

City of Doncaster Fairness and Wellbeing Commission Report 2024



**Fairness & Wellbeing
Commission**



Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction: Empowering Change for a Thriving Doncaster.....	6
Headline Summary (plan on a page).....	7
Context: Unveiling Doncaster’s Challenges	8
Crisis of Inequality: Exploring the Costs	9
Methodology: A Mixed Method Approach	10
Developing the Recommendations.....	11
Theme 1: Creating a Fair and Empowering Future for Doncaster’s Young People.....	12
Where are we now?	12
Where do we want to be?.....	14
How are we going to get there?	15
How does this make life fairer for our residents?	16
What does the evidence say?	17
Theme 2: Help to Navigate Life’s Tipping Points in Doncaster	18
Where are we now?	18
Where do we want to be?.....	20
How are we going to get there?	21
How does it make life fairer for our residents?	22
What does the evidence say?.....	23
Theme 3: Tackling In-Work Poverty to Improve the Lives of Doncaster Residents.....	24
Where are we now?	24
Where do we want to be?.....	26
How are we going to get there?	27
How does it make life fairer for our residents?	28
What does the evidence say?.....	29
Theme 4: Ensuring Equitable Access for All	30
Where are we now?	30
Where do we want to be?.....	32
How are we going to get there?	33
How does it make life fairer for our residents?	34
What does the evidence say?.....	35
Enablers for Change	36
Acknowledging the Gaps	37
A Fairer Future for Doncaster; a Collective Responsibility	38

Image credits:

A thank you to Les Monaghan for his contributions throughout from his series of work ‘Relative Poverty’ and ‘Invisible Vox Pops’



I am proud to be heading the Doncaster Fairness and Wellbeing Commission, with the goal of improving the lives of residents across the city.



As the Chair of Doncaster's Fairness and Wellbeing Commission, I am pleased to present this report, which outlines recommendations for the future of our community.

Our objective has been to create conditions that enable all Doncaster residents to thrive, reach their full potential, and experience good levels of health and wellbeing.

In our rapidly changing world, we are facing challenges that require both immediate action and forward-thinking. This report reflects the combined efforts of the commission and its partners, to address the urgent needs of our community while fostering aspirations for a better future.

Throughout this process, we have actively involved the diverse voices of Doncaster, listening, learning, and working together to find solutions. The insights from community surveys, focus groups, interviews, and thorough data analysis have played a crucial role in shaping our recommendations.

Besides presenting transformative suggestions, it is important to clarify what this report aims to achieve; it serves as an inspiration, offering valuable insights to organisations interested in improving fairness for Doncaster's residents.

Rather than a step-by-step guide, it is a broad exploration that encourages stakeholders, community leaders, and partners to engage in strategic thinking and collaboration, as we work together towards a brighter future.

At the heart of this report are not just practical proposals to address our challenges but also innovative strategies that have the potential to redefine our future. We have outlined our vision for a fairer Doncaster to guide our way.

A sincere thank you to everyone who contributed their time, insights, and passion to make this effort possible. Your dedication to the wellbeing and prosperity of Doncaster has been our driving force.

Let us work together for a thriving Doncaster, built on Fairness and Wellbeing, ensuring a bright future for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Rosie Winterton'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Rt. Hon. Dame Rosie Winterton, MP, DBE
Chair, Fairness and Wellbeing Commission

Empowering Change for a Thriving Doncaster

The Fairness and Wellbeing Commission was established to address social and economic inequalities in Doncaster and improve overall wellbeing.



There has been a collective determination to create a community that is fairer, more equitable, and inclusive.

Tasked by the Health and Wellbeing Board, the commission has undertaken a rigorous and independent examination of the root causes of disparities within Doncaster. Through our research, comprehensive data analysis, and inclusive community consultations, we have listened to a diverse range of perspectives and the experiences of our residents.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Dame Rosie Winterton, Chair of the Commission, for her invaluable guidance and leadership, in addition to all the commission members from across the Team Doncaster Partnership and beyond for their time and dedication. I would also like to recognise the secretariat for their hard work and unwavering support throughout the process.

I extend my thanks to our guest speakers and contributors from across Doncaster's communities for sharing their range of expertise and experience. This has played a crucial role in enhancing our knowledge and understanding, forming an integral part of our ongoing conversations.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the work of Dr Rupert Suckling, who had the idea for and launched the Fairness and Wellbeing Commission. His vision and leadership have been instrumental in the commission's success. We are grateful for his contributions and dedication to the cause.

Our recommendations are not a prescriptive road map but are intended to encourage stakeholders, community leaders, and partners to engage in strategic thinking and collaboration. Rather than providing a fixed path, organisations are urged to identify opportunities within their plans to implement the steps toward achieving and delivering the recommendations we set out.

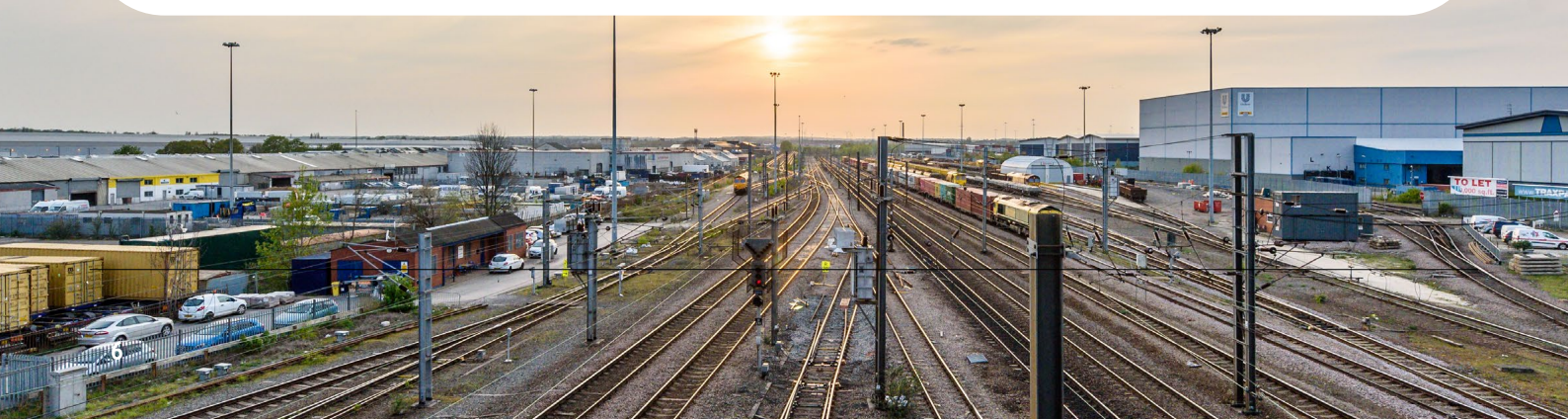
This report serves as a call to action, inviting all stakeholders to join us in the challenge to establish a more just and equitable community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Rachael'.

Rachael Leslie,
Vice Chair of the Fairness
and Wellbeing Commission

Acting Director of Public Health,
City of Doncaster Council



Headline Summary

The Fairness and Wellbeing Commission has conducted a thorough examination of the complex challenges faced by Doncaster residents. Following extensive consideration, the commission has identified and explored potential opportunities to address these challenges. This summary presents the commission’s recommendations in a concise table format, providing a strategic overview for enhancing overall fairness and wellbeing in Doncaster.

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4
Creating a Fair and Empowering future	Help to Navigate Life’s Tipping Points	Tackling In-Work Poverty	Ensuring Equitable Access for All

CHALLENGES

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elevated rates of child poverty persist in Doncaster• The prevalence of fixed-term exclusions and suspensions in schools remains high	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a high demand on support and advice services in Doncaster• Short-term funding for services and voluntary organisations provides challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents struggle to balance long hours and low pay with family commitments.• Growing numbers of households face negative budgets after covering essential expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents often struggle to reliably access services• Doncaster faces challenges with an increasingly poor public transport system
--	--	---	---

RECOMMENDATIONS

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Doncaster’s educational settings should play a leading role within the community, encouraging civic pride and providing skills for life.2. Champion inclusive education for all of Doncaster’s Young People3. Give Doncaster’s children and young people a voice in shaping services and policy4. Bridge the gap between education and employment in Doncaster.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop an evidence-based approach to identifying and supporting residents at vulnerable times in their lives2. Build inclusive support networks and legal awareness for a resilient community3. Develop trusted, sustainable support in Doncaster communities4. Ensure safe and healthy living conditions to improve wellbeing in Doncaster•	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tackle in-work poverty and improve job security for Doncaster residents2. Build a socially responsible business community3. Create the conditions for social mobility4. Improve employment opportunities in Doncaster, ensuring everyone has a fair chance to succeed and develop	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create trusted & accessible Community Support Hubs for enhanced resident health and wellbeing2. Promote kindness and compassion in service delivery3. Support doncaster residents’ transition into the digital age4. Improve doncaster’s public transport to ensure equitable access for all5.
---	--	---	---

ENABLERS FOR CHANGE

(Foundational principles that are intended to cut across all theme areas)

Understand intersectionality - the compounding effect of multiple inequalities	Build trust and community participation	Achieve data excellence	Support a Team Doncaster ‘Campaign for National Change’
--	---	-------------------------	---

Unveiling Doncaster's Challenges

The impacts of austerity, and reductions in public services, have not only deepened existing disparities in Doncaster but have also amplified challenges across crucial sectors such as employment, housing, and education.

