

## **[Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Kensington Borough].**

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON.

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ANNUAL (INTERIM) REPORT.

on the

HEALTH OF THE BOROUGH

for the Year

1941

by

JAMES FENTON, C.B.E., M.D., M.R.C.P., D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health.

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11th July, 1942.

Town Hall,  
Kensington,  
W.8.





Town Hall,  
Kensington, W.8,

11th July, 1942.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the  
Royal Borough of Kensington.

I have the honour to submit my annual report on the state of the public health in Kensington in 1941. The report is considerably abbreviated, but detailed records are available for inspection.

From the public health point of view the year was a satisfactory one. The incidence of infectious disease was low compared with pre-war years. The death rate from the principal infectious diseases is the lowest recorded for Kensington and the general death rate shows a slight decrease compared with the previous year's figure.

Infant welfare sessions were held at two welfare centres and at four first aid posts. The personnel at the posts assisted in this work, and also helped in giving 8,832 free baths to school children in the attached gas cleansing stations.

The issue of clothing coupons to expectant mothers and fruit juices and cod liver oil to children was a new feature of the maternity and child welfare service during the year.

During the year the Council decided to provide war-time day nurseries to enable women to have their children cared for whilst they undertook full time work of rational importance. One nursery was opened in January of the present year, and another in the following month. Each provides accommodation for 45 children. They are open from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. (2 p.m. Saturdays). First aid post nurses have volunteered to help and are being trained to become nursery nurses. Transport is provided to convey the children from a convenient picking-up point to the Ladbroke nursery in the morning and back again in the evening.

In June, 1941, the arrangements for dealing with the repair of war damaged houses were revised with the result that the public health department became responsible for initial and final inspections of damaged houses and the specification of repairs, while the Borough Engineer continued to supervise the work carried out by the builders. This change imposed new administrative duties on the public health department, but the new work is closely allied to ordinary peace-time duties of the department and was smoothly absorbed.

During the year, the administrative work in connection with the Council's Civil Defence Casualty Services continued to impose heavy responsibilities on the public health department. The personnel of the first aid posts, gas cleansing stations, mobile aid units, stretcher party depots, medical aid posts and ancillary units carried on their duties satisfactorily. Medical supervision of persons using the public air raid shelters was continued and no outbreak of infectious disease occurred.

Particular attention was given to the possible detrimental effect on children from sleeping night after night in public shelters, and one of the Council's medical officers visited these shelters to examine children therein at regular intervals. In addition, those children attending infant welfare centres were examined with a view to ensuring that they were not being adversely affected by having to sleep in shelters. Nearly three thousand children were examined, and it was found necessary to recommend for evacuation from London on health grounds only thirty-three cases. There was only one case in which legal proceedings had to be taken to secure evacuation.





Owing to war conditions the incidence of scabies and verminous conditions began to increase, and special measures have been taken to control the outbreak.

After forty years' service with the Council, Mr. J.H. Wilson, the Chief Clerk, retired on grounds of ill-health in 1941, and his place has been filled by Mr. J.S. Wheeler, one of the Council's sanitary inspectors.

The public health staff, both permanent and temporary, have worked extremely well to maintain the public health and the efficiency of the Civil Defence Casualty Services, and they are grateful for the encouragement and support given by the Mayor, the Public Health Committee and members of the Council.

# STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1941.

Area of Borough.....	2,291 acres	No. of deaths.....	1,664
Rateable Value.....	£3.033,729	Death rate.....	17.1
Product of ld. rate...	£8,531	No. of infant	
Population (estimated)	97,180	deaths.....	67
Density of population		(a)legitimate....	62
per acre.....	43	(b)illegitimate..	5
No. of inhabited houses	26,820	Infant Mortality rate:-	
Total live births.....	1,239	(a) All infants per	
(a) legitimate.....	1,099	1,000 births..	62
(b) illegitimate.....	140	(b) Legitimate infants	
Birth rate.....	12.7	per 1,000 legitimate	
Total still births....	54	births.....	66
(a) legitimate.....	45	(c) Illegitimate infants	
(b) illegitimate.....	9	per 1,000 illegitimate	
		births.....	36
		No. of maternal deaths	2
Still birth-rate per 1,000		Maternal mortality rate	
live births.....	41.8	per 1,000 total live	
		and still births..	1.8
		Zymotic disease death rate	
		(lowest on record)	0.15



Causes of death at different periods of life in 1941.

