

**SCRUTINY BOARD
(ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES, PUBLIC HEALTH, NHS)**

MEN'S HEALTH BRIEFING NOTE

Introduction

1. Information on Men's Health was highlighted as a gap in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Leeds and as an area for development by the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing and the Public Health Leadership Team. In response, Leeds Beckett University was commissioned to undertake a review of Men's health in Leeds. They worked closely with key commissioners and stakeholders to make sure the report reflected what they wanted to know and evidence they needed to inform changes in future service specifications.
2. Men historically have been expected to be breadwinners, providing security for their family, with long term employment and a well-defined place in society. This 'traditional' way of living is no longer possible for many men, with an increasing reality of unemployment, fragile partnerships and poverty, which can have a negative effect on their mental and physical wellbeing. Poor physical or emotional health can threaten some men's identity and they may feel such 'weakness' will make others see them as being 'less of a man'. Health and social care services need to recognise the impact of masculine identity on how services are viewed and consumed by men.
3. Leeds is the first city in the UK to explore the health issues and behaviours of its male population. The State of Men's Health in Leeds study is an introduction to the issues, but it gives us a clear picture of the challenges across the city and evidence and best practice solutions to address them. The report goes beyond the brief we gave Leeds Beckett University and offers excellent value for money. It is a great example of the close working relationship between Leeds City Council and Leeds Beckett University and the use of academic research to improve health and wellbeing in Leeds.
4. **The Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021 has a clear vision for Leeds to be a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest. How do we design people centric, gender sensitive services to achieve this?**
5. There are a significant proportion of boys and men who are failing to reach their potential in terms of their educational attainment, employment, stable safe relationships, fatherhood, and their physical and mental health. There are many positive examples of where services are successfully reaching out to men, but there are also a significant proportion of those most in need that are effectively 'unreached' by current provision.
6. Across nearly all causes of death, men in Leeds are more likely to die at a younger age than women. The majority of men's health problems are preventable, related to their lifestyle or social conditions.

Key statistics for men in Leeds

7. Some of the statistics particularly relevant to men's health in Leeds include:
- Almost 4 out of 10 men aged 50 years or over have a disability that affects their lives in some way daily
 - Two of every ten male deaths occur before the age of 65 years, compared to one in ten female deaths. The average age a man born in Leeds can expect to live to is 78.9. A woman can expect to live to 82.4.
 - The rate of death for cardiovascular disease, cancer and respiratory disease is higher for men than women
 - Men are more likely to lead unhealthy lives compared to women, which increases risk of poor health. Although risk factors are generally more common among men in less affluent areas of Leeds, many men in some of the wealthier areas are overweight, consume excessive alcohol and work long hours.
 - Only 31% of registered Healthy Living Service users are men
 - There are around 2,000 men who are single parents with dependent children.
 - Around 6,000 men of working age provide 20 or more hours of unpaid care each week.
 - The rate of death from suicide is five times higher for men than women.

Education, Housing and Employment

8. Men in less affluent areas of the city have significantly worse health than those living in more wealthy areas. The majority of this inequality can be attributed to the quality of their education, employment and living conditions.

Education

- Educational attainment is worse for boys in Leeds compared to girls throughout all the school years
- In some poorer areas of Leeds, 7 out of 10 boys are not achieving five or more grade A*-C GCSEs including English and Maths. This may impact on their ability to get good jobs.
- In 2011, 15% of men in Leeds had no qualifications but in nine local areas, over 30% of men had no qualifications

Employment

- In Leeds, those who are unemployed and seeking work are most likely to be male
- This gender gap for being out of work is greater in Leeds than the national average. Nationally there are a third more men than women who are workless for more than two years, in Leeds this rises to 60%
- 10% of men work at least 49 hours per week which can impact on their family relationships and social lives.

Housing and Living Arrangements

- Having access to good quality, affordable housing which enables people to be socially connected is an important determinant of good health
- Almost 1 in 5 men live alone
- Nearly two thirds of residents in the city's council-owned high-rise flats are male. This type of housing can be linked to high levels of depression and social isolation
- Male residents of council owned high-rise flats are typically aged between 31 and 60
- Men are more likely than women to become homeless

What have we done?

Influencing contracts and strategy

9. Key messages from The State of Men's Health report were submitted as evidence to influence the Joint Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020 and have / are being used to inform the following Public Health contracts:
 - Healthy living services
 - Community Health Development
 - Cancer preventative contracts

The Centre for Men's Health will review new specifications against the report.

10. The report will also go to the following Boards for discussion:
 - Leeds Mental Health Framework partnership
 - Leeds Cancer Strategy group
 - Ageing Well Board

JSNA

11. The data gathered and analysis will be utilised and used in a format which can make it a part of the JSNA. There will be a link to Leeds Observatory so that the report will be open to organisations and the public to use.

Build on current evidence to develop further research

12. We have established links with national Men's Health Forum to support the local Leeds group and have linked with Public Health England (Professor Martyn Regan) to identify links and opportunities to promote men's health. Work is also being done through Professor White's Centre for Men's Health including the publication of papers and contributions to national and international conferences.

Local Communications plan

13. A communications plan for the men's health study has been produced. This included a citywide launch at the beginning of men's health week in June 2016. This highlighted the close working relationship between Leeds City Council and Leeds Beckett University and the use of academic research to improve health and wellbeing in Leeds. Leeds Beckett University produced a user friendly summary for use at future events.

14. Links to report have been distributed to the Chief Executives for commissioning and provider organisations across Leeds.

Next steps

15. The planned next steps include to:

- To promote to provider organisations
- To consider views of men and develop programme of work across Leeds
- To investigate in detail the issues highlighted by the report, especially around wider determinants of health
- To consider whether Leeds develops The State of Women's Health

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Notes

To access the study, you can read the summary report [here](#), the full report [here](#) and data report [here](#).

The study was featured as the main story on BBC Look North and in the [Yorkshire Evening Post](#).

There are also some interviews with people involved in the report and its case studies, including:

- *Professor Alan White and Dr Ian Cameron: Click [here](#)*
- *Dr Philomena Commons and St George's Crypt: Click [here](#)*
- *Space 2 Men's Group: Click [here](#)*
- *Black Health Initiative - Heather Nelson and Pastor Crawford: Click [here](#)*