

HEALTHY STEVENAGE POSITION STATEMENT:

ADDRESSING THE
HEALTH & WELLBEING OF
STEVENAGE RESIDENTS
THROUGHOUT THE GLOBAL
PANDEMIC 2020/2021.



Strategic Priority Issues

Health Protection

The global COVID-19 pandemic placed emphasis on health protection as a direct response to the health needs of the population. Public Health England and Hertfordshire Public Health were on hand to deal with the outbreak situation and monitored the emergence of the virus as it spread across our towns and cities. . They have worked with partners across local government, the NHS, the voluntary and community sectors, and beyond, to co-produce a great team response.

With the focus on health protection, Healthy Stevenage Partners were forced to cease activities related to health improvement, health promotion and health inequalities due to central government directives supporting national lockdowns to prevent the spread of the virus to save lives.

Background

This position statement relies on consultations held with partners in March 2021, which reveals the extent of collective efforts made to support health protection and wider recovery plans across Stevenage. We now know what effective partnership working looks like and the importance of an integrated care model that underpins person centred approaches.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted, and in some cases worsened health inequalities amongst certain groups in England. Following the release of the [1] Public Health England (PHE) 'Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19' and [2] 'Beyond the data: Understanding the



impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups' in June 2020, the [3] 'Build Back Fairer: COVID-19 Marmot Review' in December 2020, we have seen the impact on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities with higher case rates and deaths compared to the White population.

We have seen the pandemic impact on people across the lifecourse. The Lancet report [4] '2021 – the year of reconditioning' in January 2021, Age UK's 'State of Ageing 2020' further highlights the disproportionate impacts on older people and physical inactivity on their health. With ongoing research into the impact on our children and young people and their mental health the Emerging Minds Network has also highlighted the impacts and longer term challenges we might face in the future.

The drive to reduce health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of Stevenage residents is fundamental to Healthy Stevenage Partnership's vision. The Healthy Stevenage Strategy has been working on the implementation of key strategic priorities for the past 3 years:

Health Improvement

1. Reduce obesity rates among children and adults
2. Increase physical activity rates among children and adults by targeting the most inactive
3. Reduce the number of children and adults that smoke, particularly expectant mothers and routine manual workers
4. Support adults and children to achieve good mental health and wellbeing
5. Support older people to remain independent for as long as possible in their homes

Health Protection

6. Provide and maintain a clean, safe and vibrant environment with access to parks and open spaces

Health Promotion

7. Communicate better with local residents and professionals to raise awareness of local projects and services
8. Support national health campaigns to reinforce key public health messages locally

Health Inequalities

9. Provide new high quality housing in line with demand and population growth considering health and wellbeing through design
10. Regenerate Stevenage Town Centre creating more employment opportunities, providing an enhanced leisure and cultural offer and public spaces that facilitate health and wellbeing

As detailed in the Marmot Review, globally the gap for health inequalities has widened as seen in the reported highlights. Regionally, some of the key challenges reported by Healthwatch Hertfordshire included 'Digital Exclusion' [6] and 'Covid-19 Patient Experiences' [7]. Further policy recommendations were made through the Impact of 'COVID-19 on Food and Eating in the East of England: Policy Briefings' [8]. Locally, the Stevenage Together: Recovery Plan responds to the widely ranging and disproportionate physical and mental health effects across the community.

While we know that prevention before treatment is a guiding principle of the strategy, effective partnership working and strong leadership across the partnership played a crucial role in the response to the pandemic from Healthy Stevenage Partners. They have worked quickly, efficiently, and creatively. At times of crisis, people rise to the challenge, and nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the local response to COVID-19.

With the rollout of vaccines the risks posed by the virus will overtime reduce. However, it seems that the virus may well be with us in different forms for years to come. Continuing to tackle this whilst reducing health inequalities will be a task for Healthy Stevenage and Hertfordshire Public Health Teams long into the future.

