

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – November 2013

Chief Medical Officer's Annual report 2012: Our Children Deserve Better: Prevention Pays
– a summary and report on recommendations

1.0 Background

The Chief Medical Officer's annual report must fulfil two functions: to provide an assessment of the state of the public's health and to advise government on where action is required.

The Chief Medical Officer's report for 2012 sets out her response as Chief Medical Officer to the challenges to the health and wellbeing of our children and young people. To produce this report she has drawn on the expertise of a broad range of experts, academics, clinicians and service providers who have set out the evidence about the challenges faced by policy makers, researchers and front-line professionals such as teachers and clinicians. She has also listened to and drawn on evidence from children and young people themselves as well as those who care for them.

2.0 Why was the topic chosen?

The choice of focusing on the health and wellbeing of children and young people was for a number of reasons:

- **The evidence base for the life course approach is strong.** What happens early in life affects health and wellbeing in later life. There is increasing evidence that, in England, we are not doing as well as we should to achieve good health and wellbeing outcomes for our children and young people – when we compare both historically and within and between countries for mortality, morbidity, wellbeing, social determinants and key indicators of health service provision.
- **The variation we see within our country shows us what 'good' looks like** and what is possible: we know we can do better.
- While our economic future may be challenging, there is a growing business case for improving the lives of children and young people. Improving health has the potential to **benefit our nation economically.**

3.0 The intended audience for this report

The first chapter is the Chief Medical Officer's response to the evidence base underpinning **the challenges facing children and young people today, and is therefore aimed at policy makers and politicians.** This report shines a light on those issues that require specific focus by politicians and makes recommendations aimed at policy makers, health and social care commissioners, police and crime commissioners, and providers of health, social care, education, housing and beyond.

In addition to making recommendations for action by specific bodies, she has also published for the first time, **short summaries for key organisations and individuals to enable them to quickly identify what they can do to improve the health and wellbeing of the children and young people they support, educate and care for.**

The remainder of this report consists of chapters written by internationally recognised experts who were asked to provide an assessment of the key issues facing the health and wellbeing of children and young people in England today. These chapters were written to

inform the Chief Medical Officer, of the areas she needs to champion for action. The chapters provide the evidence base on which her calls for action are made. Accompanying this report is the Atlas of Variation in Healthcare for Children and Young People 2013, published as an annex to this report, which has been updated and expanded and provides data that have helped shape the report.

The Chief Medical Officer has chosen to look at the evidence using a life course approach. Additionally, she examined four other groups of children and young people, the business case for investing in the health of children and young people, and the views of young people and their families. She chose these four groups because they exemplify the challenges that we face. By looking at two disease areas, mental health and neurodevelopmental disabilities, key themes emerge around **the importance of data, service provision and prevention**. Focusing on looked-after children and youth justice reveals themes around **the importance of early life determinants such as parenting and the inequalities that exist in child health**.

The full report can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2012-our-children-deserve-better-prevention-pays>.

Appendix 1 to this report reproduces the report's recommendations.

6.0 Recommendations:

That Wirral Children's Trust Board note the report and ensures that the findings of the Chief Medical Officer's report are reflected in local plans and actions .

Appendices:

Appendix 1

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