

Adults, Wellbeing and Health
Overview and Scrutiny Committee



5 February 2021

**COVID-19 Local Outbreak
Control Plan**

**Report of Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, Durham County
Council**

Electoral division affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is for Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive an update on our COVID-19 response and to receive the updated COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan (appendix 2).

Executive summary

- 2 The Government requires all Local Authorities to produce a COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan. The overarching focus is to protect the health of local residents from COVID-19 and reduce any onward transmission from COVID-19.
- 3 In County Durham there are established health protection assurance arrangements with key partners working closely on infectious diseases, environmental hazards and emergency preparedness and response. This work reports annually to the Health and Wellbeing Board and has stood us in good stead to establish rapid partnership arrangements, including with the Public Health England (PHE) North East Health Protection Team, for developing the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan and preparing for complex cases of COVID-19 and outbreaks.
- 4 The work is managed by the Local Health Protection Assurance Board (HPAB) building on the extensive cross Council and partnership planning and response to COVID-19. Recent updates relate to outbreak prevention and control; the LA7 regional coordination or work, our use off Covid-19 data, the development of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme and the growth of Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) programmes.

Recommendation

- 5 The Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to receive the updated COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan.

Background

- 6 The Local Outbreak Control Plan for County Durham identified that cases would be expected to rise once restrictions were lifted and that an effective test, trace and isolate and outbreak management function would be required to contain the virus.
- 7 Each local authority is expected to have its own local outbreak management arrangements, the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan, to support the national test, track and trace programme. The role of the local authority is to provide an oversight of COVID-19 outbreaks including those in complex settings such as schools, care homes and workplaces, as well as provide direct support to cases and contacts who have been asked to self-isolate through the community hubs. This is built on established and longstanding relationships with PHE North East Health Protection Team.

Role of the Local Health Protection Assurance Board

- 8 The key purpose of the Local Health Protection Assurance Board (HPAB) is to lead, co-ordinate and manage work to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- 9 The focus of local health protection work has been to undertake a risk assessment of settings where COVID-19 cases have arisen, providing public health advice and guidance, and gaining assurance that appropriate control measures are in place within the setting.
- 10 The HPAB continues to meet on a weekly basis. The current work of the HPAB includes:
 - Regional oversight of LA7 work.
 - Data and intelligence analysis, including health data from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CCDFT) and the County Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
 - Developments and innovation: eg. Vaccination Programme and the Spike Detection Tool.
 - Settings, including educations, care homes, community, workplaces, University, etc.
 - PCR Testing and LFD Testing – rapid targeted community testing / school testing / Uni testing / LA7 testing proposal.
 - Funding.

- Outbreaks.
- Local Tracing Partnership.

The COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan

- 11 The COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan continues to provide a framework for leading, co-ordinating and managing work to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- 12 The COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan key objectives remain:
- Protect the health of our local communities through:
 - Provision of clear prevention messages for COVID-19;
 - Rapid detection of COVID-19 outbreaks;
 - Controlling onward transmission;
 - Provide support to those who need to self-isolate, building on our population health management approach to the pandemic.
 - Develop and apply intelligence, including the knowledge and insight providing by our local communities.
- 13 Seven themes identified, are addressed throughout the plan. These are:
- Care homes and schools
 - High risk places, locations and communities including universities
 - Local testing capacity
 - Contact tracing in complex settings
 - Data integration
 - Vulnerable people
 - Local boards
- 14 The COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan continues to be updated but the most recent copies require reformatting for publication to the DCC website to conform to new accessibility requirements.
- 15 In addition as we enter a new phase of the pandemic with vaccines now being deployed the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan will be fully revised in the coming months to reflect these developments.

Covid funding

- 16 The funding provided to support our Covid response and the Local Outbreak Control Plan is overseen by the Health Protection Assurance Board.

- 17 Increasing capacity across Public Health, Community Protection, Communications, Community Hub and Covid-19 Champions has been implemented. Some funding was retained for contingency and support to Public Health England if required.
- 18 A detailed funding update will be presented at the next Health and Wellbeing Board.

