

Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board

Meeting to be held on 9 March 2021

Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System and Health Inequalities – Emerging Approaches

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

The fact that Health Inequalities are present within Lancashire and South Cumbria is not a new concept, with areas of significant deprivation, poor housing, high levels of long-term conditions and poor mental health clearly recognised by all public sector partners. However, Covid-19 has highlighted and worsened the health inequalities that exist within society and in particular, the North West, like never before. There is clear recognition now that everyone must act to address these inequalities, to address the causes of ill health and prevent further detrimental outcomes.

Over the Summer of 2020, a number of regional and national guidance documents were published that, between them, set out clear expectations for how the NHS in particular should take steps to address inequalities.

Following publication of these, the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS) has taken steps to ensure it is responding to these requirements and has also begun to consider how it can work differently to ensure that addressing inequalities becomes a key focus in everything it does.

This report is intended to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an overview of the national and regional requirements, along with key actions the Integrated Care System (ICS) is proposing to take to respond to these. The report also seeks to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an opportunity to offer their views in relation to the actions and consider how best the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Health and Wellbeing Board could work jointly to take forward work on this critical issue.

Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- i) Note the proposed approach by the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System to develop a cohesive and robust plan for mobilising health and care organisations to address health inequalities in Lancashire and South Cumbria.
- ii) Consider and provide feedback on how best this work can align with the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- iii) Support, in principle, the commitment to develop a health inequalities commission for Lancashire and South Cumbria, to be undertaken jointly with local authorities in the area.

Background

Whilst our health and care organisations remain under extreme pressure coordinating our COVID-19 responses and vaccination deployment, there are opportunities presented now that we cannot afford to miss, particularly in 'how' we design and deliver our responses, that could allow us to mitigate some of the pandemic impact and protect our most vulnerable people. With a focus to then build on our immediate responses, through the horizons of COVID-19 over coming months and years, we recognise that we must begin to build an infrastructure that is focused on population health and improving outcomes for all.

The outline proposals for legislative change for Integrated Care Systems (ICS), clearly outline a direction of travel for the System as vehicles for addressing health inequalities and improving health outcomes, with a particular proposal to introduce a “triple aim” duty on NHS organisations and this will become a key focus in future assurance frameworks. As a system we have received positive feedback from NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) on our approach to embedding action on health inequalities and we received a “green” rating as having made good progress on delivering against the Phase 3 Urgent Actions on Health Inequalities, but we have much still to do.

The economic shockwave that will ripple beyond the waves of the pandemic will, by all accounts, drive up poverty and deprivation to levels not seen in a generation. With no uncertainty, this will increase demands for health and care services, physical, mental and social, long after COVID-19 vaccines are deployed. We have an opportunity now to build on the common purpose we forged through our COVID-19 response, to take action with our local authorities, VCFSE partners and residents to support our communities through this shockwave.

We have collective power and resources as a health and care system, as a major employer and purchaser of goods and services, that can be harnessed to support a focus on economic recovery, sustainable employment opportunities and raising aspirations for our residents. We also have a collective voice, which can support our local authority leaders in lobbying Government for enhanced investment and support throughout our COVID-19 recovery. Our communities need and deserve, more than their “fair share”, if they are to survive this pandemic and turn the tide on the structural inequalities that have made them so vulnerable.

We have agreed, as an Integrated Care System (ICS) to undertake key actions over the short and medium term to embed a focus on addressing health inequalities throughout everything we do. The actions, summarised below, are set out in the enclosed Appendix A.

- In the short term, all organisations/systems will assure themselves they are undertaking the requirements of the Phase 3 guidance and North West Community Risk Reduction Framework and look to identify areas for improvement or where support is required.
- Support the continued development of population health management across our system, underpinned by a Community Call to Action approach to mobilise community assets.
- Utilise a Maturity Matrix baseline assessment to understand.
- Begin the development of a health inequalities action plan that embeds a focus on addressing inequalities throughout all our processes and strategies.
- Begin work with local government and Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Sector partners to scope and develop a health inequalities commission for Lancashire.

Undertaken these actions will ensure we respond to the national and regional requirements to respond to health inequalities and also ensure this becomes a key area of focus for our service changes moving forward.

List of background papers

- Embedding Action on Health Inequalities – Proposals for a Lancashire and South Cumbria Approach March 2021.
- Implementing phase 3 of the NHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 7th August 2020.
- NW Covid-19 Community Risk Reduction Framework; NHSEI; September 2020
- Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups; Public Health England, June 2020.