

- viii. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew there were health inequities in our society.
- ix. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many existing health inequities in the Welsh population, with direct and indirect effects having a disproportionate impact on some groups more than others.
- x. The reduction of health inequities should be a central part of every action that we take in re-stabilising our society and protecting our population from the impacts of COVID-19.

52. I set out eight recommendations intended to address some of these key issues.

53. My 2021/2022 report was published in June 2022 and had four chapters focusing on:

- a. the effect of climate change on public health;
- b. our aging population;
- c. the effects of the pandemic on the most deprived areas' mortality rates and life expectancy; and
- d. the effect of the pandemic on our health and social care system, lessons learned and new ways of working.

54. I included new recommendations and provided an update on recommendations from my previous report.

### **The future**

55. As an overarching point, I consider that the pandemic plans and arrangements for outbreak/incident management that were in place were generally robust and proved themselves invaluable in our Covid-19 response but that they were predicated on a short, sharp shock; something that would disrupt the normal functioning of society for days or weeks. The plans were inadequate for a two, or three, year shock to the system and that should be factored into any future pandemic planning.

56. In terms of the detail of how we strengthen public health protection in the future, my annual reports set out many of my thoughts on what needs to happen to prepare Wales for new threats and a future pandemic. It is difficult to summarise the detail of those reports succinctly but in brief I consider that we must work on improving health outcomes and reducing inequities