

Tuesday 14 October 2025

To the Public Bill Committee on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

Re: Submission of support for the amendment to the definition of "General Health Determinants" in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

On behalf of the Quality of Life Foundation, and ahead of the Public Bill Committee meetings next week, we would like to formally register our strong support for the [evidence provided by the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission](#) regarding the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.

We believe their proposal for an amendment (expansion) to the definition of "General Health Determinants" in subsection 5 of Section 43 of the Bill is critical to the success of this legislation.

The Quality of Life Foundation focuses on how the built environment impacts the health, wellbeing and lives of people. Our work shows that a narrow definition of health risks undermining the very communities the Bill seeks to empower. We support updating the definition because it will:

- Align the Bill with the latest evidence on the structural and spatial drivers of health inequalities. This includes factors like the critical role of individuals and communities in meaningfully shaping local decisions, as well as opportunities for active lives and access to nature - all of which our evidence-backed [Quality of Life Framework](#) identifies as essential components for health and wellbeing.
- Ensure consistency with current national and international legislative and policy frameworks that recognise the interconnectedness of climate, place, and public health.
- Provide Combined Authorities with the clarity and mandate they need to deliver on their new health duty, recognising the scale and breadth of the challenges faced in creating truly *healthy places*.
- Strengthen accountability by making key determinants - including those related to the quality of our built environment and social connections - explicit.

This is an evidence-led amendment that strengthens the Bill without altering its core intent. If supported, this revision will:

- Give Combined Authorities a clearer mandate to act on modern health determinants and reduce inequalities by addressing issues like poor housing, air quality, and access to services.

- Align the Bill with existing government commitments (legislative and policy) on health prevention, climate resilience, and levelling up.
- Enable credible, place-based solutions that narrow health gaps between and within regions by focusing on holistic community wellbeing.
- Provide tools to address not just physical risk factors, but also loneliness and social disconnection, which are increasingly recognised as major public health challenges, by embedding community participation in local decision-making and place-shaping.

If the duty is genuinely about reducing inequalities and improving wellbeing, it must appropriately describe the full range of determinants that drive them. This evidence-led amendment ensures the duty reflects today's challenges and gives local leaders the necessary tools to build fairer, healthier, and higher-quality communities.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Cooke

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Quality of Life Foundation