

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH 2021/22**

**Report of Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities**

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Annual Director of Public Health Report (ADPHR) 2021/22 which describes the health and needs of the local population, focusing on issues pertinent to our communities.
- 1.2 To provide recommendations from ADPHR for continuing to improve the health and wellbeing of our population and reducing health inequalities.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 This year's ADPHR (appendix one) focuses on the impact that the pandemic has had on the wider determinants of health and health inequalities in Sunderland.
- 2.2 Everyone has been affected by the pandemic in different ways, but some groups and individuals have felt and continue to feel the biggest impacts. This report highlights some of those key challenges but it also sets out the great work happening across the city to try to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. A number of recommendations are also set out in the report to help direct our work and move forward together.

**3.0 Annual Director of Public Health Report 2021/22 Same Boat, Different Storms**

- 3.1 We know that those living in areas of greater deprivation already face bigger inequalities than the least deprived, and the pandemic will have exacerbated this. Sunderland is one of the 20% most deprived local authorities in England and has eight of England's so-called 'left-behind neighbourhoods'. Nationally, people living in these neighbourhoods were 46% more likely to die of Covid-19 compared to the average. In Sunderland overall, there were 20% more deaths than expected between March 2020 and March 2021; this was the highest percentage increase in the North East, and equal to London.
- 3.2 The pandemic has had lasting impacts on areas such as mental health, educational attainment, employment and pay levels and, coupled with the cost of living crisis, is pushing more people into poverty. Our communities have

shown a great deal of resilience and spirit throughout this period, but it is clear that we face many challenges in the coming years.

- 3.3 The Council and partners recognised the potential impacts of the pandemic early and worked with the local voluntary and community sector to establish Covid-19 Champions in the community, Sunderland Community Hubs, a Covid-19 Health Inequalities Strategy, and coordinated communications. Additionally, substantial work has taken place to increase vaccine uptake and equity.
- 3.4 A significant amount of work is ongoing with partners in the areas of starting well, living well and ageing well to close the health gap and reduce health inequalities – these delivery boards cover education, mental health, welfare rights, food poverty, violence against women and girls, alcohol-related harms and substance misuse, homelessness, workplace health and more.
- 3.5 We continue to focus on delivering our Healthy City Plan, using local data and intelligence to inform our work, and building on the community response to the pandemic to ensure diverse and under-represented groups' voices and experiences are heard.
- 3.6 In order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, we have agreed the following recommendations:
  - **Recommendation 1**

Deliver the Healthy City Plan with a focus on reducing inequalities, particularly where they have widened due to the Covid-19 pandemic
  - **Recommendation 2**

Embed a Health in All Policies approach across the council and partners, supported by an Integrated Impact Assessment approach that incorporates health, equality, socio-economic and sustainability considerations.
  - **Recommendation 3**

Build on the community response to the pandemic in order to engage the population and ensure diverse and under-represented groups' voices and experiences are heard, that the overlapping dimensions of health inequalities are understood and needs are acted upon, strengthening engagement routes built upon during the pandemic.
  - **Recommendation 4**

Continue to develop, promote and widen uptake of local welfare schemes in recognition that more people are now living in poverty.

- **Recommendation 5**

Work with local employers who can provide employment and apprenticeship opportunities, especially to our vulnerable people and people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- **Recommendation 6**

Continue to embed programmes which support the development of speech, language and communication skills in children so they are able to flourish and achieve their full potential.

- **Recommendation 7**

Ensure key findings from the Health-Related Behaviour Survey are used to influence and shape local programme delivery to meet the needs identified by children and young people.

- **Recommendation 8**

Carry out further research to improve our understanding of inequalities in access to health services and excess deaths.

- **Recommendation 9**

Ensure we are responding to employee health and wellbeing needs following the intense effort of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to support the recommendations contained within the Annual Director of Public Health Report 2021/22.

