



Northumberland
County Council

Protecting the health of our communities from the impact of Covid-19

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2020/21

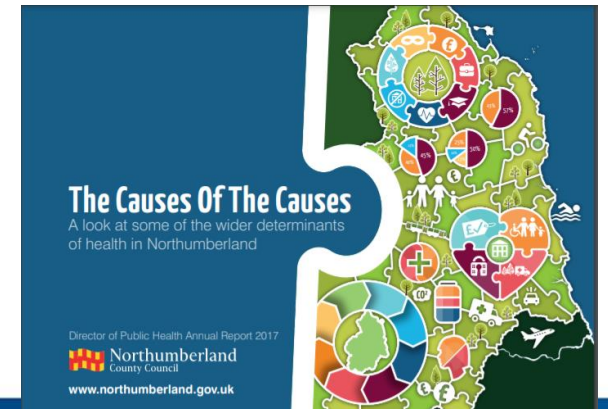
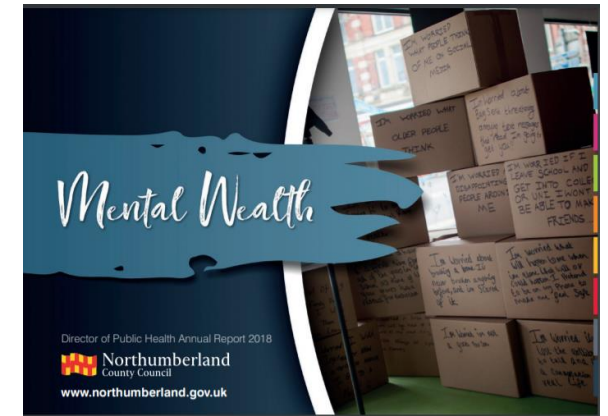
Health and Wellbeing Board

January 2022

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Background

- Directors of Public Health in England have a statutory duty to write an Annual Public Health Report on the health of the local population; the Local Authority has a duty to publish it.
- The DPH Annual Report is a vehicle for informing local people about the health of their community, as well as providing necessary information for commissioners and providers
- The DPH Annual Report for 2020 is in the format of a series of short videos.
- It was developed during the 4th wave of SARS-CoV-2 in July 2021 and reflects the situation up until that point.



