

<b>Report: Wolverhampton COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan Report</b>			<b>Appendix 1</b>
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](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 26 May, to publication date of this report, 06 July 2021 when it will be presented to Health and Wellbeing Together on 14 July 2021.

2.0 Local data & Intelligence

2.1 Local data and intelligence

*A summary of the latest data will be provided at the 14 July meting of Health and Wellbeing Together*

3.0 Outbreak Control Plan (Key updates)

Theme 1: Care Homes and educational settings

- Care homes:
- All care homes have now received 1st and 2nd doses of Covid vaccine. New residents admitted to care homes receive their vaccines on request from the relevant allocated GP.
  - Care home staff vaccines are currently at 84%, which is broadly in line with England average. Following a comprehensive consultation, on 16 June 2021 Department of Health and Social Care announced that people working in CQC-registered care homes will need to be fully Covid vaccinated with both doses. This will become a mandatory requirement following expected approval in parliament in October 2021. The approval will follow with a 16-week grace period enabling unvaccinated staff to receive both doses within this period. At the same time, it was also stated that government will now look at widening this mandatory requirement across all health and social care services.
  - Planning is underway to understand the potential impact of the mandatory vaccine announcement, on staffing levels and ability to continue providing care at the current levels.

- Access to vaccine is continually promoted through weekly communications to care providers, amongst this, the mobile vaccine bus has been promoted including contacting care homes in close proximity of the current location of the mobile unit.
- Fortnightly Provider Forums, via digital means, continue to take place where the latest guidance is shared with care providers, as well as answering queries across infection prevention, vaccination, testing and outbreak management.
- Rates of infection within care homes have significantly reduced since March 2021, which is positively indicative of how effective the vaccine has been within these settings. Whilst there have been sporadic single cases occurring, there have been no significant outbreaks causing severe illness or death.
- With the emergence of the Delta variant, in consultation with Public Health England, a precautionary policy has been adopted whereby care staff are advised to take a PCR test in the event of any new ill health presentation regardless of whether the illness is typically symptomatic of Covid.
- In line with the Roadmap, the care home sector has seen some changes in guidance, notably the expansion of out of care home visiting, easing of requirement to isolate new residents when admitted to a care home if certain criteria is met and reduced outbreak management restrictions such as the length of closing to admissions.
- Proactive infection prevention auditing and training with care homes is continuing to take place in preparation for potential rise in illnesses during winter months.

#### Educational settings:

- There has been an increase in the number of positive cases, clusters and outbreaks in educational settings in line with increasing infection rates across the city.
- The case rate in younger people, including those of school age is higher than other ages within the local population.
- The Schools Helpline has recommenced to support schools with advice and guidance around positive cases, clusters and outbreaks.
- The Incident Management Team continue to support educational settings with outbreak management, providing support when outbreaks are identified.
- The Incident Management Team continue to support educational staff with contact tracing including, providing regular refresher training.
- To encourage and support routine testing within the wider school community, local primary schools have been set up as Home Test Collect distribution hubs. There are 11 of these operational across the city.
- A small number of settings have utilised the LA financial support to re-establish onsite testing of pupils – an enhancement to the twice weekly home testing.
- Guidance has been issued to schools to encourage the continued use of face coverings in certain circumstances and to emphasise risk assessments required for the safe operation of transition days.
- Planning is underway to prepare to provide support for settings for the delayed Step 4 of the national road map (19th July) and to ensure schools are prepared for implementation of guidance for the return to school in September.
- Support is being given to settings to enable them to distribute kits to enable secondary age pupils to continue to test over the summer break. Local communication will also promote the continuation of testing.
- LA support for the anticipated September test on return for secondary age pupils is being explored.