The lasting effects of historical economic downturns are palpable today, with approximately 129,000 Doncaster residents residing in areas with the highest deprivation levels in England.

More recently, Doncaster has contended with the repercussions of environmental challenges, notably the devastating impact of flooding, coupled with the global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising cost of fuel due to international tensions including the war in Ukraine. These events have hit vulnerable communities hard, exacerbating existing inequalities and highlighting the need for targeted support.

Amid these complex challenges, Doncaster is confronted with an additional obstacle—the ongoing cost of living crisis. The rise in living expenses compounds the difficulties in an already vulnerable city, making it increasingly challenging for residents to meet their basic needs. Notably, 27,000 working adults in Doncaster earn less than the real living wage, leading to a noticeable increase in requests for support from households grappling with negative budgets. As a result, Doncaster stands as the 11th most indebted area in the UK.

The outcomes are striking; healthy life expectancy at birth for both males and females in Doncaster are among the lowest in the country. On average, males can anticipate just 57 years of good health in Doncaster, compared to the national average

of 63 years. Females in Doncaster can expect an average of just 56 years of good health, compared to a national average of 64 years. The toll extends further, with over 62,000 Doncaster residents living with a disability or long-term health condition, and an additional 28,000 residents shouldering the responsibility of providing regular unpaid care.

The challenges in Doncaster extend to the earliest stages of life, with more than 21,000 children growing up in poverty. Disturbing statistics, such as one-third of five-year-olds showing visible signs of tooth decay and over 41% of 11-year-olds being overweight or obese, highlight the impact on children's life chances from the outset. Additionally, the high levels of persistent absenteeism among secondary school students paints a concerning picture of the lack of aspiration among young people.

Disparities in life-expectancy between the least and most deprived areas of Doncaster reveal significant inequality; Men living in Sprotbrough or Tickhill can anticipate an average lifespan of 82 years, while those in Mexborough average just 74 years. Similarly, women in Edenthorpe and Bessacarr can expect to live an average of 85 years, whereas women in Adwick-le-Street or Thorne average only 78 years. These variations indicate unequal access to healthcare, opportunities, and overall wellbeing across different segments of the community and emphasise the need for targeted efforts to address the root causes of such disparities.

Members of Team Doncaster are well-versed on the challenges the city has encountered, yet they will recognise the transformative impact that strong local partnerships can have on improving the lives of Doncaster residents and acknowledge numerous successes. Doncaster boasts several instances of exceptional, nationally recognised best practices and the commission aims to leverage and expand upon this foundation of success. This report sets out our commitment to identify the root causes of social and economic inequalities, as well as promoting overall wellbeing for every resident.

Crisis of Inequality: Exploring the Costs

In Doncaster's socio-economic landscape, inequality poses a significant barrier to improving fairness and wellbeing for our residents.

This section acknowledges the multifaceted costs of inequality, exploring its impact on various aspects of life in our city

Economic Strain: The economic consequences of inequality are glaringly evident in Doncaster. With a significant portion of the population grappling with low wages and limited employment opportunities, the city faces reduced economic productivity and potential stagnation. The strain is further compounded by a current cost-of-living crisis, rendering an already vulnerable population more susceptible to financial hardship.

Health Inequalities: The unequal health outcomes incurred due to inequality impose a significant cost. With both males and females in Doncaster experiencing some of the lowest rates of healthy life expectancy in the country, the impact extends beyond individuals and places strain on an already stretched health and social care system. This, in turn, adds pressure to the economy, due to the strong association between ill health and the economic performance of an area. Addressing health inequalities not only enhances wellbeing but also boosts productivity and GDP.

Educational Challenges: Educational disparities contribute to a cycle of inequality, affecting the aspirations and opportunities of Doncaster's young people. The persistent absenteeism of almost a third of secondary school students signals a lack of aspiration or challenges in engaging with the educational system. The implications are far-reaching, as diminished educational prospects can perpetuate the cycle of inequality, limiting the potential for upward social mobility.

Social Cohesion and Wellbeing: Beyond individual hardships, inequality affects community cohesion and overall wellbeing. High levels of deprivation, coupled with limited access to opportunities, create an environment where social divisions are exacerbated. This not only diminishes the quality of life for individuals but also hampers the collective strength and resilience of the community.

Long-Term Economic Impact: Inequality poses a threat to the long-term economic sustainability of Doncaster. As certain segments of the population face barriers to economic participation and advancement, the city risks losing out on the full potential of its human capital. This long-term impact extends beyond the immediate challenges, influencing the city's ability to attract investments, businesses and create a thriving, diverse economy.

The cost of inequality in Doncaster is not merely a financial concern but a challenge that permeates various aspects of residents' lives. The following chapters will explore transformative recommendations aimed at mitigating these costs for a more equitable Doncaster.



"I want to regain my health"

A Mixed Method Approach

The Fairness and Wellbeing Commission used a mixed-method approach, carefully designed to delve into the nature, extent, causes and impact of social inequalities in Doncaster. Our methodology was designed to gather diverse perspectives, engage with the community and analyse existing evidence to inform our recommendations.

Thematic Approach and Life Stage Focus: During the initial session, the commission deliberated on the most effective approach, ultimately opting for a “life stage” focus. This approach ensures a person-centric perspective, acknowledging the complexities and cumulative impact of inequalities at different stages of residents’ lives.

Organisational Call for Evidence: To enrich our assessment, a call for evidence was extended to organisations and individuals interested in improving fairness in Doncaster. The call sought inputs on social inequalities specific to the city, analysis of underlying causes, examples of good practices, opinions on tackling disparities and priorities for Doncaster’s wellbeing.

Public Survey: The commission initiated a public survey of residents to understand their perceptions of fairness in Doncaster. Utilising both digital platforms and trusted individuals from voluntary organisations, the commission gathered insights on residents’ views regarding fairness in the city, identified areas perceived as fair or unfair and sought suggestions for enhancement.

Resident Voice: Recognising the significance of collecting authentic resident testimony to inform their findings, the commission used diverse methods, including collaboration with intermediary organisations, involvement of frontline staff from agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureau and direct evidence from residents. The commission also recognised the necessity to delve deeper into the underlying reasons behind residents’ experiences. Insights from Les Monaghan, an ethnographic researcher and artist immersed in some of Doncaster’s most

deprived communities, were utilised; his years of engagement aimed to establish trust and deepen the understanding of the profound impacts of inequality. Utilising personas, scenarios and data, we ensured the collection of genuine experiences while prioritising residents’ comfort and privacy.

Personas: Specifically designed to present combined data and research in a manner that enhanced understanding and empathy among commission members. Personas embody real individuals effectively highlighting the diverse experiences and perspective of Doncaster residents. This plays a crucial role in capturing the complex challenges and aspirations within our community.

Rapid Review of Evidence: Leveraging the expertise of Professor Andrew Booth and Professor Elizabeth Goyder from the City of Doncaster Council’s Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC), a rapid review of existing evidence was conducted. The review examined how income inequality impacts upon wellbeing essentials such as employment, housing, food and health services. A logic model, illustrating the links between income inequalities and essential aspects of wellbeing was developed and helped to identify key effective changes to address income inequalities in the short and medium term, as well as long-term structural challenges.

What Works; Best Practice Examples from Elsewhere: Professors Booth and Goyder created packs with best practices and interventions from other regions, offering a comparative analysis. The packs broadened the commission’s understanding of potential solutions and allowed members of the commission to envisage the adaptation of successful practices to the unique context of Doncaster.

Expert Panels and Speakers: Recognised specialists from various organisations were invited to present to the commission; their insights provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges in their sectors and suggested potential opportunities for change. This insight played a crucial role in the commission developing creative solutions and enhancing partnerships with key stakeholders.

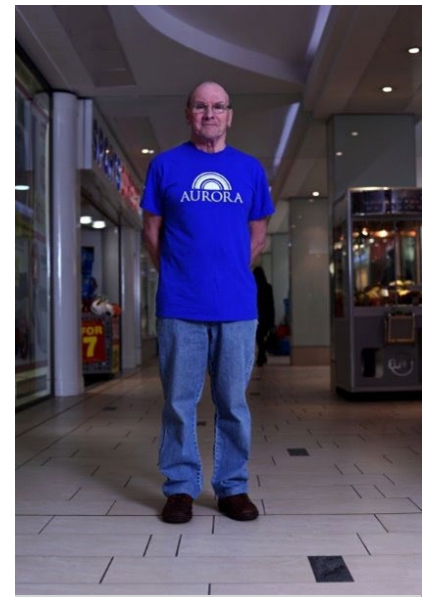
Developing the Recommendations

Insights gathered from residents, intermediary organisations and expert panels have been central in understanding both the immediate challenges and long-term aspirations of the community.

After conducting a thorough series of consultation events from January to September 2023, the Doncaster Fairness & Wellbeing Commission has carefully formulated recommendations to promote a fairer community.

A subsequent consultation period in November 2023 allowed stakeholders to provide input to bolster the strength of our recommendations. During this period, Professor Andrew Booth and a team from the University of Sheffield, supported by the Doncaster Health Determinants Research Collaboration, produced a comprehensive briefing emphasising the crucial role of broader evidence and best practices in supporting the commission's efforts. This briefing delves into research evidence, UK initiatives, systematic reviews and case studies. They showcased the varied types of evidence underpinning the commission's holistic approach to promoting fairness and wellbeing in Doncaster.

