

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD
29 SEPTEMBER 2020****COVID-19 HEALTH PROTECTION BOARD QUARTERLY
REPORT: DELIVERING WORCESTERSHIRE'S OUTBREAK
CONTROL PLAN**

Board Sponsor

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Author

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Priorities

Mental health & well-being

Being Active

Reducing harm from Alcohol

Other (specify below)

Health Protection
COVID-19

Safeguarding

Impact on Safeguarding Children

No

Impact on Safeguarding Adults

No

Item for Decision, Consideration or Information

Consideration

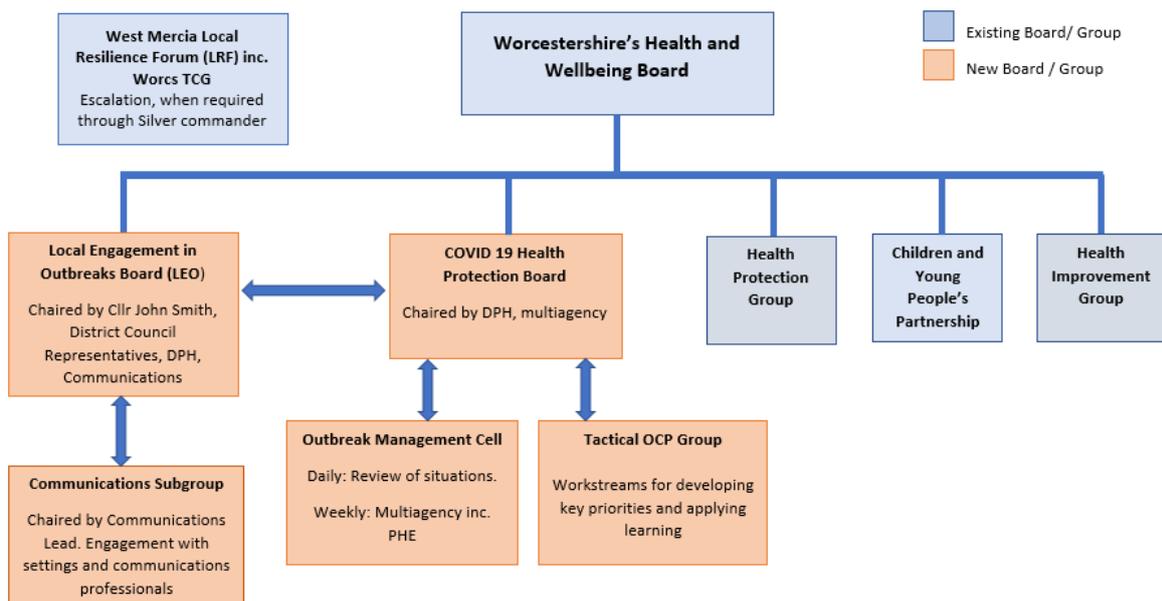
Recommendation

1. The Health and Well-being Board is asked to:
 - Note the development and delivery of Worcestershire's Outbreak Control Plan, the arrangements for governance and the initial months of Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) operation
 - Consider the contribution that Health and Well-being Board partners can make to support surge capacity in the LORT.

Background

2. This first quarterly report from the COVID-19 Health Protection Board will describe the delivery of the Outbreak Control Plan in the initial months of operation as well as an overview of version 1.3 of the Outbreak Control Plan published on 3 September 2020.

3. Each Local Authority was required to produce and publish a Local Outbreak Control Plan (OCP) specific to COVID-19 by 30 June 2020. OCPs are used to describe the arrangements and processes for preventing and managing outbreaks and how the wider impacts of COVID-19 on local communities can be reduced.
4. Alongside the development of the plan, each Local Authority was required to establish a governance system to provide oversight of delivery of the plan and enable Elected Members to lead community engagement in the prevention and response to outbreaks.
5. The OCP is a 'live' document and following publication of additional national guidance, local 'stress test' exercises, and feedback from partners, an updated version 1.3 of Worcestershire Outbreak Control Plan was published on 3 September 2020. The link to access the OCP is listed under Background Papers.
6. The OCP is delivered through a newly formed COVID-19 Health Protection Board and a Member-led Local Engagement in Outbreaks (LEO) Board. These Boards report to the Health and Well-being Board. Terms of Reference for each group are provided as appendices of the OCP. The COVID-19 Health Protection Board provides quarterly reports to the Health and Well-being Board.
7. The COVID-19 Health Protection Board provides public health leadership and oversight of the Test and Trace budget. Membership includes Public Health England (PHE), NHS, Environmental Health and District Councils. A tactical group, the Outbreak Management cell reports to the Board. This group develops key workstreams and provides regular review of situations.
8. The Member-led Local Engagement in Outbreaks (LEO) Board provides political ownership and leads on public-facing communication, engagement and community leadership, including comprehensive and timely communications to the public and a link to ministers.
9. Governance arrangements for the OCP are shown in the diagram below:



Current COVID-19 situation

10. The number of COVID-19 cases are rising in Worcestershire as they are across England generally. Although numbers in Worcestershire are lower than 'hotspot' areas, in the 7 days to 10 September 2020, Bromsgrove, Wychavon and Worcester City have seen an exceedance of 20 cases per 100,000 population.

11. Younger adults (age 18-30) are forming a larger proportion of total cases and focussed communications have been developed, to target this age group. The University of Worcester has welcomed students back under robust COVID secure measures, with Public Health providing in person support and resources at the Welcome Week.

12. The number of positive cases in Care Homes has also increased in recent weeks. A temporary restriction on Care Home visits is in place across the County.

13. Since schools reopened, the The Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) have received 477 notifications from schools in the first 3 weeks of term, the majority reporting 'possible' cases of children or school staff with symptoms, although there have been some cases in Worcestershire schools where 'bubbles' have been collapsed to enable self isolation of close contacts.

Local Outbreak Control Team

14. The Local Outbreak Control Team (LORT) is operational 9am until 6pm Monday to Sunday. The regional Public Health England team are available out of hours. The LORT is made up of existing Public Health staff working at different tiers with allocated Public Health Consultant support each day. Additional recruitment is underway to increase capacity at supporter and responder level. Environmental Health Officers and Infection Prevention Control Nurses work alongside the LORT.

15. The return of schools, and the observed increase in cases in the community and in different settings has placed significant pressure on the operation of the LORT. Temporary resource has been supplied to work alongside the LORT and there is a need to allocate and train additional staff to support activity at current volumes.

16. A workshop has explored how additional capacity could be developed for the LORT and how daily operation can be streamlined. A number of actions are in progress to bring the LORT into a COVID secure hub in County Hall to facilitate closer working.

17. Closer links with the Environmental Health Officers and Infection Prevention Control staff will be made through secured access to the digital NIMROD system which has been developed to record and track LORT activity. Additional recruitment is underway along with a request to the wider Council and partners to make available staff to provide surge capacity in the event of multiple situations and outbreaks. Training and funds for backfill are available for this purpose.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

18. The Legal and Policy context section of the Outbreak Control Plan describes the powers available to support the OCP. On 17 July 2020, “The Contain Framework” was published nationally, which outlines the powers available to Upper Tier Local Authorities.

19. Worcestershire has been allocated £2.7m from national funding to enable delivery of the Outbreak Control Plan in 2020/21. The terms of the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant apply to the use of these funds. Allocation and spend is overseen by the COVID-19 Health Protection Board.

20. As the LORT experiences surges in demand relating to escalating and new situations, there is a requirement to draw on staff from the wider County Council and partners, including District Councils and the NHS. Outbreak response and control is a priority and support and flexibility to identify and release staff is required to enable the delivery of the Outbreak Control Plan. Staff redeployed to support the LORT and its functions will be provided training and support. Departments and partners releasing staff will be able to request funds from the WCC Test and Trace budget to backfill existing functions.

Privacy Impact Assessment

21. As appropriate

Equality and Diversity Implications

22. A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of the overall Outbreak Control Plan. Impacts and mitigations are described for protected groups. The recommendations will further support action to prevent and control outbreaks that may affect protected groups.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Point for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Public Health) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Worcestershire’s Outbreak Control Plan:

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20769/coronavirus_covid-19/2273/coronavirus_covid-19_outbreak_control_plan (available online)