

Meeting: Health and Wellbeing Board **Date:** 4 December 2025

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Devon, Cornwall, and Isles of Scilly Health Protection Committee Annual Assurance Report 2024/25

When does the decision need to be implemented? Report for information

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to share with members the Devon, Cornwall, and Isles of Scilly Health Protection Committee Annual Assurance Report 2024/25.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The Devon, Plymouth, Torbay and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Health Protection Committee prepare an annual assurance report for the constituent Health and Wellbeing Boards, detailing progress against statutory duties and strategic priorities during the previous year.
- 2.2 The report describes how partners, including Torbay Public Health, work together to protect our population from infectious disease and environmental hazards.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the content of the annual assurance report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The annual assurance report of the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Health Protection Committee Annual Assurance Report 2024/25

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Torbay, Devon, Plymouth, and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Local Authority Public Health teams are partners in the Devon and Cornwall Health Protection Committee which provides assurance that health protection functions are being effectively discharged across the Peninsula.
- 1.2 The Committee prepares an annual assurance report for the constituent Health and Wellbeing Boards, detailing progress against statutory duties and strategic priorities during the previous year.
- 1.3 The report considers the key domains of Health Protection:
 - Communicable disease control and environmental hazards
 - Immunisation and screening
 - Health care associated infections and antimicrobial resistance
 - Emergency planning and response.
- 1.4 The report sets out for each of these domains:
 - Assurance arrangements
 - Performance and activity during 2024/25
 - Actions taken against health protection priorities identified for 2024/25
 - Priorities for 2025/26.
- 1.5 There is a delay between the reporting period and the preparation of the report due to the timetable for publication of annual performance data. The Torbay Public Health team drafted the report this year, with contributions from local authority, NHS and regional colleagues.

2. Key points from the report including highlights for Torbay

- 2.1 The wider system responded to a range of infectious disease outbreaks or particular high levels of disease during the year including acute respiratory infections, sexually transmitted

infections, avian flu and pertussis (whooping cough). Torbay also continued to work with other partners on measles and high consequence infectious disease preparedness although no cases were recorded locally.

- 2.2 In May 2024 Torbay and Devon Public Health and Environmental Health teams, along with UK Health Security Agency, responded to a major outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis that affected Torbay and South Hams. A boil water notice was issued by South West Water and was in place for eight weeks. The recovery phase continued after the boil water notice was lifted and the investigation into the incident is still ongoing in 2025. The outbreak involved many Council departments working together, and the voluntary sector in Torbay were invaluable in supporting vulnerable communities during the outbreak.

Avian flu was confirmed in Torbay as well as many other areas in the peninsula and outbreaks of Avian Flu continue to remain a problem in birds. Advice, signage and arrangements for the collection of dead birds remains in place in Torbay.

- 2.3 The Public Health team worked with partners to maintain and strengthen resilience planning, infection prevention and control arrangements, and antimicrobial resistance across local settings. The Torbay AMR (antimicrobial resistance) group promotes local initiatives across settings, focusing on education, business and the care sector. The work with education providers included awareness, education sessions, hand-washing training and resource packs for early years. This work led to Torbay Public Health team being nominated for a national award and we were a finalist in the category
- 2.4 Campaigns during the year included heat health, measles, vaccination, tick awareness, TB and winter preparedness. Torbay Public Health was involved with the production of podcasts and training materials on TB and vaccinations.
- 2.5 Areas where local screening or immunisation coverage is comparatively low had – and continue to have – special focus:
- Screening: Many of the screening programmes remain above the national England average, although breast screening performance in Torbay was below the required standard. This has now stabilised after a fall over the previous three years. However, the regional screening and immunisation team has been working with providers both to increase overall breast screening uptake and to the use health equity tools to identify actions to target groups where uptake is lower.
 - Vaccination: There was a focus on childhood and school based vaccines including MMR and HPV, and a programme of activity to improve uptake of Winter vaccines including flu, Covid and shingles. Torbay Public Health are members of the Maximising Immunisation Uptake Group which works on reducing inequalities in vaccination uptake. Additional funding from Vaccination Innovation Funding enabled some Torbay GP surgeries to undertake a vaccine data cleanse, with a focus on

MMR. Work to increase vaccine uptake in all target groups remains a priority for us in the current year, and a range of actions are in place.

2.6 Public Health have been working closely with partners on the challenges of climate change on health, with work including mitigation measures, adaption and best practice.

2.7 Priorities identified for 2025/26 follow the same key themes:

- Tackling the climate emergency
- Infection prevention and management and anti-microbial resistance
- Improving vaccination coverage
- Pandemic preparedness
- Inclusion health and addressing inequalities.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 None.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 None.

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 Key stakeholders have contributed to the assurance report and are listed in section 10 of the report.

6. Procurement Implications

None.

7. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

7.1 Climate and Environment remain one of the priorities for the Committee. Health protection is critically affected by climate change and the frequency and intensity of environmental health threats such as flooding and heatwaves, which heightens the risk of infectious diseases and vector transmission. Chapter eight of the report focuses on Climate and Environment (see pages 51-52), and the climate emergency remains one of the priorities for the Health Protection Committee.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 No risks associated with the assurance report. Pandemic is an identified risk on individual organisational risk registers and all have mitigations and preparatory activities in place.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	The Protection Assurance Report covers the arrangements in place to protect and improve the health of the population. It covers all ages but focuses on those more vulnerable to certain health risks or hazards.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	No differential impact although carers are prioritised for certain programmes eg flu and covid vaccination.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day	No differential impact although those vulnerable through health conditions are prioritised for certain	Not applicable	Not applicable

	activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	programmes eg vaccination.		
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a	No differential impact although pregnant women and infants are prioritised for certain programmes eg vaccination.	Not applicable	Not applicable

	notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.			
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as	No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable

	either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.			
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.	No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Human Rights impacts		No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced	No differential impact	Not applicable	Not applicable

	children and young people.			
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10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 The health protection agenda should have positive impacts on the work of the Education and Adult Social Care sectors through infection prevention and disease control.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None.