As we delve into the specific recommendations, it is important to acknowledge the collaborative and evidence-based foundation on which they stand. Our approach ensures that the recommendations not only address immediate needs but also support a vision for a more equitable and sustainable future.



"I want to be well"



"I want a job"

Creating a Fair and Empowering Future for Doncaster's Young People.

Where are we now?

Findings

- Positive outcomes are observed in schools that adopt a holistic approach, considering the unique needs and nuances of the entire community while respecting each child as an individual.
- Doncaster's strategy of early intervention for families demonstrates favourable outcomes and impacts for both children and their families.
- The effective and positive work of youth groups and forums including Make Your Mark and, School Ambassadors, not only provide a voice for young people but also shed light on critical issues important to them, offering valuable perspectives from a young person's standpoint.
- Doncaster has a strong early years and family hub offer with excellent take up
- Cultural and art enrichment activities are recognised as providing children and their families with a wide range of experiences have a lasting positive impact on their development and overall wellbeing.



"I want everyone to be happy"

Challenges

- Elevated rates of child poverty persist in Doncaster, requiring attention and action.
- Some children in Doncaster are regularly going hungry and others do not have access to healthy food.
- The prevalence of fixed-term exclusions and suspensions in Doncaster's schools is amongst the highest in England, indicating a need for alternative approaches.
- There is a lack of uniformity in school policies and community support among academies which can lead to disparities.
- A lack of diversity in the workforce means that some children do not see their own backgrounds reflected in educational settings.
- A lack of aspiration among young people, compounded by limited social mobility, poses a significant hurdle.
- Children with bold aspirations do not always have the opportunities to realise them.
- Some young people feel marginalised and disenfranchised, necessitating targeted interventions.
- Some educational settings and policies are not reflective of the modern work environment leaving children inadequately prepared.
- There are concerning outcomes for children and young people's mental health including high numbers of children in crisis.



Kate, Max & Grace

live in Bentley, Doncaster. Kate is a 35-year-old single parent to Max, aged 9, and Grace, aged 7. She separated from her partner due to his alcohol abuse and gambling addiction, resulting in the repossession of their home. Max and Grace were deeply affected by their parents' separation, and Kate tried to maintain contact with their father, but it eventually ceased.

Kate works as an admin assistant at a primary school, allowing her to spend weekends and school holidays with her children. Despite her job, her budget is tight, and she receives Universal Credit but isn't entitled to other support. She struggles with paying bills and existing debts from her previous relationship.

Financial stress has caused Kate to unplug her house phone, avoid opening mail, and fear unexpected visitors. She rarely socialises with friends and avoids other parents in the school playground due to financial limitations. Max and Grace's desires to engage in extracurricular activities, like football and dance, often go unmet due to cost, making Kate feel guilty.

Kate's financial anxieties are affecting her children's wellbeing, and her children sometimes display behavioural problems at school. Her daily routine is marked by managing her children's needs and navigating the challenges of tight finances, affecting her own mental health and their family life.



Alex

is a 16-year-old non-binary person living in Cantley, Doncaster. They have a supportive home life but find school a lonely experience. Some classmates perpetuate discrimination and Alex experiences being bullied leading to struggles with loneliness and mental health.

Alex often connects with friends online who share similar experiences. Navigating school and community life is a constant challenge as they seek acceptance, understanding, and representation.

At school, Alex faces challenges with a strict uniform policy and has received detention and warnings spending time in isolation for not conforming to the strict school uniform policies. Alex feels marginalised and invisible and PE lessons are particularly challenging, as there are no private changing areas.

Alex often feels conscious about their body and often makes excuses to avoid school on days when they have a PE lesson. There are no clubs or groups at the school that Alex feels supported by, exacerbating their feelings of isolation.

Alex is also disengaged from learning at school and finds the curriculum disinteresting. Alex would prefer to learn about subjects that align with their skills and passions and that would fit better with the career path that they wish to pursue.

Where do we want to be?

Doncaster is a place where children and young people are supported to be kind, healthy, happy, safe and active members of their community.

This will be guided by three fundamental principles:

1. RESPECT AND VALUE

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE:

Recognising their inherent value and potential, fostering a culture of respect and appreciation with opportunities that match their high aspirations.

2. EQUITABLE TREATMENT:

The city promotes equity in its treatment of children & young people; it ensures that all individuals, regardless of their age, background, or circumstances, are treated fairly.

3. EMPOWERMENT AND OWNERSHIP OF THE FUTURE:

Doncaster empowers its children & young people to voice their opinions, shaping their lives and the community they live in.

Doncaster aspires to have an inclusive environment that promotes self-awareness, critical thinking and mutual respect within the community, celebrating individuality and diversity.

Young people are encouraged to participate actively in shaping their education and lives ensuring that all residents have access to opportunities and support, regardless of their background.

A collective vision unites the community in uplifting its young people, with all educational settings collaborating to maintain shared standards and information, thus supporting the communities they serve.

Doncaster values creativity and self-expression, recognising each young person as a unique individual with their own potential to contribute to the future of the city.



How are we going to get there?

1. DONCASTER'S EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS SHOULD PLAY A LEADING ROLE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, ENCOURAGING CIVIC PRIDE AND PROVIDING SKILLS FOR LIFE:

- Educational settings should establish strong connections with existing community resources, extending their support to students, their families and the broader community. The commission firmly believes that schools, being deeply rooted in their localities, are uniquely positioned to comprehend the intricate dynamics and specific needs of their communities.
- Strengthened collaboration between schools and educational settings is essential to ensure shared standards, policies and information, including managing transitions between educational institutions.

2. CHAMPION INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL OF DONCASTER'S YOUNG PEOPLE:

- Education settings should encourage a sense of aspiration and personal growth through a nurturing and inclusive educational environment; empowering students to make academic choices that align with their interests and talents.
- Educational settings should prioritise constructive disciplinary approaches over those that disproportionately exclude young people from education
- Schools must increase transparency around punitive approaches that impact wellbeing, e.g., reporting on the numbers of children and young people spending time in isolation.
- Educational settings should promote good mental health through a positive school culture.
- Guidance should be developed and applied to all educational settings to ensure that the needs and challenges faced by students from more deprived backgrounds are considered.

3. GIVE DONCASTER'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE A VOICE IN SHAPING SERVICES AND POLICY:

- Promote active youth participation by establishing and maintaining Youth Forums and Voice Groups, where young people can have their voices heard by engaging in community discussions and influencing policies and school rules.
- Collaborate with the Youth Council to create a 'Young Person's HealthWatch' dedicated to advocating for the health and wellbeing of young people in Doncaster.
- Promote intergenerational connections through local institutions such as educational settings and places of worship to help re-establish community bonds.

4. BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN DONCASTER:

- Educational settings should establish partnerships with local employers to offer schools and young people deeper understanding of the available opportunities within Doncaster.
- Educational leaders should receive up to date leadership training that reflects the evolving nature of the workforce.
- Make certain that plans are in place locally to address emerging future trends like migration, technology, climate change and poverty, ensuring people are well-prepared to navigate these challenges for future success.



How does it make life fairer for our residents?

How could each recommendation positively impact the future for Kate, Max & Grace?

Community-Centred Education: emphasis on community engagement and collaboration with existing services mean that schools can better understand and address the specific needs of families like Kate's. Schools are active within their communities and link with services; their inclusive approaches can help ease some of the financial and emotional burdens on Kate, allowing her to focus on her children's wellbeing and her own mental health. Shared standards and information make transitions between educational institutions more seamless for Max and Grace.

Holistic and Inclusive Education: Positive disciplinary approaches and mental health support in schools contribute to a more nurturing and inclusive educational environment, addressing some of the behavioural problems that Max is experiencing. Poverty-proofing guidelines ensure that the unique needs of students from deprived backgrounds are considered, alleviating some of Kate's financial stress. Max and Grace can take part in extra-curricular activities that Kate otherwise couldn't afford. This improves their physical and mental wellbeing and alleviates some of Max's behavioural issues.

Empowerment and Support: Actively involving young people in shaping policies and promoting open dialogue with schools and other services can give Max and Grace a voice in their education and wellbeing. The establishment of Youth Forums and Voice Groups provides a platform for Max and Grace to express their opinions and concerns, which can boost their confidence, self-esteem and personal impact.

Bridging Education and Employment: Max and Grace are taught about current issues, increasing their awareness of challenges like technology, migration climate change and poverty.

How might these recommendations improve the future for Alex?

Community-Centred Education: Alex's school actively promotes civic pride and embraces opportunities for young people like them. The school acknowledges and respects individual identities, and Alex can see people like them reflected in their education. By connecting with local community resources, Alex connects with peers who share similar experiences through support groups and has access to information about LGBTQ+ experiences and challenges.

Holistic and Inclusive Education: Doncaster schools empower students like Alex to choose academic paths, including studying subjects that align with their individual interests and talents. Schools prioritise mental health support, providing a positive and inclusive environment where Alex can get help with the challenges they face such as anxiety, loneliness as well as specific issues relating to their gender identity. Instead of punitive measures, the school focuses on positive discipline. Inclusive education that promotes compassion and understanding leads to better mental health for Alex.

Empowerment and Support: Alex has a say in shaping school policies, which results in school leaders receiving training on equality and diversity ensuring they understand and support students like Alex and other marginalised young people. School youth forums and voice groups allow Alex and their peers to voice concerns, build their self-esteem, and engage in discussions about making the school more enjoyable and inclusive. They participate in the development of school rules, shaping them to be more inclusive and reflective of lived experiences. Alex collaborates with the Youth Council and attends the 'Young Person's HealthWatch,' which advocates for the wellbeing of young individuals in the community from a range of backgrounds.

