

REPORT TO: Health and Wellbeing Board

DATE: 12 November 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Public Health

PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Due North: the report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of *'Due North: the report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North'* and outline local activity within Halton to improve health equity in line with suggested actions and recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION: That

Halton take forward the Due North report recommendations, especially those related to:

- a) Lobbying Central Government for greater devolution of powers and resources to cities and local government;**
- b) Tackling poverty and economic inequality;**
- c) Developing a social value approach to procurement;**
- d) Promoting healthy development in early childhood;**
- e) Developing the capacity of local communities to engage with and influence local decision-making; and**
- f) Addressing premature mortality through primary care, with a focus on improving treatment and outcomes among older people living with long-term conditions.**

2.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Due North: the report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North

- 2.1 *'Due North: the report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North'*, (available from: <http://www.cles.org.uk/news/inquiry-publishes-due-north-report-on->

[health-equity/](#)), is the outcome of an independent inquiry, commissioned by Public Health England, to examine health inequalities affecting the North of England. The Inquiry brought together expertise from people working across the North of England from universities, local government, the NHS and the voluntary and community sector. There have been a series of reviews of health inequalities in the UK, Europe and globally, and the purpose of this inquiry was not to repeat the work of these reviews, but to learn from and move beyond them in developing action on health inequalities for a specific region – the North of England.

- 2.2 ‘*Due North*’ highlights that the North of England has persistently had poorer health than the rest of England and that this gap has continued to widen over four decades. Also, there is a gradient in health across different social groups within the North: on average, poor health increases with increasing socio-economic disadvantage, resulting in the large inequalities in health between social groups that are observed today.
- 2.3 The report highlights that austerity measures introduced by Central Government since the 2008 recession have been making the situation worse, with the burden of local authority cuts and welfare reforms falling more heavily on disadvantaged Northern local authorities such as Halton. These austerity measures are leading to reductions in the services that support health and well-being in the very places and groups where need is the greatest. As a local authority Halton is working hard to ensure we safeguard front line services, especially those supporting our most vulnerable members, however difficult decisions are having to be made in order to find savings.
- 2.4 The report recognises that Northern regions currently have had limited collective influence over how resources and assets are used in the North of England and this has hindered action on health inequalities. Greater devolution of powers and resources to cities and local government is required to drive economic growth and reduce regional inequalities in England
- 2.5 ‘*Due North*’ sets out 4 high level recommendations to tackle the root causes of health inequalities both within the North and between the North and the rest of England. The recommendations are split into two types: those that agencies within the North can implement to reduce health inequalities, and those that must be implemented by central government. While many of the recommendations lie outside the role and control of Halton Borough Council, we are committed to working closely with partners to take forward recommendations for agencies within the North.

The inquiry’s 4 high level recommendations are to:

1. Tackle poverty and economic inequality within the North and between the North and the rest of England.
2. Promote healthy development in early childhood.
3. Share power over resources and increase the influence that the public has on how resources are used to improve the determinants of health.
4. Strengthen the role of the health sector in promoting health equity.

- 2.6 Reducing health inequalities both within Halton and between Halton and other areas is a key priority for partners locally. In Halton life expectancy for both men and women has been rising steadily over time. In 2010-12 average life expectancy in the borough was 77.4 years for men and 80.7 years for women. However, life expectancy within the borough remains consistently lower than other areas and about 3 years lower than for England as a whole. In addition there are significant differences in how long people live within the borough. Internal differences in life expectancy are 10.4 years for males and 13.3 years for females

Current activities to reduce health inequalities in Halton

- 2.7 The '*Due North*' inquiry lays down challenges to local areas to reduce health inequalities. Halton Borough Council and partners are committed to reducing health inequalities and there is currently a wide range of activities working towards this aim.

Key activities to reduce health inequalities in Halton related to the '*Due North*' recommendations include:

1. Tackling poverty and economic inequality

Due North states that the difference in health between the North and the rest of England is largely explained by socioeconomic differences, including the uneven economic development and poverty. Halton is the 27th most deprived borough in the country. Halton Borough Council and its strategic partners are committed to facilitating economic growth, developing and supporting local people into employment and reducing the number of people living in poverty in Halton. According to national data around unemployment, new business development, pay and qualifications Halton's economy has been improving at a quicker pace when compared to England. This progress will address the economic and employment causes of health inequalities.

