

# Health Protection Forum Assurance Report 2022

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**December 2022**



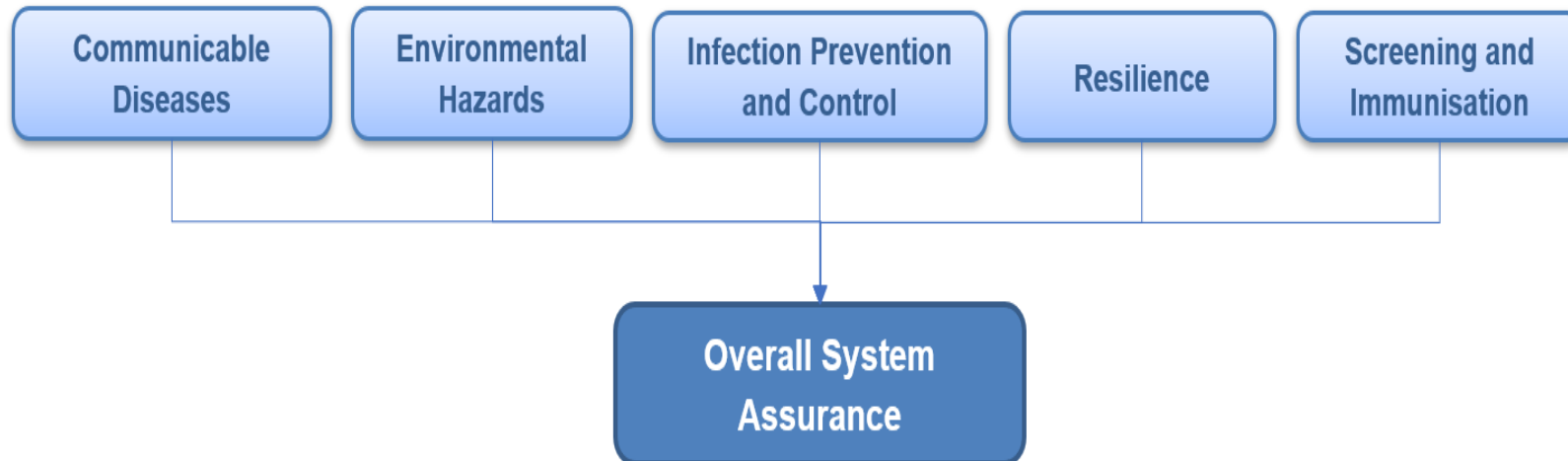
**Improving  
LIVES**



**“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



# 2022 – Responding to Incidents



- During 2022 national policy shifted to a 'Living with Covid19' approach, this has seen peaks and troughs of infection, but in the context of a highly vaccinated population, mortality and hospitalisation for Covid19 remain low. Covid19 response is now BAU.
- How the population responds to infectious disease has changed; they understand what being a contact means and there has definitely been more reporting of infectious disease through to UKHSA from high risk settings and also increased presentation of cases at health care settings
- This change in behaviour is in the context of what some people are referring to as a 'rebound' in infectious disease prevalence, following the sustained lockdowns and reduction in social mixing, particularly among infants and young children
- System wide catch up programme for health protection workstreams that were put on hold during the height of the pandemic.
- Maintained response to other non COVID-19 Health Protection incidents/outbreak:



# Key areas of success

## **Communicable Diseases**

- filled gaps around winter virus outbreak commissioning and avian influenza response
- Somerset Mpox response
- Blood Borne Virus pathways strengthened to increase numbers in treatment

## **Environmental Hazards**

- air quality additional capacity purchased and mobile so can be used to evaluate impact of interventions

# Key areas of success

## **Infection, Prevention and Control**

- Good collaborative approach amidst system change
- An example of the progress Somerset has made at working on a system level for IPC, in 2022 we developed a risk assessment to support the safe discharge of care homes residents during covid19 outbreaks; this was submitted to the National Infection Prevention Society Impact Awards, and we won Gold.

## **Resilience**

- Creation of Somerset Local Health & Care Resilience Partnership
- Progressing RMU design with national and regional support



# Key areas of success

## Screening and Immunisations

- Secured funding to undertake behavioural insights of barriers to accessing and taking up immunisation offer amongst parents
- Most programmes caught up with Covid19 backlog



