

# What is a Marmot Place?



## 1. What is a Marmot Place?

A Marmot Place is a town, city, or region that commits to improving health and reducing health inequalities by acting on the wider determinants of health- the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age.

The concept comes from the work of Professor Sir Michael Marmot and the Institute of Health Equity (IHE). Marmot Places use evidence-based strategies to tackle the root causes of poor health, not just the symptoms.



## 2. Why is it needed?

Health inequalities are growing. People in poorer areas live shorter lives and spend more time in poor health. Marmot Places aim to change this by:

- **Addressing the root causes of inequality rather than just treating the symptoms-** many communities experience significant disparities in health outcomes due to factors like poverty, education, housing, and employment.
- **Taking a whole-system approach to health equity-** rather than isolated interventions, Marmot Places promote collaboration across sectors- to create systemic change.
- **Aligning national and local policy-** they help bridge the gap between national public health goals and local implementation, ensuring that strategies are coherent and mutually reinforcing.
- **Using the principle of proportionate universalism-** everyone gets support, but those with greater needs get more.
- **Community empowerment-** they emphasise the need to involve communities in decision-making, ensuring that policies and programmes reflect local priorities and lived experiences.



## 3. The 8 Marmot Principles

These 8 principles guide action in Marmot Places:

1. Give every child the best start in life
2. Enable all to maximise capabilities and control over their lives
3. Create fair employment and good work for all
4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
5. Create healthy and sustainable place and communities
6. Strengthen ill health prevention
7. Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes
8. Tackle racism and discrimination.



#### 4. How does it work in practice?

Each Marmot Place works with IHE to:

- 1. Assess local health inequalities:** Each Marmot Place begins by working with IHE to understand the scale and nature of local health inequalities. This includes reviewing existing data on health outcomes and the wider determinants of health, mapping current initiatives, and assessing the local context to identify what's driving inequalities. Places are also supported to evaluate gaps in current action and determine where additional focus is needed.
- 2. Develop tailored recommendations based on the Marmot principles:** Using insights from the assessment, IHE provide tailored recommendations to support the place to embed a long-term, whole system approach to improving health equity.
- 3. Build partnerships across councils, community groups, NHS, education, housing, businesses, and more:** A core component of becoming a Marmot Place is strengthening cross-sector collaboration.
- 4. Monitor progress using local data and indicators:** Marmot Places commit to monitoring progress over the short, medium and long term. This involves development locally relevant indicators based on the wider determinants of health and routinely evaluating whether interventions are reducing inequalities.

Examples of action include:

- [Coventry Job Shop](#): helping residents find work and training
- [Healthy Estates Strategy in Luton](#): improving health for social housing tenants
- [Selective Licensing in Leeds](#): improving private rental housing conditions



#### 5. What's happening in Norfolk and Waveney?

King's Lynn & West Norfolk are in the process of working with IHE to become a Marmot Place. Their first focus has been on 'Starting Well', and IHE have produced a [report](#) bringing together the insights collected so far and publishing recommendations. Their second focus will be on skills and employment.

Waveney has also begun their journey to becoming a Marmot Place, starting work with IHE in 2025.



#### 6. Challenges and considerations:

- **No direct funding for becoming a 'Marmot Place':** IHE does not provide implementation funding to areas pursuing Marmot Place status. The responsibility falls on local systems, requiring councils, NHS partners, and wider organisations to commit staff time, analytical capacity, and programme

funding. Strong local leadership is therefore crucial to prioritise health equity and secure the necessary investment across partners.

- **Requires culture change and cross-sector collaboration:** Becoming a Marmot Place is fundamentally a whole-system transformation, not a standalone project. It can involve shifting individual organisational culture to foster collaboration across many sectors and communities. Marmot Places are encouraged to evaluate how partners can work together more effectively, which often means addressing siloed working, aligning priorities, and creating shared accountability- challenges that take time and sustained leadership to resolve.
- **Includes embedding health equity across the system:** Marmot Places commit to embedding health equity into every part of the local system- from economic development and planning to early years services, employment programmes, housing strategies, and NHS commissioning. This whole-system approach means that organisations must adopt policies, redesign services, and adopt new decision-making frameworks rooted in the Marmot principles. Such embedding requires long-term commitment, continuous monitoring, and an ability to influence areas of work traditionally viewed as outside of public health. Improving health equity relies on taking a long-term, whole-system approach.



## 7. Final thought:

Becoming a Marmot Place is a commitment to fairness, health, and long-term change. It's not just a label- it's a way of working that brings people and organisations together to build healthier, more equal communities.

### Further reading:

- Marmot Places, Institute of Health Equity:  
<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/taking-action/marmot-places>
- Fair Society, Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review), Institute of Health Equity:  
<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>
- Marmot Review 10 Years On, Institute of Health Equity:  
<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/marmot-review-10-years-on>
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Institute of Health Equity:  
<https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/kings-lynn-and-west-norfolk>

- Tackling health inequalities in East Suffolk, East Suffolk Council:  
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/news/2025/tackling-health-inequalities-east-suffolk>