

Public health reform

A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities

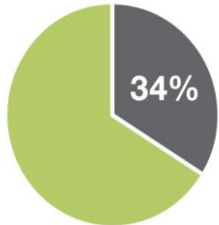
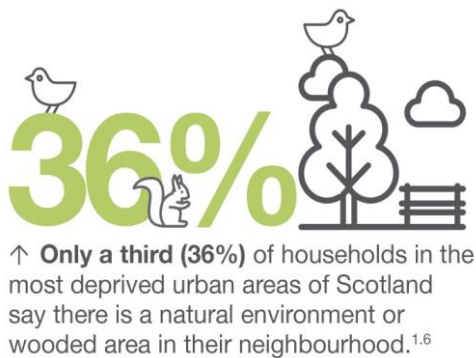


Scotland's public health priorities

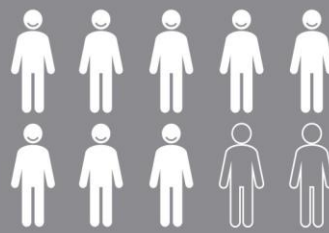
The Scottish Government and COSLA agreed six [Public Health Priorities](#) in June 2018. These are intended to support national and local partners across Scotland to work together to improve healthy life expectancy and reduce health inequalities in our communities. This includes the priority: [A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities](#).

Why place and community are important

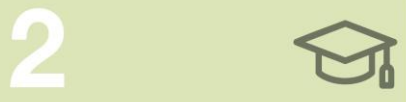
People in Scotland live in a variety of environments from cities, towns and villages, to large rural areas, coastal communities and islands. Where we live, work and play, the connections we have with others and the extent to which we feel able to influence the decisions that affect us – all have a significant impact on our health and wellbeing.



Just over a third (34%) of people said they would like to be more involved in the decisions their council makes.^{1,8}



In 2016, just over **three in ten adults** in the 10 per cent most deprived areas of Scotland rated their neighbourhood as a very good place to live, compared to almost **eight in ten** of those living in the 10 per cent least deprived areas.^{1,1}



↑ Improving housing is the third top priority for people in Scotland after education and economy.^{1,4}

Public health priorities and a whole system approach

To improve Scotland's health and wellbeing we need to work together to shift our focus towards preventing ill health, reducing inequalities and working more effectively in partnership. This will require a different way of working that supports everybody as part of a whole system to move towards a shared vision for public health.

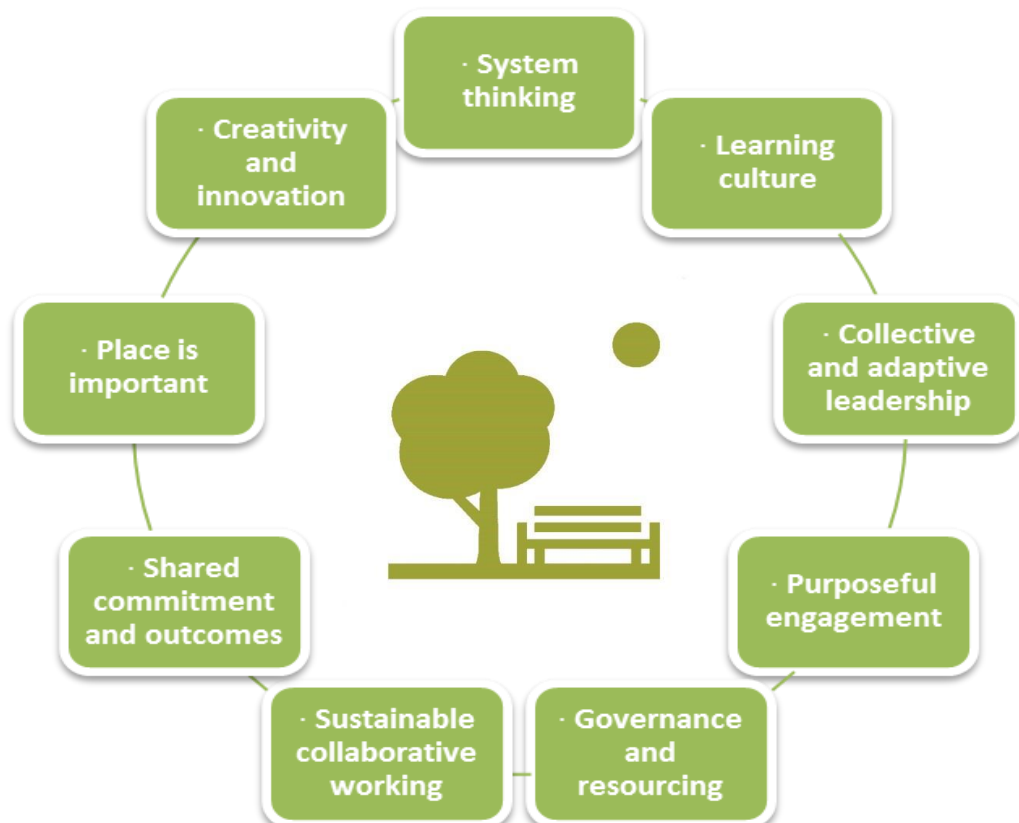
Whole system approach (WSA)

