

County Council report to Parish and Town Councils for December 2021

This month's updates consists mainly of health matters:

Defibrillators maintenance; how is it being funded in your Parish? Please let me know. Thank you.

Last month I asked for feedback on Maintenance of Defibrillators in your council area: I have heard from two Councils, but I am worried that there is a budget mechanism to ensure they are all in excellent order at all times. I applaud Kings Worthy plans with BHF and Bighton PC's efforts to ensure that a significant proportion of their Parish know exactly what they would be asked to do if they had to use a defibrillator.

Children's Matters:

I have been visiting schools in my division to thank school staff for everything they are doing and to talk about the impact of the last two years on children.

It was striking that staff reported seeing secondary age children playing as if they were in primary school; as if regaining the lost years of play. It is clear that although many children have had the opportunity to be in school (in most schools, around 40% of children were at school, 60% educated at home) that school life in (with bubbles) or out (with siblings) was not 'as normal'. Ofsted has started up again, including at local schools. We await local outcomes. All UK state schools/academies will be inspected by 2025.

Local charity No Limits has described the impact on young people of lockdown in this report which you can google (unfortunately I can't generate anything but a very long link-it is easier to search online). It is called "*The Impact of Coronavirus on Children and Young People's Mental Health – The New Normal*"

There is an additional piece on mental health in the HCC/ CAMHS report going to the County's Health and Wellbeing board on the 9th December. Both are damning accounts of how we are underestimating (and thus not coping with) the mental health of young people through the last two years.

Autism diagnoses are still taking too long, but significant additional funding has been put into this, and waiting lists are coming down from the shameful waiting time of 35 months a year ago. 85% of those sent for referral are confirmed as being on the autism spectrum, but the work includes support pre and post diagnosis. Meanwhile young people continue to be referred, and up to 280 receive Education Health and Care Plans every month. If 40% of the recipients of an EHCP seek a special school place, that's a new special school (costing £20m) every month! No council has the funds to do this, so HCC is pressing for local schools to be more inclusive. Osborne Special School has a unit at Kings School which is proving effective.

The County holds the scrutiny function for health provision. The effect of inequalities because of housing, education and employment are revealed in a recent study by the NHE which has shown that 1/3 of all **Ambulance Call Outs** are the result of just 1% of population.

You can read more here. I am following this up locally too. I'd be interested in your views.

https://www.nationalhealthexecutive.com/articles/one-percent-population-make-third-ambulance-call-outs?utm_source=National%20Health%20Executive&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=12833831_NHE%20Newsletter%2029th%20November%202021&dm_i=IJV,7N2NB,FX68XN,V4GFS,1

The County Council has received £7m funds from the Department for Work and Pensions to distribute over the winter for food, fuel and utility/ heating costs. 50% of the funds are for families, the remainder for other vulnerable households. Parents of pre-school/school/college age children can apply through schools, and Citizens Advice have also received a sum, so they are able to channel this money to residents. I urge you to ask anyone who needs help to contact Citizens Advice direct, or to me if you wish. You can also use Community Pantries (in our area Unit-12 has a community pantry) - also receiving support.

I wish you the best possible Christmas, however Covid 19 and its variants may challenge us.

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