

Report of: Victoria Eaton, The Director of Public Health

Report to: Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 20th July 2023

Subject: In Our Shoes: The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022

Are specific geographical areas affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of area(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

The Director of Public Health (DPH) has a mandatory duty to publish a report annually describing the health of the population and make recommendations to improve health. This year, the report is called "In Our Shoes" and focuses on the current state of children and young people's health in Leeds. This includes exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their lives. The report spans from when the first COVID-19 cases were identified in Leeds, to the ongoing impact as we learn to live with COVID-19 and respond to new threats and opportunities relating to children's health.

Recommendations

- Note the content of the Director of Public Health annual report and accompanying film (link on page 8 in the report).
- Support and commit to delivering the recommendations of the report, including:
 - a) All partners in Leeds to ensure the voices of children and young people are central to all work planned, taking into account the Child Friendly Leeds twelve wishes.
 - b) Leeds City Council and partners to work to ensure children are kept safe with a focus on:
 - Prevention of harm;
 - Parenting support;

- Early help;
 - Reducing domestic violence.
- c)** Leeds City Council, the Leeds Office of the West Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care Board, and partners to continue to prioritise work to improve and protect children's mental health. This will be delivered through the:
- Leeds Children and Young People's Plan;
 - Prevention workstream of the Future in Mind strategy.
- d)** Leeds City Council to build on the success of existing support to parental mental health and wellbeing, with a focus on the development of family hubs.
- e)** Leeds City Council to work with partners to continue to deliver a programme of work to protect and improve children's physical health. This will focus on:
- Implementing the recommendations from the play sufficiency research;
 - Increasing physical activity opportunities;
 - Increasing access to healthy food;
 - Implementing the child healthy weight plan.
- f)** Leeds City Council to ensure that children are central to the delivery of work to become a Marmot city, with a focus on:
- Improving housing;
 - Planning;
 - Mitigating the impacts of poverty;
 - Children getting a fair start in life;
 - Ensuring the Thriving Strategy is implemented.
- g)** The Best Start partnership to aim for all children in Leeds to receive the best start in life, with a focus on children from more deprived backgrounds. This includes redressing the gap in speech language and communication development.
- h)** Leeds City Council to maintain work underway to ensure equitable catch up in terms of educational attainment. This will be achieved through delivering the five main priorities of the 3As Plan:
- Reading;
 - Attendance;
 - Special Educational Needs;
 - Wellbeing;
 - Transition.
- i)** The Leeds Office of the West Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care Board to ensure health care services are accessible to all children and young people. This will focus on:
- Dental services;
 - Mental health services;
 - Speech, language and communication.
- j)** NHS England and The Leeds Health Protection Board to increase coverage rates of childhood immunisations.

1 How “In Our Shoes” was produced

The Director of Public Health (DPH) has a mandatory duty to publish a report annually describing the health of the population and make recommendations to improve health. This year, the report is called “In Our Shoes” and focuses on the current state of children and young people’s health in Leeds. The first stage in creating this report was to conduct a comprehensive review of the available literature about the impact of living through the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people. Over 100 papers and reports were reviewed to identify key themes and statistics that would inform the report’s development. An online survey was then conducted aimed at professionals working with children and young people in Leeds, titled: ‘The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children in Leeds’. This survey was promoted via various methods, including social media and directly with partners. The responses were analysed to identify recurring themes, which have been explored within this report. An online ‘Call for Creative Submissions’ was run. This was promoted within Leeds attractions including the Thackray Museum and Kirkgate Market, and through social media and outreach to partners. Children and young people were invited to create something that explained how the pandemic impacted them and to share it via an online form. These submissions were also analysed for key themes which are presented throughout this report. Focus groups were conducted with children and young people across Leeds.

2 Headline findings

The literature review, statistics on health outcomes and what children and partners who work with children shared were analysed. Key impacts of the pandemic and areas to focus on to improve children and young people’s health in Leeds were identified.

- Children living in more deprived areas experienced higher levels of air pollution, worse housing and less access to gardens compared to children living in more affluent areas of the city. This had a big impact on how they experienced the pandemic and had a consequent negative impact on their physical and mental health.
- Some children were less safe during lockdown. There were reduced opportunities to identify neglect and abuse. Some children experienced an increase in arguing at home, parents using alcohol and witnessing domestic violence.
- Although some children and young people reported improvements to their mental health during lockdown, overall there remains a significant deterioration in the mental health of children and young people in Leeds. Parental mental health also deteriorated during the pandemic. Families living in deprived areas were at greater risk of poorer mental health.
- Children’s physical health was impacted in terms of sleep, food, play, screen time, and activity levels. This impact was not equally experienced. It resulted in a significant increase in children living with obesity, especially in areas of the city which are deprived. This rise has dropped back to slightly below pre-pandemic levels for reception-class children but remains higher than pre-pandemic levels for children in year 6. In addition, levels of children living with obesity in both reception and year 6 remain higher for children living in deprived areas of Leeds compared to the Leeds average.
- Children’s communication, language and general development was impacted by the lockdown. It had the greatest impact in poorer communities, with many partners reporting children are now behind in their social, emotional and communication development.
- Children’s educational attainment was impacted disproportionately. Schools with a higher proportion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds lost most learning.
- Health care services were not accessible to all and there remain significant delays to some services, specifically: dentistry; speech and language therapy; mental health services.

