



**Report of:** Ian Cameron (Director of Public Health, Leeds City Council)

**Report to:** Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board

**Date:** 14 June 2019

**Subject:** State of Women's Health in Leeds

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

## Summary of main issues

1. Leeds is the first city in the UK to produce a comprehensive picture of life, health and wellbeing for women and girls known as the *State of Women's Health in Leeds Report*.
2. This paper provides a summary of the issues highlighted from its findings and next steps in using this learning across the system to understand needs and commission better services for women supporting the vision of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy, that Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest will improve their health the fastest.

## Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the content of this paper.
- Support the findings and recommendations of the State of Women's Health in Leeds report.
- Agree for organisations represented on the HWB to:
  - invite the authors of the report to their relevant senior board/group meetings to discuss the findings
  - reflect on gender differences in health and wellbeing in their services and the further actions needed to work to address the findings
  - identify commitments to support delivery of the recommendations of the State of Women's Health report, which will be overseen and reported to a future HWB meeting.

## 1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Leeds is the first city in the UK to produce a comprehensive picture of life, health and wellbeing for women and girls. This will be used across the system to understand needs and commission and provide better services. This will support the commitment to the vision outlined in the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2016-21 that Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest will improve their health the fastest.

## 2 Background information

- 2.1 The State of Women's Health in Leeds report<sup>1</sup> was a recommendation from the 2017-18 Director of Public Health Report<sup>2</sup>, which was considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) in June 2018. This explored the reasons behind the fall in life expectancy for women and a static position for male life expectancy. This included gender specific issues, including female alcohol related mortality and self-harm by young women, which are both explored in more detail in the report.
- 2.2 The State of Women's Health in Leeds report was subsequently commissioned by Leeds City Council in partnership with Women's Lives Leeds and their partners. The direction for the report came through initial conversations with women centred organisations and services about health and wellbeing. Women's Lives Leeds, the Hubs and Public Health have built on these conversations to develop and steer this report.
- 2.3 A strength of the report is its focus on citizen voice and experience. It includes a series of case studies representing key aspects of the report from the 11 partner organisations of Women's Lives Leeds. These are integrated within the report and showcase some of the fantastic assets we have in Leeds and personal stories from women in Leeds. The report was written by Professor Alan White (Emeritus Professor, Leeds Beckett University), Dr Amanda Seims (Associate Member of staff, Leeds Beckett University) and Sarah Erskine (Public Health, Leeds City Council). Dr Louise Warwick-Booth (Leeds Beckett University), the main author of the State of Women's Health in Leeds: Women's Voices report,<sup>3</sup> brought together various focus groups. Many women participated in the consultative events held by the Leeds Women and Girls Hub that helped us prioritise what the report should focus on.
- 2.4 The State of Women's Health in Leeds documents can be accessed online via the [Leeds Observatory](#) and [Women's Lives Leeds](#) websites.

The State of Women's Health in Leeds report was successfully launched on International Women's Day, 08 March 2019, at Northern Ballet by Cllr Charlwood,

---

<sup>1</sup> State of Women's Health in Leeds Report ([https://www.womenslivesleeds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/state\\_womens\\_health\\_leeds\\_final.pdf](https://www.womenslivesleeds.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/state_womens_health_leeds_final.pdf))

<sup>2</sup> 2017-18 Director of Public Health Report (<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/Director-of-Public-Health-report-2017.aspx>)

<sup>3</sup> State of Women's Health in Leeds: Women's Voices report (<https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Final-Report-Womens-Voices-Feb-2019.pdf>)

which can be viewed [here](#). This was alongside local events across Leeds within each of the 10 Community Committees where the report was discussed, with involvement from local elected members. There was widespread positive coverage of the report in the media.

### **3 Main issues**

3.1 The State of Women's Health in Leeds report provides a comprehensive overview of the women's health in Leeds. By exploring the wider social and economic circumstances women and girls' experiences, as well as the physical and emotional health challenges they face, we have created a picture of women that has been lacking up to now. What the study reveals is that despite the city taking very positive steps towards improving the health of women, there are still many whose health is poor and who are living in difficult circumstances. This requires a whole system approach to tackle these issues.

3.2 The main findings are:

- In Leeds, women and girls still face a number of inequalities and for many life is becoming more complex.
- The health and wellbeing of women living in poverty and experiencing inequality is worsening.
- Women's life expectancy is dropping, despite positive improvements in cancer and cardiovascular health.
- Women and girls' lives are becoming more complex and including more 'risky' behaviours which have long-term impacts on their physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Young girls are experiencing more mental health problems.
- An ageing population sees more women at risk of dementia, frailty and falls.
- Women's reproductive and maternity health issues are not always supported
- Safety is a priority for the women and girls of Leeds.