Bridging Education and Employment: Alex's school works in partnership with local employers who equip Alex with the tools and skills that match to job opportunities in local workplaces.

What does the evidence say?

1.1 Community-Centred Education: A research study of young people in Leicester highlights the challenge educators face in seeking to strengthen mutual understanding between students from different communities and backgrounds by drawing on their lived experience while seeking to promote cosmopolitan citizenship and civic pride.

Young LGBTQ people in a research study in Sussex stressed the social and health impact of discrimination and bullying on young people as well as barriers faced in accessing services. Young people require support, yet practitioners lack training to provide that support. Practitioners are open to this training and acknowledge that effective training should include youth in the development and delivery.

1.2 Holistic and Inclusive Education: A systematic review of 223 reviews studying non-violent interventions found evidence for the effectiveness of antecedent interventions, behaviour contracts, communication, cost, distraction, extinction, feedback on behaviour, goal setting, graduated exposure, modelling, monitoring, opportunities to respond, problem-solving, prompting, reinforcement, restorative justice interventions, restraint, self-management, structure and time-out.

A systematic review of eleven studies of interaction-based interventions in schools/communities found seven studies of supportive interactions involving students, teachers, families and mental health professionals and four studies of interventions that engage community members in dialogic interactions with children and adolescents. Interventions in both contexts implement strategies that foster supportive interactions among diverse actors including teachers, parents, community members and other professionals. Effects include a decrease in disruptive behaviours and affective symptoms such as depression and anxiety, together with an increase in social skills and improved personal wellbeing.

1.3 Empowerment and Support - 1: An evaluative systematic literature review sought to identify features of effective student participation in co-production of whole-school wellbeing strategies. Factors identified from ten papers include group composition, power balance and sustainability. Carefully planned participative projects can result in successful collaboration with students to develop whole-school strategies for diverse issues/topics. Further research is needed to evaluate the long-term impact of such projects.

1.3 Empowerment and Support - 2: Young people develop skills from participation in policy-making processes such as political literacy, confidence, communication and group skills. Young people also report greater self-confidence from participation. They feel more comfortable expressing views to adults, feel respected and empowered and report increased knowledge of the political process or developed a new interest e.g., in health or road safety. They also mentioned having learnt skills to help in going forward such as the ability to communicate and collaborate.

1.3 Empowerment and Support - 3: Young Healthwatch Westminster was set up to amplify young people's voices in meetings with health decision makers and to connect young people with requisite support. Works in partnership with an integrated care collaborative to achieve sustained change, with young people at the centre. This partnership has strengthened the health care offer to the local population and delivered sustainable models of health/care with citizens as equal partners and systematic 'listening' to understand what matters to communities and interventions to build on these insights.

1.4 Bridging Education and Employment: A systematic review of 23 studies evaluating prevention and intervention practices for creating a safe environment for LGBTQ students identified: policies that focus on inclusion/protection of LGBTQ students; training for school staff to promote LGBTQ student safety and curriculum and extracurricular activities that address LGBTQ issues. Recommendations for improving experiences of LGBTQ students in schools include involving community stakeholders in drafting affirming policies.

Help to Navigate Life's Tipping Points in Doncaster

Where are we now?

Findings:

- The commission's assessment has revealed that Doncaster has a considerable amount of support in place for older residents. Notable initiatives include:
 - the "Ageing Well in Doncaster" programme.
 - the Doncaster Dementia Collaborative.
 - the existence of the Dementia Strategy and Dementia Well Pathway.
- Voluntary organisations contribute significantly by providing a breadth of opportunities which foster community engagement and wellbeing.
- The implementation of social prescribing has had a positive impact on outcomes, linking residents with non-clinical community support to enhance their overall wellbeing.
- Several key housing issues have been identified, along with strategies to address them, such as tackling fuel poverty through the affordable warmth programme, conducting a stock condition survey with a health impact assessment.

Challenges:

- Many residents are part of a 'sandwich generation,' bearing responsibility for both older relatives and children.
- Modern financial contracts, such as those for phones and cars, leave people more vulnerable to economic shocks than previous generations.
- Residents expressed a need for proactive support during significant life-changing events or 'tipping points,' such as job loss, retirement, illness, bereavement and having children.
- A high prevalence of Category 1 hazards in private sector housing.
- Fear of retaliatory evictions by landlords further complicates reporting hazards in the private rented sector.
- The benefits system, including Universal Credit and Local Housing Allowance, is currently not meeting the needs of those renting from the private sector.
- There is a high demand on support and advice services in Doncaster.
- There is a stigma surrounding age-related adaptations to housing.
- Improved data quality is required to enable minority groups to better access support.
- Short-term funding for services and voluntary organisations provides challenges when trying to build trust and support in communities.
-



Lisa and Aiden

are a young couple living in Doncaster with their 18-month-old son, Oliver. They are currently expecting their second child. Lisa moved to Doncaster in 2020 to be with Aiden after meeting him online. She chose to move away from her family due to challenging experiences in her home life. Aiden has faced job instability and struggles to provide for the family, which has caused stress and occasional temper issues.

Both Lisa and Aiden are smokers but aim to quit before the arrival of their second child. They face financial challenges, including debts for TV licenses, gas and electricity, and credit card debts. Their small, rented home lacks space and is expensive to heat. They've recently switched to a prepayment meter due to financial constraints and struggle to manage their energy usage.

A typical day for Lisa and Aiden involves caring for their son, managing their home, and dealing with financial pressures. They attend a local church playgroup, which provides a social outlet for Lisa. However, Aiden is protective and hesitant about Lisa spending time with people he doesn't know. Their daily life revolves around financial limitations and coping with cold and damp conditions in their home.



Meena

is a 70-year-old woman who lives in Doncaster. She has a large family, but most of her children have moved away from the area. Meena was widowed three years ago, and her health has since deteriorated, leaving her immobile. She relies on her 53-year-old son for care and has few social connections. She rarely leaves her house except for GP appointments and has limited knowledge of central heating controls and tariffs.

Meena and her son are not internet-savvy and prefer to stick to familiar routines and activities. Their home is a large, old, terraced house in the town centre with outdated doors and windows, and it is damp and cold. Meena relies on an electric heater to stay warm.

A typical day for Meena involves sitting in her cold bedroom, wrapped in layers of clothes, and using an electric heater. Her son prepares everything for her, and she spends most of her day reminiscing about the past. She has limited mobility, talks to family on the phone, and goes to bed early, with her son's assistance.

Where do we want to be?

Doncaster is a place where residents feel safe and proud to call home. Our commitment to community safety initiatives and a compassionate approach to support cultivates a sense of security and pride among all who reside here.

Doncaster is a testament to the strength of its people and their collective determination to build a thriving, resilient and inclusive community. Residents have high aspirations for themselves and their families.

Doncaster residents have effective support during the pivotal movements in their life. Our support systems are accessible and easily navigated by residents. Communities support residents to overcome challenges and embrace opportunities.

Doncaster's funding models and service delivery mechanisms, align with sustainable and trusted initiatives, ensuring that the community's needs are met in ways that foster long-term growth and wellbeing.

In our vision, every Doncaster resident has access to good-quality and affordable housing that is suited to their specific needs, enabling them to live comfortably and independently within their communities for as long as possible. We prioritise housing adaptations to ensure that everyone can enjoy a safe and suitable living environment.



How are we going to get there?

1. DEVELOP AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING RESIDENTS AT VULNERABLE TIMES IN THEIR LIVES:

- Team Doncaster should adopt an evidence-based approach for identifying and supporting the most vulnerable residents in Doncaster to address their needs more effectively.
- Identify tipping points and opportunities where preventative interventions can be targeted to make the most significant difference.
- Invest in programmes that provide support and assistance to individuals before they reach crisis situations.

2. BUILD INCLUSIVE SUPPORT NETWORKS AND LEGAL AWARENESS FOR A RESILIENT COMMUNITY:

- Adopt a compassionate approach to advice and support and be mindful of language and initiatives that create or perpetuate stigma.
- Establish a network of peer support programs and translation services dedicated to addressing language barriers and assisting residents from diverse backgrounds.
- Promote awareness regarding legal rights and available resources through targeted outreach campaigns and community education initiatives. Support the set-up of a local law centre that goes beyond the current level of free advice available in Doncaster.

3. DEVELOP TRUSTED, SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT IN DONCASTER COMMUNITIES:

- Team Doncaster should reassess the current funding model for the Voluntary Community and Faith Service (VCFS) sector considering the impacts of short-term funding on service delivery, with a view to identifying longer term funding commitments and allocations – such as exploring an ongoing percentage commitment.
- Assess the effectiveness and impact of financial investments to ensure that resources are allocated equitably, efficiently and in alignment with the community's needs and priorities.

4. ENSURE SAFE AND HEALTHY LIVING CONDITIONS TO IMPROVE WELLBEING IN DONCASTER:

- Team Doncaster should aim to elevate housing standards, including implementing the Doncaster Decent Homes Standard to all sectors, prioritising safety hazards and establishing discrete and accessible reporting systems that alleviate fear of reprisals.
- Explore options for affordable housing, including retirement villages, to meet the changing needs of residents.
- Work to dispel stigmas about age-related home modifications, with the aim of improving the quality of life for our older residents.
- Team Doncaster should commit to improving crime rates and the perceptions of crime and safety across Doncaster through community-driven initiatives, fostering a safer and more closely-knit community for all.

