From:	Linden Kemkaran, Cabinet Member for Public Health Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health
To:	Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee – 18 November 2026
Subject:	**Public Health Annual Quality Report For 2025/26**
Classification:	Unrestricted
Past Pathway of Paper:	None
Future Pathway of Paper:	None

Summary: During 2025 to 2026, Public Health strengthened its quality assurance arrangements through developing the Public Health Quality Assurance Framework, completion of the Public Health Service Transformation Programme, early-stage development of quality dashboard indicators, and revision of incident management processes. Work will continue in 2026-2027 to embed these improvements and further strengthen quality governance across Public Health services.

Recommendation(s): The Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the content of this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 This Public Health Quality Annual Report 2025-2026 provides an overview of the quality assurance processes in place across Public Health, progress made during 2025-2026 to strengthen quality and key quality improvement initiatives undertaken to support the delivery of high-quality services for the people of Kent.

2. Background

2.1 The 2024-2025 Public Health Annual Quality Report outlines some existing quality process and assurance mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of Public Health commissioned services.

2.2 This includes:

- Service design based on findings from the statutory Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and additional needs assessments
- Collaborative working between specialised officers to develop comprehensive service specification and to obtain assurances during mobilisation and lifecycle of contracts
- Compliance with the Kent County Council (KCC) policy ‘Spending the Council’s Money’ (which complies with applicable procurement legislation) to facilitate the commissioning of services which are safe, effective and provide a positive experience for people who use our services

- Named contract managers and formal contract management activities to ensure safe and effective delivery of services and service outcomes
- A requirement for Providers to obtain the views and experiences of people who use their service to improve service provision.

2.3 A review of quality processes in Public Health was conducted in May 2023, focusing on commissioned services. This resulted in 13 key recommendations for improvement. To systematically address the 2023 recommendations, decision was taken to establish the Public Health Quality Framework, aligned with national and local policies and guidance.

2.4 The Public Health Service Transformation programme began in summer 2023 and concluded by April 2026. It sought to improve and ensure all services in receipt of the Public Health Grant were efficient, achieving best value, evidence based and delivering right outcomes for the people of Kent.

2.5 The Public Health Incident management policy has been reviewed, and the revised policy incorporates principles from the newer NHS Patient Safety Incident Reporting Framework.

2.6 To support the monitoring of quality improvement across Public Health, quality dashboard indicators are in early stages of development to monitor quality across the Public Health team. A baseline quality survey will also be used to understand how existing quality processes are embedded within Public Health.

3. Complaints, Compliments and Comments

3.1 Any complaints, compliments and comments about Public Health Services received are dealt with by either the programme lead or commissioner who will liaise directly with the service it relates to. These are discussed at the relevant meetings; lessons are learnt, with any agreed actions implemented to improve services.

3.2 All public Health complaints, compliments and comments are included in the Adult Social Care and Health Complaints Report, which is shared with the Cabinet Committee annually.

3.3 The table below details the number of complaints, compliments and comments received during 2025-2026 within Public Health.

Case type	**Total**
Complaints	0
Member Enquiries • Local food policies/ Climate change • Walk and Talk Scheme change • Sexual Health services • Avian Flu x2	7

• NHS Health Check • Health Impact Assessment Folkestone Harbour	
Enquiry • Drug and Alcohol Services • ICB Funding • Birth Defects Register in Kent • Marmot Programme	4
Comments	0
Compliments	0
Total Cases	**11**

3.4 No complaints required escalation to be resolved

4. Annual update

4.1 Quality Process recommendations

4.1.1 The 2023 quality processes review identified several areas for improvement. These include:

- Recruitment of a Quality Lead to lead and oversee quality
- Re-establishing a Public Health Quality Committee
- Strengthening assurance processes for the JSNA
- Undertaking targeted audits of services
- Enhancing equity assessments for access, uptake, and outcomes
- Implementing a Professional Development Policy for Public Health
- Reviewing and improving complaints and compliments processes
- Strengthening the serious incident process for timely and holistic analysis

4.1.2 A number of recommendations since 2023 have been completed, including the recruitment of a quality lead.

4.1.3 Quality has since been incorporated as a standing agenda item within periodic Public Health Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings for improved oversight.