Underpinning the public health priorities is the need to work more effectively together as part of a whole system approach. Whole system working can be defined as applying systems thinking and tools that enable:

“An ongoing, flexible approach by a broad-range of stakeholders to identify and understand current and emerging public health issues where, by working together, we can deliver sustainable change and better lives for the people of Scotland.”

A whole system approach to place and community

Drawing on established models and engagement with stakeholders, Public Health Reform has defined a set of **nine** core characteristics of a Whole System Approach:



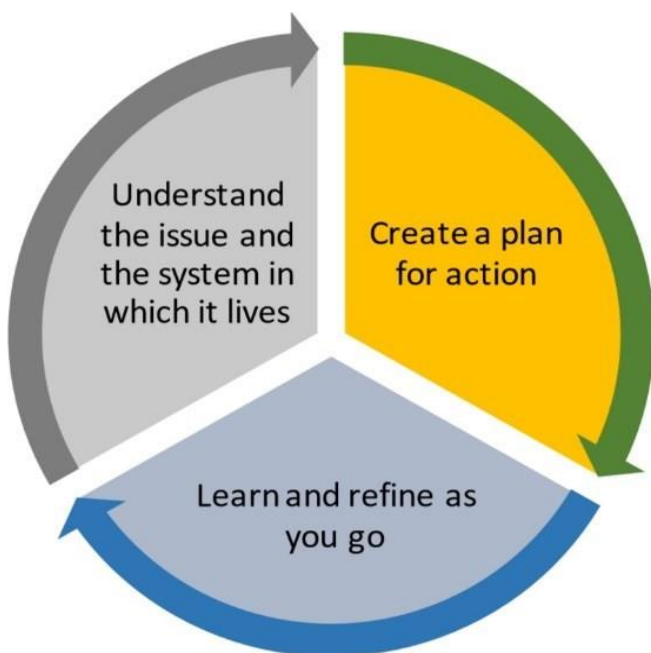
For a more detailed look at the characteristics please see this [document](#).

Applying a whole system approach

A whole system approach involves application of complex systems thinking, methods and practice to better understand public health challenges and identify collective actions. Adopting a whole system approach to Scotland's Public Health Priorities is a long-term endeavour. It will require new partnerships between a broad-range of stakeholders to deliver better lives for the people of Scotland.

For this priority this may include for example community planning partnerships, alcohol and drug partnerships, economic development, health professionals, education, early years, housing, sports and leisure, spatial planning, active travel, greenspace and environment, transport, and local businesses.

There are many tools and methods that have been developed to support whole system approaches. Put simply, there are three phases that can help stakeholders adopt a whole system approach*:



- Collectively form an **understanding of the issue, context and wider system.**
- **Create a plan for action collaboratively** with a wide set of stakeholders. Actions should be aligned and jointly prioritised.
- **Learn and refine as you go by involving stakeholders and embedding monitoring and evaluation.** Considering the 'so what?' and 'now what?'

*Adapted from FSG [Systems Thinking Toolkit. Putting systems thinking into practice in your organization](#) and Australian Prevention Partnership Centre (2018) [Systems Change Framework](#).

Measuring impact

The [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) sets out a vision for national wellbeing. Looking at the sort of Scotland we want to see. By adopting a values-based approach to improving the public's health we will be able to successfully demonstrate that we are truly working differently.

Public Health Reform – useful links

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