

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 Wolverhampton Outbreak Control Plan was refreshed in March 2021 and is published on the Council website here: https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021%20FINAL_Covid-19%20Outbreak%20Control%20Plan.pdf This report provides an update for the time period from the last meeting of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board on 10 March, to publication date of this report, 18 May 2021.

2.0 Local data & Intelligence

2.1 Local data and 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

Educational settings:

- There has been a decline in the number of outbreaks in educational settings in line with declining infection rates across the city.
- The Incident Management Team continue to prioritise outbreak management in educational settings, providing support when outbreaks are identified.
- The Incident Management Team continue to support educational staff with contact tracing including, providing regular refresher training.
- There has been a decline in the number of Covid-19 cases reported for students and staff at UoW.
- Whilst creative and practical students started returning from 8th March, remaining students who have not yet returned to campus and in-person teaching will be able to do so from Step 3 of the national road map (17th May), at the earliest in line with national guidance.
- All staff and students are provided with Covid-19 testing information on a weekly basis.
- To encourage and support routine testing within the wider school community, local primary schools have been invited to express an interest in becoming Home Test Collect distribution hubs.

- A local enhanced programme to support continued routine testing of staff and pupils is being explored with Secondary Schools in the city.
- A local testing survey has been launched to provide insight into UoW student and staff testing behaviour which will help inform futures approaches to Covid-19 testing provision on and around campus.
- Compliance in and around student accommodation across the city remains positive with strategic partners updating no current situations of concern.
- Pro-active communications have been distributed to students regarding Covid-19 compliance in line with the re-opening of license premises across the city. Students have been made aware of the need to download and use the NHS Test and Trace app to check in at venues using the QR codes displayed. Resources to support students to 'Get Home Safely' following a night out have been distributed to all license premises across the city and shared with student union for wider distribution to students.
- Planning is underway to prepare for Step 4 of the national road map (21st June) to ensure communications set a clear expectation of students in respect of compliance and continuation of adherence to on campus and community COVID-19 safety measures

Care Homes:

- Second dose vaccines are currently being administered within care homes, with the majority now complete. The highest vaccine rate amongst all care home residents was recorded at 94% (England average – 94.6%). This vaccine level fluctuates between 92%-94% due to factors such as new residents admitted, residents refusing vaccine and residents being Covid positive within 28 days of planned vaccine date.
- Care home staff vaccine uptake has now reached 80%, which is line with the England average. Of the approximate 500 staff remaining to be vaccinated, approximately 350 have refused the vaccine. Channels to receive the vaccine, and support to address any concerns remain open to this staff group through ongoing communications with all care providers across the city. These include fortnightly interactive sessions with all providers, promotion of the vaccine booking line and sharing of key data, evidence and research materials that strengthen the basis for receiving the vaccine.
- Impact of lockdown measures and vaccine roll out has taken stark effect within care homes. The latest Covid related death, in a care home, is recorded as 05 March 2021. Covid outbreaks have also taken a steep decline reducing from 20+ outbreaks in January to currently 1 small scale outbreak. In addition, a handful of single cases are being managed, which largely consist of asymptomatic staff.
- In line with the 'Roadmap out of Lockdown', the care home sector has seen some changes in guidance, notably the expansion of family/friends indoor visiting being permitted.
- The focus is now on a continuing cycle of auditing and training for care home staff to ensure infection prevention practices remain robust and up to date.

Theme 2: Higher-risk settings, communities and locations

- Over 2,500 attendances at rapid test centres have been on behalf of a business since 26 February 2021.
- 261 businesses have signed up to the Business Testing Grant Scheme and will engage in twice weekly testing for at least 75% of its employees until 30 June 2021.
- 22 businesses have been issued with Covid Testing Recognition Scheme stickers to display at their business premises.
- Registrations to provide on-site testing and home test kit provision for employees through the national DHSC scheme closed on 12 April 2021.

