

CABINET

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PROTECTING HEALTH: THE ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH 2011/12

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Brake, Adult Services
Report from/Author: Dr Alison Barnett, Director of Public Health

Summary

This report presents the Annual Public Health Report of the Director of Public Health for 2011/12. The report focuses on health protection and makes recommendations for Medway Council and partners within the new public health system.

Please note that the Annual Public Health Report has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members. It is also available at the Council's main receptions and on the Council's website via
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=2531&Ver=4>

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1 Directors of Public Health are required to produce an Annual Public Health Report and PCTs have a duty to publish the report. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 will place this duty on the Local Authority from April 2013.
- 1.2 The Annual Public Health Report (APHR) supports delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy in particular the ambition for Medway residents to enjoy good health, wellbeing and care.

2. Overview of Annual Public Health Report

- 2.1. This year's report focuses on health protection, the branch of public health concerned with protecting the public from communicable diseases and other environmental threats. From April 2013 Medway Council will have new responsibilities for ensuring that plans are in place to protect the health of the population.
- 2.2. The report has three sections. The first covers communicable diseases including childhood infections, sexually transmitted infections and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. The second deals with the prevention of communicable disease through immunisation. The final section covers environmental threats to health, which have the potential to worsen health inequalities such as poor air quality, noise and poor housing.

- 2.3. The report makes recommendations to Medway Council and its partners within the new public health system:
- To improve immunisation rates particularly for MMR and seasonal flu
 - To promote uptake of chlamydia screening in sexually active 15-24 year olds
 - That Medway Council in developing its vision and strategy for public health considers how it can ensure that public health benefits are realised across the breadth of the Council's responsibilities.

3. Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.1 The Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report on 9 October 2012.
- 3.2 Following a presentation on the key aspects of the Annual Public Health Report the Committee asked various questions and made comments which included: -
- What the causes had been of the reduction in the percentage of people smoking;
 - Concerns over sufficient supplies of flu vaccines and concern that some eligible patients were unaware that they could get the vaccine from their GP surgery;
 - Confirmation that the public health team were working closely with the local universities to offer sexual health advice and services;
 - Concern regarding the lower uptake of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine compared to other vaccines available;
 - How Members would be informed about the transition of public health to the local authority.
- 3.3 The Director of Public Health in response stated that greater awareness of the risks and cultural change were the biggest contributing factors for reductions in the number of smokers. In relation to the flu vaccine, the Director confirmed that the vaccine was delivered to every practice but there was often crisis with suppliers themselves so practices were encouraged to join up to mitigate against shortages by sharing resources. Additionally, the Director confirmed that all GPs should write to all eligible patients to inform them about getting their flu vaccine. The Director also confirmed that the team worked closely with universities about sexual health services.
- 3.4 In relation to the MMR vaccine the Director confirmed that it was believed that the previous myths relating to the vaccine, which had been quashed, were still causing some parents to choose not to get their children vaccinated for MMR, as uptake was lower for this vaccine compared to others. She also confirmed that cases of measles and mumps had risen dramatically as a result. With regard to informing Members about the transition of public health to the local authority the Director undertook to provide a member briefing session on this once more details were known.

- 3.5 The Committee requested a member briefing in the future on the transition of public health services to the local authority. In recognition of the fact that a broad range of council responsibilities impact on health and wellbeing, the Committee requested that the Cabinet ensure that all committees and services provided or commissioned by the Council take responsibility for improving health and wellbeing

4. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Failure of Medway Council and partners to address recommendations in the report	Failure to improve uptake of immunisation in groups with low uptake will lead to increased incidence of vaccine preventable disease.	Plans to improve immunisation rates are in place. Assurance of flu immunisation plans provided by SHA.	D2
	Opportunities may be missed to improve health by maximising the impact on health of the wide range of environmental factors which the Council can influence.	The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy will describe our ambitions for improving health. Further work is underway to identify opportunities to address the environmental issues highlighted in the report.	D2

5. Legal and financial implications

- 5.1. Whilst there are no direct financial or legal implications arising directly from the contents of this report, the Annual Public Health Report should influence future prioritisation and allocation of resources.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1. The Cabinet is asked to consider the comments of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, note the Annual Public Health Report and request that the Director of Public Health work with Council officers on developing a process to ensure that public health benefits are realised across the Council's responsibilities.

7. Suggested Reasons for Decisions

- 7.1 This year's Annual Public Health Report focuses on health protection and the Cabinet is asked to acknowledge its role in considering how the Council, with partners, can work within the new public health system.

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Background papers

None