



Local Outbreak Engagement Board

Minutes - 6 August 2020

Attendance

Members of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board

Councillor Jasbir Jaspal	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
Emma Bennett	Director of Children's Services
Katrina Boffey	NHS England & NHS Improvement - Midlands
Michelle Carr	Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Tracy Cresswell	Healthwatch Wolverhampton
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Yvonne Higgins	Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust
Councillor Wendy Thompson	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing
Paul Tulley	Wolverhampton CCG
David Watts	Director of Adult Services

In attendance

Donna Cope	Democratic Services Officer
Madeleine Freewood	Development Manager
Rachel Handley	Public Health Registrar
Lynsey Kelly	Head of Communities
Kate Warren	Consultant in Public Health

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
Apologies for absence were received from the Leader of the Council and Adrian Philips.
- 2 Notification of substitute members**
Yvonne Higgins attended for Professor Ann-Marie Cannaby and Michelle Carr attended for Marsha Foster.
- 3 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest made.
- 4 Local Outbreak Engagement Board Terms of Reference**
Madeleine Freewood, Development Manager, presented the Local Outbreak Engagement Board Terms of Reference.

It was reported that, following consultation with the Director of Public Health and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, the following amendments had been proposed:

1. That further meetings of the group would be open to the press and public unless confidential information was to be disclosed and Members of the public would be permitted to submit written questions in advance of the meeting (*Paragraphs 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7*).
2. That meetings be held bi-monthly and the Chair would have the power to call additional meetings if required. (*Paragraph 7.1*).

Resolved:

That the amendments be accepted, and the Local Outbreak Engagement Board Terms of Reference be approved.

5 **Current Situation**

It was agreed that Item 7 'Local Lockdown and Second Wave Triggers' would be incorporated into Item 5.

Kate Warren, Consultant in Public Health, delivered a presentation outlining the current situation of Covid-19.

Members of the board were assured that Public Health were in a much better position regarding data analysis and now had access to dataflows from:

- The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust COVID-19 dashboard;
- Public Health England "situational awareness explorer"
- NHS Digital testing dashboard;
- Office for National Statistics and Registrar Office death registrations;
- Reports from NHS Test and Trace;
- NHS Digital operational analysis hub.

Current testing methods and facilities were outlined, and the following case data was presented to the board:

- Testing was now available for everyone and the majority of cases were coming back negative.
- The NHS Test and Trace figures for Wolverhampton were in line with the national average.
- Public Health were now detecting most cases within the community and about half of these were asymptomatic.
- Many cases were contacts of known cases or outbreaks, including household clusters.
- The age profile was now younger than during the peak.
- Asian ethnicity was over-represented.
- Many cases were manual or key workers.
- There were currently no communities of concern as cases were widely distributed across the city.
- Case rates were much lower across the black country and England than during the peak.
- The slight increase of cases in Wolverhampton had been due to localised outbreaks and were not a major concern.
- The level of mortality had reduced and there had been no COVID-19 related deaths in Wolverhampton in recent weeks.
- The NHS were in a strong position regarding capacity and were now resuming normal activities.

It was noted that a comprehensive review of the deaths that occurred in March and April was being carried out by the NHS and partners in order to learn lessons around patient care should cases rise again.

It was reported that there were no national defined thresholds for further restrictions and that in the event of widespread community transmission Public Health were in a much better position to react appropriately and contain the spread at a local level.

It was agreed that the data presented was reassuring, but the Council had to remain vigilant and protect those most vulnerable especially with the opening of public venues and further relaxation of restrictions. In particular, extra caution was needed regarding care homes and visitation management.

In response to concerns raised regarding the rise of cases within children it was reported that current case numbers were low and the rise had been due to outbreaks within families, not as a result of school interaction.

It was stated that safety remained the Council's overriding principle and services were working closely with schools to ensure children could return to school in a safe environment. There was ongoing communication with parents via a Communications Plan on social media with a focus on BAME and SEN children to ensure they received the necessary support. There was a robust plan in place for September and all schools had updated their risk assessments.

The board were reassured and it was agreed that a breakdown of child case data would be provided at the next meeting. It was further agreed that there be an agenda item on 'schools' at the next meeting in order to reassure communities and parents who had concerns.

The Chair commended the Director of Children's Services and her team for their hard work.