Theme 3: Community testing

- Lateral Flow Testing sites continue to operate at Civic Centre, Jamia Masjid Bilal Mosque, and the Hub at Ashmore Park.
- Testing sites at Bilston Community Centre, St Josephs Church and Pendeford Libaray have now closed to enable the Community Centre and Church to return to their business as usual activities.
- The DHSC mobile testing unit previously situated at Aldersley Leisure Village has relocated to the Priory Green building, Whitmore Close, Pendeford, WV9 5NJ. This site is open daily from 9am to 3pm by appointment only.
- Continued work with the DHSC Underrepresented Groups Team has enabled a further two pilots to take place with Recovery Near You and The Haven. The Haven pilot made use of the home testing equipment and was the first of its kind in the country.
- Community Home Test Collect was introduced nationally in March 2021. People can collect up to two boxes – each box containing a total of 7 kits – at a time. The kits contain step-by-step instructions enabling people to complete their test from the comfort of home. This service is available at Civic Centre, the Hub at Ashmore Park Flow Test Sites, Bilston and Wolverhampton Markets, WV Active leisure centres, Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre.
- Home tests are also available for collection from the Local Testing Sites at Faulkland St, Blakenhall Community Resource Centre, Whitmore Reans Library, Showell Lane and Mountford Lane Car Parks.
- Pharmacy Collect was introduced in April 2021 with participating pharmacies across the city further extending access to lateral flow home testing kits.
- Alongside the UoW local testing survey, a community facing survey has also been launched to gather insight into home testing behaviours.
- The Wolverhampton mobile testing unit was successfully commissioned in February 2021 and is continuing to 'pop up' in locations across the city where testing rates are low and / or enduring transmission appears to be present. It is operating on a weekly rotation and is currently located at New Cross Hospital to support the re-launch of inpatient visiting. Home testing kits are also available for collection from the unit.
- Surge test planning continues to be developed to ensure the city is equipped to respond quickly and effectively should any variants of concern be identified locally.
- Work is ongoing with DHSC to explore the feasibility of undertaking a local LAMP (Loop-Mediated Isothermal Amplification) testing pilot. LAMP is a saliva-based test and is expected to be easier than swab testing for some groups e.g. children attending special school.

Theme 4: Contact Tracing

- The health protection team continues to support case management activity in high risk settings (e.g. care homes); working closely with PHE on outbreak and incident management.
- The Infection Prevention team at the Royal Wolverhampton Trust continue to support infection prevention and outbreak management in care homes.
- Environmental Health colleagues continue to support the core health protection team with infection prevention control measures in workplace settings.
- The health protection team continues to review the PHE Covid-19 Situational Awareness Report to identify unknown and new outbreaks.
- The test and trace contract tracing team have been part of the local 'o' pilot where positive cases are received within a few hours of a positive result. The pilot has been successful and a new BAU model is being developed by the DHSC.

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.
- Wolverhampton is currently seeing a low number of cases, with no sign of a resurgence yet despite lifting of some restrictions.
- Going forward the focus of surveillance will be to monitor for any signs of resurgence or enduring transmission within particular locations, settings or groups of the population, so that action can be targeted appropriately, and mitigations can be put in place where inequalities are observed.

Theme 6: Vulnerable People

- Work continues to grow a city network of community champions to support activity and interventions to reduce the disproportionate impact of the virus on certain communities, develop engagement strategies and outreach work in the most at-risk places and with the most at risk groups and support to be informed about the vaccine programme as this accelerates. Community Champions have delivered regular Q and A sessions, translated materials into a number of languages and shared messaging across a number of different communications channels.
- Through partnership working with Community Champions networks, Primary care and Wolverhampton CCG targeted work continues to take place to ensure those most vulnerable and those hardest to reach communities are not left behind and receive an offer of vaccination.