Health Inequalities and place-based initiatives have emerged as major themes of recovery and future reform efforts. The task ahead will be how we perhaps embed these practices into the new Town Regeneration and Integrated Care Systems. A wide and far reaching response and research from Healthy Stevenage Partners included:

Sport & Leisure Team – SBC

The Sport and Leisure team continue to work on the four key priority areas with internal and external partners. These include:

Health Promotion: We are reviewing communication plans using various channels e.g. social media, newsletters, regular website updates. This includes the creation of a newly revised plan and regularly updated social media with new and relevant information from internal and external partner information.

We are also supporting national health campaigns to reinforce public health messages locally. This will be included in our new communications plan. We will be able to ensure this happens with the help of regular internal and external communications aligned with HCC public health campaigns.

We have recently been trained on using a new data management system as a priority area to review Sport & Leisure team data management systems and to review existing methods of data collection. A goal of the team is to be able to effectively manage data to evidence the impact of our services.

Health Improvement: We have submitted two funding bids that include This Girl Can funding to run a project specifically for women within Stevenage. This is combating inactivity in the female population for Stevenage. Studies have shown that during the pandemic women and girls have become less active and the funding wants to give more women more opportunities to be active again. We have focused the funding on areas of deprivation and high levels of inactivity and unhealthy behaviours to specific wards. We have a few more weeks to find out if this funding bid has been successful.

The second funding bid is a place based approach with the Whole Systems Obesity team at HCC. This will fund unhealthy environments and behaviours to tackle

obesity in a specific ward. The ward which was chosen was Shephall due to the levels of inactivity, obesity in adults, year 6 and reception children and finally deprivation in children and pensioners. We have been successful in this bid and the project is due to start in September. Once again we will liaise with community development, community safety, parks & external partners to ensure the project is successful.

Health Protection: Exploration of new and existing Active Travel plans with internal and external teams welcoming new partners on board and patient engagement groups via Social Prescribers and PCN Link Workers. Focus on offering more Health Walks across the town targeting different groups and supporting new Cycle Hub operator to deliver on key performance indicators and further raise awareness of cycling opportunities across the town.

Continuing to work more closely with the Parks team to increase access to parks and open spaces through the basketball development group, proposed tennis & pickleball project in Shephalbury Park building on success of half term basketball roadshow offering more session throughout summer holiday.

Health Inequalities: Continuing to support the wider recovery plans to understand the impact on existing health inequalities with particular focus on influencing town planning and design to ensure health and wellbeing is considered. Providing leadership and qualifications through the young people's health hub to help reduce youth unemployment. Continuing to support Hertfordshire Track and Trace arrangements and Local Outbreak Plans. Scheduled review and update of the Healthy Stevenage Strategy 2018-2022 and action plan to take into account Covid-19 recovery, with both mental and physical health effects and continued support the development of the Herts Integrated Care Model.

Young People's Healthy Hub – SBC

The Hertfordshire Healthy Hubs funded by the Public Health District Partnership continues to support the delivery of a Healthy Hub in every District and Borough of Hertfordshire, including a Young People's Healthy Hub in Stevenage.

The project team continue to develop and establish a central point of access and associated outreach interventions for young people aged 11 – 17 year olds who need preventative support with their mental, emotional, and physical or lifestyle related health needs. Since launching in November 2020, the team have:

Launched the hub online until restrictions are eased with a dedicated webpage as part of the new Stevenage Borough Council website. In support of the launch the team worked with the Youth Mayor to create a video to announce the new service and implemented a new social media plan which includes the use of instagram (@yphh_stevenage) to increase online engagement with young people.

Continuation of partner engagement meetings and attendance to regular key stakeholder forums including, Stevenage Secondary School Pastoral Leads, Hertfordshire Healthy Weight Network and Herts Family Centre Service - Stevenage District Partnership Meetings, ICDB Stevenage Locality, etc to raise awareness of the hub, develop new partnerships and identify any gaps in the system.

Due to the pandemic Public Health extended the timeline of the District Partnership Healthy Hub programme up until the end of March 2022. This is to ensure that all districts have the best chance to deliver a successful Healthy Hub in light of any changes to previous plans. The project team are therefore keen to establish a physical hub.

Since launching back in late November 2020 to March 2021, the Young People's Healthy Hub received referrals for and supported 26 young people for a range of health and wellbeing needs. Out of the 26 referrals, 3 were for mental health, 16 were for healthy eating, and 7 were for getting more active.