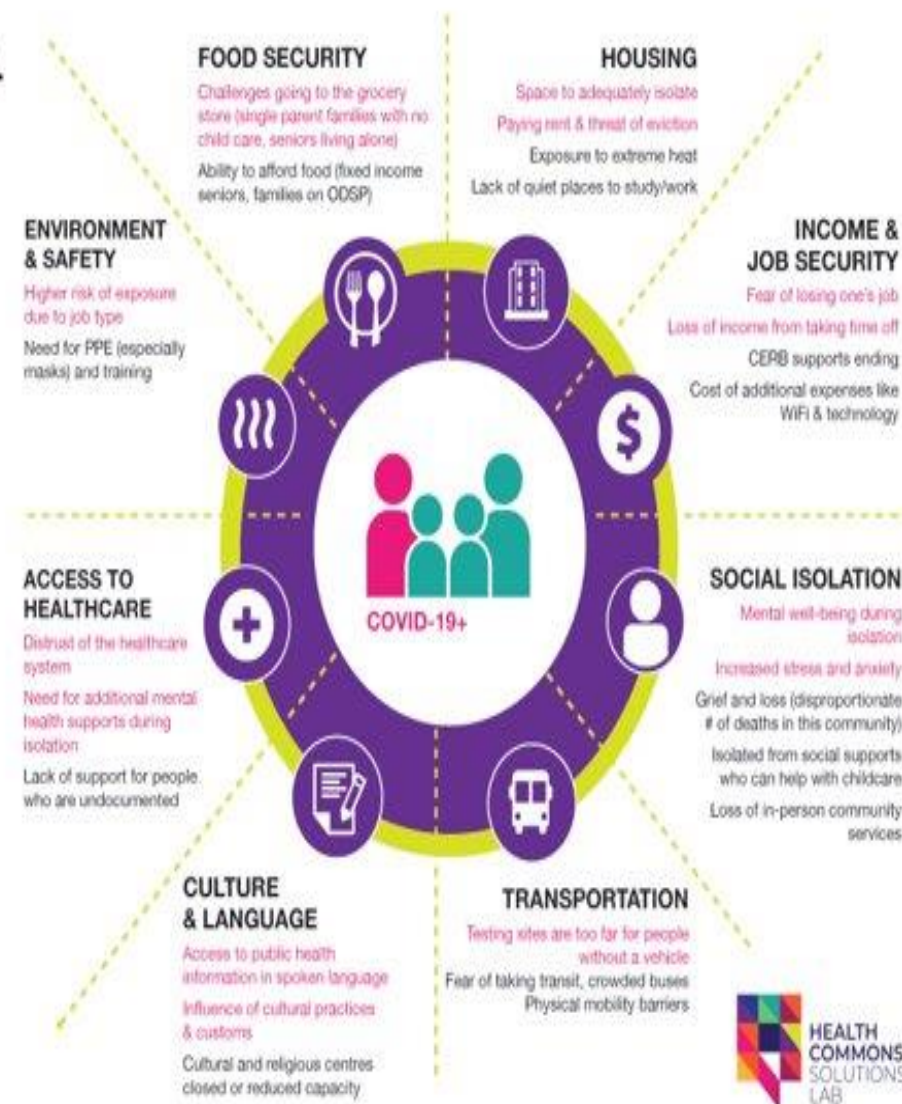
Focus of the report

- How COVID-19 has highlighted the two-way relationship between the health of our residents and the prosperity of the county;
- How the conditions within which our residents are born, live, work and age have affected their experiences of COVID-19;
- The groups who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 through exposure to the infection, the measures put in place to control the virus and the longer term social and economic consequences;
- How the council has worked to protect the health of Northumberland residents;
- What more can be done to improve health and reduce inequalities so we emerge from this pandemic more resilient to future threats.

COVID-19 & SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Not everyone has been affected equally by the pandemic. The social determinants of health affect not only who gets sick (pink) but everyone in the community during this unprecedented time.

The pandemic is exacerbating the impact of these inequities, particularly for communities who are already under-resourced and experiencing barriers.



Video 1. Introduction and overview

Video 2. Impact of Covid-19 on income, job security, social isolation and mental health

- Over a quarter of adults experienced worsening finances with the poorest suffering the most
- 1 in 10 of the population have been furloughed for more than 6 months
- Economic recessions disproportionately affect young people and pandemic affects employment for those with disabilities as well
- A fifth of the population have experienced sustained poor mental health; a quarter of which are new mental health problems emerging
- Loneliness increased and especially for those required to shield

Video 3. How the wider determinants of health have shaped the experience

- Made existing inequalities worse:
 - Safe and healthy homes – poor housing has been a significant concern – overcrowding, poor conditions, costs of living
 - Health behaviours – more extreme in our deprived communities – tobacco and alcohol use in particular

Video 4. The groups disproportionately affected by Covid-19; children & young people; digital inclusion

- Those living on lowest income have been disproportionately impacted
- Long term conditions, ethnic minority communities, those with learning disabilities or mental health conditions
- Those living in care homes and those less able to work
- Children and young people –
 - indirect impact on emotional and social and educational outcomes & physical health such as increase in obesity levels

Video 5. The Councils response and recommendations

- Rapid response and support in place: employment/skills triage; wellbeing support; grants
- Northumberland Communities Together (NCT)
- Children and young people – Kickstart, youth employment partnership approach
- Digital access
- Housing options eg homeless support

Recommendations

1. Undertake a **COVID-19 Inequalities Impact Assessment** and use that to inform the council's recovery plan to ensure that areas of deepening inequalities are recognised and addressed. This should inform future budget and planning cycles.
2. Develop an **integrated carbon reduction, equality and health inequality approach** as part of our policy development and appraisal process. This would be consistent with the Health in All Policies approach we are developing.
3. Build on the strong community networks and increased social cohesion to **ensure residents are at the centre of processes to design initiatives and services** which meet their needs and aspirations.
4. Encourage people to shop local, support local businesses, support the local development of skills to enable employment, especially those living in Northumberland who are furthest away from the employment market and **exploit the wider social value of the Northumberland pound**