How does it make life fairer for our residents?

How might these recommendations improve Lisa & Aiden's future?

Early Community Anticipation Approach: Services proactively identify the needs of vulnerable households like Lisa and Aiden's, including their financial struggles and Aiden's job instability. Support and interventions are provided before their situation escalates, reducing stress and financial strain. By investing in preventative programmes that offer support and assistance, Lisa and Aiden may receive guidance on managing their debts, finding affordable housing, and addressing their smoking habits before the arrival of their second child.

Doncaster Residents Have the Support They Need: A compassionate approach to advice and support reduces stigma and makes it easier for Lisa and Aiden to seek help without feeling judged. This enables Lisa to come forward if she has concerns about domestic abuse. Establishing a network of peer support programmes assists Lisa in connecting with a supportive community. Legal rights awareness campaigns help them navigate financial and housing challenges.

Trusted, Sustainable Communities: A re-evaluation of funding models results in sustained support services for families like Lisa and Aiden, helping them cope with financial stress and providing Aiden with opportunities to address his low moods, which may be related to job insecurity. Longer-term funding commitments for support services ensure that Lisa and Aiden, as vulnerable residents, develop trust in support services and access the assistance they need to improve their living conditions and financial situation.

Safe and Healthy Living Conditions: Elevating housing standards and safety measures across all sectors, including amongst private landlords directly benefits Lisa and Aiden, as they are living in a cold and damp home. This provides them with a safer and more comfortable environment for their growing family.

How could each of the recommendations improve Meena's future?

Early Community Anticipation Approach: Meena benefits from early identification of her needs and receives support before she reaches crisis point; resulting in better health management and overall wellbeing.

Doncaster Residents Have the Support They Need: Compassionate approaches to advice and support help Meena and her son feel more comfortable seeking help and assistance, reducing the stigma associated with their situation. Meena, who has limited social connections, becomes more aware of the available resources in the community. The establishment of peer support groups makes it easier for her to access the assistance she needs.

Trusted, Sustainable Communities: Local community groups in Meena's area have been provided with long term funding allowing her to consistently access healthcare and support services.

Safe and Healthy Living Conditions: Improvements in housing standards and safety directly benefit Meena. Her outdated, damp, and cold house is improved to meet safety and quality standards and her living conditions become safer and more comfortable. Additionally, the commitment to dispel stigmas related to age-related home modifications improve her quality of life, particularly given her immobility and health issues. Improved perceptions of crime and safety help Meena feel safer and more closely connected to her community, which can positively impact her mental and emotional wellbeing.

What does the evidence say?

2.1 Early Community Anticipation Approach:

A modelling study that explores causes underpinning the cost-of-living crisis used a case study to model potential impacts of one aspect of the crisis on a specific health outcome. The modelling illustrates how policy approaches can substantially protect health and avoid exacerbating health inequalities and confirms that targeting support at vulnerable households is likely to protect health most effectively.

Availability of evidence about the cost-effectiveness of preventive interventions strongly influences the willingness of local authorities to commission preventative services. Public Health England has previously compiled some of this data.

2.2 Doncaster Residents Have the Support They Need:

City-wide approaches to compassion are recognised in Birmingham being crowned the UK's first Compassionate City. Accredited by Compassionate Communities UK, key to such recognition is bringing together all areas of the local community, including City Council, NHS, schools, cultural organisations and employers.

A systematic review found strong evidence that well-designed public legal education (PLE) initiatives can increase the legal capability of participants by increasing knowledge as well as having a short-medium term impact on confidence building. It also found some evidence that PLE can improve recognition of early action by individuals as well as supporting groups to act early to improve prevention and influence change.

A systematic review of communication services for non-English speakers identified 23 studies. Patients reported a highly positive experience of professional interpreting and consistently favoured in-person interpreting, followed by videoconferencing. Telephone interpreting was least preferred. Unverified bilingual providers appeared to improve patient-provider communication however there remains a risk of miscommunication, as neither

patient or provider are completely competent in patient-preferred and physician-preferred languages. There is inadequate evidence to support routine use of audio recordings of consultations, instructional videos and speech-to-speech translation devices. Further evaluation of alternative modalities may have significant implications for improving patient-provider communication.

2.3 Trusted, Sustainable Communities: A SCIE rapid evidence assessment found that sustained services, targeted to meet specific needs across time (because needs can change) are effective. Effective services include those that provide Intensive Case Management and Critical Time Interventions. The review highlights the importance of rapidly responding to people with low-level needs stating that accessible services and the ability to make appropriate referrals in a time critical environment are key, for instance, by providing rapid rehousing, transitional housing, financial assistance, private sector housing or permanent accommodation.

2.4 Safe and Healthy Living Conditions - 1:

Ethnic minorities and people with low incomes face cumulative disadvantages that are exacerbated by poor-quality housing. Robust systematic review level evidence demonstrates that retrofitting existing houses and constructing high-quality new ones can reduce respiratory, cardiovascular and infectious diseases.

2.4 Safe and Healthy Living Conditions - 2:

Using wearable camera and face to face interview data, a qualitative study explored older people's retrospective experiences together with focus group discussions with professionals involved in providing home adaptations. Findings suggest people may delay having adaptations, because of perceived stigmatising associations with decline and vulnerability. Delaying installation of home adaptations until crisis point is known to reduce their effectiveness.

Tackling In-Work Poverty to Improve the Lives of Doncaster Residents

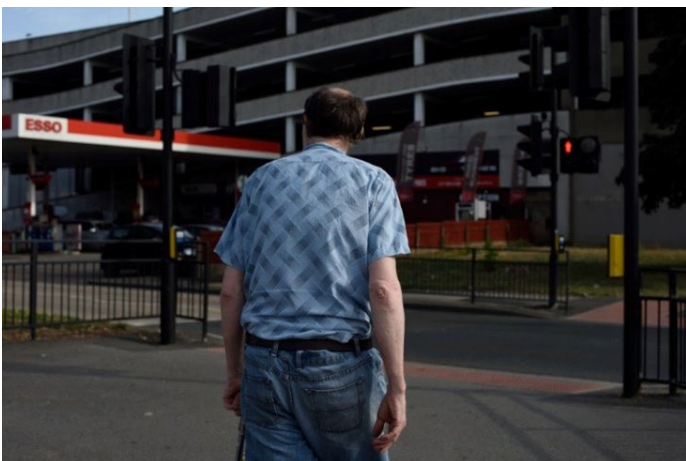
Where are we now?

Findings

- The current employee-led labour market is contributing to improvements in wages and working conditions and there are many good examples of good employment practices and work ethic.
- More inclusive recruitment practices are leading to increased diversity in the workforce.
- 'Advance Doncaster' is recognised by the commission for its successful support of both employers and individuals in upskilling efforts.
- Doncaster is very well situated regionally and nationally to attract continued ongoing investment.
- There are a number of employers who provide good jobs and have fair employment practices that benefit employee's health and wellbeing.

Challenges

- Not all residents have access to higher quality jobs within the economy. Doncaster remains a place with a low-skill, low-wage economy following deindustrialisation.
- Residents struggle to balance long hours and low pay with family commitments.
- Job opportunities concentrated in care, warehousing and logistics, are leading to a 'brain drain' and limited social mobility.
- COVID-19 has widened disparities, with remote work as a privilege and increased cost-of-living pressures for others.
- High disparities in pay persist.
- Limited support is available for neurodiverse individuals beyond school advisory services.
- Growing numbers of households face negative budgets after covering essential expenses, leading to concerns about increased reliance on credit cards, loans and illegal lending.
- Multiple interconnected issues compound the challenges residents face.
- Stigma around seeking help prevents working residents from engaging with services.
- Rising levels of in-work poverty means that residents are 'playing by the rules, but they are still not winning'.





Smita

is a 39-year-old divorced woman who works as a healthcare assistant at Doncaster Royal Infirmary and lives with her 13-year-old daughter in a privately rented 2-bedroom maisonette in Intake. Smita has been dealing with financial struggles, anxiety, and depression. She feels isolated and relies on her neighbour to look after her daughter while she works long shifts.

Smita faces debt problems, mistrusts banks, and uses pre-payment meters for utilities to avoid further financial stress. She is cautious about letting her extended family visit her home due to embarrassment about its condition. Smita often feels like a “robot” and struggles to make ends meet. She sometimes depends on the food bank for groceries and prioritises school dinners for her daughter.

Smita works extra shifts to cover costs like school trips and uniforms but faces the challenge of balancing work with her daughter’s needs. Her home is energy inefficient, and the landlord is unresponsive to repairs. Smita’s daily life is marked by financial worries, mental health concerns, and ongoing household chores. She struggles to make ends meet and is concerned about the impact on her child’s wellbeing.



Dave

is a 48-year-old man who recently separated from his wife and is currently staying with his mother. He has two children who live with their mother. Dave left school without formal qualifications but has worked as an assembly line worker at a local manufacturer near Wheatley Hall Road. He enjoyed his job and had a social life revolving around work colleagues, including 5-a-side football and pub outings.

However, Dave’s life took a challenging turn after his separation. He continues to financially support his children and is burdened by debts, including mortgage arrears, a car loan, and credit card debt. His financial situation has led to anxiety and frequent absences from work, resulting a final warning from his employer. Dave is proud and reluctant to disclose his problems to his friends or employer.