Key activities to tackle poverty and economic inequality in Halton include:

- Halton has a ***child and family poverty strategy*** which outlines the extent of child and family poverty in Halton and our local commitment to reducing it. In addition Halton is a key member of the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Commission.
- There is recognition within Halton that ***older people*** often live in poverty and may suffer from ill health (with one or more long-term conditions). Focussed work is being undertaken to reduce poverty within this vulnerable group. This work is closely linked to the work through the Better care Fund and primary care strategy.
- The Council's Economy, Enterprise and Property Department aims to facilitate employment, universal access to learning and the delivery of major regeneration schemes to enhance the prosperity of the region and boost the prospects of people and place. Key activities include:

- **Supporting economic development**
In recent years Halton has worked hard to promote economic regeneration. This is because; despite being geographically relatively small, the borough contains a number of important sites and strategic regeneration assets within its boundaries. 'Big opportunities' and 'Big Projects' have been used to drive the economic transformation of Halton. Strategic projects include Sci-Tech Daresbury; Mersey Gateway; Multi Modal Gateway (3MG); Widnes Waterfront.
- **Promoting business improvement and growth**
The Council has a dedicated business team with established relationships with external providers of business support services, (e.g. Department for Trade and Industry, Local Enterprise Partnership, Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise and private sector business support professionals) to ensure that the business community in Halton has access to comprehensive, flexible and relevant business support.
- **Attracting inward investment**
The Inward investment service provided in Halton encourages and supports enquiries from businesses outside of the borough who are considering relocating in Halton, either overseas companies expanding in to the UK or UK based businesses.
- **Supporting employment opportunities of local residents**
Local people are benefitting from new job opportunities through proactive employment schemes that the Council runs to give local people the right skills and experience to take up these job opportunities. The Halton People Into Jobs (HPiJ) initiative in the Halton Borough Council employment service which promotes local jobs for local people. HPiJ provides a comprehensive job brokering service for both employers and potential employees. The council also leads the borough's Halton Employment Partnership which acts as a one stop shop for employer local job seeker recruitment needs, as well as sector led employment initiatives such as Construction Halton and Science Halton.
- **Supporting employment opportunities of local residents**
The Council delivers a wide range of adult and family learning courses across the borough. Adults and Community Learning – providing opportunities for adults to access a wide range of learning experiences within their local area. This includes Skills For Life – improving literacy and numeracy skills amongst adults; Family Learning – which gives all family members an opportunity to learn with their children or learn about how they can further support their children.
- Halton Borough Council is a member of the Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership. A key aim of this partnership is to promote employment and sustainable economic growth across the City Region. Halton Borough Council is also a member of the Cheshire and Warrington Sub-Regional Leaders

Board which sets a strategic context for collaborative working amongst public sector partners across Cheshire and Warrington.

- Halton Borough Council and NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group have developed a social value approach to procurement which aims to promote health and local employment opportunities.
- Halton public health team in conjunction with Public Health teams within Merseyside recently commissioned a review on the health impact of the economic downturn. The report made recommendations to local authorities, commissioners and service providers which are currently being implemented locally.

2. Promoting healthy development in early childhood.

There is a large body of evidence demonstrating that early disadvantage tracks forward, to influence health and development trajectories in later life, and that children who start behind tend to stay behind.

Key activities to promote healthy development in early childhood in Halton include:

- Improved child development is a priority of the Halton Health and Wellbeing Board. A Child Development Board has been established. A strategy and action plan for Child Development at 2.5 years and 5 years has been developed. This is based on the Department of Health - Health Visitor Call to Action and Family Nurse Partnership Plans. It covers meeting a core set of universal requirements including breastfeeding, healthy weight, immunisation and speech and language. Work is being undertaken locally with Children's Centres, private nurseries and key service providers to ensure a joined up approach and the best possible outcomes.

3. Share power over resources and increase the influence that the public has on how resources are used to improve the determinants of health.

There is a growing body of evidence indicating that greater community control leads to better health. Low levels of control are associated with poor mental and physical health.

Key activities to share power over resources and increase the influence of the public in Halton include:

- Halton Borough Council and partners are developing the capacity of local communities to engage with and influence local decision-making. Key activities include:
 - A new Children and Young People's Participation Strategy has recently been launched within Halton, in order to embed active participation in the culture of Halton Children's Trust and the wider Halton partnership.

