

Report: Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan Report

Intended Audience:	Local Outbreak Engagement Board		
Submitted by:	Wolverhampton Strategic Co-ordination Group		
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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 content of this report covers the time period from the date the Wolverhampton Outbreak Control Plan was published, 30 June 2020, to publication date of this report, 18 September 2020.

2.0 Local data & Intelligence

2.1 Local Data & Intelligence

A summary of the latest data will be provided before the meeting

3.0 Outbreak Control Plan (Key updates)

Theme 1: Care Homes and Educational Settings

Education:

- Schools have re-opened and the demand on the Public Health call centre for schools is high. This line receives notifications of suspected and confirmed cases.
- An Incident Management Team comprising Public Health and Education colleagues meets daily.
- The Head Teachers' bulletin now goes out twice weekly instead of once a week to keep schools informed of the situation and any updates.
- Online engagement sessions with schools are also being held regularly.

Care Homes:

- The national care home portal for testing is now open to all care homes. The majority of care homes in the City are now registered on to this portal allowing them to regularly test staff and residents. Remaining care homes are being contacted. An

interim local testing offer is still in place for homes experiencing problems with the national portal.

- Due to the increase in proactive testing, new cases are being detected within care settings. The majority of these cases are asymptomatic staff. Care homes are being supported in such cases through being provided with the relevant advice and guidance on infection prevention control measures.
- Weekly Incident Management Team meetings continue to be held with Public Health England (PHE) colleagues to ensure outbreaks are managed effectively. This is in addition to the twice weekly City-wide partners meeting to support the care sector.

Theme 2: High Risk Workplaces, Locations and Communities

- An enforcement team comprising of representatives from Public Health, Environmental Health and West Midlands Police meets regularly to take action when notifications are received about COVID-19 non-compliance in businesses and other settings.
- A revised publication on opening safely, staying safe and accessing support has gone out to businesses, been put on to the coronavirus microsite and been promoted on social media.
- Public Health have worked with Wolverhampton Homes to support properties with multiple households to be as safe as possible.

Theme 3: Mobile Testing Units and Local Testing Approaches

- Wolverhampton has one drive-through COVID-19 Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) for members of the public with symptoms of the virus (Aldersley Leisure Village) with a capacity of 400 tests per day.
- There are currently four walk-through COVID-19 testing sites in the City for members of the public (also known as Local Testing Sites (LTS)). The sites are based at Showell Road, Whitmore Reans Health Centre on Lowe Street, on the Mountford Lane Public Car Park in Bilston and at Blakenhall Resource Centre. All sites are open seven days a week, 8am – 8pm.
- Week commencing 21 September 2020 the Whitmore Reans LTS will be moved to Faulkland Street Public Car Park to provide a convenient City centre location for businesses and students to access testing if required.
- The Council has worked with partners across the City to rapidly increase testing capacity in recent weeks. On 1 September 2020, the testing rate in the City as an average over seven days was 970 per 100,000 residents. This relates to over 2,550 tests undertaken during that period.
- The Council will be further increasing our testing capacity by rolling out an Enhanced Employee Covid-19 Testing Programme. This programme will be rolled out once testing capacity in the City has increased. This will later be extended to our partners in the City including businesses, care homes and faith and community groups. Currently these plans are on hold due to national shortages in testing capacity as there is a need to prioritise testing for residents presenting with symptoms.
- Enhanced communications rolled out to promote and encourage people to get a test no matter how mild their symptoms involving pharmacy, primary care and other key partners.

This City-wide coordinated approach towards testing allows the Council to achieve the objective to **keep people safe** by:

- ensuring that employees that are most 'high-risk' of contracting coronavirus have access to regular testing which will help them remain safe and reduce risk of infection
- enabling the council to respond early to any positive cases and ensure we put the health and safety of our employees first
- increasing our understanding of the spread of the virus in the City by using intelligence-led testing
- supporting the wider community, key employers, the most vulnerable and our residents to access testing at a population level.

Theme 4: Contact Tracing in Complex Settings

- Establishing a local contract tracing offer which will add value to the national Test and Trace system and assist Wolverhampton to identify any linked cases and potential clusters. The current expansion focuses on 'backward' tracing to increase our understanding of the current rise in community cases, to help reinforce our understanding of the drivers for local infection rates.
- Increasingly, with pressures on PHE, the health protection team is expanding its health protection functions to support PHE, initially with case management activity in high risk settings (e.g. schools). PHE and LAs will work continue to work closely on outbreak and incident management.
- Environmental Health colleagues have put into operation their stand-by rota to support the core health protection team to absorb extra health protection extra business.
- In line with other local authorities, the role of the local system is to support NHS Test and Trace and PHE and provide more health protection intelligence and response capacity for the system. There are no plans to bring all contact tracing in-house to local government/local systems, although enhanced contact tracing is now a routine part of the incident management support offered by CWC.

