



# Local Outbreak Engagement Board

2 March 2022

**Time** 2.20 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Partnership Boards  
**Venue** MS Teams

## Membership

Councillor Ian Brookfield (Chair)	Leader of the Council
Councillor Jasbir Jaspal (Vice Chair)	Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Emma Bennett	Executive Director of Families
Katrina Boffey	Assistant Director of Strategic Transformation, NHS England & NHS Improvement - Midlands
Tracy Cresswell	Healthwatch Wolverhampton
Ian Darch	Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Marsha Foster	Director of Partnerships, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Debra Hickman	Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust
Adrian Philips	Consultant in Communicable Diseases, UK Health Security Agency
Councillor Wendy Thompson	Opposition Leader
Dana Tooby	Ethnic Minority Council - Wolverhampton Equality and Diversity Partnership
Paul Tulley	Wolverhampton Managing Director, Black Country and West Birmingham CCG

## Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Democratic Services team:

**Contact** Shelley Humphries  
**Tel/Email** Tel: 01902 554070 email:shelley.humphries@wolverhampton.gov.uk  
**Address** Democratic Services, Civic Centre, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Copies of other agendas and reports are available from:

**Website** <http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk>  
**Email** [democratic.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk)  
**Tel** 01902 550320

Please take note of the protocol for filming and recording of, and use of social media in, meetings, copies of which are displayed in the meeting room.

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

# Agenda

## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*    *Title*

### MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS - PART 1

- 1            **Apologies for Absence**
- 2            **Notification of substitute members**
- 3            **Declarations of interest**
- 4            **Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 1 - 4)  
[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.]
- 5            **Matters arising**  
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.]

### ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION OR DECISION - PART 2

- 6            **COVID-19 Situation Update**  
[To receive an update on the current COVID-19 situation.]
- 7            **COVID-19 Strategic Coordinating Group Update Report** (Pages 5 - 12)  
[To provide a high-level summary of activity in support of the Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan.]
- 8            **Update - Medium-term Vaccination Plan**  
[To receive a presentation on the vaccination plan.]
- 9            **Other Urgent Business**  
[To consider any items of business by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) that in the opinion of the Chair are matters of urgency.]
- 10           **Dates of future meetings**

This page is intentionally left blank



## Local Outbreak Engagement Board

Minutes - 15 December 2021

### Attendance

#### Members of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board

Councillor Ian Brookfield (Chair)	Leader of the Council
Councillor Jasbir Jaspal (Vice Chair)	Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Michelle Carr	Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Ian Darch	Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Councillor Wendy Thompson	Opposition Leader
Dana Tooby	Ethnic Minority Council - Wolverhampton Equality and Diversity Partnership
Paul Tulley	Black Country and West Birmingham CCG
Rose Urkovskis	Healthwatch Wolverhampton

#### In Attendance

Madeleine Freewood	Public Health Partnership and Governance Lead
Emily Hackett	Senior Public Health Specialist
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer
Dr Ainee Khan	Consultant in Public Health
Vanessa Whatley	Deputy Chief Nurse, Royal Wolverhampton Trust (RWT)
Becky Wilkinson	Deputy Director of Adult Services

*Item No. Title*

- 1 **Apologies for Absence**  
Apologies were received from Emma Bennett, Debra Hickman, Katrina Boffey, Marsha Foster and Tracy Cresswell.
- 2 **Notification of substitute members**  
Michelle Carr attended for Marsha Foster and Rose Urkovskis attended for Tracy Cresswell.
- 3 **Declarations of interest**  
There were no declarations of interest made.
- 4 **Minutes of the previous meeting**  
Resolved:  
That the minutes of the meeting of 17 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.
- 5 **Matters arising**  
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

## 6 COVID-19 Situation Update

John Denley, Director of Public Health delivered the COVID-19 Situation Update with supporting presentation. It outlined that the current variant of concern, Omicron, was much more transmissible and cases had been confirmed in the Black Country. There had been indications of lower severity of illness thus far.

It was noted that Wolverhampton was in the bottom quartile and, at the time the slides were produced, case rates were at 402.8 per 100,000 people. It was stressed, however, that this was still concerning as the England case rate was around 500 per 100,000.

Graphs showed case rates per 100,000 in relation to geographical neighbours over the last six months and that Wolverhampton case rates had been fairly stable but had started to rise in the last month. Continued caution was urged and the public warned of a potentially challenging time ahead.

In terms of age, children and young people were driving transmission of the virus although this had an effect on working age people as the virus was carried from school to home and on to workplaces and vice versa.

