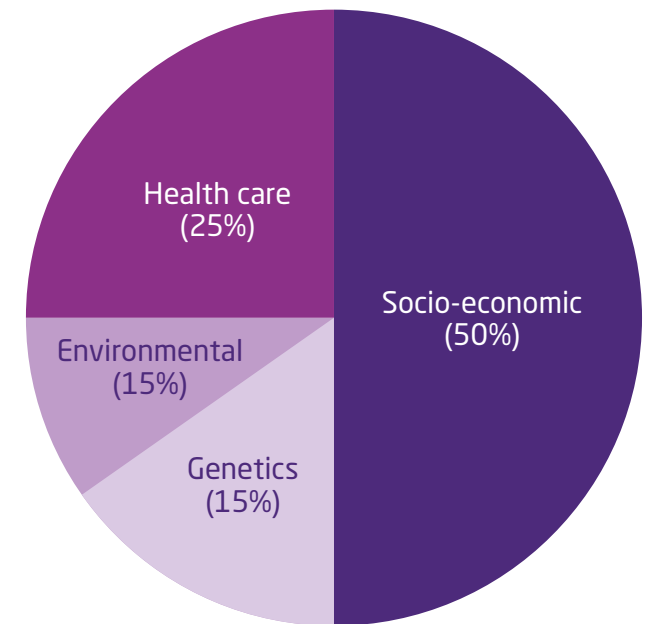
**Bunker et al (1995)**



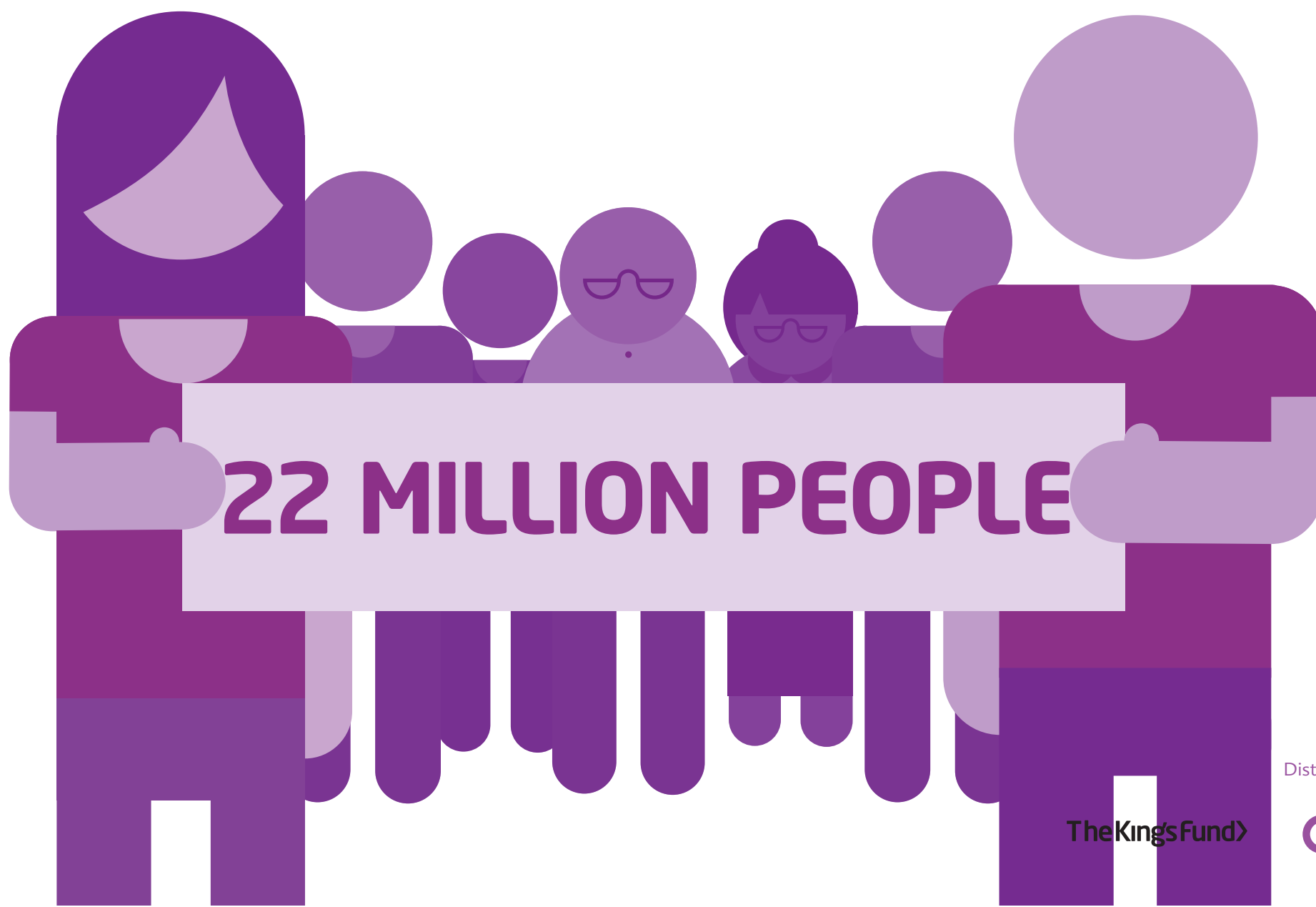
**McGiniss et al (2002)**



**Canadian Institute of Advanced Research (2012)**



District councils cover two-thirds of England's geography and four out of every ten people. They provide the majority of local government services to over 22 million people.



District councils play a key role in keeping us healthy. They provide core local services, including economic development, planning, housing, leisure, wellbeing and environmental services for local communities - areas that are increasingly recognised as vital components of population health systems.





The effects of poor housing cost the NHS over £2 billion every year. Improving homes delivers a return on investment quickly.

District councils have a direct role in house building, homelessness prevention, housing adaptation and enforcement powers to improve the condition of private rented housing.

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Physical inactivity causes up to one in five premature deaths and costs the UK economy over £7 billion a year.

District councils provide leisure services and access to high-quality green spaces. These are important to mental as well as physical health and have been shown to reduce the impact of income inequalities on mental health and wellbeing.



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Through its impacts on health, the cost of air pollution could be as high as £20 billion a year. For noise pollution the figure is around £3 billion. Food-borne disease causes around 20,000 hospital episodes a year.

District councils provide a range of environmental health services including tackling pollution, food safety inspections, pest control and emergency planning.





A strong local economy is associated with a range of better physical and mental health outcomes, primarily through good-quality, stable employment. Unemployment can double the risk of premature death and one in seven men develop clinical depression within six months of losing their job.

District councils have an important role in sustainable and equitable economic development through their role in local enterprise partnerships, economic growth teams and other functions.



Economic development, housing and other district council activities require active planning to maximise their health impacts.

District council planners are key players in encouraging active commuting, adequate design and provision of green spaces, affordable housing and equitable economic development.



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Well-connected communities are good for health. Those with strong social relationships have a 50% higher survival rate than those with poor social relationships.

District councils are close to their communities, parish and town councils, and actively support volunteering, local voluntary groups and the development of community hubs.

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## Recommendations

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