

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD  
23 FEBRUARY 2021****COVID-19 HEALTH PROTECTION BOARD QUARTERLY  
REPORT (QUARTER 3): DELIVERING WORCESTERSHIRE'S  
OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN**

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**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)

COVID-19

**Safeguarding**

Impact on Safeguarding Children

If yes, please give details

No

Impact on Safeguarding Adults

If yes, please give details

No

**Item for Decision, Consideration or Information**

Consideration

**Recommendation**

- 1. The Health and Well-being Board is asked to note the delivery of Worcestershire's Outbreak Control Plan, the arrangements for governance and the current situation of Local Outbreak Response Team (LORT) operation.**

**Background**

2. This quarterly report from the COVID-19 Health Protection Board will describe the delivery of the Outbreak Control Plan in quarter 3 of operation.
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 was updated on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 to reflect changes in guidance and legislation related to Covid - 19. This includes the Coronavirus Act 2020, local guidance for managing those who are willing to self -isolate when symptomatic and Health Protection Regulations 2020. It is also due to be updated in January February 2021.

6. The COVID-19 Health Protection Board provides public health leadership and oversight of the Test and Trace budget. Membership includes the Public Health England (PHE), NHS, Environmental Health and District Councils. This group develops key workstreams and provides regular review of situations.

7. District Incident Management Team meetings, chaired by representatives from each of the District Councils, occur regularly and report directly into COVID19 Health Protection Board. The Purpose of the District IMTs is to ensure there is local engagement with key stakeholders across each District and that district specific issues can be identified.

### **Quarter 3 COVID-19 situation**

8. In October 2020 cases rose from 40 / 100,000 to 145/100,000 by the 26<sup>th</sup> October. From 5<sup>th</sup> November, a national lockdown was introduced which allowed cases to peak at 248/100,000 but then to fall back to 84/100,000 by 11 December 2020.

9. From 11 December 2020 until 12 January 2021, cases rose continually to reach a peak of 589 / 100,000. A new lockdown came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021 which has started to suppress rates in the county.

10. Rates in children and older people remained generally low during the early parts of the 3<sup>rd</sup> major wave of infection, but have escalated particularly in 17/18-year olds, working aged adults, and also older people towards the end of December and into the New Year.

### **Local Outbreak Control Team**

11. The Local Outbreak Control Team (LORT) continues to operate 7 days a week, 9am – 5pm. The regional Public Health England team continue to be available out of hours.

12. To manage capacity and demand on the LORT Staff have been recruited from Agencies and other departments of the County and District Councils to support existing Public Health staff. Environmental Health Officers and the Infection Prevention Control Team continue to work alongside the LORT.

13. There was an increase of enquiries and activity in quarter 3 compared to quarter 2. Email activity for the LORT rose from 5389 (Q2) to 12,388 in quarter 3.

14. Quarter 3 saw an increase of positive cases in most settings including University, workplaces, Care Homes and Education settings.

## Contact Tracing

15. The LORT contact trace cases linked to outbreaks. This provides assurance that individuals are isolating appropriately and gives additional information about measures that are taken. The number of persons contact traced per setting varies according to the level of escalation that the LORT is in.

16. Backwards contact tracing is a valuable tool which looks into the 2 weeks prior to onset of infection and provides insight into where the case may have obtained the infection from. WRS act on behalf of the LORT to backwards contact trace 100 cases per week. The decision on where to focus backwards contact tracing is informed by local epidemiology. This work supports our local understanding of behaviours and sources of infection.

17. WRS and the District Council work closely with the LORT to attempt to contact cases who have not been able to be contacted by the National Test and Trace Team. This involves searching local databases for alternative contact details and in some cases a door knocking team will visit the individual to ensure they are self isolating and provide guidance and support if necessary.

## Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)

18. A Lateral Flow Testing Pilot was established in collaboration with the University of Worcester in December 2020. This pilot allowed students to be tested before returning home and provided valuable insight into developing LFT sites. In total 951 student tests were undertaken during this pilot.

19. An additional pilot site was also set up at Redditch Town Hall which tested 880 people from 28th December 2020 to 2nd January 2021

20. The pilot LFT sites allowed WCC to gain an understanding of how LFT could be rolled out across Worcestershire. Several LFT sites are planned for opening in quarter 4 which will be prioritised for key workers, in addition to community pharmacies offering LFT to the general public.

## Legal, Financial and HR Implications

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

22. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations 2020 grant powers to Local Authorities to close individual premises, public outdoor places and restrict events with immediate effect if they conclude it is necessary and proportionate to do so, in order to respond to a serious and imminent threat to public health and control the transmission of COVID-19 in its area. These new powers allow Local Authorities to manage outdoor events and spaces where there is a COVID-19 outbreak or risk of COVID-19 transmission

23. Local guidance for managing those who are unwilling to self-isolate when symptomatic with COVID-19 has been developed collaboratively with Public Health at WCC, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire and Worcestershire CCG. The guidance also outlines the process for escalating any situations that may require the use of schedule 21 to Public Health England.

24. In quarter 3, 2 allocations of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund were received. This was £4.760m in November and a further £1.2m in December.

25. Capacity and demand of the LORT is closely assessed. Systems are now in place to enable Staff to be rapidly employed from Agencies, if required, to meet demand.

## **Privacy Impact Assessment**

26. As appropriate

## **Equality and Diversity Implications**

27. 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**

### County Council Contact Points

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### Specific Contact Points 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](https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20769/coronavirus_covid-19/2273/coronavirus_covid-19_outbreak_control_plan)