Cause of death	All ages	Under 1 year	1 year and under 5	5 years and under 45	45 years and over.
Cerebro-spinal fever	6	1	2	1	2
Diphtheria	2	1	1	-	-
Measles	84	2	-	52	30
Other forms of tuberculosis	19	-	4	10	5
Syphilis	24	-	-	1	23
Influenza	22	-	-	1	21
Measles	2	1	1	-	-
Whooping cough	7	5	2	-	-
Polio-myelitis and polio-encephalitis	1	-	-	1	-
Cancer (all forms)	227	-	-	24	203
Diabetes	17	-	-	5	12
Inter-cranial vascular lesions	135	-	-	1	134
Heart disease	398	-	-	13	385
Other diseases of circulatory system	60	-	-	3	57
Bronchitis	96	2	1	5	88
Pneumonia	120	13	6	6	95
Other respiratory diseases	16	-	-	2	14
Ulcers of stomach	19	-	-	1	18
Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	4	3	1	-	-
Appendicitis	7	-	-	2	5
Other digestive diseases	51	1	1	6	43
Nephritis	48	-	-	10	38
Puerperal sepsis	1	-	-	1	-
Other maternal causes	1	-	-	1	-
Premature birth	16	16	-	-	-
Infantile diseases	21	16	2	-	3
Suicide	14	-	-	3	11
Road traffic accidents	12	-	1	3	8
Other violent causes	113	3	2	39	69
All other causes	121	3	2	15	101
TOTALS	1664	67	26	206	1365

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Bacteriological work.

The work performed during the year was as follows:-

<u>Disease suspected</u>	<u>Examinations</u>	<u>Positive</u>
Diphtheria	790	40
Tuberculosis	654	43
Paratyphoid fever (faeces)	23	3
Dysentery (Sonne) (faeces)	29	4

The following examinations were also carried out:-

Milk, general test	...	84
Milk, for tubercle bacilli	...	18 (1 positive)
Water from wells, etc.	...	26
Miscellaneous	...	1





## Professional nursing in the home.

On behalf of the borough council, the Kensington district nursing association visited 372 cases, paying 4,540 visits. The total number of cases nursed during the year was 1,005, and the total number of visits paid was 33,982.

## Vaccination.

There were 1,963 births reported in 1940 to the vaccination officer by the Kensington registrars. By the 31st December, 1941, 44.2 per cent. of these had been vaccinated or were insusceptible to vaccination. The other 55.8 per cent. were accounted for as follows:-

Statutory declarations of objection .. .. .	13.7%
Died before vaccination .. .. .	4.3%
Referred to other districts .. .. .	23.4%
Removed, leaving no trace .. .. .	11.1%
Postponed, or unaccounted for .. .. .	3.3%

(In addition, by the 31st December, 1941, 121 certificates of successful vaccination had been received in respect of children living in Kensington who were born outside the Borough during 1940)

## MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

### Health visiting staff

The work performed by the health visiting staff during 1941 in regard to maternity and child welfare is summarised in the following table:-

First visits to infants (0 - 1 year) .. .. .	789
Re-visits to infants (0 - 1 year) .. .. .	5,090
Visits to children between 1 and 5 years .. .. .	8,550
Stillbirth enquiries .. .. .	24
Visits to ophthalmia neonatorum cases .. .. .	4
Visits to measles cases .. .. .	879
Visits to whooping-cough cases .. .. .	526
Visits to puerperal fever cases .. .. .	3
Visits to puerperal pyrexia cases .. .. .	11
Visits to enteritis cases .. .. .	83
Infantile death enquiries .. .. .	48
Pre-natal visits .. .. .	2,969
Half-days at welfare centres .. .. .	1,475
Special visits .. .. .	3,112

### Infant welfare centres

The work at these institutions during 1941 is shown in the following table:-

Births occurring in the area suitable for welfare attention .. .. .	821
Sessions at which doctor attended for pre-natal consultations .. .. .	392
Individual mothers who attended pre-natal sessions .. .. .	826
Attendances of pre-natal mothers .. .. .	4,041
Sessions at which doctor attended for infant consultations .. .. .	402
Individual children who attended:-	
0 - 1 year .. .. .	1,384
1 - 5 years .. .. .	1,295
Attendances of children at doctors' consultations:-	
0 - 1 year .. .. .	5,062
1 - 5 years .. .. .	4,356
Attendances at centres of children for all purposes:-	
0 - 1 year .. .. .	9,918
1 - 5 years .. .. .	6,602
Weightings .. .. .	16,520





The Baby Clinic, 92, Tavistock Road.

Five hundred and forty-eight children attended this institution, making 4,221 attendances. The average number seen at doctors' consultations was 17.

Dental Treatment.

The following table shows the dental treatment performed at the infant welfare centres during the year:-

Patients .. .. .	413
Attendances .. .. .	948
Extractions .. .. .	1,138
Fillings .. .. .	70
Dentures .. .. .	61
Other treatments .. .. .	648

Maternity home.

