

Item 8: Public Health Transformation

By: Peter Sass, Head of Democratic Services

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 9 October 2015

Subject: Public Health Transformation

Summary: This report provides background information on the Public Health Transformation. This report is for information only.

1. Introduction

- (a) Kent County Council has asked for the attached report to be presented to the Committee.
- (b) Local authorities have, since 1 April 2013, had an enlarged remit for improving the health of their local population as the public health role of Primary Care Trusts transferred to them. The Secretary of State continues to have overall responsibility for improving health – with national public health functions delegated to Public Health England (House of Commons Library 2014).
- (c) Since commissioning responsibilities for public health services lie with local authorities, the statutory remit of the Health Overview and Scrutiny does not extend to these services. Therefore there is no requirement to consult this Committee on any proposal for a substantial development of health services in the area of the local authority. However, there is no bar on local authorities' public health departments engaging with health scrutiny and there are areas of common interest.

2. Public Health Responsibilities - Local Authorities

- (a) Local authorities' statutory responsibilities for public health services are set out in the Health and Social Care Act. The Act conferred new duties on local authorities to improve public health. It abolished Primary Care Trusts and transferred much of their responsibility for public health to local authorities from 1 April 2013. From this date local authorities have had a new duty to take such steps as they consider appropriate for improving the health of the people in their areas (House of Commons Library 2014).
- (b) Under the Act, upper-tier and unitary local authorities are required to commission or provide mandatory services which include:
 - appropriate access to sexual health services;
 - ensuring there are plans in place to protect the health of the population;
 - public health services for children and young people aged 5 to 19;
 - the National Child Measurement Programme;
 - NHS Health Check programme for people between 40 and 74;
 - supporting, reviewing and challenging delivery of key public health funded and NHS delivered services such as immunisation and screening

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programmes, including giving advice to CCGs (Local Government Association 2014).

- (c) Other services are at the discretion of local authorities, depending on national and local priorities but all local authorities will also commission a wide range of key public health services, including smoking cessation, promoting physical activity, addressing obesity and promoting better sexual health. Local authorities are required to have regard to the Public Health Outcomes Framework which sets out the key indicators the Department of Health expects local authorities to work towards. (Local Government Association 2014).
- (d) Local authorities' general statutory duties to protect and improve health and wellbeing and to tackle inequalities and the 'social determinants' of health mean taking on a very broad range of health-directed activity. This can range from considering and mitigating the impact on health of poor housing, spatial planning, education, employment, leisure and other local authority services to encouraging local businesses to become 'healthy employers' to initiatives to reduce smoking, alcohol and drug consumption, obesity and traffic collisions (Local Government Association 2014).
- (e) Each upper-tier and unitary authority, acting jointly with the Secretary of State, is required to appoint a Director of Public Health who is supported by a public health team. The Director of Public Health is a chief officer of the council and a statutory member of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Local Government Association 2014).

3. Public Health England

- (a) Public Health England was established as an executive agency of the Department of Health to bring together public health specialists from more than 70 organisations, including Health Protection England, into a single public health service (House of Commons Library 2014).
- (b) Public Health England has four core functions: protect the public's health from infectious diseases and other public health hazards; improve the public's health and wellbeing; improve population health through sustainable health and care services; and build the capacity and capability of the public health system (Public Health England 2015).
- (c) PHE has 9 local centres and 4 regions – North of England, South of England, Midlands & East of England, and London. The South of England region is made up of 2 centres: South East and South West (Public Health England 2015).

4. Recommendation

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted and the Director of Public Health be requested to provide an update on the Public Health Transformation to the Committee at the appropriate time.

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Background Documents

House of Commons Library (2014) '*Local authorities' public health responsibilities (England) (13/03/2014)*',

<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06844/SN06844.pdf>

Local Government Association (2014) '*A councillor's guide to the health system in England (01/05/2014)*',

<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/5854661/A+councillor%C3%95s+guide+to+the+health+system+in+England/430cde9f-567f-4e29-a48b-1c449961e31f>

Public Health England (2015) '*Who we are and what we do: annual plan for 2015 to 2016 (31/07/2015)*', <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-health-england-annual-plan>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-health-england-annual-plan>

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