In terms of vaccine uptake and efficacy, a bar graph showed less transmission amongst the age groups that had been vaccinated. Vaccine uptake was urged to protect those who were vulnerable as many people mixed socially with a wide range of age groups.

It was reported that vaccine availability was being widened with a choice of walk-in and bookable venues, increased capacity at existing venues, plus three more venues to be confirmed later on the <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk> website. Statistics from the vaccine 'shop' situated in the Mander Shopping Centre indicated that encouraging numbers from previously hard to reach communities had been attending supported by family and friends to take up the vaccine.

In response to a query around lateral flow tests supply issues, it was reported that this had been experienced nationally due to a sudden spike in demand. It was thought the shortage would be temporary and general advice was to only order as needed and use existing supplies before collecting more to avoid worsening the problem. Anyone in urgent need were advised to contact the Council who would look to source any available kits.

The role of community pharmacies was acknowledged and commended including their part in the roll out of vaccines, supply of LFT kits and demonstrations of their use. Thanks were also extended from partners to health colleagues for working to keep the City safe during a stressful and challenging time.

Concerns were raised around misinformation and residents were urged to consult reliable sources before making final decisions about vaccine refusal.

It was confirmed that there had been no evidence received by public health to support an emerging theory that vaccinated people passed on the Omicron variant more easily.

It was acknowledged that physical health and protection from the virus was paramount, however the impact on mental health resulting from the pandemic was still ongoing. It was confirmed that learning from the early days of the pandemic had been applied and more support mechanisms were in place than when the pandemic began. Continued partnership working, building resilience and learning to live with the virus had also been embedded into the Outbreak Control Plan.

Resolved:

That the COVID-19 Situation Update be received.

7

### **Winter Preparedness**

Dr Ainee Khan, Consultant in Public Health, Becky Wilkinson, Deputy Director of Adult Services and Vanessa Whatley, Deputy Chief Nurse, RWT delivered the Winter Preparedness presentation. The presentation provided an update on the expansion of 'flu vaccination programme and summarised existing and anticipated Winter pressures in all settings.

The Health Protection Response 2021 – 2022 set out preparations in place including ongoing partnership engagement, exercises to establish who would provide key roles and points of contact and Winter Information Packs for various settings.

The additional pressures presented by COVID within social care were outlined and plans were detailed on responding to these challenges, including planning around finances and staffing. The presentation also outlined the launch of Wolverhampton Cares, a partnership network established in November 2021 to support and strengthen the City's care sector.

Vanessa Whatley, Deputy Chief Nurse, RWT provided an update of the work being undertaken within the Royal Wolverhampton Trust and in partnership with the Council's Adult Services. The presentation detailed the Trust's ongoing work towards preventing the spread of infection alongside supporting the continuation of elective surgery and other services.

It was confirmed that at present the two separate COVID and 'flu vaccines could be taken on the same day. Although there had been no news of 'flu circulating, it was stressed that 'flu immunisations should not be forgotten.

In response to a query around prevention of cross-contamination between hospitals and care homes, it was confirmed that measures and monitoring systems were now in place following learning from the early days of the pandemic. There were separate, designated spaces in two separate locations – one for positive cases and one for close contacts. These were regularly inspected by the Care Quality Commission and would remain in place throughout the winter.

A query was raised around support for people being discharged from hospital, particularly those going home alone. It was noted that there was some provision in place however it was agreed that joint discussions would be held outside of the meeting between Adult Services and the Voluntary Sector to explore expanding the offer of support in this area.

Resolved:

That the presentation on Winter Preparedness be received.

8 **Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan December 2021 - Playing Our Part: Relighting Our City**

Madeleine Freewood, Public Health Partnership and Governance Lead and Emily Hackett, Senior Public Health Specialist presented the Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan December 2021 - Playing Our Part: Relighting Our City report and highlighted salient points.

The report outlined that every Local Authority was required to produce and publish a thematic Local Outbreak Control Plan specific to COVID-19 and that the aim of the Wolverhampton Outbreak Control Plan was to:

- Reduce the spread of COVID-19 infection and save lives;
- Help as many people as possible return to normal life in a way that is safe, protects health and care systems and supports the economy to recover.

It was noted that, as part of the collective efforts to prepare the City and system for winter 2021 pressures, the multi-agency Wolverhampton COVID-19 Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) had made the pro-active decision to undertake a further update of the current plan. It was stressed that the COVID situation was continually evolving and the plan needed to remain dynamic to keep abreast of this. The presentation summarised the key changes as detailed within the report and it was agreed that once the refreshed Plan was ready, it would be shared with the Local Outbreak Engagement Board membership for a final review and sign-off prior to publication.