Applications for admission	49
Applications accepted .. ..	49
Applications subsequently withdrawn .. .. .	12
Women confined in the home	34

The gross cost of the scheme to the Council during 1941 was £175. 10s. 0d.

The assessments made in respect of patients whose applications were accepted and not withdrawn during the year amounted to £132. 16s. 0d. Payments made by patients totalled £123. 10s. 6d.

Supply of extra nourishment for expectant and nursing mothers and for infants.

The Government's war time scheme for the supply of milk at reduced prices or free to children under five years and expectant or nursing mothers came into force in July, 1940, and continued throughout 1941. The following figures show the number of permits issued for the supply of liquid or dried milk at reduced prices or free of charge, and the number of persons involved:-

Liquid milk

<u>Permits issued free</u>	<u>No. of persons receiving free milk</u>	<u>Permits issued for milk at 2d. a pint</u>	<u>Persons receiving milk at 2d. a pint.</u>
3,354	4,548	6,624	7,929

Dried milk

Permits issued free

Permits issued for milk equivalent to 2d. a pint to children under one year.

294

245

In connection with the Government's scheme, the borough council decided to grant supplementary supplies of dried milk in special cases in which the medical officers certified that the amount of milk granted under the Government's scheme was inadequate. The number of supplementary packets of dried milk supplied was 195 and the cost to the council was £11. 11s. 0d.



## Home helps.

Home helps were supplied under the council's scheme in 28 cases at a cost of £30. 10s. 10d.

## Issue of clothing coupons to expectant mothers.

In connection with clothes rationing the Public Health Department is responsible for the issue of special clothing coupons to expectant mothers residing in the borough, and during the year 661 applications were granted.

## SANITARY INSPECTION

The following table shows a summary of the inspections, etc., carried out by the sanitary inspectors during the year:-

Total complaints received.....	1,476
<u>Public Health (London) Act, 1936.</u>	
Houses inspected on complaint.....	1,386
"          "          after infectious disease.....	432
Re-inspections.....	4,680
Inspections of news.....	18
Other inspections.....	6,731
<u>By-laws re Houses Let in Lodgings.</u>	
Houses inspected on complaint.....	90
First annual inspections.....	5
Re-inspections.....	15
<u>Housing Acts.</u>	
Initial inspections (including preparation or revision of house-to-house cards).....	5
Re-inspections.....	40
<u>Underground Living Rooms.</u>	
Primary inspections.....	7
Re-inspections.....	11
<u>Drainage.</u>	
Applications made.....	35
Plans submitted.....	11
House drains tested and inspected.....	143

(In addition to carrying out the above inspections, the sanitary inspectors have been engaged on the inspection and repair of houses damaged by enemy action.)

The following table shows the number of notices issued in respect of nuisances, defects, etc., found during the year:-

<u>Public Health (London) Act, 1936.</u>	
Intimation notices.....	645
Statutory notices.....	200
Final notices.....	49
Summonses issued.....	7
<u>Various</u>	
Rent Restriction Act certificates.....	2
Report of waste of water to M.W.B. ....	109
Report of dangerous structures to L.C.C. ....	33
Other notices.....	7





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The following is a summary of works completed under the supervision of the sanitary inspectors during the year (excluding war damage repairs) :-

House drains reconstructed.....	8
"    "    additions to.....	6
Defective drains repaired.....	33
House drains cleansed.....	101
Water-closets reconstructed.....	12
"    repaired.....	47
"    new provided.....	3
"    supplied with waver.....	12
Soil pipes ventilated, repaired, etc.,.....	4
"    new provided.....	5
Ventilating pipes, new provided.....	3
Baths, new provided.....	3
Sinks, new provided.....	6
Lavatory basins, new provided.....	4
Waste pipes. " " .....	20
Cisterns cleansed.....	1
"    covered.....	1
Taps fixed on rising main.....	5
Yards, areas paved, drained, repaired.....	9
Dustbins provided.....	34
Accumulations of filth, etc. removed.....	106
Overcrowding abated.....	7
Animals removed.....	3
Roofs repaired .....	138
Houses provided with water above basement level	18
Dampness in dwellings remedied.....	173
Ventilated food cupboards provided.....	1
Infectious disease cases removed.....	189
Houses disinfected after infectious disease (including bedding, clothing, etc.).....	595
Rooms in such houses disinfected after infectious disease.....	667
Houses cleansed under houses let in lodgings by-laws.....	53
Cleansing of houses not on register.....	24
Verminous houses cleansed (including bedding, clothing, etc.,) .....	578
Verminous rooms in such houses.....	806
Dirty bedding cleansed.....	55
"    destroyed.....	23
Other sanitary works executed.....	172

#### Legal Proceedings under the Public Health Act, etc.

Nuisances. During the year 7 summonses were taken out for various nuisances under the Public Health (London) Act, 1936. In 3 cases abatement orders were made; the remaining 4 cases were withdrawn, the nuisances having been abated.

