

## Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2021 – Young People in the Second Wave of COVID-19

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<p><b>Summary:</b></p>	<p>The production of an annual report is a statutory obligation for Directors of Public Health. It is an opportunity for the DPH to give an independent view of health and wellbeing priorities in the county.</p> <p>This report describes the impact of the ‘second wave’ of COVID-19, in the period from August 2020 to May 2021, on the Somerset population and explores what it has meant to our older children and young people.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>	<p><b>That member bodies of the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Board as a whole:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Support and promote continued vigilance of COVID-19 in the local population and the importance of testing and vaccination, including against ‘flu</b></li> <li><b>2. Commit to the improvement of digital access in education for all children and young people in Somerset</b></li> <li><b>3. Support the ongoing efforts to nurture and strengthen children and young people’s mental health.</b></li> <li><b>4. Use the evidence here – including evidence of gaps in our knowledge - to inform our plans for the continuing pandemic, and our ultimate recovery.</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Reasons for recommendations:</b></p>	<p>Evidence in this report illustrates the ongoing need for response and recovery initiatives, working in partnership with stakeholders and the voluntary sector to ensure the county can mitigate the impact of the pandemic.</p>
<p><b>Links to The Improving</b></p>	<p><b>Please tick the Improving Lives priorities influenced by the</b></p>

<b>Lives Strategy</b>	<b>delivery of this work</b>	
	<b>A County infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services</b>	
	<b>Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment</b>	<b>x</b>
	<b>Fairer life chances and opportunity for all</b>	<b>x</b>
	<b>Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer</b>	<b>x</b>
	This report promotes 'improved lives' and 'reduced inequalities': these themes appear again strongly throughout.	
<b>Financial, Legal, HR, Social value and partnership Implications:</b>	There are no direct financial implications.  There are no direct legal or HR implications.	
<b>Equalities Implications:</b>	The report does not require an Equalities Impact Assessment.  The report considers the impact of the second wave of COVID-19 on our population and on our children and young people.	
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	The direct and indirect impacts of Covid19 are considerable and a focus on the findings within this report can help to mitigate them. Not doing so can impact negatively on children and young people	

## 1. Background

- 1.1. 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.
- 1.2. Public health in 2021, and indeed life in general, has been dominated by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic and measures that have been taken to reduce its effects. In Somerset, by the end of wave 2 (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2021) there had been 22,455 infections and 680 deaths. Only 35 deaths were of people under 60, and the number of deaths of children and young people is too small to be disclosed.

**1.3.** The report uses quantitative data from the school census of 2021, and the qualitative 'voice' of children and young people as recorded by Somerset Youth Parliament, Young Somerset and Public Health Nursing teams to describe the impact.

**1.4.**

There are few generalizations that can be made about the circumstances of these children and young people, their reactions and the support that they found. The considerable resources in Somerset devoted to helping this generation are described in the report, and the findings here should strengthen their focus on a child-centred, individual approach to their care.

**1.5**

The nature of the pandemic in Somerset has been transformed by a highly successful vaccination programme, with 79.5% of the population having received two doses by November 2021. At the time of writing, this programme has been extended to 12-18 year-olds, particularly helping to reduce the impact on their schooling.

## **2. Improving Lives Priorities and Outcomes**

**2.1.** This report promotes 'improved lives' and 'reduced inequalities': these themes appear again strongly throughout.

## **3. Consultations undertaken**

**3.1.** This report is a statutory, individual responsibility of the Director of Public Health. However, it draws upon joint working 'across the system' and reflects the cooperative approach adopted. The voice of older children and young people appears in the report from focus group work with Young Somerset, Youth Parliament and Public Health Nurses.

## **4. Request of the Board and Board members**

**4.1.** To support and promote the key findings of the report within their own and partner organisations

## **5. Background papers**

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

The current Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (in production) focuses on the

impact of COVID-19 in deprived areas of Somerset.

## 6. Report Sign-Off

### 6.1

	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign off</b>	Relevant Senior Manager / Lead Officer (Director Level)	Trudi Grant	02/12/21
	Cabinet Member / Portfolio Holder (if applicable)	Claire Paul	02/12/21
	Monitoring Officer (Somerset County Council)	Scott Wooldridge	02/12/21