



Argyll and Bute Council

Agenda item :

Date of Meeting :

Title of Report : NHS Highland Director of Public Health Annual Report 2021

Presented by : Dr Tim Allison, Director of Public Health

Argyll and Bute Council is asked to :

- **Note the Director of Public Health Annual Report**
- **Support the recommendations laid out in the report**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The consequences of suicide are enormous for the community and for individuals.

This report highlights a range of different issues relating to suicide including epidemiology, mental health and illness, background influences and what is being done to improve mental health and reduce the rate of suicide. It is intended to be a stimulus for effective action on suicide in Highland and Argyll and Bute.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for 2021 is presented.

3. DETAIL OF REPORT

Directors of Public Health are required to produce an annual report on the health of the population. Mental health has been a focus in several recent reports including alcohol in 2015, loneliness in the 2016 report, and a detailed discussion of adverse childhood experiences in the 2018 report. This report highlights the issues of mental health and suicide in the NHS Highland area. COVID related demands on the Public Health team have meant that the report has less detail than normal and further work will be undertaken in the course of 2022/23.

The NHS Highland area has a consistently higher rate of deaths by suicide than the Scottish average. Rates are highest in the most deprived areas, but at each level of deprivation, death rates are higher than the Scottish average. Death rates are statistically significantly high in the Highland Council area. Responses to suicide include the need to address wider social inequalities and the lifetime impact of trauma, and to make responses from both public services and employers to stress, distress and

mental illness as effective as possible. Community awareness of mental wellbeing and stigma, and working with community partnerships to increase support and resilience are important.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report provides information that will contribute in some way to all strategic objectives but particularly to the priority to:

- Promote health and wellbeing across all communities and age groups

5. GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Impact

There are no immediate financial implications of the report.

5.2 Staff Governance

It is important that all staff are able to promote wellbeing and to respond appropriately to stress and distress.

5.3 Clinical Governance

Assuring a high quality of care to people experiencing distress, and with mental illness, is an important component of the response to these findings.

6. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The report highlights social inequalities in health as a first step to their reduction.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks are managed in line with NHS Highlands policy.

8. PUBLIC & USER INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

This is an independent report from the Director of Public Health.

9. CONCLUSIONS

This report sets out a considerable amount of information relating to both suicide and mental illness. There is much more information both available and needing to be found and further work will be undertaken during 2022. However, what is most important is that we focus on what effective actions need to be put in place to improve mental wellbeing and reduce the rate of suicide across Highland and Argyll and Bute.

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