Removal of aged and infirm persons. Application was made to the court in one case, and an order was obtained for the compulsory removal of the person to a suitable institution.

Dog nuisances. Proceedings were taken in 2 cases during the year and fines amounting to £1. 0. 0. were imposed.





## HOUSING

Inspection of dwelling houses during the year:-

(i)	(a)	Total no. of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts).....	1,493
	(b)	No. of inspections made for purpose.....	12,970
(ii)	(a)	No. of dwelling houses (included under sub-head (i) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925.....	5
	(b)	No. of inspections made for purpose.....	45
(iii)		No. of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation.....	Nil
(iv)		No. of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects fit for human habitation.....	645

(War damage excluded)

### Overcrowding.

By re-housing the council abated overcrowding in 70 cases during the year.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

### Milk.

Three hundred and forty-two samples of milk were submitted to the public analyst, and nine were found to be adulterated.

At the end of the year there were on the register, 181 purveyors registered for the sale of milk in sealed containers, 158 dairymen and 118 dairies and milkshops.

Two summonses were issued for offences under the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926, and costs amounting to £4. 4s. 0d. were awarded, no convictions being recorded.

### Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924.

Daily inspections were made at the Government's meat distribution centre established in the borough, which serves not only Kensington but other neighbouring boroughs.

### Adulteration of food.

Four hundred and ten formal samples of food were taken, of which 20, or 4.9%, were adulterated. Five hundred and eighty-nine informal samples were taken, of which 24, or 4%, were adulterated. Prosecutions were instituted in eight cases, and fines and costs amounting to £67. 2s. 0d. were imposed.



INFECTIOUS DISEASE

The following table shows the number of cases of infectious disease notified, the number of cases in North and South Kensington respectively, and the number admitted to hospital in 1941:-

Notifiable disease	Number of Cases		Total	Cases admitted to hospital.
	North Kensington.	South Kensington.		
Scarlet fever	74	17	91	84
Diphtheria (including membranous croup)	57	29	86	86
Enteric fever	5	11	16	14
Puerperal fever	1	-	1	1
„ pyrexia	7	4	11	11
Acute primary pneumonia and acute influenzal pneumonia	55	10	65	32
Dysentery	21	4	25	23
Erysipelas	22	21	43	23
Cerebro-spinal meningitis	10	12	22	22
Poliomyelitis and polioencephalitis	2	-	2	1
All forms of tuberculosis	126	108	234	155
Measles	330	36	366	166
Ophthalmia neonatorum	2	1	3	3
Whooping cough	165	11	176	96
+Enteritis (diarrhoea)	38	10	48	43
Food poisoning	1	1	2	2
Acute rheumatism	2	-	2	-

+ Notifiable only in children under the age of 5 years.  
 „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ „ 16 years.

Cases of mistaken diagnosis are excluded from the above table.





### Diphtheria immunisation.

The following table shows the diphtheria immunisation work carried out during the year:-

No. of pre-school children immunised.....	651
No. of school children immunised.....	880
Total no. of children attending for pre-immunisation schick tests.....	1,005
No. which gave positive re-action .....	563
No. of children presented for schick testing after having received immunising inoculations	667
No. proving negative.....	600
No. proving positive.....	67

### TUBERCULOSIS

During the year, 234 new cases of tuberculosis were notified, of which 204 were respiratory and 30 non-respiratory cases.

Eighty-four persons died from respiratory tuberculosis and nineteen from non-respiratory tuberculosis. The death rate for respiratory tuberculosis was 86 and that for non-respiratory 20. The rate for all forms of tuberculosis was 106.

The increase in the death rate from tuberculosis which has been occurring throughout the country since the commencement of the war is also evident in this borough.

### Dispensary Service.

Seven hundred and fifty-seven new patients were examined. Of these, 256 were suffering from respiratory tuberculosis, 38 from non-respiratory tuberculosis, 6 were new cases still under observation at the end of the year and 457 persons were diagnosed as non-tuberculous.

Specimens of sputum examined were 654, of which 43 were found to contain tubercle bacilli; 786 radiological examinations were made; and 2,583 visits were paid to the homes of patients by the women health officers.

Nine patients made 29 attendances at the dental clinic.

Fifty-four patients received 951 artificial pneumothorax treatments.

Grants of extra nourishment were made in 72 cases; beds and bedding were loaned to 15 patients; and the district nurses attended 17 patients in their homes and paid a total of 404 visits.

I am,

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES FENTON,

Medical Officer of Health.

