



Protecting and improving the nation's health

COVID-19 Place-based approach to reducing health inequalities

Overview of Resources

Public Health England (PHE) in collaboration with the Local Government Association (LGA), Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH), and NHS England and NHS Improvement, have collated a suite of resources relating to health inequalities and COVID-19 to support place-based approaches to planning and responding to the pandemic, while mitigating against potential impacts on those with the poorest health outcomes.

These resources complement the wealth of existing work on health inequalities already happening at a local level and do not duplicate documents already produced by partner organisations, but will hopefully help you and your teams to easily access data, guidance and other tools to support your ongoing work in this area.

They should be viewed and used alongside existing government guidance on protecting and shielding people who are extremely vulnerable to serious illness from COVID-19 on medical grounds and recognises that many of these people may also experience health inequities ([here](#)). They support NHS England and NHS Improvements' recently published menu of evidence-based interventions and approaches for health inequalities ([here](#)). Additionally, they build on the 'Place-Based Approaches to Health Inequalities' (PBA) on-line resource ([here](#)), which looks to strongly connect together the components of civic, service and community contribution. Such a whole system response is particularly important in crisis situations like COVID-19.

These materials are not intended as formal guidance but are offered to initiate and support the planning and delivery of organisations working at a local level. They can be used individually or in combination.

While all efforts have been made to ensure that the content of these resources is up to date, this is a fast-moving agenda, so the content can only be guaranteed to be accurate at the date of publication. If there is a need, updates will be published.

There are four resources in this collection:

1. COVID-19 Data tools to support local areas

This resource will assist local areas to quantify the estimated number of those at increased risk from coronavirus and to assess the likely impact on health inequalities. It will support the work conducted by analysts at a local authority/CCG level to quantify the sizes of different groups within the community and may be useful for presenting to leadership teams.

The resource includes:

- i) A spreadsheet with local authority breakdown of the estimates of individuals that may be at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 based on clinical risk groups offered the influenza immunisation
- ii) A series of customised profiles based on indicators (clinical and wider determinants) within the LA Fingertips tool that will allow local areas to assess those populations likely to be most affected by the coronavirus

2. COVID-19 Summary of published guidance and support for vulnerable groups

This resource is a table which collates links to existing guidance on COVID-19 that have been produced by national government, local government and voluntary, community and third sector organisations. The guidance is grouped by vulnerable/health inequality groupings. It can be used as a 'quick access' tool for local organisations working with people, groups and communities who are most vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 to sign-post people to the guidance which is most appropriate to their needs.

3. COVID-19 Suggestions for mitigating the impact on health inequalities at a local level

This resource lists the possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on health inequalities, with suggested actions that can be taken at a local level to mitigate against them. The resource can be used by public health teams in local authorities and others including CCGs and VSC organisations planning and delivering local responses.

It is recognised that much of this action may already be underway, but by bringing it together into one document, the resource acts as an aide memoire and a set of prompts for local areas. It includes action to address the potential short and longer-term impacts of the pandemic on the social determinants of health. It also connects to the importance of a place-based response which draws on and enhances local assets within communities, services and local government.

4. COVID-19 Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT) for local areas

HEAT will support local areas in taking a systematic approach to considering how their response to COVID-19 has an impact on health inequalities, those with protected characteristics and in inclusion health groups. It can be used by public health teams in local authorities to help shape communication, engagement with and delivery of services and may be used as evidence of meeting the public sector equality duty. It consists of a short self-assessment table. NHS England and NHS Improvement have produced a similar resource to support the response of health services.

Why health inequalities and COVID-19?

Health inequalities are the preventable differences in health status between groups, populations or individuals that arise from the unequal distribution of social, environmental and economic conditions within societies, which determine the risk of people getting ill, their ability to prevent sickness, or opportunities to take action and access treatment when ill health occurs. There are several dimensions of health inequalities as illustrated in Figure 1. It is important to note that people often fall into various combinations of these categories.

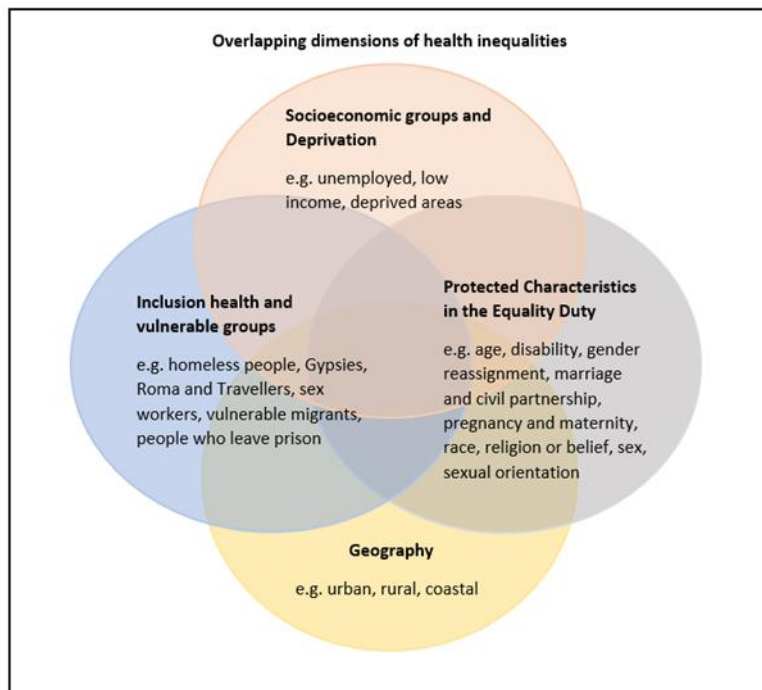


Figure 1

There are clear reasons for giving priority consideration and support to those individuals, groups and communities at greater risk of poor health outcomes from COVID-19. Government guidance on shielding and social distancing is essential to slow down the spread of the virus, to protect lives, and to ensure that the NHS and

Social Care services have the capacity to care for those who become infected. While the burden of disease falls disproportionately on the most socio-economically disadvantaged and those with greater vulnerability to poor health outcomes it is also the case that these groups may also be least equipped to manage the socio-economic impacts of shielding and social distance measures. It is therefore important that we take targeted and disproportionate action to support those individuals, groups and communities that are most vulnerable to stay safe.

Feedback

If you have any comments, updates to add, or examples of work that you are doing to address any of the areas highlighted and would be happy to share with others, please contact the Health Equity Team at Public Health England:
health.equity@phe.gov.uk

We are keen to learn how useful these resources have been and in what way and will take the opportunity to ask for feedback over the coming months.