

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Report

<b>Committee:</b>	Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board
<b>Date:</b>	07 December 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Health Protection Annual Report 2022 - 2023
<b>Report From:</b>	Simon Bryant, Director of Public Health

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Director of Public Health's Health Protection Annual Report, ahead of publication. It describes the work to protect the health of the people of Hampshire and the future focus of health protection activities in the year to come.

### Recommendation(s)

That the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board:

2. Notes and agrees the 2022-2023 Health Protection Annual Report of the Director of Public Health.
3. Supports the future focus of health protection activities for 2023-2024.

### Executive Summary

4. This is the second health protection annual report produced by Hampshire County Council's Public Health team covering the period from April 2022 through to March 2023, with a forward look on planned activities for the following year.
5. The Health Protection Board (HPB), led by the Director of Public Health, has provided a forum for oversight and assurance on health protection matters across the Hampshire and Isle of Wight geographies. It has enabled discussion on priority areas identified in the previous annual report and continues to be

the route by which partners across the health protection system can collectively address health protection issues and incidents.

6. This year's report reflects a period of transition and renewed direction, as we safely exit the COVID-19 pandemic. Work by the Council's Public Health team during 2022 and early 2023 can be broadly summarised across three areas:
  - Living with COVID-19
  - Responding to other emerging health protection issues
  - Renewing focus on vaccination, helping shape the National Vaccination Strategy
7. The above three areas of activity were underpinned by a communications strategy designed to address inequalities in the uptake of health protection behaviours, with a specific focus on vaccination.
8. Looking ahead to a future where COVID-19 is no longer considered a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC<sup>1</sup>), the Public Health team will continue to focus on supporting system recovery and responding to emerging health threats. Some of this work will be facilitated through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)<sup>2</sup> to help address health impacts and inequalities which have arisen as a result of the pandemic.

### **Contextual Information**

9. Hampshire County Council (HCC) has a critical role in protecting the health of its population, both in terms of planning to prevent threats from arising, and in ensuring appropriate responses when things do go wrong.
10. The 2012 Health and Social Care Act placed a statutory duty on local authorities to improve and protect the health of their residents.
11. This duty to deliver the health protection function is fulfilled by the Council's Public Health team, who provide 'information and advice' to ensure that threats to health are understood and seek assurance that these threats are properly addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> [Statement on the fifteenth meeting of the IHR \(2005\) Emergency Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic \(who.int\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Contain Outbreak Management Fund: 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

12. The Council's health protection team works with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the NHS, and District and Borough Council Environmental Health teams as part of the local health protection system.

## **Performance - Health protection activities in 2022 – 2023**

### 13. Living with COVID-19:

- 13.1. Embedding the UK Government's 'Living with COVID-19' strategy in day-to-day functions to manage the virus and support health protection system recovery was a key piece of work. The Council's Public Health team:

- Supported COVID-19 outbreak management.
- Provided public health intelligence to inform equitable vaccine delivery.
- Developed bespoke testing and outbreak management guidance.
- Advised the Council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG) on event plans.
- Delivered communications on the importance of continued safe behaviours.

### 14. Responding to other emerging health protection issues

#### 14.1. **Post-pandemic surge in infections**

The post-pandemic surge in infections required a heightened response in terms of monitoring levels of infection and meeting competing demands to support outbreak management in the context of:

- An increase in Group A Streptococcus (GAS) infections.
- Norovirus activity that surpassed the 5-season average.
- Intensified circulation of influenza and other seasonal respiratory infections.

#### 14.2. **Monkeypox/ mpox incident**

In response to the wide-scale outbreak of mpox infection in May 2022, the Public Health team worked collaboratively with national teams, the NHS and third sector organisations to reduce spread.

#### 14.3. **National health protection incidents**

Throughout the year, the Council's Public Health team maintained situational awareness of the likely impact of several national incidents on Hampshire residents, such as the detection of poliovirus in London sewage.

#### 14.4. **Infections in migrant populations**

The Council's Public Health team also contributed to the cascading of advice and the health protection response to incidents involving migrant populations across our local area.

#### **14.5. Tuberculosis (TB) and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**

Several communication and collaborative activities were undertaken to progress work on TB and AMR. This included system working to respond to complex TB incidents and exploring the impact of changing clinical pathways on antibiotic prescribing.

#### **15. Renewing focus on vaccination, helping shape the National Vaccination Strategy:**

- 15.1. A key focus of activity during 2022/23 has been on supporting delivery of seasonal influenza vaccination and recovery of routine childhood vaccination programmes, including MMR vaccination (with the latter being part of the national effort to re-instate the UK's 'measles-free' status).
- 15.2. The Public Health team have also been involved in the development of the new national vaccination strategy, working with partners across the system.

#### **Governance - The Health Protection Board (HPB)**

16. Oversight of health protection matters over the past year has been provided by the HPB, which is chaired by the Director of Public Health. The Hampshire HPB met for the first time in September 2022, with the main areas of focus being communicable diseases and vaccination.
17. The Board has brought together Council departments and external partners key to protecting the health of our local population and has been a forum to jointly plan and coordinate activity on health protection issues. Each meeting includes time for a deep dive on a specific health protection topic. Over the course of 2022-2023, these topics have included: health protection matters related to new entrants to the UK (including asylum seekers); TB service delivery; Vaccinations in pregnancy and childhood (opportunities and challenges); Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAIs); AMR and Health Protection issues related to adverse weather.
18. Board administration has been supported by the Council's Public Health team.

#### **Co-Production**

19. Co-production activities and processes are integral to the delivery of the Council's health protection duty. Some of the areas of work where co-production principles have been used include:

- 19.1. Gaining insight through public engagement activities that informed the communications strategy to address health protection actions in response to shifts in government policy on COVID-19.
- 19.2. Co-producing the development of communication frameworks with partners to show how they interrelate and communicate with each other across the local health protection system.

### **Future focus**

20. Over the course of the coming year, the Council's Public Health team will continue to retain a strong focus on supporting the health protection system recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and respond to emerging threats.
21. Public Health team activities will be geared up to achieving the health protection ambitions set out in the new Hampshire County Council Public Health Strategy 2023 - 2026.
22. The team will build on public health actions to address the impact of COVID-19 on health outcomes and health inequalities. Projects undertaking this work will be funded using the COVID Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).
23. Council health protection priorities for 2023-2024 are set out below:
  - Support the preparedness for, response, and recovery from health protection incidents.
  - Contribute to the continued recovery of screening and vaccination programmes with a focus on reducing inequalities.
  - Work with the NHS to support national priorities and actions outlined in the Tuberculosis (TB): action plan for England, 2021 to 2026, using local intelligence to inform how we should act.
  - Contribute to AMR programmes and achievement of the 5-year UK AMR Action Plan objectives.

### **Conclusions**

24. The 2022-2023 Health Protection Annual Report has presented a wide range of activities to protect the health of the people of Hampshire over the past year.
25. It sets out future priorities for delivery through joint work with partners across the health protection system with oversight by the Health Protection Board.
26. The report will be published once it has been agreed by the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
The Health and Social Care Act 2012	2012
The Health and Care Act 2022	2022

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

**EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

**1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

## **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

This report considers some of the health protection issues that are relevant to Hampshire residents. It does not directly impact on people and communities as would a specific proposal or project. It identifies the current situation, including any activities already in place, which address these health protection issues, and explores future work areas which will further impact positively on Hampshire's population and future health protection requirements.