

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Cabinet
Date:	15 March 2022
Title:	Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2021-22 - Covid-19: addressing inequalities in mental health and wellbeing across Hampshire.
Report From:	Director of Public Health

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present Cabinet with the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health ahead of publication.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

2. Note the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2021.
3. Endorse the recommendations within the Annual Report which are listed below in paragraph 8.

Contextual Information

4. The 2012 Health and Care Act placed a statutory duty on upper tier Local Authorities to improve and protect the health of their residents.
5. The Director of Public Health has a statutory duty to produce an annual report about the health of the local population. The content and structure of the report is decided each year by the Director of Public Health, based on key issue of health and wellbeing that would benefit from a focused review. The requirement

placed on Hampshire County Council as the relevant local authority is to publish the report.

6. The three previous reports have focused on:

- Tackling environmental factors is vital to addressing obesity in Hampshire
- Reducing Serious Violence
- Shaping Place to improve health outcomes

7. The annual report of the Director of Public Health is appended to this report:

Report Recommendations

8. The report recommendations made by the Director of Public Health are as follows:

- i. Work with partners across Hampshire to promote a prevention-focused approach towards improving the public's mental and emotional health through progressing the work of Hampshire's Mental Health Prevention Concordat.
- ii. Work alongside community, voluntary sector and district partners to identify how we can support mental health and wellbeing for people from ethnic minority backgrounds and other populations at increased risk of COVID-19 in Hampshire. This includes utilising Community Researchers to engage with their communities to understand key issues around mental and emotional health and wellbeing.
- iii. Mobilise community assets to promote mental and physical health and wellbeing via the implementation of a Community Champion programme, whilst also strengthening communities through a sustained Men's Activity Network.
- iv. Strengthen the pathways for people with co-occurring mental health and alcohol and drug use conditions, working with the NHS Transforming Mental Health Services programme
- v. Ensuring that mental health services are equally accessible for everyone, including those from ethnic minority groups who are more likely to have been affected by the impact of COVID-19.

- vi. Focus on the wider social and economic factors to address inequalities and mental health. For example, understanding the impact of COVID-19 on people's personal finances and mental wellbeing and seeking to address these through targeted resources for residents and training programmes to support front-line staff.
- vii. Building capacity and capability across frontline workforces to prevent mental health problems and promote good mental and emotional wellbeing within their everyday practice using the Public Mental Health Leadership and Workforce Development Framework Call to Action.
- viii. Continuing to promote public-facing culturally competent mental and emotional wellbeing resources and targeted communications campaigns, especially to address areas of inequalities

Executive Summary

- 9. This year's report is focussed on COVID-19: addressing inequalities in mental health and wellbeing across Hampshire.
- 10. COVID-19 has had a major impact on mental health and wellbeing – both as a direct consequence of illness, of working on the frontline, and because of the policy changes designed to protect us from infection. For some people these will be short-lived, but for others they will have a lasting impact.
- 11. Evidence has shown that Covid-19 has widened existing inequalities and some of the most vulnerable people have been the most badly affected. For example, we know that those living in areas of deprivation, people with existing physical and mental health conditions and black, Asian and ethnic minorities are more likely to be at risk of worsening mental health outcomes. These are the same groups that are often vulnerable in other ways. COVID-19 has therefore put a spotlight on existing inequalities and is a necessary trigger for action to protect those most vulnerable across communities in Hampshire.
- 12. The report provides a summary of the inequalities in mental health and wellbeing that have come to light during the pandemic across different life stages, and some of the actions required to tackle these. Case studies are used to highlight key areas of good practice in Hampshire. These include the use of technology to improve access to mental health services for children, young people and their families, work across the system on debt and anxiety and furthering the work of the Men's Activity Network to improve mental and emotional wellbeing.

Conclusion/next steps

13. The report will showcase the impact of COVID-19 on specific groups within the population, highlighting the inequalities in mental health and wellbeing and the actions needed to address these. It will be vital to work across the whole system to improve mental and emotional wellbeing and reduce inequalities.
14. The recommendations focus on building on the work already taking place to improve mental health and wellbeing in Hampshire through:
 - harnessing Hampshire's Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health to improve mental health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities.
 - working collaboratively with partners, including through the ICS mental health transformation, to support mental health and wellbeing planning and recovery, especially where inequalities exist.
 - Nurture and accelerate work through Public Health-led workstreams, with a continued focus on building capacity, capability and coordinated communications alongside key partners.