

# Information Briefing

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Report to: Cllr John Cotton, Cabinet Member – Social  
Inclusion, Community Safety & Equalities

## Creating a City without Inequality (CCwl) Forum

### 1. Summary

Birmingham has one of the most diverse, vibrant and energised populations in England. Many of our citizens enjoy healthy and fulfilling lives. However, as a City we experience significantly worse health than many of our counterparts in the West Midlands, England and Europe. Our population faces many challenges which include:

- Ten-year difference in life expectancy between the least and most affluent areas of the city.
- A significantly higher likelihood of being admitted to a hospital, receiving mental health support, or dying prematurely.
- High infant mortality rate (twice as high as the England average).
- Significant gaps in employment for those with mental health issues and learning disabilities.
- One of the youngest cities in Europe with under 25s accounting for nearly 40% of our population. Despite this, we have an increasing older population who are experiencing significant health and social care needs.
- Birmingham is an ethnically diverse city. The 2011 census reported that 46.7% of the population belong to an ethnic group that is not White British.
- Many people and communities in Birmingham face persistent health, social, and economic challenges which are driven by inequality, with 41% of children living in poverty.
- Unemployment in the city is higher than the national average; 6.4% in Birmingham compared to 2.6% in the UK – and there are unequal employment rates across the city.

The health and wellbeing of the people of Birmingham is influenced by factors such as lifestyle, living and working conditions, wealth, environment, culture, and access to services. Barriers restricting access to appropriate advice, support and treatment are major causes of differences in life expectancy across the city and are often underpinned by systematic failures across multiple local, regional, and national agencies.

The Creating a City without Inequality (CCwl) Forum is a sub-committee of the Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board. The purpose of the Forum is to mobilise, influence and work collaboratively with partners and agencies to prevent the exacerbation of health inequalities in Birmingham.

## **2. CCwl Forward Plan**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the public health response that has been required, all sub-groups of the Health and Wellbeing board are temporarily paused. However, work has continued on a wide range of areas related to health inequalities throughout the last year. At the last CCwl Forum meeting, the following topics relating to inequalities were presented and discussed with members:

- Outcomes from COVID Health and Wellbeing Impact Survey  
This work outlined key themes from a quantitative analysis, of the impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on the health and wellbeing behaviours of citizens in Birmingham. The review highlighted inequalities across housing, education and social determinants.
- Overview of inequalities and the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP)  
Looking at how health inequalities may persist through NHS provision and Covid-19. The STP relates to the following areas of inequality:  
Protecting vulnerable citizens from Covid-19.  
Restoring NHS services inclusively.  
Developing digitally enabled care pathways that increase inclusion.  
Accelerating preventative programs to proactively engage with those that are at greater risk of health inequalities.  
Supporting mental health.  
Enabling collaboration locally in the planning and delivery of actions addressing health inequalities.
- Covid-19 Economic shock and its impact on health and wellbeing  
Update on the economic impact of Covid-19 on the health and wellbeing of citizens in Birmingham. This included area of inequality relating to: poor diet (food poverty), physical inactivity, substance misuse and poor mental health.
- Community Led Recovery Programme  
Action Plan for community led recovery plan consists of three pillars across the following areas of inequality: economic; social; and community.