The hub has supported 8 families in cooking and eating healthier through the Community Kitchen course with Stevenage FC foundation; of which included 10 adults and 11 children. This gave us a fantastic start towards our target of supporting 100 young people in gaining confidence and ability to cook healthy food. The young people reported that their confidence in cooking healthy food increased by 151% on average, and ability to cook healthy food increased by 139% on average.

Since the launch of the dedicated counselling service during Children's Mental Health Week February 2021, 3 young people have received mental health related support. This gave us a good start towards our goal in improving 100 young people's mental health. Providing crucial 1:1 support for young people is in demand as an emerging need as we move out of lockdown restrictions.



In March 2021, the Young People's Healthy Hub launched its first Online Summit, showcasing the local health and wellbeing support for young people in Stevenage. There were seminars and workshops delivered by a number of hub partners including, Hertfordshire Mind Network, CGL Spectrum, BeeZee Bodies and FitKidz. The event was opened by Cllr Richard Henry and our Youth Mayor, Elissa Crew. 15 young people tuned into the event online.

Key highlights from January to March 2021 include; 869 Young People Healthy Hub webpage visits, 25, 107 Instagram views, most frequent age group to attend and/or access services are aged 11 to 12 years old with the most common referrals being healthy eating and physical activity.

Healthy Hub – SLL

Nutrition, healthy eating and exercise videos, creation of blogs and podcasts for the community to access via SLL social media and SBC. Staff survey highlighted problems with sleeping properly, eating more, drinking more, loss of confidence. Fitness Videos for seniors and visually impaired were delivered on You Tube, Live fitness sessions for all members provided FREE, non-members £8.99 per month since November 2020.

Stevenage/University of Hertfordshire Research Projects and Collaborations (ARC East of England Affiliated)

Sport & Leisure Team working with partners in translating research findings from Addressing Obesity: A consultation with Stevenage Young People (Nov 2020) to support better health outcomes for young people through newly formed Basketball Development Group. Further opportunities to translate research

into actionable interventions and projects for Stevenage residents:

- COVID-19 Food Study: Interim Report
- Prioritising Prevention Webinars: Strengthening Communities and Societies for Collective Action Policy Workshop
- Physical Activity and Dementia Project
- Dementia Involvement Group: Collaborating with Red Shed in Stevenage
- Reports: Physical Activity and Dementia, Receiving a diagnosis
- Stevenage Playcentres Project: Improving Health and Wellbeing of children
- READY Trial Mental Health and Physical Exercise for Young People

[COVID-19 Food and Eating East England Policy Briefingst](#)

[Prioritising Prevention Webinars: Strengthening Communities and Societies for Collective Action Policy Workshop](#)

[Physical Activity and Dementia Project](#)

[Dementia Involvement Group: Collaborating with Red Shed in Stevenage](#)

[The Contribution of Physical Activity to Social Connectivity and Wellbeing in Older Adults Living with Dementia](#)

[Stevenage Playcentres Project: Improving Health and Wellbeing of children](#)

[READY Trial Mental Health and Physical Exercise for Young People](#)

Independent Living Schemes

Stevenage FC Foundation collaboration - Specialist Support Services contacted anyone receiving the sandwich service and others being supported by the football foundation to ensure they had long term support in place and to offer our services when their service was drawing to a close. Specialist Support services continued to contact general needs tenants over the age of 70. Some moved onto community support service and one moved into Independent Living.

This was up to 90 residents receiving a weekly call at the height of pandemic.

Continued to contact careline customers on a regular basis to ensure they had support in place at one point this was weekly to 57 households. Continued to carry out essential visits and respond to all emergency calls to those on the Stevenage Careline service and living in schemes, (approx 500 emergency calls a month). Carried out welfare and follow up check calls or visits usually following an emergency call. Residents living in Independent Living and in Flexicare Schemes who had given consent tested monthly as part of organisation testing.

Community Safety

The No More Service and SADA have received national recognition for its innovative work in supporting their clients. Both these services have grown and SADA now covers Stevenage, North Herts, East Herts, Welwyn and Hatfield. Between April and June 2020 we have supported 191 victims/survivors of domestic abuse through Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA). SADA has introduced 15 further Safe Spaces since April 2020.

