



REPORT TO: HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD – 15 DECEMBER 2020

REPORT ON: FINDINGS FROM SURVEYS TO EXPLORE THE EXPERIENCE OF DUNDEE’S CITIZENS DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

REPORT BY: CHIEF OFFICER

REPORT NO: DIJB51-2020

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform the Integration Joint Board of findings from a range of surveys undertaken in recent months to assess citizens’ experience of using services and the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic/ lockdown more broadly, and to explore implications for Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board (IJB):

2.1 Notes the findings from the research undertaken across Dundee into the impact of Covid-19 as set out in this report.

2.2 Remits to the Integrated Strategic Planning Group to explore the implications of these findings for Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership.

2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer to use the findings where appropriate in the further development and implementation of Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership’s remobilisation plan.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 The onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, and the national lockdown in March 2020 in particular, brought far reaching implications and unprecedented challenges to populations, planners and service providers in Dundee. The city responded quickly to ensure that its citizens including the more vulnerable were cared for. Many services moved online and a range of local helplines and websites were made available. Volunteers came to the fore to provide emotional and practical support and many staff continued to provide frontline services in difficult circumstances.

4.2 People in deprived areas already experienced inequalities in health and national data is showing that the pandemic is impacting disproportionately on rates of death and illness from Covid 19, the consequences of lockdown measures, and uncertainty about the future. A review by Glasgow Centre for Population Health highlighted risks for disadvantaged communities by perpetuating poor mental and physical health, social isolation, job insecurity and unemployment and reduced access to information, advice and health services. A Mental Health Foundation survey (2020) reported anxiety related to financial and food insecurity and

showed that the unemployed were more than twice as likely to report suicidal thoughts as those in employment.

- 4.3 Dundee has high levels of poverty and disadvantage with associated effects on health and wellbeing. The likelihood is that the pandemic will make a bad situation worse for many and will impact others who were managing before and now find themselves in adverse situations with little resilience or experience to cope.
- 4.4 Three surveys were undertaken by a range of partners to explore issues arising for people during the pandemic and assess experience of using services. The total sample size was 1535: Fairness Commission 452; Engage Dundee 892; Food Insecurity Network 192. The findings will help local decision makers, partnerships and service providers to understand more fully the impact of the pandemic, particularly on those who are most disenfranchised and find it hardest to be heard.
- 4.5 The Dundee Fairness Commission survey conducted in July 2020 explored the impact of the pandemic on its three priority areas: disability, mental health, and fuel poverty. The survey received 452 responses which were analysed by specialists in the NHS Tayside Directorate of Public Health and Dundee City Council's Research and Information Team. Of the 452 respondents almost one third had been shielding during lockdown.
- 4.6 The key themes emerging from the survey were:
 - reduced access to services and support;
 - the day to day challenges of being locked down including home schooling and home working;
 - uncertainty and concerns about the ongoing nature of the pandemic including infection and future restrictions;
 - mental health more broadly;
 - social isolation, loneliness and separation from family and friends;
 - financial and job insecurity and the likely effects on life circumstances.
- 4.7 Of the 168 respondents who stated they had a disability, over two thirds felt that lockdown had affected their ability to access vital services and of these 72% had concerns about daily living over the next 6 months due to the nature of their disability.
- 4.8 Of 285 respondents who answered the question on mental health, almost 9 in 10 stated their mental health, or that of someone they know, had been affected by lockdown and two-thirds (186) had concerns for their mental health in the coming months.
- 4.9 Of 268 responses on fuel poverty, one third had a pay as you go/ top up meter. Almost ¾ of all respondents noticed an increase in fuel consumption during lockdown but those with a top up meter were much more concerned than those with a dry meter about running out of fuel during lockdown and costs of fuel moving into winter.
- 4.10 In relation to difficulties in accessing healthcare, respondents mentioned cancelled appointments including heart tests, cancer treatments, pulmonary rehab, speech therapy, podiatry, audiology, physiotherapy, dental services, optometry and eye screening, and hyperbaric treatments. Some reported access to GPs and medication being difficult.
- 4.11 Dundee City Council Community Learning and Development service undertook the Engage Dundee survey in August 2020 as part of the city's Local Community Planning Process. The DCC/ HSCP Community Health Inequalities Manager devised a question in partnership with colleagues in Public Health to explore the nature of mental health impacts specifically.

