

Service Delivery for Public Health Devon: In-Year Briefing

Report of the Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: Health and Adult Care Scrutiny is asked to note the update on the delivery of public health services in 2020.

~~~~~

### 1. Background

1.1. This report summarises the position on the delivery of public health service during 2020-21. It should be noted that this year, due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the local authority public health function has been at the centre of the response, especially since the publication of the national Contain Framework which required upper-tier and unitary local authorities, from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020, to establish COVID-19 Health Protection Boards and Local Outbreak Engagement Boards and a Local Outbreak Management Plan.

### 2. The delivery of the Council's strategic objectives: public health and health protection

2.1 Public Health Devon has been at the forefront of the local and regional response to the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic.

2.2 Specifically, Public Health Devon brought together the decision-making structures to deal with this international public health incident, under a Pandemic Incident Management Team (PIMT), which was chaired by the Director of Public Health. This enabled Devon County Council to:

- mobilise a rapid response across all key Council services;
- co-ordinate effort across the Local Authority;
- lead work with District Council partners, with the NHS, the police and other partners
- use the learning from the 'Doing What Matters' programme to support and develop high-quality decision-making and organisational response.

2.3 The Pandemic Incident Management Team was able to take swift decisions, with appropriate governance, about the deployment of additional resources to meet needs that were known to be escalating as a direct result of the pandemic, such as making

additional money available to support services responding to increasing incidents of domestic violence, or increasing payments to support infection control in care settings.

2.4 Public Health Devon has since established and provided leadership for:

- The Devon Local Outbreak Management Plan
- The Devon and Torbay COVID-19 Health Protection Board
- and a Tactical Management Group.

2.5 As part of this, Public Health Devon has developed with partners a series of protocols (standard operating procedures) to guide services in responding in a wide range of settings in the event of local outbreaks. It is noteworthy that the arrangements with the University of Exeter have been tested extensively in recent weeks and have worked well.

2.6 Public Health Devon has drawn extensively on its expertise in intelligence and health protection and the capability of the Emergency Planning team to respond to the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic.

### **3. The delivery of the Council's strategic objectives: public health and health improvement**

3.1 Public Health Devon's commissioned services have also responded quickly and innovatively. Commissioners and providers have worked together to vary contracts (where appropriate) to allow services to:

- focus on digital and telephone services where it has been deemed safe to stand-down the need for face-to-face delivery;
- develop innovative approaches to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

3.2 Examples of this include:

- the sexual health service provided by Northern Devon Healthcare Trust was able to move at speed to initiate telephone triage of everyone who would have otherwise attended one of their walk-in centres;
- the substance misuse service provided by EDP/Together rapidly organised virtual contact with clients for support and welfare checks as well as continuing to deliver face-to-face interventions for the most complex clients; was able to modify prescriptions at short notice to provide opiate substitute therapy to individuals without the need for them to attend community pharmacies; in addition,
- the healthy lifestyles services provided by 'Everyone Health' mobilised a vaping pilot offer to rough sleepers who were smokers wanting and needed to quit to facilitate the accommodation they were provided as part of the 'Everyone In' programme;
- the health visiting service provided by Children's Services created a digital/phone model of delivery for health visiting and school nursing which was largely received very positively by families and complemented this with a comprehensive catch-up process based on targeting of higher need families for the 1575 babies born during lockdown who had only had a digital contact

- 3.3 Alongside responding to the Pandemic, Public Health Devon continues to support the local health and care system, including working with selected primary care networks to test new approaches to population health management, and by providing public health advice to NHS Devon CCG. The Director of Public Health also contributes to NHS senior system meetings on behalf of the Directors of Public Health for Torbay and Plymouth.

#### **4. Delivery of the budget in line with the previously agreed budget**

- 4.1 The work of Public Health Devon - and all of its commissioned services - are funded from within a ring-fenced grant that is paid directly to Devon County Council from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). There are no actual or projected overspends to report against budget projections at the mid-year point.
- 4.2 Where contracts are paid on the basis of activity, there are underspends at the mid-year point, as fewer people have accessed services in both General Practice and in community pharmacies. Any underspends, though, are a delayed cost (as an example: there have been fewer health checks in the first half of the year than had been budgeted for but the expectation is that those health checks will still happen, just at a later date) rather than an actual saving. In terms of any significant variations from budget, Public Health Nursing recruitment vacancies currently account for approximately £300k underspend on the budget.
- 4.3 Money that hasn't been spent at year end remains within the statutory Public Health ring-fenced reserve, as required by the conditions of the Grant, and it may only be spent on the Grant's defined public health services.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 Health and Adult Care Scrutiny is asked to note the update on the delivery of public health services so far in 2020.

#### **6. Financial considerations**

- 6.1 Contained within the report, particularly pertaining to the conditions of the ring-fenced Public Health grant.

#### **7. Legal considerations**

- 7.1 The deployment of the Public Health Grant for specified services is a statutory responsibility under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

#### **8. Environmental impact considerations**

- 8.1 Contained within the report.

#### **9. Equality considerations**

- 9.1 Contained within the report.

#### **10. Risk assessment considerations**

- 10.1 Contained within the report.

**Dr Virginia Pearson**

**CHIEF OFFICER FOR COMMUNITIES, PUBLIC HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND PROSPERITY AND DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Electoral Divisions:** All

Cabinet Member for Community, Public Health and Transportation and Environmental Services: Councillor Roger Croad

Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment, and Prosperity: Dr Virginia Pearson

**Background publications**

More information on health outcomes in Devon can be found in the Public Health Annual Report for 2019-20:

[www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/aphr](http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/aphr)