Resolved:

1. That an update on the national picture be received.
2. That an update on local finding be received.
3. That an overview of the triggers that would be used to indicate the need for local lockdown and a second wave be received.
4. That a breakdown of child case data to be provided at the next meeting.
5. That an item on 'schools' be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

5a National Picture

See above

5b Local Surveillance

See above

6 COVID-19 Strategic Coordinating Group Update Report

John Denley, Director of Public Health, provided an update on the progress relating to the delivery of the local COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan.

The purpose of the plan was to prevent Covid-19 spreading and to be able to respond quickly if it did. The testing approach was moving swiftly and lots of work was being done to reassure people and ensure that key messages were promoted within the City.

It was stated that since the report had been circulated the Care Home Visiting Protocol had been published on the Council website and circulated to all care homes in the City.

The Director of Children's Services supported the report, and she and the Chair commended the work done by Public Health and partners.

Resolved:

That a high-level summary of activity in support of the Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan, including allocation of grant, be received.

7 Local Lockdown and Second Wave Triggers

It was agreed that item 7 be taken with item 5 – see item 5.

8 Communications Plan Update

Rachel Handley, Public Health Registrar, presented an overview of the Communication and Engagement Plan.

The purpose of the plan was to ensure that messages were clear, accessible and relevant for all people, settings and communities.

Universal and targeted approaches had been used to promote key messages and work so far included:

- The development of the Stay Safe Be Kind website
- Regular press releases
- Daily updates to Wolverhampton Today
- Regular updates on social media.
- Weekly radio interviews on community radios
- The production of posters
- The life in lockdown survey
- Weekly meetings with faith leaders
- Creation of materials in other language
- Covid 19 helpline for vulnerable people
- Monthly training with Health Champions

The importance of promoting key messages was acknowledged and it was reported that future communications work included:

- Increasing the test and trace message
- Making it easier for people to get tested
- Publication of a data dashboard for the public
- Using social media more carefully to target sub-groups
- Producing additional translated materials
- Building relationships with key community groups and settings

Resolved:

That an overview of the Communication and Engagement Plan be received.

8a Theme 2 - High Risk Workplaces, Locations and Communities - Communication with Faith Settings, Voluntary Sector and Businesses

Lynsey Kelly, Head of Community Safety, outlined the work undertaken at High Risk Workplaces, Locations, Communities, Faith Settings, Voluntary Sector and Businesses.

A summary of how the council were supporting these settings was provided and such work included:

- Universal communications offering guidance on how to open safely;
- Visits to premises with Environmental Health to give practical advice where required;
- Weekly meetings and ongoing communications with faith leaders;
- Visits to work places with Public Health; identifying high-risk venues and providing pop up testing facilities at these venues;
- Looking into the provision of additional pop up testing sites across city around residential areas to provide better access for residents;
- Future work with Wolverhampton Homes, focussing on HMOs and large blocks of flats to ensure communal safety;
- Future work with Environmental Health to offer further support to voluntary business sectors.

Resolved:

That an update on the work undertaken in High Risk Workplaces, Locations, Communities, Faith Settings, Voluntary Sector and Businesses be received.

8b Theme 6 - Vulnerable People: Distribution of Face Masks to Vulnerable People and Settings.

Lynsey Kelly, Head of Community Safety, outlined the work undertaken with vulnerable people and communities. This included:

- The Stay Safe Be Kind hotline which had now been integrated into councils' call centre;
- Supporting faith settings by distributing a range of resources in a range of languages;
- Supporting voluntary and community sectors by providing telephone advice and visits;
- Local radio interviews;
- Provision of Project Relight face coverings;
- Provision of face coverings in public venues and council premises;
- The development of a book a test call centre to assist residents and support those with limited access to internet, poor digital skills and those who don't have English as a first language;
- Plans to establish a local test and trace centre.

The Chair thanked the Public Health Registrar and Head of Community Safety for their hard work.

Resolved:

That an update on work undertaken with vulnerable people and communities be received.

- 9 **Any other business**
The Director of Public Health acknowledged that partnership working throughout the pandemic had been imperative and highlighted how important it was that the Council continued to do so in order to get the City back on its feet in a safe way.

The Chair agreed and thanked all partners.

- 10 **Dates of future meetings**
It was agreed that Democratic Services would arrange the next meeting during the last week in September.