

From: Gerry McCartney (gmccartney@nhs.net)
To: Directors of Public Health
Date: 26th June 2019
Subject: Recent mortality and life expectancy trends update

Actions required:

1. We are looking for someone to scope out and lead work on the potential contribution of mental (ill-)health to the mortality trends. If you have someone in your teams that could do this work please let me know.
2. Please let Gerry know if there are additional comments or tasks that you feel need to be covered following the recent discussion on this.
3. Please use the material on the ScotPHO website below to inform any local work on the trends.
4. The next mortality Special Interest Group meeting is on the 19th August and is co-ordinated by ScotPHN. Please ensure that you are content with your representation at that meeting.

Update since last meeting:

Publications

- We have now published a summary of our current understanding of the nature, causes and implications of the recent mortality trends on ScotPHO: <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/population-dynamics/recent-mortality-trends/>. We will keep this page updated with new developments.
- The next substantive public release of work will be by National Records of Scotland who will report on the contribution of different causes of death by age group to the life expectancy trends. This is the work I recently presented to the DsPH. It is expected that this will be released in mid-July.

Briefings and workshops

- I have briefed Scottish Government civil servants on the trends. Further work is needed in this area to ensure relevant ministers are fully aware of this work and the implications for them.
- We led a workshop in London, hosted by Public Health England and involving colleagues from Wales and Northern Ireland, to move towards a more collaborative approach to researching the problem and to explaining this to policymakers and the public. This went well and will be followed by a further workshop in Belfast around September.
- There is increasing press interest in the trends and we are briefing journalists as appropriate.

Work programme

- The work programme is described in more detail below. We are now making good progress across most areas and are grateful for the time of public health staff across Scotland in contributing to this.
- Note that Clare Campbell from NHS Fife is leading work to produce local data to allow each board to understand its own trends in the context of Scotland overall.

Sub-project	Lead contributors	Offers	Stage
Overall approach to the mortality trends			
Communications and engagement strategy	Paige Somerville (HS) Elspeth Maloney (HS)		In draft
Overall synthesis of causes and contributions	Gerry McCartney (HS)		Holding statement on ScotPHO website
Development of recommendations and messages	David Walsh (GCPH) Gerry McCartney (HS)		Holding statement on ScotPHO website
What would 'success' look like?	Jon Minton (HS)		Initial analyses complete
Monitoring of trends and updating analysis	Julie Ramsay (NRS)		Ongoing, to be discussed further at mortality SIG
Administration and co-ordination of individual research projects	Possibly ScotPHN		In discussion
Descriptive analyses			
Which causes of death have contributed to changes in life expectancy trend over time by deprivation?	Julie Ramsay (NRS)		Due for publication in July 2019
What is the contribution of seasonality and high winter peaks in deaths to overall mortality trends?	Jon Minton (HS) Lynda Fenton (GGC/AA/HS) Grant Wyper (HS) Grant Wyper (HS)		Being drafted
Morbidity and Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) trends			Being scoped
Spatial analysis: administrative geographies, deprivation, urban-rural	Clare Campbell (Fife)		Protocol drafted
Testing of 'limits to life expectancy' hypothesis	Jon Minton (HS)		Initial analysis done
How likely are trends like this to be due to chance	Jon Minton (HS)		Drafted
Austerity			
Scoping a systematic review of literature examining relationship between austerity and mortality trends	David Walsh (GCPH)		Initial scoping complete
Analysis of austerity hypothesis at international level	Gerry McCartney (HS)		Protocol drafted
Analysis of austerity hypothesis at national level	Gerry McCartney (HS)		Protocol drafted

Ischaemic heart disease

Exploring IHD and stroke trend contributions

Katie Levin (GGC)
John Frank
(University of
Edinburgh)

Scoping underway

Influenza

What is the contribution of influenza to the trends

Arlene Reynolds
(HPS)

Pressures on health and social care services

Analysis of role of health and social care pressures in Scotland

Christina Wraw (HS)

Obesity

Ecological analysis of trends in obesity and mortality trends

Rebecca Devine
(Borders/HS)

Scoping underway

Contribution analysis of obesity to the trends

Rebecca Devine
(Borders/HS)

Scoping underway

Other

What role does mental health play in explaining the trends

Unallocated offers of help: Jackie Hyland (Tayside)