

KENT AND MEDWAY JOINT HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

10 MARCH 2021

STRATEGIC PLAN TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON HEALTH INEQUALITIES: PROGRESS UPDATE

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1. Summary

The Kent and Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the initial progress made on the development of a strategic plan to mitigate the impacts of COVID19 on health inequalities. The Joint Board is also asked to consider the proposal to hold its development session to explore the emerging impact of Covid-19 on health inequalities in early June 2021.

2. Background

2.1. At its meeting on 17 September 2020, the Kent and Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Board agreed:

- a. To the development of a joint plan setting out how the system could work together to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities, which will be presented to the Joint Board at a future date for consideration.
- b. To hold a development session in private at a future date after the Joint Board meeting in December to be informed about the emerging impact of Covid-19, understand the wider health inequalities found in Kent and Medway and recommend the priority areas for focus.
- c. That this work will be led by the Executive Director of Strategy and Population Health for Kent and Medway CCG and that the plan's development will be guided and informed by the Directors of Public Health.

2.2. This report gives a brief update on initial progress to date against these agreed actions.

3. Progress to date

- 3.1. A project plan has been drafted, outlining the work and resources required to produce the system-wide strategic plan. This draft plan has been developed with the Directors of Public Health and their consultant teams for their input and is now being finalised. This will be used to inform and engage local partners in this important work.
- 3.2. Discussions are underway with the Kent Public Health Observatory, Medway Public Health Intelligence Team and Public Health England's Local Knowledge and Information Service to scope the data, intelligence and analytics support that this work will require. Public Health England is also in the process of finalising an offer of health inequalities planning support to local systems, comprising data analysis, evidence review, monitoring and evaluation. Consideration is being given to how this support can be best utilised in developing the strategic plan.
- 3.3. There is much work already ongoing with respect to health inequalities across Kent and Medway. A mapping of existing activity to reduce widening inequalities resulting from the pandemic will be carried out prior to drafting the strategic plan, to minimise duplication and to align initiatives and resources where appropriate. As an initial step, an overview of the project was presented to the STP Prevention Workstream on 29 January, where in addition to discussing perspectives on addressing health inequalities, members were asked to identify existing or planned health inequality work which could form part of this mapping.
- 3.4. A number of major work programmes and projects are currently underway across the system focussed on improving population health. This has led to discussions with Public Health colleagues as to how oversight and the governance of these initiatives can be brought together. While these discussions are ongoing, a small interim task and finish group has been established to provide direction and oversight for the development of the health inequalities strategic plan. Rachel Jones, CCG Executive Director for Strategy and Population Health as SRO for the strategic plan will chair the group, with members from Kent and Medway Public Health teams, Kent and Medway CCG, Healthwatch Kent and Healthwatch Medway.
- 3.5. Given recent pressures across the system due to the second wave of COVID-19 and the forthcoming pre-election period prior to the local elections in early May, it is proposed that the development session in private for Joint Health and Wellbeing Board members is held on the afternoon of 10 June 2021. The output of this session will inform discussions at the July 2021 meeting of the Joint Board.

4. Risk management

- 4.1. There are no risks arising from the proposals set out within the report.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. Further advice will be taken on consultation and engagement as the draft strategic plan develops.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. The Joint Board itself does not have a budget. Any executive decisions or the determination of any matter relating to the discharge of the statutory functions of the Kent and Medway Health and Wellbeing Boards remain a matter for each Council. It should be recognised that the Joint Board has no formal financial support and so capacity to develop the plan would have to be found from within existing resources.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. The proposal for a joint plan does not replace the statutory requirement for each upper tier local authority and its partner CCG to prepare a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS). In this instance the Health and Wellbeing Boards of Kent and Medway have not agreed to formally exercise this function jointly and both Kent County Council and Medway Council maintain their own JHWS development and publication process. The joint plan will be considered by both Medway and Kent's Health and Wellbeing Boards and be approved through each Council's governance processes

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. The Joint Board is asked:
 - a. To note the initial progress made on the development of the joint strategic plan to mitigate the impacts of COVID19 on health inequalities.
 - b. To hold a development session in private on 10 June 2021 to be informed about the emerging impact of Covid-19, understand the wider health inequalities found in Kent and Medway and recommend the priority areas for focus.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

None

Background papers

Proposal to develop a strategic plan to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities [Kent and Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Board, 17/09/2020](#)