Resolved:

1. That the winter refresh of the Local Outbreak Control Plan be approved.
2. That a copy of the refreshed Local Outbreak Control Plan be circulated to members of Local Outbreak Engagement Board for final review and sign-off.


9 **Other Urgent Business**

There was no other urgent business.

10 **Dates of future meetings**

- 17 February 2022
- 20 May 2022



	<h2>Local Outbreak Engagement Board</h2> <p>2 March 2022</p>
---	--

<b>Report title</b>	Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan Report	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Ian Brookfield Leader of the Council	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards	
<b>Accountable director</b>	John Denley, Director of Public Health	
<b>Originating service</b>	Public Health	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Madeleine Freewood	Partnership and Governance Lead
	Tel	01902 550352
	Email	madeleine.freewood@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Wolverhampton COVID-19 Strategic Coordinating Group via email circulation	15 February 2022

---

### Recommendations for action:

The Local Outbreak Engagement Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan Report.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The multi-agency Wolverhampton COVID-19 Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) provides regular progress reports to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board to enable it to fulfil its objectives.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Every Local Authority is required to produce and publish a thematic Local Outbreak Control Plan specific to COVID-19. The aim of the Wolverhampton Outbreak Control Plan is to:
- Reduce the spread of COVID-19 infection and save lives
  - Help as many people as possible return to normal life, in a way that is safe, protects our health and care systems and supports our economy to recover.
- 2.2 Wolverhampton's Outbreak Control Plan was last updated in December 2021 and is kept under active review. It is published here: <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information/covid-19-outbreak-control-plan>
- 2.3 Wolverhampton's COVID-19 Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG), supported by the Public Health led Outbreak Control Planning Group, is responsible for prioritising, managing and overseeing the work plans aligned to the following themes in the Local Outbreak Plan:
- Care homes and schools
  - High risk places, locations and communities
  - Local testing capacity
  - Contact tracing in complex settings
  - Data integration
  - Vulnerable people
  - Local Boards
- 2.4 In addition, the Wolverhampton COVID-19 Vaccine Partnership Working Group brings together strategic leads from across the local health system to coordinate a one city response to supporting vaccine roll out to best meet population need.
- 2.5 SCG provides a regular progress report regarding the above to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board summarising key activity across the eight themes in the Local Outbreak Plan, including an update regarding finance and the associated communication plan.
- ## **3.0 SCG progress overview**
- 3.1 Appendix 1 of this report provides a copy of the SCG report to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

#### **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 The Government has announced a number of one-off grants to support local authorities in their response to the pandemic. This includes allocations from the Outbreak Control - Test and Trace grant and the Contained Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) which are ring-fenced public health grants and have to be spent in line with the conditions of grant. In 2020-2021 the Council received a total of £9.3 million from these two grants.
- 4.2 The extension of the COMF into 2021-2022 totalled £400 million, Wolverhampton's allocation was £2.2 million, this grant continues to be subject to grant conditions and the submission of monitoring returns. The COMF will be used to support the activities outlined in the plan for 2021-2022. The Government have announced the COMF grant can be rolled over into 2022-2023 to help further reduce the spread of coronavirus and support local public health initiatives. The refreshed Local Outbreak Control Plan provides an overview of where this money is being targeted.  
[JG/22022022/M]

#### **5.0 Legal implications**

- 5.1 Every Local Authority is required to produce a Local Outbreak Control Plan specific to COVID-19 as outlined in the August 2020 national framework:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/containing-and-managing-local-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreaks/covid-19-contain-framework-a-guide-for-local-decision-makers>
- 5.2 The Coronavirus Act 2020 provides a legal framework that gives Local Authorities – through Public Health and Environmental Health functions – the primary responsibility for the delivery and management of public health action to control outbreaks of infectious disease.  
[TC/15022022/F]

#### **6.0 Equalities implications**

- 6.1 The Local Outbreak Engagement Board is a sub-board of Health and Wellbeing Together. Equalities implications of COVID-19 are being actively reviewed by both boards informed by qualitative and quantitative data.

#### **7.0 Health and wellbeing implications**

- 7.1 The Local Outbreak Engagement Board is a sub-board of Health and Wellbeing Together and health and wellbeing implications of Local Outbreak Plan are kept under review through established reporting lines.

#### **8.0 COVID-19 Implications**

- 8.1 The SCG summary report outlines progress relating to the delivery of the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan.

