

CUMBRIA HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Meeting date: 17 June 2022

From: Director of Public Health

COVID 19: HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD – THE IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON INEQUALITIES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 *This cover note gives a brief update on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board Inequalities Task and Finish Group. A report including recommendations is to be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board at the next Board development session. The report aims to construct a framework for a conversation at the Health and Wellbeing Board around what approach is required to:–*

- i) mitigate inequalities which have developed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and to mitigate any potential impacts of COVID-19 which is currently still circulating in the population.*
- ii) address inequalities as part of Cumbria's stabilisation and recovery plans.*

1.2 *Following this discussion, the amended report will then be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board for agreement in September 2022.*

2.0 LINKS TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board exists to provide strategic leadership and promote closer integration of health and care, through partners working together to ensure that everyone in Cumbria is able to benefit from improvements in health and wellbeing.

2.2 The Board has a responsibility to ensure a collective awareness of the major changes, pressures and risks across health and wellbeing services and provide opportunity to review, comment and consider the opportunities for collaborative approaches to address or manage these.

2.3 The Board is responsible for providing a structure for strategic local planning and accountability of health and wellbeing related services across a range of sectors and providers and for providing County-wide strategic leadership to public health, NHS, adults social care, children's social care and other relevant local authority commissioning - acting as a focal point for determining and agreeing health and wellbeing priorities and outcomes.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Board is asked to:-

- i. Note that a report describing the work undertaken by the task and finish group containing recommendations for the HWBB Recovery Priorities will be presented at the next Board development session.***
- ii. Agree to have a substantive discussion at the next HWBB development session on the recommendations of the task and finish group for agreement on the Health and Wellbeing Board Recovery Priorities.***

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 On the 11th March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO), declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. In Cumbria there has been significant impact caused by the pandemic. Disease control measures alongside strategic and operational planning for optimum patient care arrangements have over the last two years rightly been the centremost priority. The pandemic will have far reaching and long-lasting consequences for health and well-being in communities across Cumbria. Many people have experienced the devastating loss of family members or friends, and there have been significant impacts on businesses, communities and organisations. Additional inequalities in health have and will continue to manifest as a result of the social, economic and environmental consequences of a variety of control measures as well as the direct health consequences of the disease. Public Health focused forward planning will be essential to lessen the negative longer-term impacts on morbidity and to reduce the increased impact of the pandemic on inequalities.

4.2 In July 2020 a paper was submitted to the HWBB outlining the recovery structures that had been put in place in Cumbria in order start to rebuild after Covid). It was agreed that the HWBB priorities for the next year would be:

Wellbeing:

- Priority 1 - Addressing the impact that Covid has had on the emotional and mental wellbeing of Children and young people.
- Priority 2 - Building on the community response to Covid - supporting people and communities in Cumbria to thrive.
- Priority 3 - Addressing the impact of Covid has had on the wider determinants of health. In particular, focussing on the impact that the economic downturn will have on individuals, families and communities.

Sustainability of Health and Care System:

- Priority 1 Development of new service delivery models
- Priority 2 Sustainability of the Regulated Care Market

- 4.3 In July 2021 a paper was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board outlining the impact of Covid-19 on inequalities. The paper aimed to construct a framework for a conversation at the Health and Wellbeing Board around what approach is required to:
- Mitigate further inequalities which may develop due to further possible measures that may be required to control the spread of COVID-19 which is currently still circulating in the population.
 - Address inequalities as part of Cumbria's stabilisation and recovery plans.
- 4.4 The paper described how the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted existing inequalities with people living in our most deprived communities, males, people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds having higher rates of infection and sadly mortality from COVID-19. The highest mortality rate has been seen in London, followed by the North West and the North East. A greater negative impact on mental and financial wellbeing has been seen in the North of England than the rest of the country. The paper highlighted that allowing these inequalities to continue will result in poorer population health outcomes and a missed opportunity to learn from the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4.5 The paper also highlighted that deprivation-related inequalities in the mortality rate from COVID-19 follow a similar trajectory to inequalities in mortality from other causes, this suggests that the drivers of COVID-19 mortality are similar to the wider causes of inequalities in health.
- 4.6 Following the presentation of the paper the HWBB recommended that a small task and finish group was established to take the outcomes from the discussion and bring forward a refresh of the Health and Wellbeing Board Recovery Priorities.
- 4.7 The role of the task and finish group was to bring together representatives from the Health and Wellbeing Board with colleagues from across the county. The aim of the group was to undertake a refresh of the Health and Wellbeing Board Recovery Priorities considering the potential impacts of COVID-19 on the existing inequalities faced by certain population groups within Cumbria.

5.0 SCOPE OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- 5.1 The group first met in August of 2021 where the chair, group membership, Terms of Reference and scope of the review was agreed. The group was multi agency, non-executive and as far as possible, worked on the basis of consensus to:
- Review the data on the impact of COVID-19 on inequalities in Cumbria.
 - Review the Recovery Strategy Priorities and Outcomes Framework to ensure they include actions to try and mitigate the impacts identified.
 - Discuss the local response of the Health and Wellbeing Board partners to tackling health inequalities as part of the COVID recovery strategy and identify key workstreams.

- Develop priorities/actions to fill gaps in the priorities for the Outcomes Framework.
- 5.2 It was initially agreed that the group would meet for six months, however due to the Lancashire and Cumbria Health Equity Commission (HEC) it was agreed to extend the group until the HEC report and recommendations was published to ensure they were considered by the group.
- 5.3 A project plan based on the findings in the July 2021 paper was developed. Guest speakers were invited to group meetings to inform the group of the local issues and priorities.

6.0 THEMES IDENTIFIED

- 6.1 The task group identified several topics they would like the review to cover at their first meeting, other topics e.g., the cost-of-living crisis emerged during the life of the group. Key topics included:
- Care sector
 - Children and young people
 - Housing and homelessness
 - Poverty
 - Cost of living crisis
 - Unpaid carers
 - Older people/healthy ageing
 - Domestic Violence
 - Physical Health and Activity
 - Obesity and weight management services
 - Digital inclusion
 - BAMER Communities
 - Mental health and wellbeing
 - Health services
 - Community resilience
- 6.2 As part of the project plan the group invited guests with knowledge and experience of the themes identified to attend meetings with the aim to generate discussions and gather evidence to inform the priorities going forward. Specifically, the group focused on how inequalities impact on the lives of individuals and families in Cumbria, particularly if the pandemic had exacerbated these inequalities.

7.0 CONTENT OF THE REPORT FOR DISCUSSION

7.1 The report that will be presented to the Board development day will include -

- Update on the mortality impacts of Covid-19
- Mapping of local strategies/plans
- Update on the Recovery Strategy
- Details of the findings of the task and finish group on the themes identified
- Recommendations for the Health and Wellbeing Board Recovery Priorities.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

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