He has considered seeking help but feels unsure about the urgency of his situation. Additionally, his lack of internet access and the need to save data for video calls with his children make it difficult to schedule a doctor’s appointment. Dave is living with his mother, but he’s keen to regain his independence and looks for rental options.

Dave is struggling with maintaining his physical appearance and emotional wellbeing, often arguing with his wife on the phone. After losing his car, Dave is struggling to find alternative transportation to work. He often seeks solace in online gambling and alcohol consumption at home.

Where do we want to be?

Doncaster is a community where economic prosperity, social equity and environmental sustainability are not just aspirations but fundamental values that shape the future of the region.

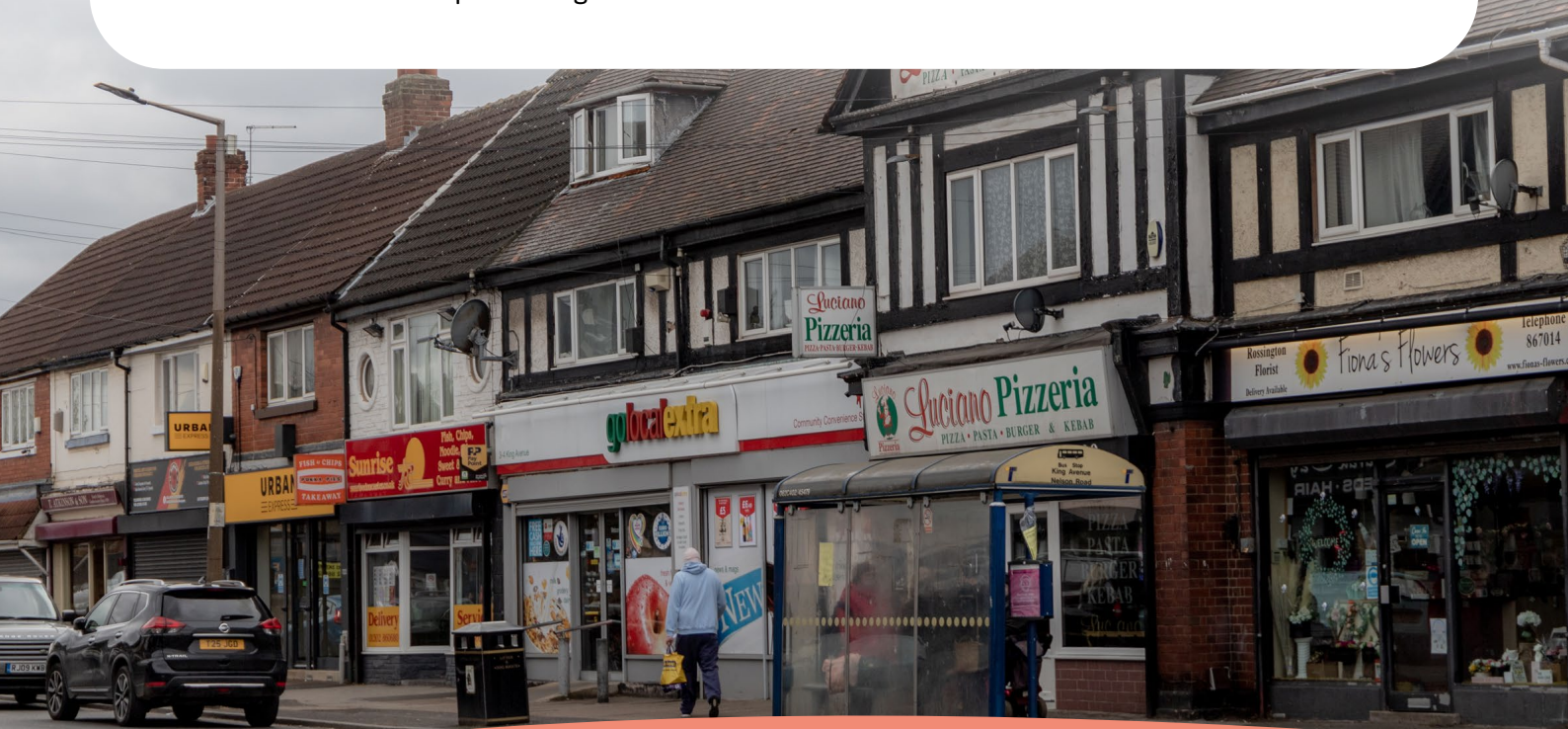
It is a place where everyone can thrive, work is meaningful and fulfilling and businesses are a force for positive change in the community.

Every Doncaster resident enjoys the assurance that their hard work is rewarded with a wage that enables a decent standard of living. No one in Doncaster does a hard day's work for less than they can afford to live on, fostering financial stability and wellbeing.

Doncaster champions a compassionate approach to employment that prioritises the health and wellbeing of its workforce. This approach ensures that work is not just a means of livelihood but also a source of fulfilment and personal growth.

Local employers are committed to inclusive recruitment practices that celebrate diversity and offer flexible opportunities to accommodate the needs of all employees, whether they have family responsibilities or belong to different backgrounds.

Corporate social responsibility is not an option but an expectation. Businesses and organisations in Doncaster proactively take responsibility for their impact on the community, actively contributing to the betterment of society and embracing sustainable practices that safeguard the environment.



How are we going to get there?

1. TACKLE IN-WORK POVERTY AND IMPROVE JOB SECURITY FOR DONCASTER RESIDENTS:

- Ensure an approach to employment support that prioritises compassion and wellbeing.
- Implement the Real Living Wage & living pension contributions.
- Organisations and businesses in Doncaster should promote work-life balance and offer stable and secure employment with career advancement opportunities.
- Local employers should develop inclusive recruitment practices that promote diversity and flexibility to accommodate employees with family or caring responsibilities.
- Ensure long term financial education and support services are available to address the increasing levels of debt, arrears and hardship.
- Employers should be fully aware of the Universal Credit offer for their employees who are entitled to in-work benefits and offer assistance in accessing the support

2. BUILD A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS COMMUNITY:

- Investigate ways businesses can adopt a social mission to bolster local economic resilience, community engagement and equitable wealth distribution. (e.g., the adoption of a 'Good Business Charter').
- Align grant and funding allocation with specific social and environmental impact goals, encouraging businesses to prioritise fairness and sustainability.
- Ensure procurement exercises include social value as a significant proportion of contracting as business as usual.

- Promote further collaboration between businesses and voluntary organisations (e.g., encourage business leaders as trustees of voluntary organisations).
- Enhance the corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach in Doncaster; encourage businesses and organisations in the area to take responsibility for their impact on the community and adopt sustainable practices.

3. CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL MOBILITY:

- Nurture new skilled industries within the region that align with local strengths and resources.
- Establish targeted skills programmes designed to upskill residents to meet the demands of evolving employment industries ensuring Doncaster's workforce remains competitive.

4. IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN DONCASTER, ENSURING EVERYONE HAS A FAIR CHANCE TO SUCCEED AND DEVELOP:

- With a focus on diversity and exploring the complexity of challenges that individuals may face, conduct an in-depth analysis of residents and their barriers to employment; to provide valuable insights into tailoring solutions across protected characteristics.
- Actively promote mentoring opportunities that enable job seekers to openly discuss their challenges and receive guidance on job applications, interviews and overall employability skills.
- Develop a strategic approach to matching residents accessing the Jobcentre with suitable job opportunities based on their skills prior to the interview stage to streamline the hiring process, improving efficiency and job placement rates.
- Promote extended volunteering opportunities recognising the value of volunteering as a pathway for personal and professional skill development.

•

How does it make life fairer for our residents?

How might these recommendations improve Smita's future?

Tackling In-Work Poverty and Improving Job Security: Smita's role as a healthcare assistant becomes more rewarding and secure. She receives the living-wage that ensures a decent standard of living and can plan for her future, thanks to realistic pension contributions. Inclusive employment practices accommodate Smita's family and caring responsibilities, allowing for a better work-life balance. Smita benefits from essential financial education and support services, helping her address her debts and financial hardships, while her employer is well-informed about Universal Credit supporting her to claim additional financial aid.

Fair and Inclusive Doncaster Businesses: Grant and funding allocations in the public sector align with social and environmental impact goals, encouraging businesses to prioritise fairness and sustainability. Procurement exercises now focus on social value, leading to increased support for the community. Smita enjoys the benefits of enhanced collaboration between businesses and voluntary organisations, providing her with additional support.

Creating Conditions for Social Mobility: Smita gains new skills that align with local job opportunities, allowing her to thrive in her chosen career. Targeted skills programmes equip her and other residents to remain competitive in the changing job market.

Fair Chance for All in Employment: Smita benefits from mentoring opportunities, receiving guidance to enhance her career. A strategic approach streamlines her job search, matching her with suitable job opportunities based on her skills. These improvements result in Smita experiencing enhanced financial stability, improved mental wellbeing, and a more supportive community. She is no longer just trying to make ends meet but is on a path to a more fulfilling and sustainable future.

How could these recommendations benefit Dave?

Tackling In-Work Poverty and Improving Job Security: Dave receives assistance in managing his debts and financial hardships, reducing financial stress and anxiety and allowing him to focus on stabilising his income. With a brighter outlook and increased self-worth, Dave gains the confidence to engage in sports and social activities, contributing to enhanced physical and mental wellbeing.

Fair and Inclusive Doncaster Businesses: Local businesses' social responsibility and community engagement provide Dave with more support and job security. Employer support, including counselling services and financial wellness programs, help him address personal and financial issues without the fear of disclosure to colleagues.

