

Service Delivery for Public Health Devon: In-Year Briefing  
Report of the Director of Public Health

Recommendation: Health and Adult Care Scrutiny is asked to note the update on the delivery of public health services in 2021.

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**1. Background**

1.1. This report summarises the position on the delivery of public health service during 2021-22. Since the beginning of the Pandemic Public Health Devon has played a significant leadership role in the ongoing response to Covid-19. Public Health Devon as part of the Covid-19 response includes the establishment of the Devon and Torbay Health Protection Board and the Team Devon Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

**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 has lead the Covid-19 tactical response through a multi-agency Tactical Management Group (TMG), which was chaired by the Director of Public Health. This has 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;
- establish a Devon Local Contacting Tracing Service and a Devon Community Testing Programme
- use the learning from the 'Doing What Matters' programme to support and develop high-quality decision-making and organisational response.

2.3 The Tactical Management Group has been able to take swift decisions, with appropriate governance, about the deployment of additional resources and actions to help control the spread of the virus.

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
- Team Devon Local Outbreak Engagement Board
- Devon Tactical Management Group.

2.5 As part of this, Public Health Devon has had to develop with key partners a series of standard operating procedures to guide services in responding in a wide range of settings in the event of local outbreaks.

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's commissioned services continue to innovate to do what they can to meet people's needs. Commissioned services continue to offer face-to-face services for people that need to be seen but have also created opportunities for people to have their needs assessed and met remotely.
- 3.2 Both Public Health Nursing and Substance Misuse services have faced significant staffing challenges in terms of recruitment and retention.
- 3.3 Commissioners and providers have worked together to vary contracts as necessary to reflect the new ways of working required to deliver against the backdrop of a pandemic and together are reviewing the lessons learned from the changes that have been introduced to ensure the positives are identified and retained.

### **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 There are underspends emerging at the mid-year point for two reasons:
  - As a result of the pandemic, fewer people overall have accessed services in both General Practice and in community pharmacies
  - Public Health Devon has utilised the central Government Covid-19 funding, Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF), to support staffing resource and some services during the pandemic, funding that otherwise would have had to come from Public Health's budget.

However, any underspends represent **delayed** costs, rather than savings.

- 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 2021.

### **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.

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