



HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 3rd JUNE 2020

REPORT OF LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEALTH

LEICESTERSHIRE SEXUAL HEALTH STRATEGY 2020-23

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to consult the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the County Council's draft Sexual Health Strategy for 2020- 2023.
2. The report also includes an overview of sexual health locally as evidenced in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapter on sexual health.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. In April 2013 Public Health transferred from the NHS into local government, which took on the statutory responsibility for commissioning almost all sexual health services for their local populations.
4. The priorities in the draft Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy build on the stability of the integrated sexual health service with its strong partnership work that was developed through the 2016-2019 strategy and focuses on sexual health improvement, leadership and policy in Leicestershire. Its five key priorities align with Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22 which aims to be 'Working together for the benefit of everyone', in particular, the wellbeing and opportunity objective which states that people need to be enabled to take control of their own health and wellbeing throughout their lives and for the Council to support the population to stay well through prevention and early intervention.

Background

5. Sexual and reproductive health is not just about preventing disease or infection. It also means promoting good sexual health in a wider context, including relationships, sexuality and sexual rights. This is a key theme for The Sexual Health Strategy for 2020-23.
6. The previous sexual health strategy 2016-2019 focused on pulling together what was then a fragmented system. This was achieved, and the 2020-23 Strategy builds on the stability of the integrated sexual health service and focuses on sexual health improvement, leadership and policy in Leicestershire.

Sexual Health Locally

7. Nationally and locally, the burden of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) continues to be greatest in young people (aged 15-24). Men who have sex with men (MSM), specific Black and minority ethnic groups, vulnerable people (including Looked After Children (LAC)), those with physical and learning disabilities and those who had adverse childhood experiences, are all at greater risk of STIs. Reinfection rates of STIs, particularly in women, are an issue in some areas of the County.
8. Generally, the diagnosed prevalence rate of HIV is lower than nationally but testing coverage in Leicestershire is significantly worse than England overall. Late diagnosis is a key factor in HIV related morbidity and premature mortality. Local authorities were due to commission, from April 2020, the provision of PrEP (pre exposure prophylactic) an antiviral medication that, when taken appropriately, is a highly effective way of preventing HIV transmission. The commissioning of PrEP by local authorities has been delayed due to Covid-19, with no start date as yet. The medication will be paid for by the NHS and the Council has also set aside funding to support delivery.
9. The total abortion rate in Leicestershire has increased significantly over the past six years, reflecting the national pattern. In Leicestershire the rate of abortions in over 25s has increased since 2014, but the rate remains below the national rate.

Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy 2020-23

10. The draft Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy 2020-23 is appended to this report. It considers the achievements made thus far and outlines five key priorities for the next three years to further improve sexual health outcomes for Leicestershire's residents. The priorities, which are underpinned by the results and recommendations from the JSNA chapter, which was completed in September 2019, which can be found at: www.lsr-online.org/uploads/jsna-sexual-health.pdf The five priorities are:
 - Informed choice around sexual and reproductive health - This includes: communicating clear, consistent sexual health messages across LLR; ensuring delivery of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in schools and running targeted sexual health campaigns.
 - Flexible, accessible services for all - Significant work has already been done to improve services and reduced fragmentation across the system. The sexual health services and workforce will look to ensure that groups at specific high risk of poor sexual health have access to high quality equitable services across the county.
 - Fulfilling reproductive intentions - Support Leicestershire residents to have the best opportunity to have children at a time and place in life that they choose and reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancy and STIs.
 - Reduce the impact of health inequalities on sexual and reproductive health - Work with partners both within the council and externally to build a strong local economy to promote opportunities for communities to thrive and, support people to take control of their health and wellbeing.
 - Working with partners to maintain a strategic approach to sexual health improvement - The Council will ensure good joint working with other sexual

health commissioners including joint procurements and co-commissioning of services across organisational boundaries where possible.

Covid-19

11. There is no doubt that the impact of Covid-19 will affect wider health issues for people including their sexual health. This may be as a result of the changed access to services during the crisis – mostly delivered via video and telephone link with online provision of contraception and some STI treatment – or through an increase in health inequalities. The Strategy will look to address the changes in people’s circumstances and also to promote what which new methods of service delivery have worked well. It will be essential to provide clear communications about the delivery of services as the Council moves into a recovery phase, so that residents are informed and able to make decisions about their sexual health.

Consultation

12. The Strategy is subject to an eight week consultation which began on the 1st April 2020. While face to face meetings have not been possible the consultation has been delivered via email to key stakeholders, social media posts, and articles in local newsletters. Specifically, consultation has been sought with East and West Clinical Commissioning Groups, all 7 District and Borough councils, the integrated sexual health service, University Hospitals Leicester (UHL), Public Health England (PHE), Healthwatch, Turning Point, Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL), Leicestershire Aids Support Service (LASS), Trade, Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Chair of Secondary Head Group, Chair of Primary Heads and various schools through the PSHE network, Parish Councils, Leicestershire County Council members and all internal departments. The Strategy has also been shared with Leicester City and Rutland Councils via the integrated sexual health board.
13. The report is being presented to members of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order for them to comment on the draft Strategy. It is anticipated that the final draft of the Strategy will be presented to Leicestershire County Council’s Cabinet for approval on 23 June 2020.

Recommendation

14. It is recommended that members of the Health and Scrutiny Committee comment on the draft Leicestershire Sexual Health Strategy 2020 – 23.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

15. None. The Strategy is county wide.

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Appendix

Draft Sexual Health Strategy

Relevant Impact Assessments

Equality and Human Rights Implications

As the implementation of the new Strategy would not result in major changes to services, an EHIRA screening exercise identified that a full assessment was not required. The Council will, however, keep in mind that the Covid-19 crisis may have substantially affected resident's sexual health and will therefore reassess whether a full EHIRA might be required in the next 12 months.