

## **SUNDERLAND COVID-19 HEALTH INEQUALITIES STRATEGY**

### **Report of the Director of Public Health**

#### **1.0 Purpose of the Report**

##### **1.1 The purpose of the report is to:**

- seek endorsement of the Sunderland COVID-19 Health Inequalities Strategy
- commit to supporting the development of the action plan with agreed key performance indicators
- agree to monitor the key performance indicators.

#### **2.0 Background**

##### **2.1 Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council has responsibility for improving the health of the population in Sunderland and reducing health inequalities.**

##### **2.2 People facing the greatest deprivation are experiencing a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 and existing poor health puts them at risk of more severe outcomes if they contract the virus. According to the ONS data people from the most deprived areas of England and Wales are more likely to die with Coronavirus than those in more affluent places. The government and wider societal measures to control the spread of the virus and save lives now (including the lockdown, social distancing and cancellations to routine care) are exacting a heavier social and economic price on those already experiencing inequality.**

##### **2.3 The strategy sets out Sunderland's response to COVID-19 and the impact it has had on health inequalities. It builds on previous strategies where health inequalities have been identified including the City Plan, Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019. COVID-19 Health Inequalities Strategy aims to:**

- raise awareness of the importance of health inequalities in both the response to and recovery from Covid-19;
- follow the key principles set out in the Healthy City Plan and use data, intelligence and evidence to systematically understand the natural and unintended consequences that may have widened health inequalities;
- support local organisations and communities to consider how their work may impact on health inequalities as described in the Sunderland Prevention and Health Inequalities Framework;
- consider the evidence to ensure that any recommendations will prevent or mitigate health inequalities widening as part of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.4 The strategy has three strategic objectives which are to:

1. Continue to improve health outcomes for our most disadvantaged communities who are at greater risk of COVID-19 by adopting a life-course approach which identifies the key opportunities for minimising risk factors and enhancing protective factors through evidence-based interventions at key life stages, from preconception to early years and adolescence, working age and into older age.
2. Take every opportunity to mitigate the impact that COVID-19 has had on our communities by building on a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach, systematically and explicitly considering the health implications of the decisions we make with the aim of improving the health of the population.
3. Ensure that as we move into recovery we take the opportunity to address health inequalities as part of our plans by using available tools to ensure that health inequalities are considered for every policy and service.

2.5 The strategy details a range of actions that organisations represented on the Board could take to help to mitigate the differential impact of COVID-19 on local communities and outlines a number of strategic objectives, which are to:

1. Embed the Health Inequalities Strategy as part of any response or recovery work in relation to Covid-19.
2. Develop and implement a local tool kit which will take into account any emerging evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities. This will include evidence-based actions that can be used to address these for use by the council, partners and voluntary and community sector.
3. Review and update the strategy and supporting resources which highlight the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities, alongside local intelligence. This strategy will therefore be a “living” document.
4. Build on previous local intelligence, relationships and resident experiences as well as information gathered as part of the city’s immediate response from volunteers, people who are shielded, our vulnerable young people and any other sources of community intelligence to inform our approach.
5. Consider how the recent enhanced interest in community and mutual aid approaches can be sustained to benefit priority communities and reduce demand on services.
6. Review social value secured through existing contracts and explore the potential to divert the social value offer where required for most vulnerable communities.
7. Progress the Marmot City principles which have been adopted by Sunderland City Council.

8. Engage with key agencies and partners to develop an action plan with agreed key performance indicators. The action plan will be monitored through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 2.6 The strategy will be regularly reviewed and updated along with the supporting resources about the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities and local intelligence. The strategy should, therefore, be considered a “living” document.
- 2.7 The Sunderland COVID-19 Health Inequalities Strategy is attached to this paper and the strategy and supporting annexes can be found at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/healthinequalities](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/healthinequalities).

### **3.0 Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is requested to:
- endorse the Sunderland COVID-19 Health Inequalities Strategy
  - commit to supporting the development of the action plan with agreed key performance indicators
  - monitor the action plan and key performance indicators through an update report every six months.

