

Healthwatch York Report: Health and the Cost of Living in York

Summary

1. This report is for the attention and action of Board members, sharing a report from Healthwatch York which looks at the results of the second Healthwatch York survey exploring the health impacts of the rising cost of living.

Background

2. Healthwatch York provides information and advice about health and care services, signposts people to support, and listens to their experiences when accessing health and care services. Recently there has been an increase in mentions of the cost of living when discussing health and care concerns. Having completed one survey before Christmas, we wanted to maintain our understanding of the issues being experienced.
3. We developed a survey and reached out through our local engagement activities and our partner organisations to share the survey widely. We would like to thank Kate Pickett from University of York for her support with the survey questions to maximise our learning potential.
4. We produced a report highlighting the day-to-day impact on local people's health and wellbeing as a direct result of rising living costs. We have shared this report to encourage further discussion of these challenges and consideration of ways we can collectively address them. We acknowledge the significant partnership work already underway to provide help, advice, and information to those most directly affected. This partnership work is being coordinated and supported by City of York Council.

Main/Key Issues to be considered

5. Our report's key findings are:

- The increasing cost of living is having a detrimental effect on York residents' physical and mental health
- York residents are deeply concerned about being able to keep themselves and their families warm
- People are having to skip meals and/or relying on foodbanks - irrespective of what ward they live in
- Residents are reducing their consumption of healthy foods due to rising costs
- Those whose answers indicate they are depressed and/or clinically anxious are disproportionately impacted
- Rising costs are beginning to have an impact in households that had previously reported as managing
- York residents are adapting by changing their spending and living habits, dipping into their savings, and increasing their borrowing
- Feelings of isolation are increased by not being able to afford associated costs with socialising such as transport

Consultation

6. In producing this report, we consulted the public through a short, simple survey and compared them with our previous survey results. We also used the experiences people shared with us.

Options

7. There are recommendations on page 36 of the report, namely:

- i. Consider ways of measuring and monitoring the health impacts of cost of living rises across the York population, for example monitoring over time the levels of people admitted to hospital who are malnourished
- ii. Consider ways of making sure everyone has access to advice and information, not just those living in known areas of deprivation in the city. This must include access for those in the outer villages and those experiencing digital exclusion

- iii. Consider the findings from the pilot of heating help for those with long term health conditions in Gloucester, and whether opportunity exists locally to support those most at risk through winter pressures funding York Health and Care Partnership Continue to make strong representations to challenge the perceptions of York as an affluent city and speak out for our residents who are currently struggling. This must include making sure colleagues across the wider Integrated Care System are fully sighted on the particular issues York residents are experiencing
- iv. Collectively recommit to the council motion to recognise socio economic status

Implications

8. There are no specialist implications from this report.

- **Financial**

There are no financial implications in this report.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

There are no HR implications in this report.

- **Equalities**

There are no equalities implications in this report.

- **Legal**

There are no legal implications in this report.

- **Crime and Disorder**

There are no crime and disorder implications in this report.

- **Information Technology (IT)**

There are no IT implications in this report.

- **Property**

There are no property implications in this report.

- **Other**

There are no other implications in this report.

Risk Management

9. There are no risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

10. The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:
- i. Receive Healthwatch York's report, Health and the Cost of Living in York.
 - ii. Request responses to the recommendations from the bodies named within the report.

Reason: To keep up to date with the work of Healthwatch York, be aware of what members of the public are telling us and respond to the issues raised.

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Report
Approved



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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annex A – <https://www.healthwatchyork.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Health-and-the-Cost-of-Living-in-York-May-2023.pdf>