

Title of report: Director of Public Health Annual Report

Meeting: Health and wellbeing board

Meeting date: Monday 8 March 2021

Report by: Director of Public Health

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards)

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the 2020 Director of Public Health (DPH) annual report and to seek the support of the Health and Wellbeing Board in implementing the recommendations.

The report identifies key areas for action to tackle some of the societal impacts of COVID-19.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The Health and Wellbeing Board notes and considers the findings of the report, and provides leadership in addressing inequalities created by, or exacerbated by, the COVID-19 pandemic, through recognition of these challenges, communicating the key messages of the report to their constituent members, and identifying further actions that can be taken by constituent organisations and across the system.**

Alternative options

1. The Health and Wellbeing Board may receive the report but determine that they will put in place different arrangements to support the health and wellbeing of Herefordshire residents during the pandemic, and during the period of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key considerations

2. Directors of Public Health have a statutory requirement to write an independent annual report on the health of their population. The Director of Public Health Annual Report is a vehicle for informing local people about the health of their community, as well as providing necessary information for decision makers in local health services and authorities on health gaps and priorities that need to be addressed. The report is informed by and sits alongside the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (Understanding Herefordshire).
3. The focus of the 2020 report is the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has affected every member of our society, either through direct effects on our health, or indirectly through the impact of lockdowns, social isolation and wider economic disruptions. It is clear that COVID-19 has disproportionately affected certain members of our society, such as the elderly, the vulnerable and those of minority ethnic backgrounds. The report looks at the impact of COVID-19 on the Herefordshire population and identifies challenges that will need to be met in order to support Herefordshire's recovery from the pandemic.
4. The impacts of COVID-19 are far-reaching and will affect every member of Herefordshire's population either directly through the effect of the virus on their health, or indirectly as a result of isolation measures, detrimental effects on education and the economy, or wider social concerns such as longer-term impact on access to healthcare and suitable housing.
5. COVID-19 has exposed existing inequalities, and created new inequalities, across the UK. In Herefordshire, the elderly and those in care homes have been particularly affected through being in closer contact with carers, being more likely to develop severe disease, and being more likely to experience social isolation and loneliness during periods of lockdown. Children have missed school, which risks an impact on future educational attainment. Additionally, through not being at school, there are some children who are not receiving school meals and therefore risk not being fed adequately nutritious food at home. Those living in rural areas, as in much of Herefordshire, are likely to find it even harder than usual to access healthcare given reductions in available appointments, and longer waiting times.
6. The 2020 Annual Director of Public Health Report outlines the challenges that Herefordshire has faced during the different waves of the pandemic. It documents the response of the community and the council to meet these challenges, and suggests areas of focus for the coming years to address the needs that have arisen as a result of the pandemic.
7. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of whole-system, partnership approaches in all that we do. The effects of the virus are so broad that in order to support a safe and healthy local recovery, a holistic approach, as suggested in the report, is necessary.

Community impact

8. The Director of Public Health Annual Report recommendations are all designed to have a positive impact on the community by delivering more robust and effective approaches to improve health and wellbeing and tackling inequalities.
9. The recommendations specifically identify priority areas to focus on to tackle the challenges created by the impact of COVID-19 in Herefordshire.
10. This is in line with the current County Plan, and pursuing existing agendas such as the Children and Young People's Plan, Talk Community, making Herefordshire a Sustainable Food Place, and ongoing towards carbon neutrality by 2030. Additionally, there will need to be a focus on the local economic recovery, with support to re-establish the visitor economy and local small businesses.

Environmental Impact

11. This report considers the health and wider social impact of the COVID-19 virus on the Herefordshire population, within which is a consideration of the indirect impact of the virus on the environment.

Equality duty

12. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
13. This is a factual report that sets out the impact and response to COVID-19 in Herefordshire, identifying and recommending inequalities to be addressed. Therefore we believe that this will not have a detrimental impact on anyone that shares a protected characteristic and as the report aims to highlight and ensure that health inequalities are addressed we believe this will support the council in fulfilling its equality duty in particular advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

Resource implications

14. There are no direct resource implications from the publication of the 2020 DPH annual report.
15. Not all of the activity outlined in the recommendations has been costed at this stage and where this is the case those projects will require further work across relevant organisations.

Legal implications

16. Every Director of Public Health must produce an annual report. This is a statutory requirement and must be complied with.

Risk management

17. The risks and opportunities associated with the delivery of the recommendations of the Director of Public Health Annual Report are identified below:

<u>Risk / opportunity</u>	<u>Mitigation</u>
The impact of COVID-19 on health and wellbeing are not understood.	Data presented to describe the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on health and wellbeing, in addition to analysis of who is most at risk from COVID-19.
HWBB constituent members do not utilise the findings reported in the DPH report to inform their decisions and actions, including provision of services, in Herefordshire.	Report shared with HWBB. DPH working with partners in the development and delivery of various plans, for example Herefordshire Council delivery plan for the County Plan, and with NHS partners on Integrated Care System development and local Primary Care Networks.

Consultees

18. None

Appendices

Appendix 1: Director of Public Health 2020 Annual Report. The impact of COVID-19 on Herefordshire.

Background papers

None identified.

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report

DPH: Director of Public Health

HWBB: Health and Wellbeing Board