

Annual Public Health Report **2008-09**



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1. Introduction and Background



1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction by the Joint Executive Director of Public Health for NHS Devon and Devon County Council

This is my second Annual Public Health Report for NHS Devon and Devon County Council. Last year's report set out a series of challenges as part of our strategy towards tackling inequalities in health. The report showed significant improvements in health and wellbeing and the narrowing gap between those living in the most deprived and least deprived areas of Devon. Chapter 11 of this report sets out our achievements against each of the recommendations from the 2007-08 Annual Public Health Report. I am pleased to report that of the 50 recommendations, 49 have either been fully achieved or activity is taking place.



My last report noted that the 2008-09 Annual Public Health Report would focus on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. We know that a healthy start to life is one of the main determinants of life-long health. Those of us who have a responsibility for working towards the best of health for everyone will be pleased to read this assessment of the current state of health of children and young people in Devon. As well as the need to take greater responsibility for our own health, we also have that responsibility for our children and for the children and young people living in our communities.

This report highlights where we can do more for children and young people and how we can work together to achieve better health for them. My challenge is that we still need to do more for those in society who are least able to help themselves.

I should like to acknowledge the contribution of all of my colleagues in creating the Annual Public Health Report for Devon, 2008-09 and I hope you enjoy reading it.

Dr Virginia Pearson

Joint Executive Director of Public Health



1.2 Executive summary

This 2008-09 Annual Public Health Report sets out the top Public Health priorities for the Devon population, especially in improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people:

- Reduce the proportion of people who smoke overall, and the proportion of women who smoke during pregnancy.
- Promote a healthy weight through a balanced diet and regular physical activity.
- Prevent the misuse of alcohol and drugs.
- Improve sexual health and reduce the number of teenagers becoming pregnant.
- Promote mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Tackle child poverty and disadvantage.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of those living in socio-economically deprived communities.
- Work effectively across organisations to tackle the major causes of ill health and health inequality.
- Promote the health of pregnant women.
- Increase the proportion of breastfed infants, both at six to eight weeks after birth and beyond.
- Improve immunisation uptake rates.
- Take action to safeguard children and young people.
- Promote positive parenting to improve family health and wellbeing.
- Ensure a smooth transition from adolescence to adulthood.

The main actions required are:

- Develop a Tobacco Control Strategy and invest in specialist Stop Smoking Services to help reduce the proportion of people who smoke in Devon and women smoking in pregnancy.
- Implement the new multi-agency Healthy Weight Strategy for Devon (including developing the care pathway for children who are obese) and implement the Healthy Schools Plus Programme.
- Continued focus on implementing the national strategies for alcohol and drugs through the Devon Drug and Alcohol Action Team plans.
- Continue to implement the Young People's Sexual Health Strategy and the Sexual Health Strategy, including promoting the national Chlamydia Screening Programme; ensuring that sexual health promotion is provided through school nurses; delivering rapid access to integrated sexual health services and fully implementing the Teenage Pregnancy Plan.
- Publish a strategy for mental health and emotional wellbeing and a Suicide Prevention Strategy.
- Promote the uptake of opportunities for employment and welfare benefits.
- Continue to focus efforts on improving the health and wellbeing of those living in Devon's priority communities.
- Implement the Tackling Health Inequalities Action Plan with greater ownership at local level by Practice Based Commissioners (to include action on smoking, circulatory disease risk factors and improvement in uptake of screening programmes).
- Implement "Maternity Matters".
- Develop a strategy for the promotion of breastfeeding.
- Promote the uptake of childhood immunisations (including the use of social marketing techniques to achieve this).
- Continue efforts to improve child safeguarding through promoting positive parenting, investment in drug and alcohol misuse prevention and treatment services, prevention of domestic violence and abuse, and increased training and recruitment of staff.
- Always consider transition issues when commissioning and providing services.