- Rates for childhood vaccinations have also dropped. This may lead to increased childhood infections.
- Some children had positive experiences during lockdown. This included more time with family members, particularly dads, more flexible services and less road traffic. However, these were not experienced equally.

3 Recommendations

- a) All partners in Leeds to ensure the voices of children and young people are central to all work planned, taking into account the Child Friendly Leeds twelve wishes.
- b) Leeds City Council and partners to work to ensure children are kept safe with focus on:
 - Prevention of harm;
 - Parenting support;
 - Early help;
 - Reducing domestic violence.
- c) Leeds City Council, the Leeds Office of the West Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care Board, and partners to continue to prioritise work to improve and protect children's mental health. This will be delivered through the:
 - Leeds Children and Young People's Plan;
 - Prevention workstream of the Future in Mind strategy.
- d) Leeds City Council to build on the success of existing support to parental mental health and wellbeing, with a focus on the development of family hubs.
- e) Leeds City Council to work with partners to continue to deliver a programme of work to protect and improve children's physical health. This will focus on:
 - Implementing the recommendations from the play sufficiency research;
 - Increasing physical activity opportunities;
 - Increasing access to healthy food;
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- f) Leeds City Council to ensure that children are central to the delivery of work to become a Marmot city, with a focus on:
 - Improving housing;
 - Planning;
 - Mitigating the impacts of poverty;
 - Children getting a fair start in life;
 - Ensuring the Thriving Strategy is implemented.
- g) The Best Start partnership to aim for all children in Leeds to receive the best start in life, with a focus on children from more deprived backgrounds. This includes redressing the gap in speech language and communication development.
- h) Leeds City Council to maintain work underway to ensure equitable catch up in terms of educational attainment. This will be achieved through delivering the five main priorities of the 3As Plan:
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4 National recognition

“In Our Shoes“ was submitted to the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) as part of the annual report competition and celebration. At the ADPH annual workshop and AGM on 24th May, the Chief Executive, announced the shortlist of reports submitted for the Annual Report Celebration. These reports demonstrated excellence or innovation. A total of 49 reports were submitted from all over the UK. The topics covered included health inequalities, cost of living, ageing, the influence of the pandemic and more. The top four reports that stood out as overall good examples included Leeds. The panel said: “This year, we had great pleasure in recommending the Leeds report, which gave a powerful snapshot of the inequity of outcomes for children and young people in the city. We particularly enjoyed the film embedded into the report, and the presentation was fresh and inviting on every page. The report is also peppered with statistics and quotes which makes it relatable and interesting throughout. One thing that really stood out was the section on positive impacts of the pandemic. This isn’t something you hear much about but serves as a timely reminder that there is good to be found in every situation, and by exploring what that good is, we can learn valuable lessons for the future.”

5 Impact

It is hoped the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022 will have a wide-ranging impact if partners take note of the recommendations, which have been written in response to intelligence created by a review of evidence, epidemiological data and a wide consultation of children, young people, their families and partners who work with children and young people in Leeds.

6 Health and Wellbeing Board governance

6.1 Consultation, engagement and hearing citizen voice

Children, families and partners were consulted as described in section 1.

6.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

No equality and diversity / cohesion and integration issues identified.

6.3 Resources and value for money

No additional resources needed.

6.4 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

No legal implications identified.

3.5 Risk management

No risks identified.

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Implementing the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21

How does this help reduce health inequalities in Leeds?

Data highlights inequalities and recommendations direct action needed to reduce them.

How does this help create a high quality health and care system?

Data highlights areas of greatest need and recommendations direct action needed to reduce waiting times.

How does this help have a financially sustainable health and care system?

There is no direct cost attached as this is a report. If actions are undertaken in the longer term there will be savings by investing in promotion of wellbeing and primary prevention if disease.

Future challenges or opportunities

To deliver against the recommendations within the resources available.

Priorities of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21 (please tick all that apply to this report)	
A Child Friendly City and the best start in life	X
An Age Friendly City where people age well	
Strong, engaged and well-connected communities	X
Housing and the environment enable all people of Leeds to be healthy	X
A strong economy with quality, local jobs	
Get more people, more physically active, more often	X
Maximise the benefits of information and technology	
A stronger focus on prevention	X
Support self-care, with more people managing their own conditions	
Promote mental and physical health equally	X
A valued, well trained and supported workforce	X