Theme 5: Data Integration

- Regular surveillance of all available data continues, and the frequency of analysis is increased during times when there is a spike in cases or a persistently high rate.
- The range of data available has increased; data provided by Public Health England for cases now includes whether they are a resident or staff member in a care home, details of workplace and occupation where this is available, and the category of exposure for close contacts reported through contact tracing (e.g. household member, visiting friends or family, restaurant).
- Any trends or patterns in testing access, positivity, or demographics of cases are reported to the relevant response groups for appropriate action.

Theme 6: Vulnerable People

- Local Book a Test call centre has been established to assist residents to book a test if they are not able to use the online portal due or if English is not their first language. Team can also answer any questions and concerns from residents and sign post them to local testing sites.
- Continued support for the Community and Voluntary Sector including faith groups to enable partners to provide services and support the community in Covid-19 secure

spaces. Provision of face coverings, floor spacers and information posters and advice will continue to be provided as required.

- Provision of key messages and communication in a variety of languages to ensure that all of Wolverhampton's communities, including any hard to reach groups are informed and know how to seek testing / isolate if required. Testing walk through videos have been produced in Punjabi to help myth bust and demonstrate the ease of getting a test.
- Continued conversations with Ministry of Communities and Local Government to ensure that, if a local lockdown is required, shielders can be supported to remain safe.

Theme 7: Governance

- The first meeting of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board took place on 6th August. The draft terms of reference were agreed along with a recommendation that future meetings will be open to the public and press and that members of the public can submit written questions in advance of the meeting date. Information about the Board along with the Terms of Reference have been published on the Health & Wellbeing Together microsite:
http://wellbeingwolves.co.uk/local_outbreak_engagment_board.html

4.0 Communications and Engagement Plan

- Established a COVID-19 communications group that meets fortnightly and sets the routine and non-routine messaging for each week and works with partners to agree single messaging through a variety of mechanisms depending on the Local Outbreak Plan/ Escalation Strategy theme.
- Working with local partners, we have launched a major communications campaign targeted at vulnerable residents, young people aged around 16-25, families and City businesses.
- Presented an overview of the communications plan to the August meeting of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board and building on feedback will be scoping an approach to coproducing effective messaging that creates an environment for sustainable behaviour change.

5.0 Finance

Alongside the development of an outbreak control plan for the City, a grant of £1.9m was received in May 2020. The funding will be used to help minimise the spread of infection whilst also responding to outbreaks as they occur. Initial investment prevention areas include funding for schools to create COVID secure environments. Other areas of expenditure include communication resources and COVID-19 Testing.

6.0 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 22 September 2020, there are three red risks to be escalated to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board, all linked to testing capacity with a target resolution date of 31 October 2020. Risk R006 has also been identified as an issue.

R006 data availability for surveillance relies on people getting test

- Local Outbreak Plan theme: Data integration
- Current PI score: red 15
- Impact: Underestimating spread
- Treatment/ control: Communications on testing, piloting proactive testing.
- Local Outbreak Plan theme lead: Kate Warren

R008 significant increase in national demand for testing:

- Local Outbreak Plan theme: Local Testing Capacity
- Current PI score: red 25
- Impact: Available daily capacity reduced, local testing rates decreased, underestimation of cases / spread, reputational damage
- Treatment/ control: Available capacity limited to manage demand, lab flow and backlog. Additional capacity being introduced into the national system but likely to take a number of weeks to rectify.
- Local Outbreak Plan theme lead: Lynsey Kelly

R011 lack of access to testing for symptomatic pupils and the wider household meaning pupils isolating for 10/14 days as a precaution and therefore not having the ability to return to education based on a negative result:

- Local Outbreak Plan theme: Care Homes & Schools
- Current PI score: red 25
- Impact: Missed days in education amongst pupils
- Treatment/ control: 10-day home test kits allocated to schools to be used in a triage system. Exploration of an outreach testing offer.
- Local Outbreak Plan theme lead: Neeraj Malhotra

7.0 Recommendations & Considerations

It is recommended that Wolverhampton Local Outbreak Engagement Board:

- Note the content of the report