

Report: Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan Report

Intended Audience:	Local Outbreak Engagement Board		
Submitted by:	Wolverhampton Strategic Co-ordination Group		
Submission Date:	09.09.2021	Meeting Date:	17.09.2021

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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 14 July 2021 to the next meeting of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board on 17 September 2021.

2.0 Local data & Intelligence

2.1 Local data and intelligence

A summary of the latest data will be provided at the 17 September meeting of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

3.0 Outbreak Control Plan (Key updates)

Theme 1: Care Homes and educational settings

Care Homes:

- Planning is underway to deliver the booster doses to care home residents and staff. The programme of delivery will commence mid-September to allow for the required 6-month interval between dose 2 and the booster. Primary Care Networks will deliver the booster programme in care homes and will also offer staff on site the booster whilst vaccinating residents.
- The deadline for care home workers to get vaccinated, in line with the new mandatory vaccine regulations, is 16 September 2021 for dose 1. This will allow for the required 8-week window between dose 2, which should be administered by 11 November 2021, at which point the regulations come into force. Currently in Wolverhampton 87% of care home workers are vaccinated (dose 1), this is broadly in line with England and Regional averages. This leave approximately 350 unvaccinated care home workers. A final push campaign is underway to

encourage vaccination with this group, which includes promotion of vaccine walk-in clinics and Q&A sessions with Public Health officers.

- In preparation for reduced workforce, work is underway with Skills for Care, who are strategic body for workforce development in adult social care in England, to help recruit new staff. Additionally, Wolves at Work are engaged to help unemployed or those seeking a career change to enter the care market.
- Care homes have been asked to complete a survey outlining confirmation that they have completed impact assessments and how they will mitigate risks identified.
- COVID Infection rates in care homes are increasing with a handful of outbreaks currently being managed. Additionally, a significant amount of care homes have reported single cases. Whilst the majority of cases are amongst staff, resident cases are also now increasing. Care homes are continuously being supported with outbreak management through a multi-disciplinary approach involving Infection Prevention, Public Health, Clinical Commissioning Group, Adult Social Care and Public Health England.

Educational Settings:

- The case rate in younger people, including those of school age is higher than other ages within the local population.
- A training workshop with holiday activity providers was held prior to the summer break to outline local infection rates, importance of testing, COVID secure operational practices, managing positive cases and promotion of vaccine uptake.
- The 'schools' helpline continued to operate during the summer break to provide support to local providers of holiday activities with navigating operational guidance and managing positive cases.
- The schools' helpline will continue to operate in the Autumn term to support schools with advice and guidance around new operational guidance, positive cases, clusters and outbreaks.
- Engagement sessions have been held with Headteachers and leaders in educational settings to outline the current epidemiology, exemption from isolation, the operational processes for managing and reporting positive cases this term and to give a brief update on the vaccine situation for young people aged 12-15.
- All secondary schools have commenced the testing on return requirement of two onsite tests, 3-4 days apart, for secondary age pupils. Additional test processing support has been negotiated from School Nursing and our test site staff. A rota has been provided to schools to support the extra capacity required to carry out the testing at the start of term.
- The Health Protection Team will continue to support educational settings with outbreak management, providing support when outbreaks are identified as per the definitions in the DfE thresholds for escalation.
- To encourage and support routine testing within the wider school community, local primary schools are continuing to operate as Home Test Collect distribution hubs. There are 11 of these operational across the City.
- In order to protect the most vulnerable, guidance has been issued to educational settings to encourage the CEV staff and pupils to be notified if there is contact with a positive case. The recommendation is that these individuals are given the option to self-isolate for 10 days from any contact with the case. Attendance and sickness implications are being worked through with relevant partners.
- Plans are starting to be drafted to ensure we are poised to support the vaccination of 12-15 year olds in educational settings.

Theme 2: Higher-risk settings, communities and locations

- The supervised on-site LFT testing service launched on 23 August (delivery across 11 pharmacies in phase 1 and 2, more expected in phase 3). This provision is intended to sit alongside the

existing pharmacy collect (home testing) programme and aims to increase both ad-hoc and planned testing amongst vulnerable cohorts, local residents and nearby business employees.

- A prioritisation exercise is underway to identify high-risk businesses whose employees may be from disproportionately impacted and under-represented groups with a view to offering targeted testing provision and support to increase vaccination uptake. During phase one, 40 businesses across the City have been identified and will be contacted to offer additional support.
- There have been 284 COVID Compliance Grant Inspection applications to date. This involves an inspector reviewing workplace COVID 19 Risk assessment and safe control measures, including work-place testing, outbreak management, and vaccinations.
- Officers are continuing to respond to work-place complaints regarding non-compliance and unsafe working environments, as well as responding to workplace outbreaks, including attending site and providing advice.
- Workplace webinars are taking place, with live Q&A sessions, and advice for safe practice whilst working within the current standards set by government.
- CSA's are re-visiting low level retail sites, making observations and recommendations where needed for cleaning, hand gels, and the offering of face coverings for use.

