

MEETING:	Health and social care overview and scrutiny committee
MEETING DATE:	3 May 2016
TITLE OF REPORT:	Public health accountability session
REPORT BY:	Director of public health

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an executive decision

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

To hold a public accountability session to discuss the performance of the public health service in Herefordshire.

Recommendation

THAT:

- (a) the committee consider the performance of public health in 2015/16; and**
- (b) with reference to the suggestions or opportunities for future scrutiny work, agree any items for inclusion in the committee's work programme for 2016/17.**

Alternative Options

1. There are no relevant alternative options. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 set out new responsibilities for local authorities in relation to a wide range of public health functions that had been the responsibility of the NHS. For April 2013 local government has received a grant from the Department of Health to commission a range of health promotion, screening and treatment services. These services include school nursing; health visiting, smoking cessation, obesity prevention, substance misuse treatment and infection control. As the core of these services are mandated, local authorities are required to commission them.

Reasons for Recommendations

2. Accountability sessions provide a way for health and social care bodies to be challenged and questioned about their service and allow for the identification of items to be included on the committee's work programme.

Key considerations

3. This accountability session focuses on public health and:
 - the key work that the public health team of Herefordshire Council has completed through the previous year;
 - any success throughout the previous year;
 - any challenges throughout the previous year;
 - key areas of concentration for the coming year;
 - areas of risk for the coming year; and
 - areas that might be beneficial of an input by scrutiny, such as by way of a task and finish group.

Overview

4. Adults: According to Public Health England's (PHE) healthier lives table, Herefordshire is one of the healthiest places in England to live. Out of the 150 local authorities Herefordshire is ranked 21st in terms of its premature mortality rates. PHE defines premature mortality as a death before the age of 75 years. Within this overall ranking there are variations for particular diseases that are the causes of death. For example in terms of deaths from lung cancer we are rated 3rd out of 150 local authorities. (1st is best and 150th is worst rated.) However for heart disease we are rated 64th and below the national average. In contrast we are rated 8th best for our premature mortality rate for strokes.
5. Children: In contrast our child health performance is generally at or around the national performance rates for the west midlands region and the figures for England. For example our immunisation rates for children are slightly below the regional average, although we have made progress this year in improving them. Our rates of dental caries are higher than the regional average and along with the number of children within the county who are clinically obese or over weight is of concern. As rates of physical activity amongst children and young people are low there is concern that without changes in their lifestyles our children and young people will grow up at greater risk of health problems such as heart disease and diabetes.
6. Opportunities for future scrutiny
 - Mental health services for children and young people. Supporting schools and young people
 - Delivery of an obesity framework
 - Extent to which public health is imbedded in sustainability and transformation programme work

Community impact

7. The topics selected for the scrutiny work programme should have regard to what matters to residents of Herefordshire.

Equality duty

8. The focus of public health interventions is to reduce health inequalities and to commission interventions that are accessible to hard to reach communities. All of the services that are commissioned by the public health grant meet the national and local requirements of our public sector equality duties.

Financial Implications

9. Public health grant: At a time when the government is advocating the need for more preventative measure to improve the health of the nation, due to the national austerity measures the treasury reduced the public health grant nationally in 2015/16 by £200 million. This equated to a 6.2% cut in the national and local grant. For Herefordshire Council this meant a cut of £571,000. For 2016/17 a further cut is being made by the treasury equivalent to an 8.5% cut in the grant, meaning a loss of over £720,000. The treasury is proposing an additional cut in 2017/18 of a further £200,000. As Herefordshire Council receives less than the national average per capita allocation, these cuts will mean a reduction in the council's ability to invest in prevention services. Whilst it has been acknowledged nationally that rural councils receive less funding than their urban counterparts, the national government has yet to take steps to allocate a fairer funding formula to address the needs of rural areas. This has been further discussed in the presentation.

Legal Implications

10. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 provides that Local authorities have a statutory duty to improve the health of their population. The Director of Public health is required to produce an Annual Report on the health of the local population and the convening of a public session to discuss the performance of the public health service in Herefordshire will contribute to this

Risk management

11. There is a reputational risk to the council if the Council fails to discharge its public health responsibilities as set out in the H&SC Act 2012.

Consultees

12. Public health team consults regularly on the public health programmes and services (covered in this report) with management board, council, cabinet and leader, NHS commissioning bodies, category one responders, voluntary organisations and

provides such as Taurus, Wye Valley NHS Trust, Worcester Community Healthcare Trust and Addaction

Appendices

Appendix a – 2015 health profile for Herefordshire

Appendix b – child health profile 2016 for Herefordshire

Link to key data

[Public Health England interactive data](#)

Background Papers

None identified.