Almost 9 in 10 (88%) residents have stated they feel safe when outside in their local area during the day, and more than half of residents (52%) say that they feel very or fairly safe when outside in their local area after dark. Supported vulnerable clients including those who have suffered domestic abuse and assisted with added security including video doorbells.

Targeted those areas that the public have concerns for their safety and engaged with the community and the local businesses to change their perceptions. This includes developing Action Plan for hot spots areas such as St Nicholas and the Tower Blocks to support our partners, residents and local Cllrs.

Offered training to our volunteers and have been working closely with North Herts College and Children Services offer long term student placements. We have introduced two projects following successful funding bids around Suicide Prevention, this includes having Prevention Champions and a project to encourage clients to have hobbies and get involved with projects like our allotment.

By working with partners and our local communities, we are able to make significant changes to the lives of those people who need support, guidance and advice, whilst tackling crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour.

Mind in Mid Herts

Both previous programmes have stopped. MiMH continues to be signposted people from the Stevenage Adult Healthy Hub. MiMH identified that carers are already being catered for via Carers in Herts & Rethink and therefore have discontinued the monthly carers group.

Since the beginning of 2021 MiMH's have been working in partnership with Carrie Washington the Director from BEEE Creative, who has funding from the National Lottery to run dance classes and they have been running them on a Monday afternoon at the Wellbeing Centre. This too has now finished however we have a photography course running at Mecca Bingo Hall who have offered us a larger room than we have at the Wellbeing Centre and we are running the course there. We continue to look for funding opportunities with Carrie to be able to resume the dance class.



Family Centres

100% service delivered virtually, apart from FAB - going into maternity ward/special unit for premature babies. Delivering food parcels, mental health support packages.

Stevenage FC Foundation

National campaigns reduced to local level such as Joy of Moving delivered across social media including home festivals in May 2020 and Jan 2021. The Stevenage FC Foundation Careline delivered a 21 week service with 15k sandwiches, 500 calls, 400 prescriptions, 100 volunteers and 70-80 errands completed between April 2020 to mid August 2020. Delivered muffins to Lister hospital's AoU team when there was reduced capacity to make sandwiches, with a further 141 households receiving sandwiches and/or prescriptions. To ensure ongoing support Stevenage FC Foundation and Independent Living Schemes co-produced a duty of care letter to recipients of joint services.

In September 2020 a Tackling Loneliness project was launched with the distribution of activity packs, exercise sessions online with 100 winter care packs sent out to residents over 70 years old and activity pack. 900 activity packs delivered across Independent Living schemes including So Active 'How to Zoom Guides' and flyers for Chair Fit sessions, 4500k activity packs were delivered to primary and secondary schools over Christmas period.

120 virtual sessions delivered since Sept 2020, engaging 586 people across the lifecourse. 1800 outbound calls lasting on average 25 minutes with the team carrying out weekly calls. Stevenage FC Foundation engaged with a total of 4671 people amounting to 16000 hours of engagement.

Stevenage Sporting Futures Team

With the challenges of schools opening and partially closing, virtual means have been used to offer opportunities which would usually have been face to face such as competitions, sports leadership and support for school staff.

The Fit Kidz Go Programme: Continued to deliver what has been possible virtually while schools were fully open, to allow schools who had not received planned delivery in the Summer of 2020 to still engage with the programme. The Parental Engagement element was lost though due to restrictions. When schools were closed to all but vulnerable and key worker children suggested home activities were used to keep engagement levels high.

Herts Sports Partnership

Fit, Fed & Read: "A high-quality holiday activity programme - including support with literacy - in Hertfordshire's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, with a nutritious meal every day, free of charge." Fit Fed & Read school holiday activity programmes operate across Hertfordshire during the school Easter and summer holidays. Each four-hour day consists of two hours of physical activity, one hour of fun education and one hour of two-course nutritious cooked lunch. Participant entry criteria they must be aged between 8-11 years and eligible for free school meals. HSP ran this in the Summer Holidays in 2020 at Bedwell Primary School for 20 children per day across four weeks and at Easter 2021 for 20 children per day.