Creating Conditions for Social Mobility: Dave, who left school without formal qualifications, benefits from targeted skills programmes that enhance his employability and open doors to better job opportunities. This may lead to higher wages and improved job security.

Fair Chance for All in Employment: Dave's unique challenges and barriers are identified and addressed, ensuring that he receives the support he needs to overcome his difficulties, both at work and in his personal life. Dave also finds support to address his addiction issues, ultimately regaining his independence and improving his relationships with his children.

What does the evidence say?

3.1 Tackling In-Work Poverty and Improving Job Security: A literature review argues for the need to explore the living wage through a person-centric lens focusing on the employee and their family. Simple study of wage rates is unhelpful without understanding what makes work decent.

A literature review finds that a better work–life balance fosters not only job satisfaction, job performance and organisational commitment but also life and family satisfaction. The work–life balance also reduces stress-related outcomes such as psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety and depression.

An evidence review finds that in-work poverty is driven by a combination of low pay, low work intensity at household level and household structure. Low pay is one risk factor. However, high risks are also faced by those working part-time or part-year; those on temporary rather than permanent contracts; those who are the sole earner in the household; and those with family responsibilities. Workers are most at risk where these factors overlap. Strategies for reducing in-work poverty include tackling low pay; improving job stability and quality; facilitating maternal employment, including improving the quality of part-time options; and increasing state financial support for households with children.

A systematic review of 133 studies summarises the social impacts associated with outdoor sports within six broad categories: physical health, mental health and wellbeing, education and lifelong learning, active citizenship, crime reduction and anti-social behaviour, as well as additional benefits.

3.2 Fair and Inclusive Doncaster Businesses: An OECD report finds that social impact investment can provide new ways to efficiently and effectively allocate public and private capital to address social and economic challenges at global, national and local levels. While these innovative market-based approaches will not replace the core role of the public sector or the need for philanthropy, they offer a potentially powerful means for leveraging existing capital.

A systematic review has been undertaken to inform redesign of wellness programmes against four key dimensions of wellness programmes: emotional, intellectual, social and financial to support employee welfare. A further systematic review reports that three critical success factors for implementation of workplace health and psychological wellbeing are continuation, learning and effective governance.

A systematic review of the contribution of social enterprise to health and wellbeing found five studies. Included studies provide limited evidence that social enterprise activity can impact positively on mental health, self-reliance/esteem and health behaviours, reduce stigmatisation and build social capital, all of which can contribute to overall health and wellbeing.

3.3 Creating Conditions for Social Mobility: A Key Cities UK report (2023) seeks to identify how cities, government, employers and providers can work together to help people and places everywhere succeed and identifies numerous case studies of targeted skills training.

3.4 Fair Chance for All in Employment: In the context of declining union membership, limited employment regulation and a growing disconnect between pay and living costs, employment charters offer one means for cities to engage employers in a conversation about how their employment practices can enable local people to live and work well. Several case studies illustrate the impact of several local employment charter initiatives in the UK to assess the role that they play in creating and sustaining quality jobs.

Ensuring Equitable Access for All

Where are we now?

Findings

- Many but not all residents have a strong attachment to their neighbourhoods.
- Some communities on the outer areas of Doncaster feel disconnected from the city centre, leading residents to prefer shopping and socialising in nearby locations.
- Bringing services together in local settings has been effective, providing trusted advice and support from existing positions of care.
- Reducing silo working and adopting a more joined-up approach is increasing access to services and is favourable for residents.
- There are initiatives being successfully implemented in Doncaster despite national policies and austerity.
- The quality and outcomes of many services are good through commitment of partners to improve but access to services can be poor.



Challenges

- Doncaster faces challenges with an increasingly poor public transport system, making it difficult for residents to rely on it for transportation.
- Residents often struggle to reliably access services designed to support them, leading to potential gaps in support.
- The shift of many services online leaves vulnerable groups feeling marginalised and excluded, exacerbating social disparities. A lack of digital access leaves financially vulnerable residents unable to find the most financially beneficial services and goods.
- Increasingly centralised services reduce the sense of community, belonging and safety while contributing to social isolation among residents.
- Many residents report feelings of not being safe, social isolation and a lack of pride in their local area.
- Residents sometimes feel the decline in their communities is due to the loss of community assets.
- Those with complex needs often face hidden barriers when trying to navigate services designed to support them.
- There is the perception from residents and staff that nothing out there can improve.
- A lack of funding, resources, capacity, recruitment & retention all impact on the sustainability of the delivery of services.



Sofia

is a 9-year-old girl living in Toll Bar with her parents, Maria and Andrei, and her grandmother, Adina. Sofia was born in Romania and moved to England at the age of 4 with her parents. Her parents immigrated in search of better opportunities, and Sofia often acts as a translator for them since their English is limited.

Sofia faces challenges at her local primary school where she is one of the few students from a Romanian background. She struggles to explain her culture to her peers, leading to feelings of isolation during group activities. While the school has provided some support, a lack of resources has hindered her progress.

The family lives in a two-bedroom rented house in Toll Bar, which requires some maintenance due to issues with damp. Sofia's parents have tried to address these issues with the landlord, but it hasn't been resolved yet. Sofia often sees her classmates playing at the local park, but her parents don't allow her to go there alone due to safety concerns.

Sofia's parents work long hours, and, in the evenings, they enjoy spending time as a family. Sofia's day includes attending school, and acting as carer for her grandmother, which can sometimes be challenging and causes her to worry. Her school life and family life are both significant aspects of her upbringing, and she navigates them while trying to maintain her cultural identity and adapt to her new surroundings.



Kirsty

a 22-year-old young woman, grew up in a challenging environment marked by domestic violence and substance abuse in her family. She was placed in care at the age of 10 after experiencing physical abuse and witnessing her parents' turbulent relationship. Kirsty's journey through the care system was marked by numerous placements, leaving her with feelings of abandonment and difficulty forming trusting relationships with foster families.

Her experiences in care have contributed to mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, leading to previous hospital admissions. She faced judgment and discrimination while seeking support, especially during her pregnancy, as she prepares to become a mother.

Kirsty currently lives in a small one-bedroom flat and is expecting her first child, struggling with financial difficulties, isolation, and a sense of impending responsibility. She faces challenges, such as past self-harm, concerns about the baby's father, and dissatisfaction with the support provided by healthcare professionals.

Kirsty is conscious of spending too much on food and saving for her baby and dreams of finding employment despite limited childcare support. She grapples with the scars of a difficult childhood, including feeling unloved and uninvited to social events.

She receives increasing bills and struggles with anxiety and loneliness, often finding it hard to sleep due to nightmares related to her traumatic past. Kirsty has faced a challenging upbringing and continues to confront adversity while preparing for motherhood. She desires support and understanding in her journey.

Where do we want to be?

Doncaster has a profound sense of “Pride in Place” among residents, a feeling of safety and a shared commitment to making our community a model of fairness, sustainability and social cohesion.

This present vision embodies our collective aspirations for a brighter, fairer Doncaster.

We envisage a Doncaster where accessible, affordable and inclusive transportation options are available to all residents, reducing barriers to mobility and promoting a healthier, more environmentally friendly way of life. There is positive shift towards a genuine demand for sustainable modes of transport, reflecting our commitment to a greener, more efficient future.

Community support is seamlessly integrated into our neighbourhoods; localised and easily accessible in places that residents naturally frequent, such as community centres and local gathering spots.

Team Doncaster proactively addresses emerging trends and barriers, ensuring our community remains adaptable and resilient. Essential services and support are readily accessible both physically and digitally to all families, promoting wellbeing and inclusivity. Residents are supported in navigating services with grace, eliminating the stigma associated with seeking help.



How are we going to get there?

1. CREATE TRUSTED & ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SUPPORT HUBS FOR ENHANCED RESIDENT HEALTH & WELLBEING:

- Develop service models that, through partnership with local organisations, create One-Stop centres which offer a wide range of services that provide equitable support.
- Community-based offers should provide physical and mental health services and additional wellbeing support tailored to the diverse needs of residents, enhancing accessibility while alleviating the burden on acute services.
- Services should be strategically located in accessible, familiar community spaces to encourage engagement and reduce stigma, enhancing visibility through improved communications and outreach.
- The experience of residents should be improved by adopting a customer focussed approach when scheduling appointments and navigating services.

2. PROMOTE KINDNESS AND COMPASSION IN SERVICE DELIVERY:

- Ensure that individuals most in need can readily access and navigate the services most appropriate to support them.
- Ensure the language used when discussing residents' challenges is appropriate and considered, avoiding terminology that can perpetuate biases and stereotypes.
- Empower individuals to be compassionate in key frontline roles; individuals who prioritise people's wellbeing over rigid rules, recognising that their empathetic approach can lead to life-changing improvements for those in need.
- Ensure an equitable approach to care and support pathways addressing inequalities and identifying opportunities for streamlining and enhancing the patient journey.

3. SUPPORT DONCASTER RESIDENTS' TRANSITION INTO THE DIGITAL AGE:

- Develop an approach that encompasses private providers, voluntary organisations and anchor institutions to narrow the digital gap and guarantee widespread access to online services and information, advancing universal digital inclusion.
- Promote a healthy approach to technology usage while being conscious of the implications of automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Improve and promote the centralised Team Doncaster online platform to serve as a user-friendly, singular digital gateway for easily accessible, high-quality information, advice and guidance.

