

Date of Meeting: 31st January 2024

Title of Report: **Director of Public Health Annual Report:** Medication and Public Health Do the Right Thing

Presented by: Dr Tim Allison, Director of Public Health & Policy

The Health and Social Care Partnership is asked to:

Note

Discuss

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 1: Demography and health inequalities

- and care services across the life course.
- An ageing population is increasing the demand on health and care services as more people are living with one or more long-term health conditions and with increasingly complex needs.
- of the characteristics of our people and communities, including information on: ethnic group, armed forces veterans, sexual orientation and trans status or history; health, disability and unpaid care.
- Improving the health of our population requires a fundamental shift towards prevention and mitigating the underlying issues that can impact on health, such as poverty and deprivation.

Chapter 2: The Environment: How medication can make our environment sicker

- There is growing evidence of the negative effects of medicines on our environment. When medicines are excreted from our body or flushed down toilets or sinks, they can end up in our water environment and soils. They can have negative effects on aquatic organisms and end up in the crops we eat.
- NHS Highland is at the forefront of research and action to reduce the impact of the medicines we use on the environment and is a co-founder of the One Health Breakthrough Partnership ([www.https://ohbp.org](https://ohbp.org)).
- There is something that everyone can do to help reduce pollution of our environment with medicines.

Chapter 3: Hepatitis C: How medication is transforming treatment and prevention

- Hepatitis C (HCV) is a blood borne virus (BBV) which can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and hepatocellular carcinoma.
- The management of HCV has been revolutionised in recent years by the introduction of new therapies. This development has played a significant role in the increase in treatment initiatives and the potential across Scotland to achieve HCV elimination.
- The availability of effective treatment that can be taken over a short period of time with few side effects should encourage more people to come forward for testing for Hepatitis C and provide a major step towards elimination of the virus.

Chapter 4: Social Prescribing: How an alternative to medication can work

- It is estimated that 20% of people visit their GP with non-medical needs.
- Social prescribing provides an evidence-based potential to complement management of a wide range of health conditions through providing a

holistic person-centred model of care to improve health and wellbeing and reduce reliance on medication and health services.

- The social determinants of health play an important role in the development of risk factors for a range of diseases and the health outcomes that people experience throughout life. Supporting people with wider social and environmental issues is important for improving health and wellbeing and reducing demand on health and care services.
- There is promising evidence that social prescribing provides a positive return on investment from between £2.30 and £7.08 for every £1 invested.

Chapter 5: Analgesics and Opioids: How medication can have long lasting effects on public health

- There is little doubt that analgesics and opioid use

NHS Highland and partners should improve the knowledge and skills of health and social care staff in relation to social prescribing by providing learning and development opportunities.

NHS Highland and partners should improve the infrastructure and availability of social prescribing by embedding link workers in a range of health and social care services and increasing use of the community benefits gateway through public sector procurement and commissioning processes.

Alcohol and Drug Partnership members should support further work 1 0 0 1

7. PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY

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

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The report addresses equality issues. The chapter on demography clearly outlines, for the Argyle and Bute populations, trends in health inequalities for selected health outcomes. This chapter also discusses the need for a fundamental shift towards prevention and mitigating the underlying issues that can impact on health such as poverty and deprivation.

9. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION PRINCIPLES COMPLIANCE

The report complies with NHS Highland data protection principles.

10. RISK ASSESSMENT

Risks are managed in line with NHS Highland policy.

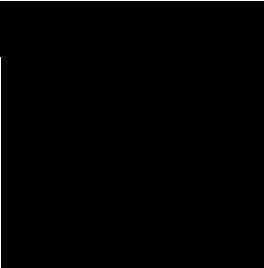
11. PUBLIC & USER INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

The principles of public and user involvement and engagement are embedded in public health actions. This is an independent report from the Director of Public Health.

12. CONCLUSIONS

Members are asked to note and comment on the report.

13. DIRECTIONS

	Directions to:	tick
	No Directions required	x