

Public Health Annual Report 2020-21

Report of the Director of Public Health

Recommendation: Cabinet is asked to receive the annual report of the Director of Public Health 2020-21 on 'Covid-19' and to note its recommendations.

1. Background

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- 1.1. The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to write an annual report, and the local authority has a statutory duty to publish it (section 73B [5] & [6] of the 2006 NHS Act, inserted by section 31 of the 2012 Health and Social Care Act). This enables the Director of Public Health to make an independent judgement about the state of the health of the local population and ensures that the report will be published and in the public domain. The annual report by the Director of Public Health is therefore different from all other reports received from an officer in that it is not a Cabinet Member report.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This Annual Public Health Report for Devon County Council is my first report as Director of Public Health.
- 2.2 This year's annual report looks back over the past twelve months, describing the story of COVID-19, assessing the impact it has had on people's lives, and on local services, workplaces and businesses.
- 2.3 The report also covers the general health of the population of Devon; increasingly the detail about health and wellbeing can be found in the annual Joint Strategic Needs assessment which is available at: www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna.
- 2.4 The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone, but it has not affected everyone to the same extent. What we have known for a long time is that not everybody in society has the same risk of becoming ill or of dying early and the differences are related to many factors including gender, ethnic group, and poverty.
- 2.5 The report is structured to give a timeline of significant dates and events during the past twelve months and then covers the key impacts of the pandemic on individuals, families and how inequalities have been exacerbated due to the pandemic. The report also considers the wider impact on communities and society and reflects on how communities came together to respond and support one another.
- 2.6 The report highlights how the learning from previous events can help guide us as we work together to recover from the pandemic. The report contains a number of recommendations to help us to live safely with COVID during the years to come, and help us Build Back Fairer.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The 10 recommendations set out in the report are:

1. Public Health Devon, working with colleagues within Devon County Council, the NHS and Public Health England, maintains a comprehensive COVID-19 surveillance system to provide real-time monitoring data to enable swift and decisive actions to any increase in cases or outbreaks.
2. An effective local testing and contact tracing service, run by Public Health Devon, is maintained for as long as required to support the NHS Test and Trace service.
3. The local authority's health protection function is reviewed in the light of the pandemic and the relationship with the new UK Health Security Agency* (replacing Public Health England) is established.
4. Lessons from reviews of the response informs how we prepare for and respond to future communicable disease outbreaks and shapes our recovery.
5. Devon County Council continues to work with NHS partners and other stakeholders to promote the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, with a particular focus on addressing inequalities in uptake.
6. Public Health Devon continues to advocate for and contribute to Devon-wide, as well as place-based, plans for tackling poverty and reducing health inequalities.
7. Public Health Intelligence Team and Smarter Devon, with stakeholders, coordinate the gathering and sharing of intelligence on the wider impacts of the pandemic in Devon and that this is used to inform partners' recovery plans.
8. Public Health Devon continues to advocate for a collaborative, cross-sector asset-based approach to reducing inequalities ensuring that communities' assets, priorities and perspectives are understood by, and inform the support offered by, organisations.
9. Recovery programmes should be based on the evidence of what works to reduce health inequalities.
10. Review how agencies' policies and programmes and the use of impact assessment tools harness the potential we have for addressing the climate emergency and reducing inequalities

4. Financial considerations

4.1 Contained within the report.

5. Sustainability considerations

5.1 Contained within the report.

6. Carbon impact considerations

6.1 Contained within the report.

7. Equality considerations

7.1 Contained within the report.

8. Legal considerations

8.1 The publication of the annual report of the Director of Public Health by Devon County Council discharges a statutory responsibility under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

9. Risk management considerations

9.1 Contained within the report.

10. Public Health Impact

10.1 Contained within the report.

11. Recommendation

11.1 Cabinet is asked to receive the annual report of the Director of Public Health and to note its recommendations.

Steven Brown
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Devon County Council

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Public Health: Councillor Roger Croad

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper Date File Reference

Previous annual reports and this 2020-21 annual report of the Director of Public Health can be found at: www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/aph