HAPpy Programme, Hertfordshire's Holiday Activity Programme: Hertfordshire County Council has joined forces with the Herts Sports Partnership and the Hertfordshire Community Foundation, to organise a

programme for the summer holidays aimed at countering the triple inequalities facing Hertfordshire's most disadvantaged young people – holiday hunger, physical inactivity and social isolation. In an initiative funded by the Department for Education, existing or prospective organisers of holiday activity programmes can access funding to deliver daily, four hour programmes for those young people aged 5 to 16 who are in receipt of free school meals. Programmes can be led by a range of organisations from across the public, private and community and voluntary sectors, must offer a range of catering, sports and physical activity and enrichment activities. HSP plan on reaching 20,000 children a day across Hertfordshire in the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.

Sofa to Saddle: The Stevenage Sofa to Saddle programme is a 6-week learn to ride programme for adults (aged 18 years and over) running in partnership with the Stevenage Cycling Hub and Herts Sports Partnership, and funded by British Cycling and Hertfordshire County Council. This programme is suited to those individuals who are new to riding a bike or lack confidence in their cycling skills. This was aimed at the BAME community within Stevenage. This has been running for a short period and the females session is almost full with 9 registered and the males session had 5 registered. This runs on Saturdays.

Sporting Chance: Sporting Chance is a sport based programme aimed at young people on the cusp of the youth justice system. Young people's feedback has been at the heart of planning and consequently, the programme is designed in line with the thoughts of the target demographic. With football, boxing and basketball highlighted as the most sports, HSP have created sessions throughout all 10 district areas in the county, working with schools, community centres, sports clubs and Educational Support Centres to ensure that the offer is comprehensive and can deliver to

as many young people as possible. HSP are running a Box Cleva session on a Tuesday night 4.30pm-6.00pm at the Stevenage Boxing Club. Also Herts Cricket are going to be running a session on a Friday night at King George Playing Fields 5-6pm.

Active Local – Bedwell: Launched place-based initiative to reduce inactivity in areas of highest deprivation. Bedwell selected based on combination of deprivation statistics, current insight and local knowledge. Over £6k awarded to local organisations via Tackling Inequalities Funding to aid delivery of local projects including: Bedwell Table Tennis Club: New morning session at Bedwell Community Centre targeting older people to learn the sport and join the club. Bedwell School Learn to Ride: Teach 23 children in years 5/6 to ride, identified by the school to support transition to secondary school. Includes bike hire from Stevenage Cycle Hub. Irish Network Stevenage: Funding to continue line dancing and seated exercise at Bedwell Community Centre for 36 sessions. Croquette at the Red Shed providing people with dementia, equipment so that they can participate in croquette whilst they attend the Red Shed. This is due to take place in the summer 2021 and have provided links with another croquette session in North Herts which they will be able to attend regularly.

In partnership with Stevenage Sporting Futures Team the Schools Community Facilities Fund - is being split between The Valley & Barclay Academy. The Valley are spending their half on cycling and buying different types of bikes suited to the different disabilities and putting on a bike ability course for the students. Barclay are spending their half on Volleyball equipment as it is very popular in the school, also cheerleading equipment as they are having to travel to another facility for their cheerleading squad to practice. They are also purchasing new goals on their artificial pitches so that they can welcome more hirers after school hours.

HCC Services for Young People

Primary purpose continued to be “Enabling Young People to Succeed” through the delivery of targeted prevention and early intervention work to address emerging needs, improve life chances and reduce escalation to more expensive and intensive services. Working with young people primarily aged 11-17 who face particular challenges. The service is extended to young people up to age 25 if they belong to an identified vulnerable group. This includes work with individuals, their families and opportunities for informal education and learning within a group work setting.

Continue with one to one interventions with young people. During the first lockdown in March 2020 over 900 interventions were carried out with young people in Stevenage with a Personal Adviser or Youth Worker. The top reason for youth work interventions was emotional wellbeing.