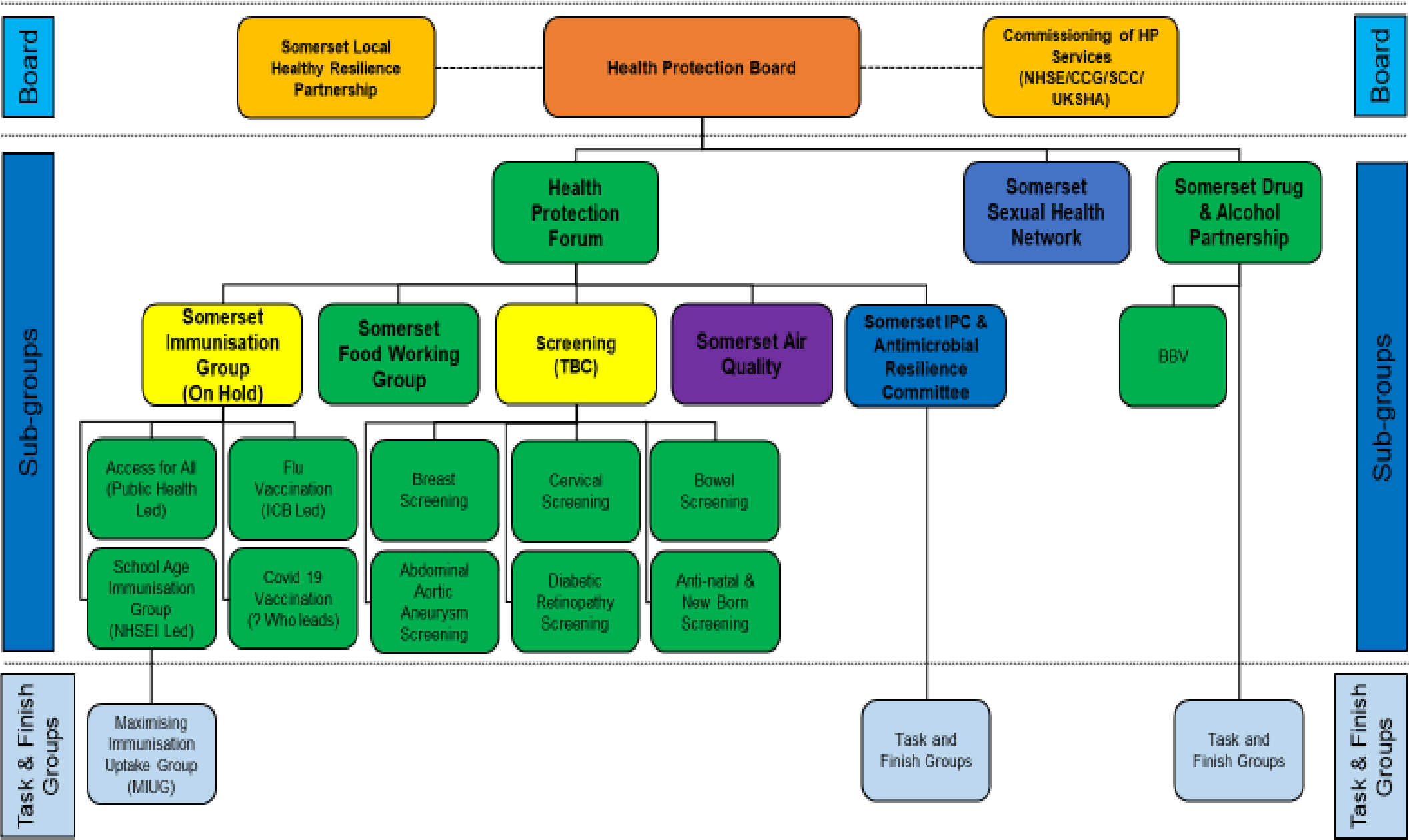
# Key areas of improvement



- **Breast Cancer Screening** – The planned catch up recovery date has been moved to February 2023 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 and pre-school booster and flu vaccination coverage for at risk populations
- **Infection Prevention & Control**
  - – gram negative blood stream infections
  - Scabies outbreaks
- **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.



# Health Protection Board & Sub-groups



# Priorities for 2023

It is proposed that the focus of 2023 is to ensure the strengthening of a whole system approach to health protection. Local priorities identified are:

1. Maximizing immunization uptake
2. Filling health protection commissioning gaps
3. Communicable disease framework
4. Refresh MOU
5. Transform system wide communication of outbreaks to cover all, not just covid19
6. HNA for health protection
7. Transforming IPC across the system
8. Translate the Tuberculosis (TB) service specification into the clinical service delivery
9. Migrant health



# Priorities for 2023

The Health Protection Forum will use the strength of its partnership to ensure that during this period of change in creating a unitary authority and a single NHS foundation trust, alongside the developing ICS, as a system we retain the capacity to respond and build a stronger system of health protection for the future.

These priorities are identified to assure the Director of Public Health and ensure suitable arrangements are in place to protect the health of Somerset's population.



# Recommendations

- To endorse the list of discussed priorities
- To approve the report's conclusion that the Director of Public Health is assured that suitable arrangements are in place to protect the health of Somerset's population



**Any Questions?**