4.1.4 The outstanding recommendations are assigned for completion and/or considered at Public Health SMT for feasibility and progress monitored alongside the Public Health Quality Assurance Framework.

4.2 The Public Health Quality Assurance Framework

4.2.1 The Public Health Quality Assurance Framework has been established following the identified gaps and recommendations of the 2023 Public Health Quality Review; to systematically address the 2023 recommendations.

4.2.2 The Quality Assurance Framework defines what high-quality Public Health services look like, establishes a shared understanding of quality, and sets out the arrangements for quality assurance and continuous improvement across Public Health and Integrated Commissioning.

4.2.3 The Framework has been established as a working document and will be updated as new quality processes are developed, and assurance gaps are identified and addressed.

4.2.4 The goal is to establish a final Quality Assurance Framework with formalised and documented systems, standards and governance arrangements to deliver consistent, high-quality services across Public Health.

4.2.5 Development of the Framework was guided by the 2023 KCC Public Health Quality Processes document and existing quality Frameworks for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Integrated Care Systems; which characterise high-quality services as being safe, effective, positively experienced, equitable in access and usage, well-led and resourced sustainably. It also aligns with Kent County Council's (KCC; the Council) governance mechanisms.

4.3 The Public Health Quality Dashboard

4.3.1 Public Health Quality Dashboard indicators are currently in early stages of development and will support the monitoring of quality and quality improvement across Public Health and commissioned services.

4.3.2 They will supplement existing service level quality metrics and key performance indicators, and will be reviewed quarterly by the Public Health Performance Oversight Monitoring Group.

4.3.3 Once implemented, these quality indicators will collectively support regular oversight of quality performance, facilitate identification of emerging risks and provide assurance that improvement activities are delivering the intended outcomes.

4.3.4 A baseline quality survey will be undertaken to identify good practice and assess how (and to what extent) existing quality processes are embedded throughout commissioned services.

4.4 The Public Health Transformation Programme

4.4.1 The Public Health Service Transformation Programme was launched in 2023 to undertake a structured review of services funded through the Public Health Grant. The programme aimed to ensure that services remained efficient,

evidence-based, focused on prevention and health inequalities, responsive to local need and delivered value for money.

4.4.2 The programme has now concluded, and the changes identified through the reviews have been reflected in new and revised contracts. These include a stronger focus on prevention and early intervention, enhanced targeting of services according to local need and a strengthening of focus on outcomes.

4.4.3 The impact of these changes will continue to be assessed through contract monitoring, service review and population health information. Learning from the programme will also inform future service improvement and commissioning activity.

4.5 Incident management policy

4.5.1 Incidents that occur within a Public Health commissioned service provide an opportunity to learn, improve, and develop services.

4.5.2 The Public Health Incident Management Policy has been reviewed and revised to align with principles of the newer NHS Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF), which promotes a proportionate and learning-focused approach to incident management.

4.5.3 The revised policy, now titled the Significant Safety Incident Policy, supports learning from a wider range of incidents and strengthens continuous quality improvement across commissioned services.

4.5.4 Following communication of the revised policy to providers and implementation of the necessary system changes, the policy will be implemented across commissioned services in Q1 2027.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Progress has been made during 2025-2026 to strengthen Public Health quality governance. This included establishing the Public Health Quality Assurance Framework as a working document to systematically address the 2023 quality recommendations, improved quality oversight from the Public Health Senior Management Team, initiation of the development of quality dashboard indicators, completion of the Public Health Service Transformation Programme, and revision of incident management arrangements.

5.2 Combined, these developments have strengthened assurance, improved commissioning and oversight arrangements, and supported the delivery of safe, effective and equitable Public Health services.

5.3 Work will continue during 2026- 2027 to embed these improvements and complete the remaining recommendations from the 2023 review.

6. Recommendations

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Cabinet Committee is asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** the content of this report.

7. Background Documents

NHS England » Patient Safety Incident Response Framework

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/809305/Quality_in_public_health_shared_responsibility_2019.pdf

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