LA7 Regional Coordination

- 19 Seven North East Local Authorities (LA7) came together in October 2020 to act as one voice as we moved into winter months.
- 20 The North East already has the greatest health inequalities which have been exacerbated by COVID-19, both the virus itself and wider social and economic consequences of the virus.
- 21 In line with our Local Outbreak Control Plans the LA7 have developed a four stage approach:
 - **Informing** – engaging with our local communities and being innovative in that approach and working collectively.
 - **Understanding** – using the deep understanding of our local communities to shape testing, test and trace, and support services that reflect local need.
 - **Compliance** – increasing the capacity and extending the existing compliance workforce.
 - **Enforcement** – having the ability to change North East restrictions from guidance to law to have a greater impact on transmission rates.
- 22 The work of the LA7 also includes support for the North East Collaboration led by Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals providing integration and support for local systems, to interface seamlessly with NHS laboratory capacity.

Covid-19 Data

- 23 Local detailed information is available on our [COVID-19 dashboard](#). The dashboard provides a summary of cases by rates, ages and Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) along with current hospital bed occupancy and a summary of Covid-19 deaths.

- 24 A third national lockdown legally came into force Wednesday 06 January 2021, in response to a steep rise in cases throughout the country and growing admissions to hospital.
www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home
- 25 The next national review is planned for 15 February 2021.
- 26 Previously, County Durham was placed in a new Covid Alert Level - Tier 4 when it was introduced on the 19 December 2020.
www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-4-stay-at-home

Vaccination Programme

- 27 Central Government accepted recommendations from the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Authority (MHRA) and approved the rollout for the Pfizer vaccination prioritising the over 80s population and NHS staff with the first patient receiving the vaccination on Tuesday 09 December 2020.
- 28 It should be noted that there are logistical difficulties with the transportation and storage as the vaccine requires extreme frozen temperatures, only lasting 5 days out of storage. For this reason people aged over 80, those in hospital, frontline health staff and care home workers have been the first to get the Pfizer vaccine at designated hospitals hubs and community sites across the UK.
- 29 The Covid vaccination programme across County Durham started from University Hospital Durham on the 14 December 2020 with an initial three strategic sites in County Durham identified as vaccination centres, these are in Seaham, Newton Aycliffe and Stanley.
- 30 The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine was approved by MHRA on the 30 December 2020. Rollout to an ever-increasing number of vaccination sites began 04 January 2021.
- 31 By Wednesday 06 January 2021 a total of 28,000 vaccinations had been administered across our CDDFT and primary care sites. These sites are working on a seven-day basis.
- 32 On the 08 January the Moderna vaccine became third Covid-19 vaccine approved by MHRA, with supplies expected to arrive early spring.
- 33 Those in line for the vaccine will be contacted by the NHS/GPs directly and will follow the identified NHS nine high-priority groups, covering around 30 million people representing those at most risk of dying from Covid-19:
- Residents in care homes for older adults and their carers

- 80-year-olds and over and frontline health and social care workers
- 75-year-olds and over
- 70-year-olds and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals
- 65-year-olds and over
- 16- to 64-year-olds with serious underlying health conditions
- 60-year-olds and over
- 55-year-olds and over
- 50-year-olds and over

34 Planning is underway to identify those DCC staff priority groups for Covid vaccination. The priority groups will include, staff who deliver up close and personal care, with the most vulnerable members in our community.

Lateral flow testing (LFT)

35 Our aim in County Durham is to develop a rapid and targeted asymptomatic community testing solution to complement our local Covid testing sites. This would be used to support our actions to control the transmission of the virus in local areas, determine prevalence of the virus in local communities if appropriate, and to provide some of our very rural areas with a suitable testing option.

36 In addition, we will focus on front line staff testing, for those who can't work from home. Some national lateral flow testing programmes are being planned or underway that will affect us in County Durham. This includes the Department of Education's schools testing programme and University testing programme and the Department for Health and Social Care's testing for Care Homes.