Theme 3: Community testing

- Provision for lateral flow testing continues to operate at the Civic Centre, Jamia Masjid Bilal Mosque, and the Hub at Ashmore Park.
- The DHSC mobile testing unit (MTU) continues to operate at the Priory Green building, Whitmore Close, Pendeford, WV9 5NJ. This site is open daily from 9am to 3pm by appointment only.
- The DHSC Under-represented Groups pilot has been mainstreamed. The Haven and The Good Shepherd will continue to be a distribution hub for home test kits to its service users and staff workforce. Work has started with the other pilot settings to enable them to make the same offer to their service users.
- Community Home Test Collect has continued to be rolled out across the City. 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 and 11 local school sites, and a number of community pharmacy venues.
- The semi-permanent site has been successful and will remain at New Cross Hospital to serve visitors to outpatients and maternity.
- Surge test planning has been developed to ensure the City is equipped to respond quickly and effectively should any variants of concern be identified locally.
- A local protocol has been drafted to ensure testing can be implemented in a timely manner to support management of outbreaks.
- The Testing Delivery Plan specifically for July to September has concentrated on delivery and update of testing in under-represented groups and disadvantaged groups. The focus is to continue providing Asymptomatic Test Sites, Pop-up sites at identified locations at address need, increase of Home Test Collect Sites and door to door delivery to particularly serve under-represented and disproportionately affected groups.
- Daily Contact Tracing (DCT) is now available to selected businesses (as determined by the DHSC). Businesses can choose to apply to undertake DCT to keep employees who have not been double vaccinated in the workplace. This will ensure that businesses can operated in a COVID secure way and ensure their productivity / delivery is maintained.

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 and high-risk community settings where required.
- 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. Local contact tracing team notify health protection team of any settings (including workplaces and/ or community settings) with 2 or more cases in 14-day period so that these can be followed up for further investigation as a common exposure point.
- The contact centre team continue to deliver local 4 contact tracing on behalf of the national team for any positive cases recorded in Wolverhampton.

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 continues to be on monitoring the scale of resurgence 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.

Theme 6: Vulnerable People

- Community Champions continue 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.
- Through partnership working with Community Champion 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 nearly 170,000 people in Wolverhampton having now had at least one dose, and over 150,000 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.
- In total, 319,630 vaccinations have been given, and 92.8% of over 80s in Wolverhampton have had at least one jab, rising to 94.3% of people aged 75-79.
- Some 93.4% of 70-74-year-olds, 90.4% of 65-69-year-olds, 87.1% of 60-64-year-olds, 84.1% of 55-59-year-olds and 82.2% of people aged 50-54 have now had a jab.
- 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 the WVActive site at Aldersley, as well as several temporary bespoke 'pop up' venues in the heart of communities.

- Strong relationships have been formed with RWT via regular attendance to Silver command meetings. Shared intel and discussions regarding staff vaccine uptake, and variation in workforce uptake, have been used to support the vaccine roll out to RWT staff. 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. A final push to vaccinate care staff is underway prior to the mandatory legislation coming in from October.
- All established clinics are now part of the national booking system and since May, community pharmacy provision is also in place in the City. Walk up and drop-in clinics are available at all sites, to serve the need of the population.
- A roving vaccination bus has been established in partnership with Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group and local GPs to offer the vaccine out in the heart of communities and to tackle areas of low uptake, providing a more localised offer. The bus visits areas of low uptake, targeting community engagement in local areas via community champions to take the vaccine into the heart of these communities. To date, over 5,000 doses have been administered via this route.
- Working in partnership with local GPs and CCG the LA call centre have spoken to over 35,000 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 no one from eligible groups are left behind without an offer of vaccination in the City.
- Further work to encourage local businesses to get their staff vaccinated is underway, in partnership with the local NHS. Written communication is planned with local employers to facilitate this.
- It is anticipated that healthy 12 – 15-year olds will be the next group advised for vaccination by JCVI in the coming weeks. Public Health are currently liaising closely with secondary schools and education colleagues to ensure there is a suitable offer and support provided to facilitate this aspect of vaccine delivery.
- The NHS continue to lead on the vaccination programme and are due to commence phase 3 – boosters from mid-September. It will be our responsibility to ensure that this is managed fairly and equitably. Prioritised for those most in need of the additional protection which the vaccine offers.

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 p12.

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

The Health Protection Team is continuing to support Public Health England to investigate and manage any positive cases which are identified as a VOC/VUI. Nationally, VOCs/VUIs remain an evolving situation. 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

Through the COVID-19 Communications Group, general communications and stakeholder messaging continue to focus on coronavirus advice and behaviours, and vaccine uptake. This includes the 'COVID's Not Over' campaign that encourages four key behaviours: social distancing, the wearing of face coverings in busy places and on public transport, regular testing and getting fully vaccinated. More targeted communications have been focused on younger people, to encourage vaccine uptake as they become eligible and also promoting City-wide walk-in vaccine clinics. Additionally, direct communications to all businesses have offered to work with employers to increase vaccine uptake amongst their staff, including having dedicated vaccine clinics for staff at larger businesses, stressing the commercial benefits of having a fully vaccinated workforce. This work continues to be underpinned by the principals of behavioural science.

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 03 September, there is one red risk to be escalated to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board. The risk relates to Theme 1 – Care Homes.

Risk detail: Mandatory vaccine may cause shortfall in staff, resulting in outbreaks not being managed effectively.

Risk mitigations: Final campaign to promote vaccine; internal staff have received letter detailing requirement and support available; Working with Skills for Care and Wolves at Work on recruitment; engaging with care home to understand business continuity plans.

8.0 Recommendations & Considerations

It is recommended that the Local Outbreak Engagement Board:
Note the content of the report