Throughout 2020-2021 continued to deliver a mixture of virtual/remote support and face to face delivery, recognising the increased need for support with emotional wellbeing, including:

Supporting You programmes. Supporting You is a 10-week programme for young people aged 13-17 who are beginning to show early signs of distress due to anxiety or low mood. Attendees learn 12 CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) skills plus a method for planning how to achieve goals. Three programmes were delivered with a minimum of 10 young people attending weekly.

Positive Alternatives programmes. Three programmes delivered to 50 young people. These programmes helped young people find alternatives to becoming involved in violence, knife crime and gang culture. The programmes use multi-sports sessions as an important focus, along with other inputs such as music recording, practical workshops in First Aid.

When government regulations allowed minimum 3 sessions a week of street based detached youth work delivered. Youth Workers have engaged with young people and given information and advice – particularly around wellbeing during the COVID pandemic.

Weekly session of Targeted Prevention, Early Intervention and Diversionary projects to engage young people at risk; including of violence, criminal exploitation, gang involvement and other risky behaviour at the Oval and Bedwell on Friday nights

Supporting young people with Learning Disabilities with the weekly Megamix Project for young people aged 13-17. Attendees found 2020-21 very challenging and have been very keen to engage with face to face delivery.

Youth Council - working closely with the Stevenage Youth Strategy Partnership Group - giving a voice to young people and working on issues to improve the lives of young people in Stevenage. One area focussed on during 2020-21 was emotional wellbeing- such as providing helpful tips to other young people via social media.

Hospital Youth Worker continued to provide support for young people and young adults in the Lister Hospital weekly. Healthcare professionals or the young people and their families can request a visit from a hospital Youth Worker. Together they will identify what support they need with issues that may be affecting their physical or mental health, both during their hospital stay and beyond. Support with emotional health and wellbeing, dealing with schoolwork or exam stress and relationships have been the top issues during 2020-21.

Continued with Pathways to Success NEET Programme. The target group are those who are NEET or those in school who are at risk of becoming NEET post 16. During the Spring



2020 lockdown 25 Stevenage NEET young people plus an additional 11 pre-NEETs were signed up. A significant challenge during 2021-22 will be moving young people into employment to be sustained for 6 months, particularly during the ongoing pandemic with unfavourable economic conditions affecting the labour market.

Call To Action

“To help all residents live well, be happy and healthy for as long as possible by providing high quality services in partnership that are accessible to all”. The Healthy Stevenage Partnership supports the key actions to support the mental and physical health of the town as part of the Stevenage Together Recovery Plan:

- Support Hertfordshire Track and Trace arrangements and Local Outbreak Plans
- Review and update the Healthy Stevenage Strategy and action plan to take into account Covid-19 recovery, with both mental and physical health effects
- Launch the Diabetes Prevention and Young People’s Healthy Hub initiatives
- Support the development of the Herts Integrated Care Model

Effective Period

This statement was reviewed and agreed by Healthy Stevenage Partners on 18th June 2021 and will be effective until 31st March 2022.

References:

[1] Public Health England (PHE) ‘Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19

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[2] Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups

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[3] Build Back Fairer: COVID-19 Marmot Review

<https://www.health.org.uk/publications/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review>

[4] The Lancet 2021 – the year of reconditioning

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[5] State of Ageing 2020

www.ageing-better.org.uk/state-of-ageing-20

[6] Digital Exclusion Case Studies: Covid-19 Patient Experience:

<https://www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/sites/healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/files/HwH-Digital-Exclusion-Report-FINAL.pdf>

[7] Covid-19 Patient Experience:

<https://www.healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/sites/healthwatchhertfordshire.co.uk/files/HwH-Covid-19-Patient-Experience-Report-FINAL.pdf>

[8] Covid Food Study: 4 Policy Briefings:

<https://arc-eoe.nihr.ac.uk/research-implementation/research-themes/prevention-and-early-detection-health-and-social-care>

five ways
to
wellbeing
connect
be active
take notice
keep learning
give

Special Thanks

We would like to send a special thanks to all our Healthy Stevenage Partners for your collective efforts made to support health protection and wider recovery plans across Stevenage. We look forward to our continued partnership to drive our

Vision

To reduce health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of Stevenage residents.

& Mission

To help all residents live well, be happy and healthy for as long as possible by providing high quality services in partnership that are accessible to all.





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