## **9.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 9.1 Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan  
<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information/covid-19-outbreak-control-plan>

Intended Audience:	Local Outbreak Engagement Board		
Submitted by:	Wolverhampton Strategic Co-ordination Group		
Submission Date:	22.02.2022	Meeting Date:	02.03.2022

**Contents**

1.0	Purpose.....	1
2.0	Local data & Intelligence .....	1
3.0	Outbreak Control Plan (Key updates) .....	1
4.0	Variants of Concern (VOC) and Variants Under Investigation (VUI) .....	3
5.0	Communications and Engagement Plan .....	4
6.0	Finance .....	4
7.0	Emerging Risks .....	4
8.0	Recommendations & Considerations .....	4

## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Wolverhampton Local Outbreak Engagement Board on progress relating to the delivery of the local COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan. The Wolverhampton Outbreak Control Plan was refreshed in December 2021 and is published on the [Council website here](#). This report provides an update for the time period from 15 December 2021 to the next meeting of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board on 2 March 2022.

## 2.0 Local data & Intelligence

### 2.1 Local data and intelligence

A summary of the latest data will be provided at the 2 March 2022 meeting of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

## 3.0 Outbreak Control Plan (Key updates)

### Theme 1: Care Homes and educational settings

Care homes:

- The booster programme has been completed across care homes. New admitted residents will receive vaccines as required and requested through primary care on an individual basis.
- The Omicron wave is now receding within care homes, at peak level 25+ care homes were being actively managed as outbreaks, the highest point throughout the pandemic. In line with wider community trends, this most recent wave has not caused as much severe illness as previous waves with care home residents, with the exception of a small number of cases that required hospitalisation. A small number of deaths have also occurred where care home residents had tested positive, invariably these people had complex underlying health issues.
- Care homes have been supported to understand and implement changes in Government guidance as a result of the gradual abolition of COVID regulations. This has included changes to visitor restrictions, testing regimen, mandatory vaccine requirements and isolation periods.

- Following Government announcement to repeal mandatory vaccination for care home staff, which also extended to all health and social care staff, care homes have been provided with up-to-date information on the proposed changes.
- Weekly meetings between UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Public Health Wolverhampton, and other key partners continue to meet on a weekly basis to manage outbreak response.

#### Educational settings:

- Continued to provide a dedicated schools helpline to provide first line support and reassurance for issues, incidents and outbreaks.
- Continued to operate a local surveillance system to proactively identify potential outbreaks and respond accordingly. When community case rates began to peak, we adapted the proactive approach to target settings most at risk including special schools and boarding schools.
- Responded to incidents and outbreaks in educational settings, providing rapid risk assessments and offering tailored infection prevention and control guidance with the aim of slowing transmission whilst prioritising face to face education.

#### **Theme 2: Higher-risk settings, communities and locations**

- Facilitated a 'stay safe over festive break' campaign for University of Wolverhampton (UoW) students 1-2 December 2021 in partnership with CCG, WMP, WMFS, CWC, Bradley Pharmacy and UoW. During the campaign we conducted a student wellbeing survey on campus to identify student concerns around wellbeing and safety, distributed face coverings, lateral flow tests and provided an on-site vaccination clinic for both staff and students.
- Facilitated a 'safe return to campus' campaign for the start of the autumn term to encourage students and staff to keep testing before, during and following their return to campus, again distributed face coverings, lateral flow test kits and ran a 4-day pop-up vaccination clinic from 25-28 January.
- Continued to support the University in monitoring and responding to COVID-19 case and outbreak management and maintaining COVID-19 secure student accommodation.

#### **Theme 3: Community testing**

- Continued to ensure PCR and LFT testing is available and convenient across all wards in the city. This allows residents and visitors access a test quickly and locally should they need one.
- Responded to the high demand for LFT kits and testing during December and January when the Omicron variant was at a peak to ensure frontline and key services were able to deliver. During this period over 15,000 home test kits were distributed to individual residents and key partners, including Fire service, Domiciliary Care, Passenger Transport Services and Waste Services.
- Continuation of on-site LFT testing offer through selected community pharmacies.
- Testing continues to be used as a preventative measure, allowing for the early identification of positive cases, and prompt isolation to reduce the risk of onward spread.

#### **Theme 4: Contact Tracing**

- Continued to use data and intelligence to support Outbreak Investigation and Rapid Response.
- Worked closely with our dedicated COVID-19 IPC team to manage outbreaks in care settings, alongside other winter infections including flu and norovirus.
- Increased capacity of the Incident Management Team to support outbreak management when the emergence of the Omicron variant resulted in a surge of cases across the city.
- Further developed our flexible approach to outbreak management in response to Omicron and changes to national guidance. This included supporting settings to adapt to revised measures on self-isolation, contact tracing, IPC, testing etc.