- 4.12 The survey received 892 responses which were analysed by DCC Research and Information Team. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents were female, the majority were working age, almost one fifth lived alone, over $\frac{1}{2}$ were in some form of employment, 27.4% were in receipt of Benefits, and 45% had a long-term condition.
- 4.13 Findings show that the most commonly used services during lockdown were: GP services (61.5%); websites/self-help resources (46%); mental health advice/ support (32%); physical health advice/ support (30%); food parcels/ delivery (29.2%); and money/ benefits advice and support (23.5%).
- 4.14 There were varying degrees of satisfaction expressed for using services; highest for websites/ self-help resources (78.9%), food parcels/ delivery (76.2%) and GP services (69%), and lowest for employment advice (40.2%) and substance use/alcohol support (16.3%).
- 4.15 The survey explored whether respondents were experiencing certain difficulties and the highest responses were for mental health (37%), healthy lifestyle (31%), family/ household relationships (18%), physical health (18%), and income/ money (20%).
- 4.16 The survey explored mental health in more detail. Of 867 responses, 63.9% reported experiencing fear/anxiety/stress, 56.4% low mood/depression, and 36.3% social isolation/ loneliness. Of the 553 respondents who stated they were experiencing fear/anxiety/stress, 411 were also experiencing low mood/depression and 269 social isolation/ loneliness.
- 4.17 Some respondents felt there had been positive developments due to lockdown/Covid restrictions. 57.7% reported less traffic, 41.5% reported spending more time with their family, 30.2% made more use of green space, and 28% exercised more.
- 4.18 Projects involved in Dundee Food Insecurity Network provided emergency parcels/delivery, food larders, and/or meals to people struggling to access food during lockdown. Money advice leaflets were also circulated to service users. A survey was conducted in June 2020 to gain feedback from beneficiaries and a total of 191 questionnaires were returned by 17 projects.
- 4.19 Respondents came from all wards in the city and all age groups. 35% were using a food larder, 25.1% a drop-in, 24.7% were receiving food delivery and 14% lunch delivery. The highest proportion of respondents were single adults (40.8%).
- 4.20 Respondents were using the service for a range of reasons and often multiple reasons such as low income/ financial difficulties, lockdown, furlough and delays in accessing Benefits. The most common reason for accessing services was long term low income (28%). A fifth of respondents were receiving support prior to lockdown and 27.7% thought they would need ongoing help.
- 4.21 39.5% of respondents stated they were experiencing mental health pressures, 37.2% financial pressures, 18.8% social isolation, and 14.1% family/relationship pressures. Reasons included services being unavailable, not being able to visit family and friends, reduction in income, and increased costs due to being at home more often.
- 4.22 Satisfaction with the service was explored. Many comments were provided which reflected not only provision of emergency food but also social interaction/ emotional support from staff and volunteers, access to information about other services, and provision of other items such as period products, pet food, toiletries and clothing.

4.23 Potential improvements were highlighted by respondents including easing of lockdown restrictions, reinstatement of services, help with budgeting, drop-in support, and better communication/ information on support available.

4.24 Results from these surveys show emerging themes regarding the impact of the pandemic during and moving out of lockdown and reflect to varying degrees the themes highlighted in 4.5. The most common themes across the surveys related to mental health impacts, reduced access to services, social isolation and financial insecurity. For many, the issues were interconnected and for some the pandemic had exacerbated what were already difficult life circumstances.

4.25 The findings suggest that accelerated efforts should be considered by a wide range of partners including Dundee HSCP to mitigate effects for those in most need whilst building resilience for individuals and communities to provide responses themselves.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Equality Impact Assessment. There are no major issues.

6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 This report has not been subject to a risk assessment as it does not require any policy or financial decisions at this time.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The Chief Finance Officer and the Clerk were consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 DIRECTIONS

8.1 The Integration Joint Board requires a mechanism to action its strategic commissioning plans and this is provided for in sections 26 to 28 of the Public Bodies (Joint Working)(Scotland) Act 2014. This mechanism takes the form of binding directions from the Integration Joint Board to one or both of Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside.

Direction Required to Dundee City Council, NHS Tayside or Both	Direction to:	
	1. No Direction Required	X
	2. Dundee City Council	
	3. NHS Tayside	
	4. Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside	

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

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