37 Durham County Council are working closely with LA7 colleagues and have submitted a proposal to the Government. Locally we are trying to align the various Lateral Flow Tests programmes available and to identify the best solution for County Durham.

38 Just before the Christmas break schools were not anticipating the announcement of a schools testing programme. The timing of the announcement was difficult after a long and hard year where our schools have worked tirelessly to keep up and running and keep our

children and young people safe whilst providing the best learning environment possible.

- 39 The planning, logistics and deployment of the schools testing programme is still being worked through. We know our current Covid case management within schools keeps as many children in school as possible.
- 40 Over the first two months of 2021, we will look to introduce and use the schools testing programme as an enhancement to 'Covid Secure' arrangements and to deploy this across schools in the County in a targeted and measured way to support our actions to control the transmission of the virus.
- 41 We will work with schools as closely as we can so that disruption is kept to a minimum.

Outbreak control and community transmission

- 42 As cases increased rapidly at the beginning of September 2020 and we experience high rates of community transmission NHS Test and Trace began to escalate cases to Public Health England (PHE) North East Health Protection Team (HPT). This increase in volume meant the HPT system and response slowed due to the volume of calls.
- 43 Joint management arrangements with PHE were revised and Local Authorities were asked to follow up single cases on schools and workplaces and to allow HPT to focus on complex cases and settings and to support local authorities in managing outbreaks.
- 44 Since 31st August 2020 the public health team have supported more than 2,535 reports and enquiries from settings.
- 45 Other developments include the implementation of our Enhanced Support Framework providing a rapid process for detecting, investigating and responding to local spikes in COVID-19 cases across County Durham utilising our community spike outbreak control group.

County Durham Together Community Hub – Local Tracing Partnership

- 46 Local Authorities were offered the opportunity by Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to develop local contact tracing partnerships, whereby positive cases, who have not been reached by the NHS Test and Trace central team after 24 hours, are passed to Local Authority teams for follow up.

- 47 In County Durham, the work of the Local Tracing Partnership will be part of the testing element within the Local Outbreak Control Plan and governance will be via the Health Protection Assurance Board with links to the LRF Community and Compliance Cells and the Outbreak Control Team.
- 48 Operationally the programme will sit within the remit of County Durham Together Community Hub in partnership with Public Health. This enables the development of a blended model of case and contact management that supports a graded response based upon vulnerability and inequalities underpinned by:
- Infection Prevention and Control measures.
 - Population Health Management.
 - County Durham wellbeing principles.
- 49 County Durham Local Tracing Partnership went live 04 January 2021.

Main Implications

- 50 Ability for all settings to respond rapidly to any outbreak situation.

Background papers

- Included in Plan

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Health Protection: Legal and Policy Context¹

The legal context for managing outbreaks of communicable disease which present a risk to the health of the public requiring urgent investigation and management sits:

- With Public Health England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With Directors of Public Health under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With Chief Environmental Health Officers under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
- With NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups² to collaborate with Directors of Public Health and Public Health England to take local action (e.g. testing and treating) to assist the management of outbreaks under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With other responders' specific responsibilities to respond to major incidents as part of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- In the context of COVID-19 there is also the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Finance

Funding being provided by government.

Staffing

Staff time to implement the plan.

Risk

Unknown due to the nature of COVID-19.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Community Hub has been developed to support vulnerable individuals.

Accommodation

No impact.

Crime and Disorder

No impact.

Human Rights

No impact.

¹ ADPH, FPH, PHE, LGA et al (2020) Public Health Leadership, Multi-Agency Capability: *Guiding Principles for Effective Management of COVID-19 at a Local Level*. <https://www.adph.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Guiding-Principles-for-Making-Outbreak-Management-Work-Final.pdf>

Consultation

Full consultation not possible due to impact of COVID-19.

Procurement

No impact but should inform council commissioning plans in relation to services that impact on the health of the population.

Disability Issues

No impact.