

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES

22 July 2020

Report of the Director of Public Health

REVIEW OF URGENT DECISION OF CHANGES TO DELIVERY OF PUBLIC HEALTH DELIVERED SERVICES

1. Purpose of the report:

To update the Cabinet Member on changes made to Public Health delivered services due to the COVID19 pandemic.

2. Information and analysis:

The COVID19 pandemic has resulted in the implementation of national guidance for social distancing, self-isolation and the closure, and subsequent partial re-opening, of schools. In light of these requirements changes have been made to the delivery model for Public Health services, including the suspension of some services.

The Council's Constitution allows for Executive Directors to make urgent decisions:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution, the Executive Directors shall have power, after discussion, if practicable, with the leader of the Council or the relevant Cabinet Member or Chairman, to take such action deemed to be necessary and expedient in matters requiring urgent consideration and which, because of the time scales involved, or the need to safeguard the interests of the County Council, cannot be dealt with by submission to the next following meeting of the Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committee.

Changes to the delivery of Public Health services were approved by the Director of Public Health and the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities in March 2020, and subsequently ratified by Cabinet on 23 April 2020. The decision has been reviewed on a fortnightly basis by the Director of Public Health, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities.

Current delivery of Public Health delivered services is as follows:

Live Life Better Derbyshire - Stop Smoking, Weight Management, Physical Activity and the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

Live Life Better Derbyshire provides support to Derbyshire residents who wish to stop smoking, lose weight or increase levels of physical activity. It also delivers the National Child Measurement Programme, a mandated Public Health function for the Council, that measures the height and weight of children in Reception class and year 6, to assess overweight and obesity levels in children within primary schools.

Face-to-face service delivery was stopped on 18th March, and remains paused, however support remains available to existing and new clients through phone and video-call support. Smokers and clients with a BMI of over 40 are being prioritised for support due to their increased risk of serious illness as a result of COVID19.

NHS guidance on prioritisation of community health services during the COVID19 pandemic (including services commissioned or provided by Local Authority Public Health teams) has been provided in a letter dated 19 March from NHS England and NHS Improvement, entitled COVID-19 Prioritisation within Community Health Services. In line with the guidance the NCMP programme was paused from this date. The recommendation from NHS England is that changes to the service delivery model for NCMP will apply until 31st July at the earliest.

School Crossing Patrols

School Crossing Patrol services were suspended from the end of school duty on Friday 20th March.

Following the national policy announcement for a phased return to schools starting from 1st June, the service has assessed sites where a service can resume. This requires consideration of staff availability, a risk assessment of each site to ensure that social distancing can be safely implemented for the School Crossing Patrol and children and their parents/carers, and confirmation from schools as to their arrangements for children to be able to return to school.

There has been an increase of open sites from 34 to 56 sites. The focus on communication with schools and support for patrols with issues around their return to work has had the main impact on the resumption numbers. There are now only 2 sites that are effected by patrols concerned about their return to work.

Since the Government announcement of the reduction to 1 metre social distancing, where 2 metres is not possible, risk assessment reviews of 13 sites are now in process. It is anticipated that those with positive assessments will be opened within the week.

The service continues to have 4 sites where patrols are unable to return due to shielding or caring responsibilities. It has been possible to open one of the 4 as the highest risk site, using a relief patrol.

There continues to be 6 schools who have extreme low numbers of pupils attending and therefore the sites serving these schools remain closed. We are working closely with these schools to monitor any changes in pupil numbers so that service can be resumed when appropriate.

Time Swap, Safe Places, Local Area Co-ordination, Disability Employment Service, First contact, 50+ Forums and the Pension Credit Project

Time Swap is an initiative that encourages local communities to help each other by sharing time and talents. Time Swap members earn 'time' by giving help and support to other members in your community, and in return spend that time on getting help from other members.

Safe Places are public buildings in towns and communities across Derbyshire, such as libraries, shops, pharmacies and GP surgeries. A Safe Place is somewhere vulnerable individuals can go if they feel scared, are lost or need help when they are out and about.

Local Area Co-ordination is a way of supporting people with disabilities, mental ill health, older people and their families and carers. Local Area Co-ordinators support people to live fulfilling lives, stay safe and be well connected with their local communities. Local Area Co-ordinators work in the Bolsover, Amber Valley and High Peak areas.

The Disability Employment Service supports disabled people to find training, work experience, voluntary work and paid employment.

First Contact provides an easy way for Derbyshire residents to get in touch with local services who can support wellbeing and help with staying independent. The Council runs the scheme in partnership with a variety of local agencies.

50+ Forums provide an opportunity for Derbyshire residents aged 50 and above to become involved in the services that are delivered in their area. The majority of 50+ Forum members are aged over 70 years old, and therefore are recommended to implement stringent social distancing and social isolation practices due to their increased risk of more severe illness from COVID19.

The Pension Credit project identifies and supports older people entitled to, but not claiming, pension credit. New contacts with clients were suspended from 13th March and the team has been following up on existing contacts by telephone. Support remains available to older people through the work of the Welfare Rights Service more widely, but not on the scale achievable by the project.

All the above Public Health services were suspended across Derbyshire on 20 March, with the exception of the Pension Credit Project which was suspended on 6 April.

3. Financial considerations:

No additional costs have been identified as a result of the changes to the delivery of Public Health services.

4. HR considerations:

Where possible, staff working in the Public Health services detailed above have been redeployed to support the Council's response to COVID19, for example within the Community Response Unit.

5. Legal considerations:

The Council has powers in accordance with s1-6 of the Localism Act 2011 to do that which will be to the 'benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'. The proposed benefit of this action is to support the reduction in COVID19 infections and reduce the transmission of the virus. Due to the timescales involved it has not been possible to consult affected persons but arrangements have been put in place to continue to support people most vulnerable to COVID19 complications. The decision is a proportionate and reasonable response to COVID19 risks. The Director of Public Health, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities, will review on a fortnightly basis the decision to change or suspend delivery of these services, particularly in light of any changes to the Government's social distancing and self-isolation recommendations.

6. Other considerations:

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

7. Background papers:

Cabinet report 23 April 2020: Officer decisions

Cabinet Member report 8 July 2020: Review of urgent decision of changes to delivery of Public Health delivered services

Fortnightly reports to the Director of Public Health: available on request from Public Health Department

8. Key Decision:

Yes

9. Call-in:

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report? No

10. Officer's Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member notes the ongoing changes to delivery of Public Health services as a result of the COVID19 pandemic.

Dean Wallace
Director of Public Health