

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

COVID-19 OUTBREAK PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 Progress update against each of the 7 themes in the North Lincolnshire Outbreak Prevention & Management Plan
- 1.2 Key areas of focus for the outbreak prevention and management in North Lincolnshire for the forthcoming period

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Background

North Lincolnshire Council is committed to working with our local people to keep them safe, well, prosperous and connected. Successful prevention and management of local outbreaks is vital to break the chains of COVID-19 transmission and enable people to return to and maintain a more normal way of life.

North Lincolnshire Council is the lead organisation for local outbreak planning, within a national framework and with the support of NHS Test and Trace, PHE and other government departments. The North Lincolnshire Outbreak Prevention and Management Plan sets out our collaborative and preventive approach. It is based on the tried and tested practice of preventing and containing outbreaks in individual settings such as workplaces and care homes, enhanced with a broader range of partners, capacity, communications and governance.

- 2.2 This is a report of the North Lincolnshire Outbreak Control Executive Group (OCEG). Accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the executive group provides the strategic oversight of health protection in respect of COVID 19 in North Lincolnshire and includes, prevention, surveillance, planning and response.

The OCEG is responsible for the place-based response to ensure a community focus and appropriately tailored response. It also provides the interface with regional and national response through the Humber Local Resilience Forum arrangements.

The OCEG oversees the work of the Health Protection and Outbreak Management Group, whose remit is to conduct regular surveillance of the local COVID-19 epidemiology and implement the Outbreak Prevention and Management Plan.

The Director of Public Health has the primary responsibility for the health of their communities, including being assured that the arrangements to protect the health of the communities they serve are robust and implemented. This is achieved through the DPH leadership in the OCEG.

2.3 **Progress update** against the North Lincolnshire Outbreak Prevention and Management Plan

A summary of the progress made to date against each of the seven key themes in the Plan is given below.

2.3.1 **Care Homes**

The Care Home Oversight Group meets twice weekly to review local data and intelligence, coordinate support to care homes around infection control and outbreak management, and to lead on implementing the COVID-19 Care Home Support Plan.

A programme of training in infection, prevention and control, end of life and clinical observations has been provided to the Care Home sector.

Test, Trace and Isolate has been integrated into the Care Home Support Plan, including arrangements and support for whole-home testing.

Thanks to the comprehensive package of support in place and coordinated approach taken locally, the situation in our local Care Homes has dramatically improved since April and there are currently no outbreaks.

2.3.2 **Education settings**

Weekly meetings are in place to oversee the outbreak prevention and management in educational settings.

Coordinated support has been provided to enable the safe reopening of educational settings, from across the Council and with School Nursing.

Clear protocols for early management of outbreaks in schools, early years and college settings have been agreed and disseminated. They are reviewed regularly in the light of new guidance. They include a requirement for educational settings to notify the Council of any confirmed COVID-19 cases, enabling swift action to prevent any onward spread.

We are providing enhanced infection control (IPC) support to school and early years settings. We have employed a dedicated IPC nurse to provide specialist advice and support to these settings, for example, advising on the wearing of face masks, and supporting safe provision of physical activity in schools.

A coordinated package of communications is in place and is delivering tailored messaging through a variety of channels to support the safe reopening of schools.

2.3.3 High-risk workplaces, communities and locations

A sub group of the OBMG has been developed to lead this priority.

A comprehensive scoping exercise has been undertaken with the settings that have been identified as either high risk and/ or complex. These are incorporated into a document that also includes details about those within NLC and wider partners who work with these settings and vulnerable or complex communities (in line with priority 6 of the Outbreak Management Delivery Plan). This has enabled a host of information to be available within one document for ease of access.

Guidance has been developed for use by our local complex/high priority settings that will provide information on what they need to do and who they need to contact in case of any concerns about positive cases or outbreaks. This has so far been disseminated to around 4,7000 workplaces.

2.3.4 Local testing

Our local testing agenda is being led by the Humber Track and Trace group and the wider Humber Coast and Vale (HCV) Testing Coordination Group. These groups provide coordination, strategic guidance and equitable access for testing across the HCV area.

Good testing capacity is available locally to include mobile testing unit's (MTUs) being available across the area and flexible testing capacity to be used if required due to an outbreak.

Weekly testing for care home staff is in place and monthly for residents to help avoid outbreaks in our care home sector.

Antibody testing has been available for healthcare staff and is now in place for the wider care sector since August 26th.

2.3.5 Contact tracing (CT) in complex settings

As with the local Testing priority this is taken forward through the Humber Test and Trace Group and the wider HCV Testing Coordination Group.

Contact tracing is currently led by the national Contact Tracing team with any complex cases being taken forward through the Yorkshire and Humber Public Health England (PHE) Team. The role for local authorities is to be able to support PHE as required to follow up any locally complex cases. This utilises the existing relationships our teams, such as licensing and environmental health have with local business and wider settings, facilitating effective liaison to work with the businesses and wider settings to be able to provide essential information that could be difficult for PHE to obtain.

To ensure those who work with these settings are knowledgeable around health protection and contact tracing, we have trained 70 of our employees in the PHE recognised training to ensure consistency of approach and to support the role of a contract tracer.

2.3.6 Data integration

Data on local high risk settings and population groups have been gathered and mapped.

Processes have been designed and implemented for the notification of COVID-19 suspected and confirmed cases from various sources including Test & Trace, businesses, care homes and schools.

Local dashboards have been built for care home and wider COVID-19 outbreak management.