Theme 7: Interface with the vaccine roll out

- The vaccination roll out has continued to make incredible progress with well over 120,000 people in Wolverhampton having now had at least one dose, with more and more people going back for their second dose. This is particularly important as it acts as a booster, enhancing immunity and offering people stronger and longer-lasting protection against infection.
- The City of Wolverhampton Council's role in the vaccination programme has been to support the local NHS in effective and efficient equitable rollout to those in the highest priority groups in the city. The Director of Public Health also has an oversight system leader role to ensure robust health arrangements including effective vaccination delivery are in place for their local population. The Director for Adult Social Services has a designated role to collate information on the requirements for and take up of, vaccinations by social care workers/ other related eligible cohorts.
- The delivery model in Wolverhampton up to now has predominantly been via six Primary Care Network (PCN) vaccination hubs. This includes vaccine delivery from WVActive Aldersley Leisure Village and the Bert Williams sites, as well as several temporary bespoke 'pop up' venues in the heart of communities.
- In addition to the PCN hubs New Cross hospital has been acting as on-site hub for front line health and social care workers, with the majority of NHS and social care workforce now vaccinated.
- Phase two of delivery to the younger cohorts will include incorporation of these sites into the national booking system and also see community pharmacy delivery in allocated settings in the city – likely to be from May onward.
- Working in partnership with local GPs and CCG the LA call centre have spoken to over 11,500 residents encouraging them to book their vaccine to date. Engagement with the most vulnerable and hard to reach communities via partnership working with Community Champions networks, Primary care and Wolverhampton CCG has meant that we continue to work to ensure none from eligible groups are left behind without an offer of vaccination in the City.

Theme 8: Governance and local boards

- Following the publication of the Government's Roadmap on 22 February 2021, a refresh of the Department of Health and Social Care 'Contain Framework' and an increasing focus on Variants of Concern, Local Authorities were asked to review and update their local Outbreak Control Plans in March 2021 in order to ensure they remained fit for purpose as well as aiding national understanding. On completion of a regional and national assurance process Wolverhampton's refreshed Outbreak Control Plan was published on the Council website:
<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information/covid-19-outbreak-control-plan>
- As the country progresses through the different stages of the Roadmap, the Local Outbreak Engagement Board, in conjunction with Wolverhampton Health and Wellbeing Board, will continue to keep the eight themes of the Outbreak Control Plan under review. To assist with this the current programme management approach is also being refreshed to ensure it aligns with this refreshed Outbreak Control Plan and stages within the national Roadmap.

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

The Health Protection Team is supporting Public Health England to investigate and manage any positive cases which are identified as a VOC/VUI. Nationally, VOCs/VUIs remain an evolving situation, with the current priorities being the South African, Indian and Brazilian variants. Locally, the majority of these cases are linked to travel however there has also been a small of number cases involving community transmission. Locally, the team currently supports PHE to follow up any complex cases including establishing contact with people who have not engaged with PHE and delivering enhanced contact tracing to identify possible clusters and prevent onward transmission.

5.0 Communications and Engagement Plan

The Covid-19 Communications Group continues to deliver campaigns and messaging through traditional and social media channels. Communications have been underpinned by behavioural science principles to increase the impact on tackling covid-19. This includes work with local trusted figures and celebrities to address vaccine misinformation and encourage uptake. Messages, information and calls to action are shared city-wide through the Community Champions network, who have also been carrying out targeted engagement activities, including Q&A sessions, and supporting people to book onto the vaccine through door knocking and access to local pop-up vaccination clinics.

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 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 Government have announced the extension of the Contained Outbreak Management Fund into 2021-2022 totalling £400 million, Wolverhampton's allocation is £2.2 million, this grant continues to be subject to grant conditions and the submission of monitoring returns. The Contained Outbreak Management Fund will be used to support the activities outlined in the plan for 2021-2022.

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 18 May 2021, there are no red risk to be escalated to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

8.0 Recommendations & Considerations

It is recommended that Wolverhampton Local Outbreak Engagement Board:

- Note the content of the report