The Impact of the Pandemic in Rotherham

How this impacted people, health behaviours, community and neighbourhoods, the environment, and socio-economic factors.

Rotherham Metropolitan **Borough Council**

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Background

- The pandemic highlighted how Rotherham's deprivation coupled with the unequal distribution of social determinants of health impacted resilience to Covid-19 and the outcomes for our population.
- Preventable inequalities within society reduce an individual's ability to prevent sickness or access healthcare when ill health occurs. These inequalities include exposure to risk factors, education, housing, employment, and lead to associated inequalities in physical and mental health.
- The pandemic exposed these inequalities with people living in the poorest 10% of areas more likely to die from Covid-19, and left sections of society vulnerable to financial insecurity, employment loss, missing education, and unmet mental and physical health needs.



Growing numbers in substance misuse treatment

because of exits not keeping pace with new

Post-lockdown increase in self-

services and increasing self-

People reporting increasing

struggles with loneliness and

worsening mental health.

Increase in year 7 & 10 pupils

poor, and 35% of this cohort

reporting their mental health as

reporting some deterioration in

their mental health in the past

The pandemic and the cost-of-

exacerbated underlying poverty

The community hub was established and

• 1272 people who offered their

• 435 organisation and businesses

Crisis food support pre-Covid delivered around 4000

in 2020/21 and although demand has since fallen, it

is still far higher than pre-pandemic levels (4).

Most referrals into the service since the end of

pandemic restrictions are due to poverty and low

food parcels per year, this increased to almost 20,000

during the pandemic dealt with (4):

5623 requests for help

services as volunteers

offering support

in the borough and pushed

people from precarity into

• 3161 calls

living crisis have both

two years⁽³⁾.

crisis.

referrals for weight management

reported smoking prevalence⁽²⁾.

presentations: 15% reduction in opiate exits⁽¹⁾.

Method

 Semi-structured interviews across the four Council directorates to understand how the pandemic affected staff and service users, coupled with quantitative data covering service demand, changes and adaptations, and ongoing and emerging issues.



This information was combined with significant public engagement obtained through thirteen focus group sessions and 70 survey responses including participation from carers and those in receipt of care, parent and toddler group members, people living with neurodiversity, ethnic minority communities, and older people.



Measures

Socio-economic

- Education
- Healthcare
- Adult Social Care
- Children's Services
- Housing
- Income and Inequality
- Work and Employment

Environment

- Air Quality
- Transport
- Culture, Leisure and Socialising

Community and Neighbourhoods

- Crime
- 'Being at home'
- Community Hub

Health Behaviours

- Smoking
- Weight
- Alcohol
- Substance use
- Sexual Health

<u>People</u>

- Digital
- Access to Services
- Guidance and Media

Conclusion and recommendations

number of services and outcomes with consideration of the impact on health inequalities and inequalities in access. Outcomes of concern that will have a long-term effect on individuals and within the borough include Alcohol and Drug treatment completions, Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) prescribing rates, smoking rates, obesity rates, immunisation, and cancer screening rates.

It should be noted the economic impacts of the pandemic, and the post pandemic rises in the cost of living, ensuring mitigation of poverty locally both through the provision of support services, and in terms of organisational delivery of social value through support for the local economy and to local employment

Results

Health behaviours

/ |

Community and

neighbourhoods

People

Socioeconomic

Environment

Decreased early years registrations but an increase in demand due to change in need; a rise in numbers of children with additional speech, language and behavioural needs⁽⁴⁾.

> Increases in pupils registered with SEND support needs, and applications for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) (4).

> > Many children, particularly in transition cohorts, presenting with social and emotional needs, lack of self-regulation, and speech and language issues (4).

Increased number of requests for support from social care to facilitate safe hospital discharge including frailty and complex needs demonstrating the rising level of need at this stage in the patient pathway (4).

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a significant decline in bus patronage across South Yorkshire from just under 11.1 million passenger journeys in 2019/20 to just under 4.1 million passenger journeys in 2020/21, increasing to 4.9 million in 2021/22.

Buses were referred to as a barrier due to accessibility, reduced service, increased cost, and frequent cancellations and some felt that those relying on the reduced service operating during the pandemic, meant that people couldn't get out as much.

Libraries were recognised as a support for a range of groups including as a resource and a centre for community need.

- Work remains to recover the pre-pandemic position for a
- There remains continued anxiety felt by certain cohorts within the population creating a barrier to community participation and therefore risking detriment to physical and mental health; there is a need to support people to overcome this to regain the confidence to interact and achieve wider integration with society.
- Engagement responses demonstrate the complexity of pandemic guidance and communication challenges throughout. For future major incidents, partners should recognise the importance of good communications nationally, regionally, and locally, and the need for community engagement to support understanding, adherence, and the ability to engage with the changes to pathways and services.

Acknowledgements

- Alcohol and substance misuse data obtained from NDTMS Data obtained from Public Health Commissioned Services Rotherham Voice of the Child Survey, 2022
- Data obtained from internal RMBC services. Full report available here: Director of Public Health Annual Reports - Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

References

income (4).

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