

# Health Protection Forum Assurance Report 2021

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**March 2022**



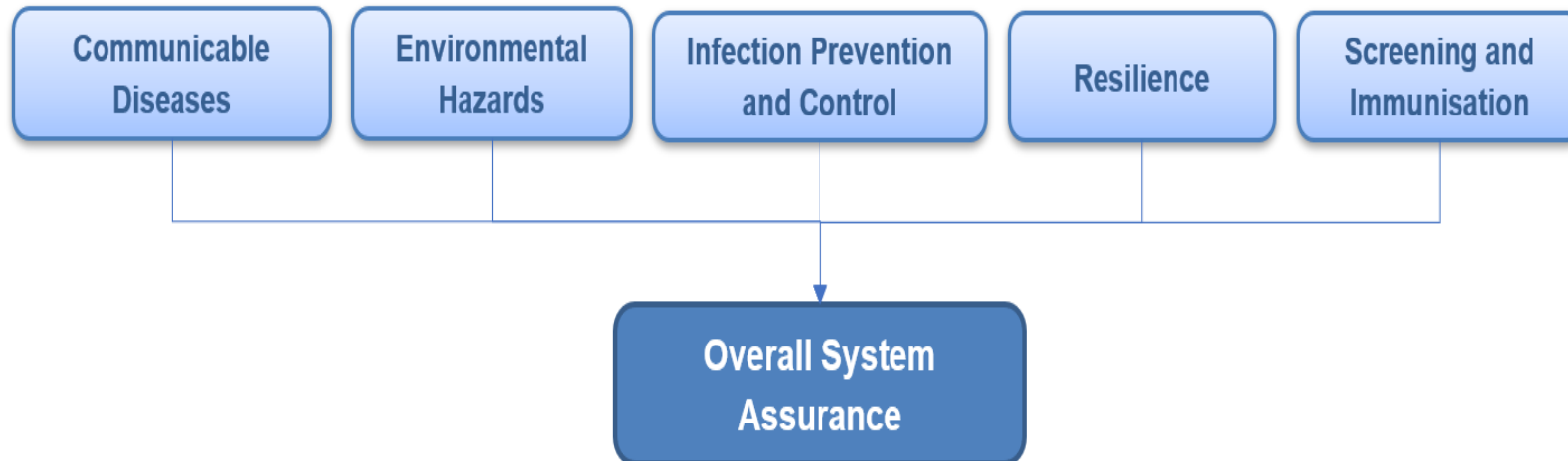
**Improving  
LIVES**



**“Health Protection seeks to prevent or reduce harm caused by communicable diseases and minimise the health impact from environmental hazards such as chemicals and radiation”**

*PHE, Protecting the health of the local population: the new health protection duty of local authorities under the Local Authorities (Public health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch representatives) Regulations 2013, 2013.*

# Health Protection Forum



# 2021 – Responding to the Pandemic



- During 2021 Somerset partners continued to respond and manage to the local impact of COVID-19, starting and ending 2021 with cases peaking at record levels.
- System wide catch up programme for health protection workstreams that were put on hold during the height of the Pandemic.
- Moving to embed the COVID response as a business as usual function.
- Maintained response to other non COVID-19 Health Protection incidents/outbreak:
  - 74 Situations/outbreaks
  - 3 complex TB cases
  - 1 Toxigenic Diphtheria case
  - Cluster of a rare strain of Invasive group A Streptococcal Disease amongst the homeless community.



# Key areas of success

## Communicable Diseases

- Blood Borne Virus e.g Hepatitis and HIV, action group was established in 2021 to review and priorities the 10 recommendations from the needs assessment
- Suite of learning events took place across the health system to identify lessons from the COVID response so far to continually review and improve COVID and non-COVID response arrangements.
- CCG put in place process for testing and prescribing for contacts of avian influenza

## Environmental Hazards

- After a period of inactivity due to redeployment into the COVID response, the Air Quality Steering Group reconvened in November 2021.
- SCC Public Health and the Civil Contingencies Unit hosted a virtual workshop in November that shared information on the various national and local schemes available to the population of Somerset who are living in cold homes and/or fuel poverty.

# Key areas of success



## **Infection, Prevention and Control**

- Building on wave 1 and 2 of the COVID19 response, the CCG IPC team continue to provide infection prevention and control support across the system. This work has built a cross system approach and puts us in a strong position as Somerset goes into an Integrated Health and Care system in July 2022.

## **Resilience**

- Hinkley Point Offsite Emergency Plan was tested during Exercise Dorado. The Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) concluded that the exercise was a satisfactory test of the Offsite Emergency Plan.
- A draft framework has been developed which outlines essential elements required to deliver an RMU capability, along with guidance for planning and considerations for response.

# Key areas of success



## Screening and Immunisations

- To support the recovery programme, the Somerset Local Immunisations Group was reconvened during 2021.
- The School Aged Immunisations Nursing Team has worked hard to vaccinate children and young people who missed their vaccination in 2019-20 as well as fulfilling the COVID vaccination programme in addition to the usual vaccination schedule.
- Development of the Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT) which was designed to help programme leads to systematically assess health inequalities related to screening programmes and identify what can be done to help reduce inequalities.
- Most screening programmes will have caught up with the backlog of invites and screening by March 2022, with the exception of breast cancer screening



# Key areas of improvement

- **TB treatment completion** - Somerset is an area of low incidence for TB, publicly available data shows on average 10 cases of TB are identified every year in Somerset. However, treatment completion at 68.8% (2018-20) remains lower than national levels and international standards.
- **Breast Cancer Screening** – The planned catch up recovery date has been moved to August 2022 and is working on increasing the number of women being screening at 36 months.
- **Radiological Monitoring Unit Capacity** – Planning is now managed at a regional level due to cross boundary elements of the plan. Still further work to be done locally to agree locations.
- **Childhood immunisation coverage** – particularly MMR



# Priorities for 2022

It is proposed that the focus of 2022/23 is to ensure the strengthening of health protection during a time of transition. Over the next couple of years, Somerset will go through several crucial transitions:

- Somerset Integrated Care System
- Musgrove Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital to both sit under one NHS provider Trust.
- Local Health Resilience Partnership moving to the Integrated Care System boundaries.
- Transition to a Unitary Authority – Somerset Council

The Health Protection Forum will use the strength of its partnership to ensure that during this period of change they retain the capacity to respond and build a stronger system of health protection for the future.



# COVID 19 Reporting

- During the response to the COVID19 pandemic, the COVID Engagement Board was stood up to have strategic oversight of the response.
- On the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022, the COVID19 engagement board members endorsed the leaders decision to stand down COVID19 Engagement Board.
- Going forwards, the Health and Wellbeing Board will receive COVID reports by exception.





# We can all play our part...

During the COVID-19 response, it was clear that the national response was dependent on individuals playing their part in the fight against COVID-19.

Population behaviour is key to protect the health of the public from other diseases/infections:

- Keeping up effective infection prevention and control
  - Keep washing hands
  - If unwell, keep away from other people
- Keeping on top of immunisation and screening appointments

**Any Questions?**

