

18 August 2021 Standing Overview Group – Public Health Focus

Report of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Members

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to confirmation by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendations:

That the Committee shares the learning from the most recent Standing Overview Group meeting which focussed on Public Health to inform its future work programme.

Background

The Standing Overview Group of the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee meets bi-monthly as an information sharing and member development session where issues are presented to the councillors to raise awareness and increase knowledge. Any action points arising from the sessions are reported back to the formal Committee meeting. On 18 August 2021 the Standing Overview Group received presentations from officers on Public Health, which particularly focussed on their latest annual report.

Members in Attendance

- Cllr Sara Randall Johnson (Chair)
- Cllr David Cox
- Cllr Ian Hall
- Cllr Carol Whitton
- Cllr Martin Wrigley
- Cllr James McInnes (Cabinet Member)

2020/21 Public Health Annual Report

Officers from Public Health provided members with an overview of [2020/21 Public Health Annual Report](#):

- The report centres on Covid both from an epidemiological point of view, and Devon perspective and response. There is a significant focus on the impact of Covid, not just from a health perspective but from a societal and environmental one.
- A key feature of report is the disproportionate impact of Covid on certain communities, with the pandemic exacerbating inequalities.
- Many of the recommendations in the annual report focus on maintaining capacity that has been developed through collaboration with health colleagues as well as districts in terms of test and trace, to ensure a robust health protection system is in place.
- The report includes headline data but seeks to encourage a move to accessing digital data that is up to date in a way an annual report cannot be.

Officers guided members through various resources on the [Devon Health and Wellbeing webpages](#), and then those relating to the [Devon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#), which is a statutory function of the Health & Wellbeing Board, but has use in terms of neighbourhood planning, community groups and voluntary sector, schools and universities. Officers highlighted:

- Discrepancy in health outcomes in different areas in the County. North / South divide in terms of multiple indices of deprivation with a 10-15-year gap in life expectancy between different communities.
- The impact of poor mental health.
- The need to understand what the health and care needs of a population of a geographical area are, and what is being done to address those needs. Strive to have an intelligence led health and care system as the foundation of decision making, not just as required by law.
- The need to create happy and healthy communities.
- Encourage members to use the resources available. Officers happy to support members with detailed neighbourhood information on interactive tools available. JSNA links to be included as a resource on members [Sharepoint](#) site.

Issues Identified by Members

The following issues were identified by members during their discussion with officers:

- Important for all members to have clarity around health needs of the population.
- Concern as to the significant variance in life expectancy in different parts of the County, and the action being taken to address issues in certain communities. Officers accepted that they need to gain traction on change in a way that they have not been able to date. It is not a simple fix, but through the Integrated Care System and Local Care Partnerships there are both the opportunities and the appetite to address these inequalities.
- The dynamics of need, demand and supply are critical. How to help people live their lives as well as they can in the place they want to be.
- Small pots of funding can really help community groups in local delivery.
- Issues with workforce and ability to supply services with older population and reducing working age population.
- There are issues in some communities where a need is identified, and services are put in place but then not accessed. Officers noted the importance of a universal element of service delivery but there also needs to be a targeted offer to certain communities to get the take up.
- The Chief Officer for Adult Care and Health highlighted Locality Care Partnerships as being key to delivering transformation change at local level.
- The importance of asset-based community development. Communities understand the local issues and are key to finding solutions. Member's role in enabling those they represent to be empowered in moving forward. Members need to be community advocates and a conduit for hearing what is happening on the ground.
- Using workplaces to communicate health information.

- The opportunity as a system to be braver and do things differently. The need to better understand what barriers are stopping things happening. It is not just about money, but about working together, overcoming cultural barriers, data sharing etc.
- Putting early intervention in place to try to reduce more costly demand further down the line. Officers advised that there are financial models in terms of preventative work to reduce acute costs.
- The importance of undertaking a health inequalities impact assessment on every decision taken. It is as much about prevention and early intervention as treatment.
- Public Health urge the County Council, and the wider health system to ensure that on all decisions made there is an analysis of whether its impact will make health outcomes better or worse in terms of inequalities. It is a challenge for the Scrutiny function to review how successfully this is happening. Scrutiny needs to continue to challenge, to be curious, inquisitive and to look for innovation.

Conclusion

The Committee thanked officers for attending this meeting and recognised the invaluable role Public Health has played, and very much continues to play, in terms of responding to the unprecedented challenges society has faced through the pandemic.

A further session on the JSNA and the Health & Wellbeing Strategy is planned for members later in the Autumn.

Key Links Referenced

- **JSNA Summary:** report picking out the main health and wellbeing headlines for Devon: [Devon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Summary - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#)
- **Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Report:** monitors Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities for Devon, districts and inequalities: [Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Report - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#)
- **Vital Statistics Tool:** Devon and local authority level population and health statistics (an live 'appendix' to our Annual Public Health report: [Vital Statistics tool - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#)
- **JSNA Headline Tool:** the community profile tool from our JSNA providing population, health, social and economic information at various community levels including small areas (LSOAs) and electoral divisions: [JSNA headline tool - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#)
- **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy:** sets out the priorities for the Health and Wellbeing Board and constituent organisations from 2020 to 2025: [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Devon Health and Wellbeing](#)

Councillor Sara Randall Johnson, Chair Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee

Electoral Divisions: All
Local Government Act 1972
[List of Background Papers](#)

Contact for Enquiries: Dan Looker / Tel No: (01392) 382232

Background Paper	Date	File Ref
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Nil

There are no equality issues associated with this report