A process is now in place for monitoring all new cases in North Lincolnshire, and screening for possible epidemiological links between cases. Restricted case sensitive track and trace data is available to assist with early detection of clusters or outbreaks.

A multi-level threshold model has been developed, approved by OCEG and is now in place to assess local COVID-19 transmission patterns and trends.

2.3.7 Vulnerable people and diverse communities

Vulnerable groups across North Lincolnshire have been identified and stratified according to COVID-19 risk. This includes the cohort of people for example, older people, rough sleepers, sex workers, the factors contributing to their vulnerability in relation to COVID-19, for example

chaotic lifestyles, use of shared facilities, language barriers, and which organisations and/or individuals have strong connections with each cohort.

Key liaison workers for those groups have been identified and given training in outbreak management.

Support has been put in place to enable vulnerable local cases or contacts to self-isolate safely. This is provided through the principles of community assistance, enabling the Voluntary and Community Sector to direct a North Lincolnshire Council response for those whose needs remain unmet. A coordinated, place-based approach across public and voluntary community organisations has been mobilised for identifying and meeting the needs of vulnerable people.

Communications that promote compliance with self-isolation, social distancing, and other preventive behaviours have been tailored and targeted for specific local vulnerable populations, including translating materials is appropriate.

2.4 **Next steps** - Key areas of focus for the outbreak prevention and management in North Lincolnshire for the forthcoming months.

2.4.1 Care Homes

The Care Home Oversight Group will continue to closely monitor the situation across our Care Homes and provide coordinated support to prevent and manage outbreaks in these settings.

Our focus going forward will be supporting the roll out of antibody testing to the Care workforce, supporting the regime of whole-home antigen testing, providing infection control advice, and putting in place clinical support as outlined in the Care Home Support Plan.

Support and advice will also be provided to ensure the safe lifting of certain COVID-19 restrictions, such as provision of respite care, and family visiting.

2.4.2 Education settings

A Public Health information and advice drop-in is planned for the week after term starts, allowing Head teachers to be briefed on the latest guidance, local epidemiology, and ask any questions relating to preventing the spread of COVID19.

A COVID-19 risk analysis of schools cross North Lincolnshire is planned, to inform the targeting of comms and to feed into the dynamic risk assessment which forms part of the outbreak management process.

We will stay fully apprised of the guidance relating to educational settings, and ensure settings are supported to implement new guidance, f considering local application of the tiered restrictions in the case of increased community transmission of COVID-19.

2.4.3 High-risk workplaces, communities and locations

Plans for sharing the guidance on what to do and who to contact in case of an outbreaks will be shared with wider settings such as voluntary and community groups.

Risk analysis work to ensure mitigation and support are in place for the highest risk settings is being taken forward by the subgroup.

2.4.4 Local testing

We are currently investigating the opportunity to have a testing site for students that can be accessed near to our local colleges'. This will enable ease of access for students and will aid prevention activity towards reducing the spread of COVID-19.

We are expecting a further supply of up to 500 per day testing capacity to be available for the Director of Public Health sometime in September, this will enable flexible capacity to be in place in the case of any outbreaks.

2.4.5 Contact tracing (CT) in complex settings

To further enhance contact tracing, we are developing a more localised model. This will utilise the provision of allocated Contact Tracing leads from the national centre to work on a regional or local level, supported by our locally trained colleagues. This will further ensure vital contacts are not being missed.

2.4.6 Data integration

A web-app is being developed to allow 'street level observations' to be logged which will provide useful intelligence about issues such as social gatherings. A demo version should be available in early September.

A new phase of this project has now been initiated. This will use a new MS Sandbox system and be populated with our Test & Trace data. This will have the benefits of being able to more systematically:

- undertake checks for screening multiple cases
- link cases with contacts
- run reports on anomalies
- show relationships between cases and contacts
- allow notes to be added
- allow people to see if cases have been checked

If there is a future requirement for local contact tracing, this system will be in place to meet our requirements.

2.4.7 Vulnerable people and diverse communities

Engagement work is being planned with our vulnerable communities – to better understand their perspectives, anxieties, and the barriers they face to maintaining social distancing and adhering to other preventive measures for example, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, the wearing of face masks, to getting tested if they develop symptoms, and to safely self-isolate if they are identified as either a COVID-19 case or a close contact of a case.

We have identified officers who actively engage and meet regularly with people in the various vulnerable groups and will be providing a training session outlining the engagement, methodology and timescales.

The engagement will take the form of a conversation guided by questions on a one to one basis or in small socially distanced groups.

Once completed, we will be able to better support people from our most vulnerable communities to either prevent an outbreak or to effectively manage an outbreak if that occurs.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider the report and note the work undertaken to date by the Health Protection and Outbreak Management Group, and the planned next steps to ensure we prevent outbreaks of COVID-19 and respond effectively and early to emerging outbreaks.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Successful prevention and management of local outbreaks is vital to break the chains of COVID-19 transmission and enable people to return to and maintain a more normal way of life.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

- 5.1 Financial implications associated with the councils Covid-19 response and recovery are being monitored by OCEG

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

6.1 Implications and risks associated with Covid-19 are being monitored constantly and mitigations being implemented as necessary

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

7.1 A council-wide approach to assessing the impact of Covid-19 is being developed

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

8.1 Ongoing consultation with a range of partners and key stakeholders are integral to our local response to Covid-19; both the OCEG and the HPOM are system-wide partnerships.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes the Outbreak Prevention and Management activity as outlined in the report.

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