

## Practising Realistic Medicine

Last year's annual report highlighted the need for Lanarkshire to embrace the ambitions of Realistic Medicine (Healthcare). This year's report includes some innovative work on the issue of managing chronic pain. It highlights the need to ensure shared patient decision making when starting on a medication. It also emphasises the need to consider the potential risks and benefits, alternatives to medication and regular reviews. This is just one example of a number of strands of work in Lanarkshire as advocated by the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) latest reports.

## Pioneering Distress Brief Interventions

Distress Brief Interventions (DBIs) are an innovative way of supporting people in distress. North and South Lanarkshire's Health & Social Care Partnerships were jointly awarded host status to oversee the implementation of the DBI programme on behalf of the Scottish Government. This reflects on the brilliant work to promote mental health in Lanarkshire over the last number of years.

The overarching aim of the programme is to provide a framework for improved inter-agency co-ordination, collaboration and co-operation across a wide range of care settings. The interventions and community supports help achieve the shared goal of providing a compassionate and effective response for people in distress. It is a two-level, time limited and supportive problem solving contact established with a person in distress. DBI level 1 is provided by trained frontline staff working in Emergency Departments, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Services and primary care. It involves a compassionate response, signposting and offer of referral to a DBI level 2 service. DBI level 2 is provided by commissioned and

trained third sector staff who contact the person within 24 hours of referral. Staff provide compassionate community based problem solving support, wellness and distress management planning, supported connections and signposting for a period of up to 14 days. The chapter describes the progress to date. Early indications suggest that the programme is effective in supporting people in distress.

## Responding to climate change

Climate change has been described as having the potential to undermine many of the public health gains of the last 50 years. However, how we respond also represents one of the greatest opportunities to improve global health. The report highlights how many of the human driven causes of climate change are also many of the drivers behind poor health: inequalities, sedentary lifestyles, over consumption, low fruit, vegetable and fibre consumption and high red meat consumption. Our response to climate change and our actions to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions will have co-benefits in terms of our health and in many cases, also save us money. Addressing climate change is a challenge for us all and the chapter explores actions that everyone could consider.

### Contacts

Department of Public Health, NHS Lanarkshire  
**Email:** [PublicHealthAnnualReport@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:PublicHealthAnnualReport@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)  
**Web:** [www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk)  
**Tel:** 01698 858241

# Key Issues

*from the Annual Report of the Director of Public Health*

2017/18



## Having an equal chance of a long and healthy life

The Faculty of Public Health in Scotland published *Healthier Lives Fairer Futures*<sup>1</sup> in late 2017. This ‘call to action’ advocates steps to be taken so that everyone in Scotland can have an equal chance of a long and healthy life. The following priorities were highlighted:

- **Health in all policies:** Include health in all policies for Scotland
- **Inequalities:** Make taxation more progressive, including income tax, to reduce inequalities; mitigate the adverse impacts of welfare reform on our most vulnerable and introduce a minimum wage for healthy living.
- **Improve Health for Future Generations:** Reduce child poverty and mitigate its adverse impacts and prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- **Create Healthy Places:** Use the Community Empowerment Act to improve population mental health; increase investment in integrated public transport and active travel and prioritise walking and cycling in the built environment.

The power to address some of these issues rests with Scottish and UK governments, however others are within the control of Community Planning Partners. Whilst recognising that much more needs to be done, this, and last year’s report, highlights some of the actions that have been taken locally to improve everyone’s chance of a long and healthy life.

<sup>1</sup> [www.fph.org.uk/media/1168/healthy-lives-fairer-futures-final.pdf](http://www.fph.org.uk/media/1168/healthy-lives-fairer-futures-final.pdf)

## Tackling Poverty – an urgent human rights issue

Poverty stubbornly remains the biggest obstacle to improving the health of our population. Scotland’s Children and Young People’s Commissioner, in response to an independent report on Poverty in Scotland 2018, commented that: *“Growing up in poverty needs to be recognised as the most significant human rights issue facing children in Scotland and that we need a sustained, systematic and human rights based approach to tackle and eradicate it”*.

This is an important issue that needs multi-agency action. The negative impact of both austerity measures and the reform of our welfare system is well documented. The continued efforts of North and South Lanarkshire Councils, both Community Planning Partnerships, both Health and Social Care Partnerships, the voluntary sector and NHS Lanarkshire in addressing the issue are to be commended.

## Helping those who need our help most

Last year’s report provided an introduction to the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on health and wellbeing. Progress has been made in this arena, particularly around raising awareness and understanding of the issue. Addressing ACEs is a major challenge for us all and the need to embrace the concept of Trauma Informed Practice is set out in the report.

The chapter on Keep Well and the Criminal Justice System is an excellent example of work to support those with the greatest needs within our society. Whilst many individuals who experience adverse events in their early years show amazing resilience in adult life,

many people in the criminal justice system have endured adverse experiences in their childhood. Preventing our children from experiencing adverse events is crucial and one of the direct benefits of this will be a reduction in the population entering the criminal justice system.

## Prevention is better than cure

People are living longer, which is fantastic. Over the next 20 years, it is estimated that the population aged 75 years and over will increase by almost 64%. This will mean that there will be an increase of over 32,000 people aged 75 years and older living in Lanarkshire. We need everyone to embrace the concept of self-management whenever possible and to make every effort to promote and look after their own health. To use a phrase *“There is only one you so look after yourself”*.

Quite simply, we need to invest more in prevention and anticipatory care if we are going to reduce demand upon our clinical and social care services. The challenge for those working in this arena is to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of interventions in order to convince budget holders to invest more.

The report describes a number of excellent initiatives and I take the opportunity to highlight the chapter on mental health and the work of Clyde United Community Football Team. It describes how the programme promotes self-esteem, social interaction and a range of other positive benefits for participants. Community led programmes such as this have a massive potential to promote health and wellbeing and prevent the need for accessing clinical services. Mental health has been identified as one of six national public health priorities and this is extremely welcome.