

Wiltshire Council

Health and Wellbeing Board

30 January 2025

Subject: Annual Health Protection Report 2023

Executive Summary

- I. The Director of Public Health (DPH) has a statutory responsibility for strategic leadership and oversight of health protection functions on behalf of the Council. This includes planning and response to threats to public health such as infectious disease and environmental hazards. The Health and Wellbeing board, through the DPH, should be assured that arrangements in place locally are sufficient, robust and implemented accordingly to protect public health.
- II. The multi-agency Wiltshire Health Protection Assurance Group (HPAG) is the forum in which assurance is sought that adequate arrangements are in place for the prevention, surveillance, planning and response required to protect the public's health.
- III. The HPAG produces an annual report for consideration by the Health and Wellbeing Board. This provides an overview of health protection monitoring and surveillance, any significant issues with lessons learned, and recommendations for further development of the local health protection system. The report illustrates the significant collaborative work of the Wiltshire system during 2023, including a range of outreach activity, working closely with the Wiltshire population.
- IV. A Health Protection Report 2023 has been prepared for the Board with information on and assurance of the health protection arrangements in Wiltshire. The scope of health protection in this context includes: infection prevention and management, immunisations and screening programmes, infectious diseases, health emergency planning, and environmental hazards.

Proposal(s)

It is recommended that the Board:

- i) Notes and acknowledges the Wiltshire Health Protection Assurance Group Annual Report 2023;
- ii) Supports the recommendations of the Wiltshire Health Protection Assurance Group Annual Report 2023.

Reason for Proposal

To provide assurance of the local health protection arrangements for the population for Wiltshire, and to continue to develop the local health protection system through recommendations based on previous experience and evidence.

Gemma Brinn
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Wiltshire Council

Subject: Health Protection Annual Report 2023

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an annual update to the Health and Wellbeing Board on the health protection system in Wiltshire in line with the Director of Public Health's statutory responsibility to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for the surveillance, prevention, planning and response required to protect the public's health (Health and Social Care Act 2013).

Relevance to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

2. The Health Protection Report outlines activity monitored by the Health Protection Assurance Group to deliver the Health Protection Strategy 2022-26. Key to the assurance activity of the Group is how health protection activity links to the guiding theme of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy of prevention; learning from experience in order to reduce the risk to the population of health protection hazards and ensuring preventive actions such as screening and immunisation programmes and infectious disease testing and control, are implemented across our population.
3. Throughout the report there is a strategic focus on inequalities, ensuring partners are working towards equitable access to services for all Wiltshire residents; focusing on those groups that may be disproportionately affected by infectious diseases, cancer and other health threats.

Background

4. Health Protection is concerned with preventing and controlling infectious diseases, environmental threats, and protection from hazards. It uses population-wide surveillance and interventions to prevent disease and provide protection from a range of potential hazards and harms. To achieve this requires effective partnership working arrangements across several organisations.
5. Wiltshire has well-established and effective multi-agency working relationships, and a long history of collaborative working to deliver health protection functions. However, there are new and evolving challenges to population health, emerging epidemics and drug resistance, changing environments and demographics, and the ongoing risk of chemical and biological incidents. This clearly demands an ongoing robust health protection system.

6. The Wiltshire Health Protection Assurance Group is comprised of internal and external stakeholders, with the aim to provide assurance to the Health and Wellbeing Board of Wiltshire Council, that adequate arrangements are in place for the prevention, surveillance, planning and response required to protect the public's health. The scope of the Group is to minimise hazards to human health for Wiltshire, and to ensure that any threats are promptly dealt with.
7. This report builds on the health protection strategy 2022-2026 and the recommendations and shared priorities identified in the Wiltshire health protection report 2022. This report has been agreed upon by the Wiltshire Health Protection Assurance Group and will be used to ensure appropriate and adequate assurance systems are in place, and guide the workplan of the group based on identified gaps and needs, with a particular focus on inequalities

Main Considerations

8. The report sets out the health protection activities, events and data for the calendar year 2023. Recommendations for continuing work are made with a focus on inequalities and identify system gaps and needs of the Wiltshire population. This report will further guide the workplan and health protection strategy and gives assurance that the health protection system across Wiltshire is robust and fit for purpose.
9. There is a focus on inequalities in this report and this will continue to be incorporated in all workstreams of health protection and be reported on in future reports.

Next Steps

10. Following sign off, the Wiltshire Health Protection Assurance Group will take forward the recommendations from the report and map these to current workstreams or initiate new projects. Where gaps in service delivery, data streams or strategy are identified, the Group will determine how best to take this forward and may create task and finish groups as required.
11. The Health Protection Assurance Group reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board and updates can be provided as felt to be appropriate.
12. To support with data collection and reporting timescales, the next Health Protection Report will cover the 2024/25 financial year, which will therefore cover the additional quarter Q4 23/24 to ensure no gap in the data presented to the Board and assurance is maintained.

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