#### Next steps

3.3 The State of Women's Health in Leeds and the State of Men's Health in Leeds reports contributes to a richer picture of our Joint Strategic Assessment<sup>4</sup> and articulates a series of recommendations to support the ambition of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Leeds to be the Best City for Health and Wellbeing for all of our citizens.

3.4 Positively, to date the State of Women's Health in Leeds and the State of Men's Health in Leeds reports have been:

- Highlighted in the next Leeds Integrated Market Position Statement developed by the Integrated Commissioning Executive (ICE).
- Shared as best practice examples regionally and nationally with Public Health England.

---

<sup>4</sup> Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment Summary (<https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Leeds-JSA-2018-Summary-Report.pdf>)

- Presented at NHS Leeds CCG Target events.

3.5 There are also plans in place for the reports to be discussed at the Leeds Academic Health Partnership and will for part of the work plan for Scrutiny Board (Adults, Health & Active Lifestyles).

3.6 In order to meaningfully begin to address the issues within the report, it is essential that we:

- Consider the recommendations from the State of Women's Health in Leeds (summary attached as an appendix), which will be explored further at HWB on 14 June.
- Reflect and discuss with commissioners of services and providers to consider how to take forward the findings and key areas of action. This includes auditing new and existing commissioning specifications to ensure gender is appropriately represented.
- Deliver workshops to share key findings of the report with stakeholders.
- Recognise it as a valuable resource to shape future programmes of work and as an evidence base to support funding bids (e.g. Third Sector).

3.7 It is proposed that we undertook a piece of work to engage with health and care organisation represented on the HWB as part of the audit highlighted above to reflect on gender differences in health and wellbeing in their services and identify further actions needed to work to address the findings. It is recommended that this will form a series of commitments to support delivery of the recommendations of the State of Women's Health report, which will be overseen and reported to a future HWB meeting.

## **4 Health and Wellbeing Board governance**

### **4.1 Consultation, engagement and hearing citizen voice**

4.1.1 The direction for the report come through initial conversations with women centred organisations and services about health and wellbeing. Women's Lives Leeds, the Hubs and Public Health have built on these to develop and steer this report.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 Gender is a protected characteristic of the equality act. The State of Women's Health in Leeds report complements the State of Men's Health in Leeds report.

### **4.3 Resources and value for money**

4.3.1 The reports help us understand the needs of the Leeds population better and design and deliver more effective, value for money services.

### **4.4 Legal Implications, access to information and call In**

4.4.1 There are no legal, access to information or call in implications arising from this report.

## **4.5 Risk management**

4.5.1 Risks were considered and managed by a steering group during the completion of the report.

## **5 Conclusion**

5.1 Leeds is the first city in the UK to produce a comprehensive picture of life, health and wellbeing for women and girls. There is a valuable opportunity to use the findings of the State of Women's Health in Leeds report across the system to understand needs and commission and provide better services. This is will make a significant contribution to our Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Leeds to be a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest will improve their health the fastest.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- Note the content of this paper.
- Support the findings and recommendations of the State of Women's Health in Leeds report.
- Agree for organisations represented on the HWB to:
  - invite the authors of the report to their relevant senior board/group meetings to discuss the findings
  - reflect on gender differences in health and wellbeing in their services and the further actions needed to work to address the findings
  - identify commitments to support delivery of the recommendations of the State of Women's Health report, which will be overseen and reported to a future HWB meeting.

## **7 Background documents**

None.





**How does this help reduce health inequalities in Leeds?**

Leeds is the first city in the UK to produce a comprehensive picture of life, health and wellbeing for women and girls. This will support the commitment to the vision outlined in the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2016-21 that Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for all ages, where people who are the poorest will improve their health the fastest.

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

The report, the finding and recommendations support the health and care system in Leeds to understand the needs of women and girls better. This will be used across the system to commission and provide better services.

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

There is lots of positive work already happening around women’s health in Leeds. This report seeks to build on the assets we have and target our efforts and resources more effectively around need.

<b>Priorities of the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-21</b>	
A Child Friendly City and the best start in life	*
An Age Friendly City where people age well	*
Strong, engaged and well-connected communities	*
Housing and the environment enable all people of Leeds to be healthy	*
A strong economy with quality, local jobs	*
Get more people, more physically active, more often	*
Maximise the benefits of information and technology	*
A stronger focus on prevention	*
Support self-care, with more people managing their own conditions	*
Promote mental and physical health equally	*
A valued, well trained and supported workforce	*
The best care, in the right place, at the right time	*