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

- Over 3,200 attendances at rapid test centres have been attended on behalf of a business since 26 February 2021.
- 305 businesses have signed up to the Business Testing Grant Scheme to engage in twice weekly testing for at least 75% of its employees until 30 June 2021. Of these 222 businesses have actively been testing their workforce covering a total of 2148 employees.
- 183 businesses have been issued with Covid Testing Recognition Scheme stickers to display at their business premises as of 2 July 2021.
- Registrations to provide on-site testing and home test kit provision for employees through the national DHSC scheme closed on 12 April 2021, a total of 200 businesses across Wolverhampton registered for on-site testing and have access to free tests until 19 July.
- There have been 155 COVID Compliance Grant applications to date. Businesses across all sectors can apply for up to £1000, initial payment issued, and once Covid recognition is achieved via an EHO visit. A separate grant for voluntary sports clubs is also available.
- There have been 1079 Covid Marshall revisits to non-essential retail sites as part of low level COVID compliance observations. They have also engaged with the public, handing out a total of 17,000 face coverings since October last year.
- Pro-active visits to close contact businesses, Gyms and Leisure, Faith Settings, and Hospitality Venues are also taking place.
- Joint CJET work continues between WMP/PH/Licensing/COVID Compliance Teams - patrols, joint enforcement. Between 30 April 2020 and 02 July 2021 47 prohibition notices have been served in relation to business restriction offences, with 10 fixed penalty notices for further breaches.
- Webinars have taken place across all sectors, including the voluntary sports and physical activity sectors to bring back physical activity safely into the community.

## **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 Underrepresented Groups pilot has been mainstreamed at The Haven. The Haven 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.
- Home tests are also available for collection from the Local Testing Sites (LTS) 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 increasing numbers of 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 – showing that those that do collect home test kits are using them and registering results.

- The Wolverhampton mobile testing unit has been located at New Cross Hospital for the past several weeks, outside of A&E to support the re-launch of inpatient visiting. Home testing kits are also available for collection from the unit.
- A supplementary semi-permanent site has also been mobilised 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.
- 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. It is expected that this work will start in the Autumn term.
- A local protocol has been drafted to ensure testing can be implemented in a timely manner to support management of outbreaks.
- A Testing Delivery Plan has been submitted to DHSC for approval to outline the proposal for testing from July to March 2022. This proposal will focus on providing Asymptomatic Test Sites, Pop-up sites, Home Test Collect Sites and door to door delivery to particularly serve under-represented and disproportionately affected groups.

#### **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.

#### **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 is now 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 160,000 people in Wolverhampton having now had at least one dose, and over 118,000 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, 278,330 vaccinations have been given, and 92.6% of over 80s in Wolverhampton have had at least one jab, rising to 94% of people aged 75-79. Some 93.3% of 70-74-year-olds, 90% of 65-69-year-olds, 86.6% of 60-64-year-olds, 83.2% of 55-59-year-olds and 80.8% 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 WVActive sites, 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.
- 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 also being made available to meet 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.
- Working in partnership with local GPs and CCG the LA call centre have spoken to almost 25,000 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.

## **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.
- As the country progresses through the different stages of the Government's 'Roadmap' published 22 February 2021, the Local Outbreak Engagement Board, in conjunction with Wolverhampton's Health and Wellbeing Together Board, will continue to keep the eight themes of the Outbreak Control Plan under review.

## **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. 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 support efforts to combat Covid-19 through co-ordinated campaigns and messaging across a broad spectrum of audiences. Communications work is supporting and encouraging vaccine uptake through a range of communications methods, tailored to effectively reach our different communities. Regular testing has been promoted to schools, businesses and community groups and wider public messaging through the 'Get Up, Get Tested' campaign has encouraged routine testing as part of daily lives. Stakeholder engagement, targeted communications and general messaging have also focused on coronavirus advice and informing behaviours, with regular reminders about the need to follow the latest guidance and the reasons why. This work is all informed by principles of behavioural science, ensuring we understand and influence behaviours to help keep people safe during the pandemic.

## 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 06 July 2021, there are no red risk to be escalated to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

## 8.0 Recommendations & Considerations

It is recommended that Health and Wellbeing Together Board:

- Receive and note the content of the report