

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD
20 JULY 2021****COVID-19 Health Protection Board Quarterly Report
(Quarter 4 and Quarter 1): Delivering Worcestershire's
Outbreak Control Plan**

Board Sponsor

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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 (OCP), 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 4 2020/21 and Quarter 1 2021/22 of operation.
3. The OCP was updated on 24 March 2021 to reflect the Government Contain Framework. A refreshed version of the Outbreak Control Plan will be published in

August to reflect the changes in national policy that are due to come into place on 19 July and 16th August.

4. 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 works as a system to unblock any issues arising.

5. 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. District IMTs are also used to understand and contextualise district level vaccination uptake data. Areas of lower vaccination uptake are escalated and the IMT will work with NHS colleagues to increase vaccination uptake in areas where issues have been identified,

Quarter 4 and Quarter 1 COVID-19 situation

6. Cases of COVID-19 raised sharply in December 2020 and into January 2021 peaking at 589/100,000 on 8th Jan 2021. From 9th January until the end of February, the rate declined and dipped underneath 100/100,000 by 1st March 2021.

7. From April 2021 until June 2021 rates of COVID-19 in Worcestershire remained relatively stable and low. Since June 2021 rates in Worcestershire have begun to rise and currently continue to do so. This increase is linked to easing of lockdown restrictions.

8. Due to vaccination, hospitalisations have been reduced, but there is still a relationship between case rates and hospital admissions. Between April and June 2021, there were around 5 admissions to hospital for every 100 cases in Worcestershire.

9. Variants of concern have been more robustly reported during the past 3 months due to increased national sequencing capacity. Most positive samples are now sent for sequencing – the dominant variant of concern in Worcestershire is currently Delta (first identified in India), with only very few Alpha variant cases now presenting.

Local Outbreak Control Team

10. The Local Outbreak Control Team (LORT) continues to operate 7 days a week. The regional Public Health England team continue to be available out of hours.

Quarter 4 2020/21:

11. In Quarter 4 the LORT dealt with a total of 1032 situations with 4128 attached cases. This was an increase in activity compared to Quarter 3.

12. The majority of cases at the beginning of Quarter 4 were in workplaces, Adult Social Care (ASC), Nurseries and School settings. However, there was a significant decline in cases in Adult Social Care settings by the end of Quarter 4.

Quarter 1 2021/22

13. In Quarter 1 the LORT dealt with a total of 492 situations and 958 individual cases. Although a decrease compared to Quarter 4 there has been a month on month increase from 111 in April to 228 in June.

14. During May and June there was a significant increase in the proportion of cases in Schools. This rose from 28 situations in April to 106 situations in June. There were a total of 229 situations in schools in Quarter 1 overall.

15. Situations within Adult Social Care settings remained low compared to Quarter 3 and Quarter 4. In April there were 37 situations, 9 in May and 24 in June, totalling 70 situations for the Quarter 1. This still remains low.

16. Quarter 1 also saw the first Anniversary of the LOR. In the first year of operation the LORT has:

- Dealt with 2,105 situations which includes 982 Education settings, 621 ASC settings, 326 workplace settings and 176 other settings (ie homeless, children homes etc)
- Received and responded to 911 enquiries
- Undertaken 2,937 risk assessments
- Dealt with 7,950 positive or suspected cases
- Received and sent over 35,437 emails
- Received over 5,000 telephone call

Contact Tracing

17. The LORT and WRS continue to work together to contact trace cases linked to outbreaks and those who NHS Test and Trace are unable to contact.

18. There are currently plans in place for WRS to contact trace all cases from August 2021. This would be in place of NHS test and trace, aiming to have an improved local response. Health and Well Being board will be kept up to date with these plans.

Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)

19. The strategy for lateral flow testing (LFT) across Worcestershire has continued to develop in line with National policy. As LFT has become more normalised and more freely available to people to do at home, the need for assisted testing centres has reduced. Therefore, our County wide provision is now predominantly provided by pharmacies and collection sites. However, some assisted test sites do remain where coverage from pharmacies and collection sites is low.

20. The LFT strategy is kept under constant review in line with guidance from DHSC. The current focus is testing groups who we find difficult to reach. Links developed with community groups throughout the pandemic are being used to ensure equitable access to testing.

Surge Testing

21. In Quarter 4 surge testing was deployed across two weeks in February 2021 to control the spread of a COVID-19 variant in Worcestershire. This was due to a small number of variant COVID-19 cases identified in WR3 and WR9 postcode area. A local Standard Operational Procedure has been developed should there be a future need to repeat.

22. In Quarter 1 surge testing was also deployed across parts of the postcode areas B97 and B98 of Redditch due to confirmation of a number of cases of the South African variant of coronavirus in the area. The operation was successful with over 12,000 test kits distributed.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

23. In Quarter 4, 3 further allocations of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund were received totalling £7.8m giving a total received for 2020/21 of £13.7m. It has also been announced that this grant will continue into 2021/22 and allocations have been awarded of £2.9m for Worcestershire County Council and £0.778m across the six district councils. This funding has been allocated with the approval of the COVID Health Protection Board. The allocations are largely to support the acute response against COVID-19 and reduce inequalities being driven by COVID-19.

Privacy Impact Assessment

24. As appropriate

Equality and Diversity Implications

25. 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

County Council: 01905 763763

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