



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

16 March 2021

COVID-19 Additional Activities

Report of the Area Manager Assets and Assurance

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the COVID-19 additional activities being completed by County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).

Background

2. During the first wave of the pandemic, CDDFRS was prepared to assist partner organisations in the fight against COVID-19, however there was limited need, with support only needed to support logistic arrangements for some of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) cells.
3. Staff from the Service supported the Communities Cell to deliver essential items to vulnerable persons and the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Cell to deliver PPE to NHS and care facilities. In total there were 255 deliveries made by CDDFRS staff across these two activities between March and July 2020.
4. Additionally, six staff were trained to drive ambulances for NEAS as a resilience arrangement, although fortunately this support was never needed.

Current Position

5. During February 2021, the Service was asked by partners to support their activities in four areas:
 - Community Testing
 - Vaccination Centre Support
 - Vaccinators
 - Local Contact Tracing

6. To support this work, staff were asked to volunteer to provide assistance. As of 7 March 2021, 165 staff had volunteered to assist with additional activities to support partners and communities in the fight against COVID-19.

Community Testing Sites

7. The Service is supporting Durham County Council to run the Community Testing Sites. There are six testing sites in operation across County Durham operating 5 days per week. Three sites opened the week commencing 15 February (Meadowfield Leisure Centre, Spennymoor Leisure Centre, The Louisa Centre) and three the week commencing 22 February (Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre, Teesdale Leisure Centre, East Durham College).
8. The Service is providing staff to fulfil the Team Leader role at all sites. The Team Leader is responsible for the overall on-site operations at the test site, including day-to-day workforce management.
9. Staff are also providing support at the sites as Site Operatives (Queue Coordinator, Registration Assistant and Test Assistant) and Testing Operatives (Prepare test sample for analysis and interpret results).
10. As of 7 March 2021, our staff have provided over 1,500 hours of leadership and support to the testing sites.

Vaccination Centres

11. The NHS asked for the Service's support in two activities at their Vaccination Centres. The Vaccination Centre in Durham opened on 22 February and the Centre in Darlington opened on 1 March. Both centres operate from 8 am to 8 pm, 7 days per week.
12. The first activity is logistical support which involves supporting Vaccination Centre staff and is mainly a marshalling role with some engagement, discussion and reassurance with members of the public who are progressing through the centre for their vaccination.
13. As of 7 March 2021 CDDFRS, staff have provided over 650 hours of support to the Vaccination Centres.
14. The second additional activity at the Vaccination Centres is the role of Vaccinator.
15. Due to the size of the vaccination task, the NHS are training others to undertake the role of a Vaccinator. To be able to undertake this role you need to have an appropriate level of first aid training, the trauma training our operational workforce receive meets this requirement.
16. As of 2 March 2021, 14 staff have been trained. A Memorandum of Understanding is in the final stages of being agreed between the NHS Newcastle Trust and the Fire and Rescue Services which make up the North East and Cumbria region. Once agreed CDDFRS staff will administer vaccinations at the local Vaccination Centres.

Local Contact Tracing

17. The fourth additional activity is to support Durham County Council with local contact tracing. This support is to provide additional capacity to the County Durham Together Community Hub with their local contact tracing.
18. The Hub call those positive cases who NHS Test and Trace have not been able to contact for the 36 hours following their positive test result. If the Hub is unable to contact the individual, a doorstep welfare visit will be conducted.
19. The Service have agreed to support the doorstep visits when the Hub do not have capacity, although to date due to low numbers, there has been no requirement yet for the Service's support.

Summary

20. The report highlights the commitment of the Service's staff who should be praised for the way they have stepped forward to support partners and assist the community in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The extent of these activities also highlights the strength of partnership working across the County Durham and Darlington area.

Recommendations

21. CFA Members are requested to:
 - a. **note** the contents of this report;
 - b. **receive** further reports as appropriate.

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