4. IMPROVE DONCASTER'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL:

- Develop an integrated, affordable and high-quality transport system, designed with residents, particularly those from deprived areas who bear a disproportionate burden of poor transport services.
- Promote policy interventions that stimulate a demand for sustainable transport as the preferred choice.
- Increase cleaner and greener public-transport options to reduce carbon emissions and promote environmental sustainability.
- Team Doncaster should collaborate with major business hubs to improve accessibility and diminish transportation obstacles for both existing employees and job seekers.
- Develop community transport options that guarantee fair and equitable access for all.
-

How does it make life fairer for our residents?

How might Sofia's future improve if the recommendations were implemented?

Locally Based Trusted Support: Community-based health services offer physical and mental health support for Sofia's family, promoting overall wellbeing and easing the strain on acute healthcare services. Accessible community spaces make it easier for Sofia's family to engage with the local community, helping her to feel more connected to her peers and reducing the sense of isolation she experiences.

Kindness and Compassion: A customer-focused approach to scheduling appointments and navigating services alleviates stress for Sofia's parents, ensuring they receive necessary support with greater convenience. Appropriate and non-judgemental language helps Sofia and her family feel more accepted and respected in their community, reducing cultural isolation.

Bridging the Digital Gap: Sofia's role as a translator for her parents is lessened by the adoption of inclusive communication practices; including corresponding with her family in their preferred language, thereby reducing her anxiety. A user-friendly online Team Doncaster platform offers accessible, reliable resources and guidance, improving Sofia's family's access to essential services and support.

Public Transport: Improved public transportation provides Sofia's family with a safer and reliable means of traveling to appointments, work and community events. The collaboration with large business centres leads to more job opportunities for Sofia's parents, reducing their work hours and allowing for more family time in the evenings.

How could the specific recommendations improve life for Kirsty and her family?

Locally Based Trusted Support: One-stop support centres offer a wide range of services, including mental health and wellbeing support. Kirsty, who has struggled with mental health issues, benefits from easy access to these services, reducing the need for hospital visits. Locating services in familiar community spaces helps Kirsty overcome her feelings of isolation and makes accessing support less intimidating. It also reduces the stigma Kirsty previously associated with seeking help.

Kindness and Compassion: Compassionate individuals in key frontline roles are empowered to provide Kirsty with the understanding and empathy she needs. It helps her build confidence and overcome her difficulty in forming trusting relationships with caregivers. Staff in frontline roles are mindful of the language used and have developed a personalised approach to care. This reduces the judgment and discrimination Kirsty experiences, especially during her pregnancy making her feel more respected and valued.

Bridging the Digital Gap: Ensuring universal access to online services empowers Kirsty to find information on potential job opportunities and connect with others. A central online platform serves as a valuable resource for Kirsty.

Public Transport: Easy and affordable transport options alleviate Kirsty's financial difficulties and enhance her ability to reach essential places. This enables her to connect with the community, socialise with friends, and participate more fully in various activities.

What does the evidence say?

4.1 Locally Based Trusted Support: Examples of one-stop shops for advice and services include Department of Education funded “Family Hubs”. Hubs offer access to support for physical and mental health, housing and debt advice, youth services, domestic abuse support, as well as services run by charities.

A qualitative study found that drivers of integration for primary care and social care services are like-minded individuals supported by good leadership, interface roles that bridge gaps between systems and co-location of services.

4.2 Kindness and Compassion: An overview of eleven systematic reviews on patient navigators found nine systematic reviews primarily targeted to ethnic minorities or other disadvantaged groups. Navigators provide education/counselling, translations, home visits, outreach, scheduling of appointments and follow-up. Eight reviews identified positive outcomes in expanded access to care, notably for vulnerable patient groups. Two reviews reported improved patient outcomes, hospital readmission rates and mixed evidence on quality of life and A&E visits. Two reviews demonstrated improved patient outcomes for persons with multiple chronic conditions.

A realist review found that compassion training may engender compassionate practice if it becomes a key component of the infrastructure and vision of care organisations, engages institutional participation, improves leadership, adopts a multi-modal approach and uses valid measures to assess outcomes.

An essential element of communication in maternity services is the use of language. Medical jargon detracts from patient autonomy and emotive language can influence women’s mindset and experience both positively and negatively. When English is not an individual’s first language, women feel defenceless and lack understanding. Anticipated stigma around pregnancy in the workplace impacts on psychological wellbeing, experienced stigma impacts on psychological wellbeing and turnover intentions.

4.3 Bridging the Digital Gap: A guide has been produced to assist councils undertaking digital transformation projects. Using the cross-government agreed technology code of practice as a starting point, it demonstrates how technology agreements can help, wherever a council is on its digital transformation journey.

A small local government organisation on the south coast identified core capabilities (e.g. online booking, notifications, performance management, inspection assessments, payments, SLA management and customer self-service, etc.) as key to local government work. Since these were not provided effectively by pre-existing platforms, they configured their own platform. This resulted in entirely cloud-based, local government capabilities which could be commoditised further by persuading local service providers to use them to improve data sharing and innovation and save money.

4.4 Public Transport: Locally relevant research finds that coordinated local/national government action needs to ensure that ‘stronger’ models of partnership/bus franchising improve the availability, reliability and affordability of public transport. Planning needs to ensure that new housing and employment developments are well served by public transport that reduces travel costs, times/distances between home and work and that transport and employment policy are integrated to enable employment support providers to help clients factor in travel choices into their return to work.

The first Great British study to examine whether better public transport improves chances of getting a job used British national employment datasets to assess which urban/rural areas and population groups would benefit from better transport services. Better job accessibility improves individual employment probabilities, in particular in metropolitan areas and smaller cities and towns with lower car ownership rates and in low-income neighbourhoods. Lower educated groups and young people would be the main beneficiaries from better public transport job accessibility.

Enablers for Change

The “Enablers for Change” are recommendations intended to cut across all theme areas. They act as foundational principles for guiding transformative initiatives in Doncaster.

1. UNDERSTAND INTERSECTIONALITY - THE COMPOUNDING EFFECT OF MULTIPLE INEQUALITIES:

- Recognise that multiple factors, such as age, ethnicity, economic status and health compound to create unique challenges for residents and develop policies and interventions that address these intersectional issues comprehensively.
- Avoid judgemental language to promote empathy, understanding and de-stigmatisation in all communication (e.g., trauma informed approach).

2. BUILD TRUST AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:

- Foster meaningful resident engagement by involving residents in service design and decision-making processes and seek input from a range of diverse communities to ensure that policies, programmes and services are reflective of the community’s values and aspirations.
- Recognise the importance of capturing ‘hidden resident voices,’ especially from vulnerable populations and identify approaches that build trust with these individuals to gather their input.
- Address community engagement fatigue and ensure that residents understand how their thoughts add value by providing regular updates on decisions and initiatives.

3. ACHIEVE DATA EXCELLENCE:

- Improve data quality and establish effective data-sharing mechanisms with partners to understand individual and community needs, e.g. standardised data collection methods, ensuring accuracy and consistency and establishing secure platforms for sharing information.
- Improve access and data quality for minority groups and those with protected characteristics to ensure their voices are heard.
- Continuously assess and analyse data related to fairness and wellbeing in Doncaster.

4. SUPPORT A TEAM DONCASTER ‘CAMPAIGN FOR NATIONAL CHANGE’:

- Create a united lobbying voice through the Team Doncaster partnership to advocate for national policy reforms that support the wellbeing and fairness of the local community including voices from the voluntary, community and faith sectors.
-

Reflections on the Commission

Acknowledging The Gaps

A comprehensive approach was used to gather evidence on fairness and wellbeing for Doncaster residents to cover a wide range of issues. Although coverage was extensive, it is crucial to acknowledge the inherent limitations of this work and recognise that our examination remains incomplete. Although the methods provide a wide consultation, we cannot claim to have covered every aspect comprehensively. The complexity of the challenge demands ongoing attention and continued exploration.

Throughout our community engagement residents have highlighted crucial areas that, unfortunately, were not explored in the depth they deserve. As we present our findings, transparency is key and it is important to acknowledge these limitations. Our commitment to pursuing fairness and wellbeing remains steadfast and we see these acknowledged gaps as opportunities for future investigation.

Continuous conversations and collaboration with the community will be vital in refining our understanding and ensuring that Team Doncaster's efforts align with the evolving needs and concerns of Doncaster residents.



A Fairer Future for Doncaster; a Collective Responsibility

This report marks a critical milestone in our work and is our opportunity to advocate for change.

It reveals our findings, outlines our ambitions and presents recommendations for sustained action.

We celebrate progress in education, community wellbeing and employment, highlighting successes in schools and initiatives supporting older residents. At the same time, we acknowledge persistent challenges, such as elevated child poverty rates and disparities in service access.

The identified gaps in our work are viewed not as limitations but as opportunities for future inquiry and refinement. We welcome ongoing dialogue and collaboration. Our recommendations go beyond a mere checklist; they call for strategic thinking and a commitment to positive change. When collectively transformed into actionable initiatives, these recommendations can have a lasting impact.

We recognise that there's no simple road map, but we are confident that the strong principles of collaboration in Doncaster and a shared commitment to addressing injustices will help identify existing and future opportunities to make a meaningful difference.

The Fairness Commission encourages organisations to incorporate responses to our recommendations within their own plans and policies.

To find the full appendix, please visit:

www.teamdoncaster.org.uk/doncaster-fairness-well-being-commission





