

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
November 2019

**STATEMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTION & SUPPORTED HOUSING PORTFOLIO
HOLDER COUNTY COUNCILLOR CAROLINE DICKINSON**

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019

The 2019 Annual Report from our Director of Public Health is entitled “Life in times of change; health and hardship in North Yorkshire” and looks at the impact of poverty on health in our county. The report was launched at the Wider Partnership Conference in October. Although North Yorkshire is a generally affluent and healthy county, this overall picture masks people and places that experience significant deprivation. The report highlights 11 areas in our county that are among the most deprived 10% localities in England. It also brings focus to aspects of poverty that are sometimes overlooked such as fuel poverty in rural communities and poverty that affects some military families and veterans.

Dr Sargeant makes a number of recommendations for actions we can take with our partners to address the issues raised in the report. One area is community engagement to encourage local communities to take an active role in the plans that are developed to address deprivation. As county and district councillors we have a key part to play in helping our local constituencies to identify the local actions they can take to tackle problems.

Duncan Selbie visit

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England visited us on 21st October. This was his second visit in this capacity. It gave us a chance to showcase some of the work we are doing to address public health issues from health inequalities and social mobility, to shaping healthy places and reducing childhood obesity. We also highlighted joint work with PHE including the management of the Hepatitis A outbreak in Ripon over summer.

In a wide ranging discussion, the challenges of working with the NHS in North Yorkshire were among the topics covered. We described the vital work we do as a Council to help to deliver the ambitions of the NHS Long Term Plan against the backdrop of a very complex landscape of NHS organisations.

In his summary of the visit Duncan Selbie made the following observations:

“We spoke of the most important factors affecting good physical and mental health. For children, having the best start in life and being ready to start school and for young people entering adulthood with the resilience to thrive. For adults, having a secure job and home and at all ages the importance of friendship and belonging in life. Essentially, economic growth creating new jobs that local people can get with health and wealth being two sides of the same coin.

There are of course many challenges and not least in the persistent social inequities, despite your strong system wide approach to tackling these. Of course the problems were decades in the making and will take many years to overcome but you are making steady inroads with strong spatial strategies for growing affordable housing and improving your transport infrastructure and it was good to hear of your work through the North Yorkshire Coast Opportunities Area programme to improve educational outcomes in Scarborough.

The challenge of course is sustaining this with budgets on the edge and where integration with your local NHS colleagues is so central to this. There is no future other than through working together and pooling resources in place based investment. Being accountable to each other for focusing on what matters and engaging and working with local people in making the hard choices.”

Seasonal Flu vaccination

Around 30 million people are eligible for the free flu vaccine this year through the biggest ever national flu campaign. Eligible groups include all primary school children, children aged 2 and 3, over 65's, pregnant women and people with underlying health conditions such as asthma or heart disease.

This year a cohort of social care staff have been included so anyone working in a residential or domiciliary setting can access the vaccine free from their GP or pharmacist.

In addition to the national programme, it is recommended that all health and social care staff are vaccinated, therefore a local agreement has been made with pharmacies to enable all HAS staff to access the free vaccine. Some front line CYPS staff have also been included in this programme. In 2017/18 25% of HAS staff reported having had the vaccine and in 18/19 this increased to 42%.

There are a number of ways in which we are promoting uptake of the vaccine:

- An internal and external communications campaign is being delivered. This includes promoting the vaccine to eligible groups such as carers and disseminating information to all schools and nurseries.
- Flu champions have been nominated in teams to promote the vaccine in their areas and dispel myths
- Flu clinics will be set up at key staff sites. For example, 80% of staff attending the HAS leadership forum in October received the vaccine from a pharmacist who ran a clinic at the event.
- Staff can also access the vaccine through a voucher scheme at a pharmacy participating in our scheme

Public Mental Health

On World Mental Health Day (10th October) we hosted a public mental health conference in Harrogate on the topic "Prevention – what does it mean in the context of mental health?" The conference heard from national and local speakers on the factors that support positive mental health and prevent mental illness. Speakers from Public Health England gave an overview of their resources for public mental health including the Every Mind Matters campaign. This national mass media campaign was also launched in the same week with television advertisements featuring high profile celebrities and members of the Royal Family. The campaign is supported by a website and an extensive range of resources to help people and organisations to act on the messages they receive.

The conference also heard from inspirational speakers telling their stories about acknowledging their own mental health issues and the measures they take to maintain their mental wellbeing. Participants had opportunities to reflect on the presentations and to share actions that could be taken to address the issues raised. The output from the day will inform a strategic framework for how we work collectively with partners across the county on this important agenda.

As a Mindful Employer the Council marked World Mental Health Day running free lunch time sessions to help promote workplace mental wellbeing. These hour long workshops were intended to give staff time away from their desks or workspaces to try something new. The topics covered were: Drawing to music; Creative card making; Mindful Sashiko Stitching; Creative writing 'About a strange land'; Mindful photography; Positive Psychology and, Art for Wellbeing. Additionally, the Harrogate run/walk group organised a run/walk for mental health at 06:30am which staff were encouraged to attend.

Measles

On 29th September, Matt Hancock the Secretary of State for Health, was reported to say he was seriously considering making vaccination compulsory in response to falling vaccination rates and the UK losing its status as measles-free. In North Yorkshire our vaccination coverage is generally good but we are below the target of 95% for the second dose of Measles Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine uptake in children. This is currently at 88%. We are working to support the NHS England / Public Health England Screening and Immunisation Team to increase uptake and have put out communications targeting our North Yorkshire communities to encourage them to ensure they are vaccinated. Hancock's announcement led to media interest in vaccination and we were asked to comment. Our key points were:

- Measles is a highly infectious virus that can cause serious complications, even death. Measles killed 72 children and adults in the European Region in 2018.
- Cases of measles have been increasing as vaccine coverage has been decreasing.

- People can access vaccination through their GP
- The evidence is unclear about the effectiveness of mandatory vaccination to increase uptake rates. Providing credible information for parents, reminders and increasing the opportunities for them to access the vaccine are likely to be more effective measures.
- If people are unsure about the decision to vaccinate we advise they access information on the NHS Choices website or make an appointment to talk to their GP, practice nurse or health visitor.