- Halton Borough Council supports 7 Area Forums. The Forums encourage local people to be actively involved in the decision-making process and to pay a real part in getting things done for their communities. The Halton Director of Public Health has recently attended all Area Forums to explain and discuss health profiles and potential actions that could be taken to improve health within local communities.
- Halton Public Health team has commissioned a local alcohol inquiry to engage the local community in Halton in looking for shared solutions to tackle alcohol-related harm.
- A public engagement event was held one year after the launch of the Halton Health and Wellbeing Strategy to update Halton residents on progress against Halton Health and Wellbeing Board priorities and to gain local input into future planned activities.
- The Halton Health and Wellbeing Board is focussed upon reducing health inequalities. The 5 priorities identified for action by the Halton Health and Wellbeing Board were selected based upon their potential to make a significant impact on health inequalities. Public engagement was a key part of this decision making process.
- Halton CCG have a formal relationship with Halton Healthwatch to hold four 'Halton Peoples Forum' events a year at either the stadium or the town hall. The Halton People's Forum have had several engagement events which have informed the development of Halton CCG commissioning intentions and the development of specific projects e.g. the urgent care centres.

4. Strengthen the role of the health sector in promoting health equity

Access to NHS care when ill will help to reduce health inequalities. The NHS can influence health inequalities through 3 main areas of activity. Firstly by providing equitable high quality health care, secondly by directly influencing the social determinants of health through procurement and as an employer, and thirdly as a champion and facilitator that influences other sectors to take action to reduce inequalities in health.

Key activities to strengthen the role of the health sector in promoting health equity in Halton include:

- Social Care and Health services are already closely aligned in Halton with a high level of integration at strategic and operational levels. The Better Care Fund agreed between Halton Borough Council, the NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group and Stakeholders moves further towards full integration of health and social care for the benefit of the people of Halton to improve outcomes for both patients and people receiving health and social care services. The Better Care Fund aims to make a real and positive difference to the most vulnerable people in our community.
- **Primary care**

Work is currently underway to develop a primary care strategy for Halton. A key focus of this strategy is to support primary care to address population level outcomes, and reduce inequalities in access and outcomes. This will impact upon and reduce premature mortality in Halton. This work is being supported by Professor Chris Bentley.

- **Older people**

The primary care strategy being developed has a particular focus on improving the care, treatment and support of older people with long-term conditions. Initial topic areas being reviewed from a reducing health inequalities lense include cancer, care homes and hypertension. Through the Better Care Fund we hope to align health and social care spending to improve outcomes. This work has a focus on reducing health inequalities through secondary prevention.

- **Mental health**

In Halton we recognise the significant burden mental health and its contributions towards inequalities in health between us and other areas. We are working hard locally to ensure parity of esteem for mental health compared to physical health care treatment. A new mental health and wellbeing commissioning strategy has been developed in partnership for Halton. The strategy covers actions to promote mental health and wellbeing, to ensure the early identification of people with a mental illness, ensure best available treatment is available and that people are supported in their recovery. Identified activities through the strategy are wide ranging and include improving and extending screening for postnatal depression, procurement of Child and Adolescent mental health (CAMHS) services, the development of an IAPT service for military veterans, psychiatric liaison work to support local acute trusts in treating those with a mental illness, development of a mental health crisis Declaration statement and action plan, the strengthening and continuation of Operation Emblem, reviewing the later life and mental health service (LAMHS), promoting the early diagnosis and reviewing community support for those suffering from dementia.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The *Due North* Inquiry and its recommendations will help to inform local policy to reduce health inequalities.

4.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications relating to '*Due North: the report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North*', however, the implementation of the recommendations set out within it may require investment.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Promoting healthy development in early childhood is a key recommendation of the *Due North* Inquiry and is a key priority locally.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The *Due North* Inquiry highlights the strong link between low income, poverty, unemployment and poor health outcomes. The inquiry makes a number of recommendations to address the economic and employment causes of health inequalities. Many of the recommendations lie outside the role and control of Halton Borough Council. Relevant local actions to reduce health inequalities through promoting employment, learning and skills have been highlighted in the supporting information section.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

The '*Due North*' Inquiry sets out recommendations to tackle the root causes of health inequalities both within the North and between the North and the rest of England. Halton's response to these recommendations are outlined above.

5.4 A Safer Halton

There are strong links between deprivation and crime and community safety. Actions to tackle poverty and economic inequality will also promote safer local communities.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Urban renewal can have a positive impact on health and health inequalities through promoting employment and income. Urban renewal projects in Halton should be assessed for their potential impact upon health inequalities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There is no risk associated with the publication of the '*Due North: the report of the Inquiry on Health Equity for the North*',

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

This is in line with all equality and diversity issues in Halton.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Due North	Centre for Local Economic Strategies website: http://www.cles.org.uk/news/inquiry-publishes-due-north-report-on-	Dr Elspeth Anwar, Elspeth.anwar@halton.gov.uk

[health-equity/](#)