



## **The Association of North East Councils – response to Department of Health consultation on behalf of the independent Advisory Committee on Resource Allocation (ACRA) on 0-5 children’s public health formula 2016/17**

### **Summary**

The Association of North East Councils is the representative voice for local government in the North East. It represents all 12 local authorities in the North East, throughout Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Durham and the Tees Valley on issues of concern to them and the communities they serve. It is a cross-party organisation, with all of its members democratically elected and accountable politicians.

### **Overview**

The Association welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Department of Health consultation on 0-5s children’s public health formula 2016/17. We also note that there will be an opportunity to input into the wider engagement exercise scheduled for summer 2015.

The Association is aware that individual North East authorities are submitting their own responses to the consultation and thereby responding to the individual consultation questions. As an Association, we would call upon ACRA to ensure that there is a fair approach to the allocation of funding, and a commitment to needs-based funding that recognises and protects those areas of the country with higher levels of deprivation and with the highest and most complex needs and demand pressures. We would refer ACRA to Public Health England’s commissioned report ‘Due North’, which indicated the disproportionate impact of poverty on health outcomes in the North of England, which ought to be taken into account with regard to, for example, weighting for child poverty.

Local authorities, along with the Local Government Association continue to work closely with the Department of Health to secure appropriate levels of funding for public health within local government. Local authorities in the North East of England have embraced their new responsibilities for public health and are making good progress. However we would emphasise that there remains a clear need to do more in terms of the whole preventative agenda, necessitating increased investment in public health. The case is proven that increased funding spent efficiently and effectively by Local Authorities will deliver outcomes that improve wellbeing and health, thereby preventing ill health and inequalities.

There has been a significant differential in the amount that is allocated to public health within local authorities and we would seek commitment from government to increase the proportion of health spending to be given to local authorities. We would advocate that the aim of any suggested allocation system should be to achieve a fair distribution with respect to inequalities. ACRA's current proposals suggest that some authorities would be negatively impacted in terms of funding. We would argue that achievement of growth in some areas should not be to the financial detriment of others and that increased funding ought to be allocated, increasing the overall quantum.

The Association will make a fuller response as part of the summer engagement exercise.