

Somerset County Council  
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families  
Committee  
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## Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2018 – Prevention: Getting on the front foot

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Cabinet Member: Cllr Christine Lawrence – Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

Division and Local Member: All

### 1. Summary

1.1. This report takes a broad overview of ‘prevention’. It can come across a rather a negative term but this report argues that its far from that. Prevention is about Improving Lives, it’s about getting on the front foot and preventing or delaying negative circumstances from happening. The report argues that prevention at the ‘high’ (and expensive) end of need, is the most effective way to improve the lives of those that experience the worst outcomes and free up resources, enabling investment in prevention at lower levels of need. The report gives many case studies of good practice in the county. Above all, it shows that prevention is ‘everybody’s business’.

1.2. The final report will be an ‘e-book’, including links to video recordings of participants in the case studies and leaders in Somerset health and care.

#### 1.3. This report promotes:

- A County of resilient, well-connected and compassionate communities working to reduce inequalities
- A County where all partners actively work together for the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses and the environment in which we all live.

### 2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

2.1. The report is deliberately broad, showing how a preventative approach can bring benefits to service providers and the public alike. Key points include:

- Half of health and care expenditure is on the 7% of people with greatest needs. The financial sustainability of ‘the system’ can only be assured by reducing the risk of individuals falling into this category.
- Prevention works at all levels of need. It is just as relevant to prevent high needs escalating to an acute need, as it is to put protective factors in place at the grassroots, such as helping new mothers to breastfeed or children to eat healthy food, which would have a lifetime worth of benefits.

- 2.2. The committee is asked to bear these considerations in mind in scrutinising policies in Somerset.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The production of an Annual Report is a statutory requirement for all Directors of Public Health (DPH). It is the personal responsibility of the DPH, and an opportunity to give an independent view of the range of factors affecting health and wellbeing in the county.
- 3.2. Emergency and unplanned care or treatment is overwhelmingly more expensive than planned care. Prevention focussed on supporting people with the greatest need, such as those recently discharged from hospital, high intensity users ('frequent flyers') and families in crisis, can help the financial sustainability of health and care as well as improve lives.
- 3.3. Issues that drive the highest local spend in the NHS and Social Care are dementia, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, falls, mental ill-health, substance misuse and domestic abuse. Prevention in all of these issues should be considered as a priority. Many of these issues are influenced by the lifestyles we lead, improvements in smoking, diet, exercise, alcohol and social contact as a preventative measure can lead to significant, long-lasting benefits to health, and again, the sustainability of health and social care services.
- 3.4. This report includes numerous case studies. They are intended to inspire increased effort in prevention by Somerset organisations, businesses, communities and residents.

### **4. Consultations undertaken**

- 4.1. The report includes contributions from many people in Somerset, including the CCG, 'Zing' (activities and sports), 'Spark' (voluntary sector), Musgrove Park hospital, Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Beauty and others. It is, however, the personal responsibility of the DPH.

### **5. Implications**

- 5.1. The report is intended to inspire more prevention across the board in Somerset.

### **6. Background papers**

- 6.1. Previous reports, along with the statistical annexes, are published at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/public-health/> (downloads).

**Note** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.