### **Theme 5: Data integration and information sharing**

- Regular surveillance of all available data continues and is fed into the relevant response groups and partnerships for action or decision.
- The focus of surveillance has been on monitoring the scale of the omicron variant infection and its impact on education, hospitals and mortality. Case rates are broken down by age, geography and ethnicity so that action can be targeted appropriately, including vaccination access.
- The vaccination process has been data driven, using weekly information focusing on vaccination uptake in different MSOAs and in different JCVI cohorts.

### **Theme 6: Vulnerable People**

- Continued to provide food parcels for those who are self-isolating or with financial difficulties, supported by Welfare Rights team.
- Continued referrals to social prescribing team for those who are alone and worried or in need of additional non-financial support.
- Continued to identify and support underrepresented groups to register with a GP through Community Champion engagement and support.

### **Theme 7: Interface with the vaccine roll out**

Tackling disparities in vaccine uptake, since December 2021, we have:

- Continued to work with communities to understand the complexity behind low uptake in certain parts of the city and among certain community groups.
- Implemented the Community Vaccine Fund targeting voluntary and community sector groups in low uptake areas to develop initiatives and projects to support residents in their communities to access the vaccine.
- Delivered pop-up clinics to respond to the Governments Booster campaign, offering vaccines in local community centres, sports venues and in shopping centres. Success of this model has resulted in continued work to secure additional high footfall locations which can host vaccines sites to provide opportunistic vaccines.
- Developed a six-point plan to continue to address inequalities in vaccine uptake across Wolverhampton.
- Planning for future provision of the programme is underway, with an increased focus on community pharmacy delivery and opportunistic offers in GP practices rather than stand-alone bespoke vaccination sites delivered via PCN.

### **Theme 8: Governance and local boards**

- Wolverhampton's Outbreak Control Plan is published on the Council website: <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information/covid-19-outbreak-control-plan> and the governance arrangements supporting the Plan are detailed on p10.
- Governance arrangements and the Outbreak Control Plan will be reviewed following the expected announcement of the Government's "Living with COVID" strategy on 21 February 2022.

## **4.0 Variants of Concern (VOC) and Variants Under Investigation (VUI)**

We have continued to monitor available data on current and emerging Variants and Mutations (VAMs):

- We worked in close partnership with UKHSA to provide a rapid but proportionate response to the emergence of the VOC identified towards the end of 2021, which became known as Omicron.

This included monitoring the growth of the Omicron throughout Wolverhampton, providing local advice to settings and adapting incident and outbreak response procedures.

## 5.0 Communications and Engagement Plan

Through the COVID-19 Communications Group, extensive communications and stakeholder messaging continue to focus on coronavirus advice and behaviours, and vaccine uptake. This includes sharing 'Return to Plan A' messaging that focus on safer behaviours, regular testing and getting fully vaccinated. We have continued to promote our city-wide walk-in vaccine clinics daily and more targeted communications have been focused on those who are vaccine hesitant. These include as groups which have seen the lowest uptake of the vaccine, including younger people and at-risk groups such as pregnant women. This work continues to be underpinned by the principals of behavioural science. The COVID-19 Communications Group are also looking at a 'Living with COVID' plan for the Spring.

## 6.0 Finance

Government have announced a number of one-off grants to support local authorities in their response to the pandemic. This includes allocations from the Outbreak Control - Test and Trace grant and the Contained Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) which are ring-fenced public health grants and have to be spent in line with the conditions of grant. In 2020-2021 the Council received a total of £9.3 million from these two grants.

The extension of the COMF into 2021-2022 totalled £400 million, Wolverhampton's allocation was £2.2 million, this grant continues to be subject to grant conditions and the submission of monitoring returns. The COMF will be used to support the activities outlined in the plan for 2021-2022. The Government have announcement the COMF grant can be rolled over into 2022-2023 to help further reduce the spread of coronavirus and support local public health initiatives. The refreshed Local Outbreak Control Plan provides an overview of where this money is being targeted.

## 7.0 Emerging Risks

A complete risk register (red, amber and green risks) is held by the COVID-19 Outbreak Control Planning Group (OCPG). Escalation of risk through the governance structure thereafter is as follows:

- OCPG escalate any amber and red risks to the Strategic Coordination Group (SCG)
- SCG escalate any red risks to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

As of 2 February 2022, there are no red risks to be escalated to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

## 8.0 Recommendations & Considerations

It is recommended that the Local Outbreak Engagement Board:

- Note the content of the report