- **Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business**  
The Council's statement of intent with regard to tackling inequality focuses upon three key themes: 1. Employment and leading by example e.g. better HR practices; 2. Civic leaders in partnership with others; 3. How we tell the story and history of people living in Birmingham. A city-wide conversation will be taking place to inform how the statement of intent will be taken forward. The forum will continue to be updated on the progress of the statement of intent and will align with the three key themes.
- **Covid-19 Action on Health Inequalities: effects of the pandemic and impacts on health inequalities across the life course.**  
The life course report with the group which includes highlighted gaps, challenges and opportunities brought about by Covid-19 and the lockdown measures on people's lives and health inequalities. Themes include; reduced access to services and timely interventions, low take up of immunisations and vaccinations, child/family poverty, isolation and loneliness.
- **Smoking in Pregnancy**
- **Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review**  
This work is a partnership between the Lewisham Council and Birmingham City Council to conduct a review to gather insights on health inequalities within Black African and Caribbean communities in Birmingham and Lewisham. Both Birmingham and Lewisham Public Health Divisions shared a joint aspiration to address this and improve ethnic inequalities, through an increased understanding, appreciation, and engagement with BAME groups. This resulted in a collaboration between the two local authorities to share knowledge and resources through a review process. By focusing on different ethnic groups and communities separately, beginning with the Black African and Black Caribbean communities, this will enable a more detailed and culturally sensitive approach to the review.
- **West Midlands State of the Group report August 2020**  
This report depicts the current picture around the West Midlands economy as a key area of inequality. Briefly, the coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic has delivered a major shock to the West Midlands economy. This State of the Group report for August 2020 provided the latest data that goes some way to measuring the impact of the pandemic on our labour market.

The restart of this Forum is currently under review and upon commencement, the Forum will be refreshed with a renewed focus on the work of the forum being underpinned by the Marmot Report; *'Health Equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 Years On'*. This underpinning strategy will work to ensure that the Forum has a sharp focus on reducing the inequalities through the six key areas of policy action presented in the *Marmot Review*. In addition, the refreshed focus of the Forum will also look to embed the *'Build back fairer: COVID-19-Marmot review'* recommendations (including the short, medium and long-term) into tangible and collaborative actions for the City, facilitating joined-up working across agencies and systems.

In the 2010 Marmot Review, '*Fair Society, Healthy Lives*', six themes relating to avoidable differences in health outcomes emerged which encompassed; stages of life; healthy standard of living; communities and places; and ill health prevention. These formed the basis for six priority objectives and areas of recommendations for reducing health inequalities.

Six priority objectives for action on health inequalities. Marmot Review, '*Fair Society, Healthy Lives*':

1. Give every child the best start in life.
2. Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.
3. Create fair employment and good work for all.
4. Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.
5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.
6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.

Since the publication of the 2010 Marmot Review, life expectancy in England has stalled. This slowdown in life expectancy is attributed to factors other than winter-associated mortality, such as social gradients becoming steeper, and thus inequalities in life expectancy have increased. Inequalities and poor health adversely affect individuals, families and communities and are largely avoidable with the right policies in place. By focusing on each of the priority objectives identified by Marmot, the CCwl Forum can link projects and programmes to each area, reporting on the outcomes, identifying gaps and developing associated actions. This will give the Forum a sharper focus and encourage real joined up working across organisations and systems. Rather than inequalities being rhetoric, they will become tangible and real, making a difference to citizens of Birmingham. The Forum will also capture evidence relating to the Health and Wellbeing Boards' inequalities indicators, reporting these back to the Board.

## **2.1 Forum schedule 2021-2022**

It is proposed that a series of workshops will be put in place prior to each Forum meeting. The workshops will link with each of the policy areas with the overarching aim to facilitate discussion on each policy area to inform the subsequent forum meeting, providing a sharper, localised focus on each specific area.

We will also update members of the Forum with the progression of key projects, one of which is the establishment of the Poverty Truth Commission in Birmingham, which will ensure that the voices of those with lived experience of poverty have a direct influence upon how we deliver our services and develop policy. The aim of the project is to build on the legacy of the previous Truth Commission as well as developing a new rolling engagement model that strengthens the connection between the Council and its partners and the citizens. The initial theme of exploration is lived experiences in relation to housing. The project commenced in November 2020 and is anticipated to run until late 2022, according to the following phases:

*Phase 1:* Foundations.

*Phase 2:* Process evaluation. Create theory of change for the PTC model, identifying key inputs/outputs and outcomes assumptions.

*Phase 3:* Data collection and analysis. Semi-structured interviews with commissioners and system level stakeholders to explore their ambitions for the commission.

*Phase 4:* Refining and testing findings, report completion and dissemination. Production and co-development of system-level recommendations.

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