

The Health Inequalities Taskforce

Report being considered by: Health and Wellbeing Board

On: 20th May 2021

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Item for: Decision

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Board on the establishment of a Health Inequalities Taskforce for West Berkshire Council.
- 1.2 To propose that the Taskforce is formalised as a sub-group under the Health and Wellbeing Board and that it should start to report to the Board via the Steering Group.

2. Recommendation(s)

For the Health and Wellbeing Board to formalise the new Health Inequalities Taskforce and agree the Taskforce reporting into the Board via the Steering group.

3. How the Health and Wellbeing Board can help

To support the development of the Taskforce and to provide feedback on membership and initial plans for the scoping of health inequalities in West Berkshire.

Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Executive for final determination?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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4. Introduction/Background

- 4.1 Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. This can be the differences in care that people receive, but also the difference in opportunities people have to lead healthy lives including both behavioural risks to health and the wider determinants of health, such as housing.
- 4.2 West Berkshire is an affluent area, with many of our health indicators being better than national averages. However, this is not the case for everyone living in our area. We know that people living in our most deprived areas will live on average 5–6 years less than people living in our least deprived areas. In addition, people living in our most deprived areas will spend less of their lives in good health, with a reduced Healthy Life Expectancy of 5-6 years on average. There are other examples of inequalities across our area including economic inequality, and deaths from preventable causes.
- 4.3 The Covid-19 pandemic has both highlighted and exacerbated existing health inequalities, starkly demonstrating the importance of the social and wider determinants of health.

- 4.4 The Build Back Fairer report (The Covid-19 Marmot Review) by the Institute of Health Equity set out the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the different parts of our society. It included a number of recommendations, including the need for a commitment to social justice and putting equity at the heart of local decisions, in order to use recovery from Covid-19 as an opportunity to build a fairer society.
- 4.5 The most recent West Berkshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017 – 2020) included “Tackling inequalities in health” as one of the cross cutting themes underpinning the main priorities for the Strategy.
- 4.6 Through engagement with both partners and the public as part of developing the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Berkshire West, it was clear that health inequalities were felt to be vital to future work of the Health and Wellbeing Boards. The new draft Strategy therefore includes the priority of “Reduce the differences in health between different groups of people” both as a priority in its own right, but also as a pillar sitting underneath the other four priorities.
- 4.7 In addition, the refreshed West Berkshire Council Strategy 2019 – 2023 includes the priorities to “Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes” and to “Support everyone to reach their full potential”.
- 4.8 In response to this, we have set up a Health Inequalities Taskforce with the purpose of providing a co-ordinated approach and oversight to work undertaken to address health inequalities in West Berkshire.
- 4.9 The membership of the Taskforce includes representatives from Public Health, Education, Equality and Diversity, Building Communities Together, Adult Social Care, Children’s Services, Transport, Housing, Planning and the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 4.10 It is proposed that the Health Inequalities Taskforce be responsible for developing the delivery and action plan to address the first priority in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy: “Reduce the differences in health between different groups of people”.
- 4.11 The initial phase of developing this delivery plan will include:
- (1) A deep dive into local data to fully understand and scope out what our inequalities are and who in our area is experiencing them
 - (2) Mapping out current work and initiatives that are already in place to address health inequalities
 - (3) Working with our communities and partners to understand our local picture, building on the engagement already undertaken as part of the development of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy
 - (4) The use of evidence to understand what works
- 4.12 The Taskforce will also work to support the adoption of a Health in All Policies approach at West Berkshire Council. This approach looks to incorporate health considerations into decision making across all sectors, policy and service areas, thereby taking a collaborative approach to address the wider determinants of health.

5. Supporting Information

This paper is supported by both the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Berkshire West, and also the paper summarising the Build Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot review.

6. Options for Consideration

To support the establishment of the Health Inequalities Taskforce.

7. Proposal(s)

To formalise the new Health Inequalities Taskforce and its reporting mechanism to the Health and Wellbeing Board via the Steering Group.

8. Conclusion(s)

A Health Inequalities Taskforce has been set up in response to the increasing recognition of the importance of inequalities in health in West Berkshire and need to provide a coordinated approach to work undertaken in this area. It will be responsible for developing the delivery plan for priority one in the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

9. Consultation and Engagement

The work of the Health Inequalities Taskforce will take account of the engagement already undertaken as part of the developing the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and will seek to work with communities and individuals as part of developing the delivery plan to implement this Strategy.

10. Appendices

Appendix A: Health Inequalities Taskforce Terms of Reference

Background Papers:

None

Health and Wellbeing Priorities 2019/20 Supported:

- ☒ First 1001 days – give every child the best start in life
- ☐ Primary Care Networks

Health and Wellbeing Strategic Aims Supported:

The proposals will help achieve the following Health and Wellbeing Strategy aim(s):

- ☒ Give every child the best start in life
- ☒ Support mental health and wellbeing throughout life
- ☒ Reduce premature mortality by helping people lead healthier lives
- ☒ Build a thriving and sustainable environment in which communities can flourish
- ☒ Help older people maintain a healthy, independent life for as long as possible

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Health and Wellbeing Strategy aim by reducing the differences in health between different groups of people

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