

## NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

### HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

## OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL UPDATE

### 1.0 OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on:
  - The implications of the government's living with Covid plan.
  - Development of Greater Lincolnshire public health's living safely with Covid-19 plan.
  - Progress report against the six key themes from the Local Outbreak Prevention and Management plan (LOMP).

### 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 21 February the government published their living with Covid-19 plan for removing the remaining legal restrictions while protecting people most vulnerable to Covid-19 and maintaining resilience. This report summarises the key implications of the government's plan.
- 2.2 North Lincolnshire's Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) is based on six key themes which are essential to preventing outbreaks, breaking viral transmission and reducing prevalence of Covid-19. The implementation of LOMP is overseen by the Health Protection and Outbreak Management Group (HPOM). This report provides a 'position statement' on progress against each of the key themes, based on the latest HPOM meeting of 4 March.
- 2.3 Following the recent inception of Greater Lincolnshire public health team, work has now commenced on developing a collective approach to health protection. The Greater Lincolnshire model provides more opportunity to improve capacity, resilience and use of specialist resources across the combined authorities. This report updates members on the key features of the Greater Lincolnshire plan.

### 3.0 THE GOVERNMENT'S LIVING WITH COVID-19 PLAN

- 3.1.1 The government published the 'Living with Covid Plan' on 21 February. The plan outlines when the remaining legal restrictions will be removed.

3.1.2 The strategy marks a shift in approach to how England responds to the pandemic away from legal restrictions to one based on personal responsibility to enable the country to return to some form of normality. The Government's plan recognises that the Covid-19 virus has not gone away therefore surveillance systems and plans for contingency measures will remain in place.

3.1.3 The Government's objectives in the next phase of the Covid-19 response are to enable the country to:

- Manage Covid-19 like other respiratory illnesses.
- Minimise mortality and retain the ability to respond if a new variant emerges
- Ensure the health and social care system does not become overwhelmed

3.1.4 To meet these objectives, the Government will structure its ongoing response around four key principles:

1. **Living with Covid-19:** removing domestic restrictions while encouraging safer behaviours.
2. **Protecting people most vulnerable to Covid-19:** including deploying targeted testing.
3. **Maintaining resilience:** ongoing surveillance, contingency planning, and the ability to reintroduce key capabilities such as mass vaccination and testing in an emergency.
4. **Securing innovations and opportunities:**

## 3.2 Key changes and implementation dates:

- **From 21 February:**
  - Removing the guidance for staff and students in most education and childcare settings to undertake twice weekly asymptomatic testing.
- **From 24 February:**
  - Remove the legal requirement to self-isolate following a positive test; people testing positive will be advised to isolate.
  - Fully vaccinated close contacts and people aged under 18-year-old will no longer be required to test or isolate.
  - End of self-isolation support; end routine contact tracing.
  - End legal requirement for employees to inform their employers about positive tests.
- **From 24 March:**
  - Remove Covid provisions within statutory sick pay.
- **From 1 April**
  - No provision for free universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England (testing will still be available for high-risk groups and social care staff).
  - Remove the current guidance on voluntary Covid-status certification and Covid-19 passports.
  - The Government will update guidance setting out the ongoing steps that

people with Covid-19 should take to minimise contact with other people.

- **From 1st April (workplace specific)**
  - Guidance to the public and to businesses will be consolidated in line with public health advice.
  - Removal of the health and safety requirement for every employer to explicitly consider Covid-19 in their risk assessments (employers should continue to consider the needs of vulnerable employees).
  - The existing set of ‘working safely’ guidance will be replaced with new public health guidance.

## 4.0 GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO LIVING WITH COVID

- 4.1 In response to the government’s strategy, Greater Lincolnshire Public Health have drafted a ‘Living Safely with Covid-19’ Plan. The plan recognises that, while COVID-19 rates have fallen considerably, the disease has not gone away. There is still a risk of further waves of transmission because of waning immunity and/or the emergence of new variants and mutations. The plan builds on valuable lessons learnt over the pandemic and formalises arrangements for identifying and preventing diseases, controlling diseases, providing resources and providing specialist expertise to meet current and future demands.

## 5.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LOMP THEMES (based on HPOM meeting 4 March)

### 5.1 Care Homes

Whilst around half of all care homes in North Lincolnshire are affected by at least one Covid case, the majority of cases relate to staff members. The most important measure is the risk of harm to residents and link to hospitals. Currently, the vast majority of care homes do not have any COVID positive residents which suggests that infection prevention control measures, are working effectively. We are waiting national guidance to be updated on visiting and testing within care homes

### 5.2 Educational Settings

The number of pupils and staff members testing positive has significantly decreased since January and we have not experienced a spike in cases following schools reopening after half term. In terms of prevention, 61% of 12-15 year-olds have received their first Covid vaccine, this is above the average for Humber, Coast & Vale. The public health team continues to work with schools around infection prevention control, but demand for support has decreased with reduction in cases.

### 5.3 Local Community Testing and Contract Tracing

Nationally, from 24 February, routine contact tracing will end. Contacts will no longer be required to self-isolate or advised to take daily tests. In view of this local contact tracing provision has been stood-down, but can be reactivated if required. Collection of LFD test kit levels remain for a period of time in 17 venues. LFT test will no longer be free, except for certain vulnerable groups of people.

#### **5.4 Community Update**

Community engagement is still active, especially in terms of testing and vaccinations. However, as cases have decreased, there has been less demand for volunteer support and volunteers have started to support other non-Covid priorities.

#### **5.6 Vaccination Program**

Over 100,500 booster vaccinations have been administered across North Lincolnshire. The Scunthorpe Vaccination Centres continues to offer booked and walk-in appointments and outreach sessions continue to take place 2 days a week. Clinics continue within PCN sites for vaccination to the clinically at risk 5-11 age cohort, and children within this age group who reside within a household where someone is immunosuppressed. We are continuing to plan for the next steps for the vaccination programme.

#### **5.7 High Risk Settings**

The test and trace data sources used to proactively respond to outbreaks in workplaces have ceased due to that element of work being discontinued. However, we continue to receive reports from some businesses directly. In line with falling Covid rates, cases within businesses have also continued to decline. We continuing to liaise with UKHSA to monitor possible local outbreaks. The statutory responsibility and funding are now with UKHSA.

### **6.0 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

6.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider this report and note:

- The government's strategy to remove the remaining Covid-19 restrictions.
- The work undertaken by Greater Lincolnshire Public Health's team to develop a 'living with Covid-19' plan.
- Progress by HPOM to deliver the themes within the local outbreak management plan.

### **7.0 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

7.1 The work undertaken by HPOM ensures that effective arrangements are in place to help reduce the impact of Covid-19 on our communities and, in particular, vulnerable people. A clear focus on protecting the most vulnerable means that we are reducing harm and reducing impact on the healthcare system.

7.2 The development of a Greater Lincolnshire living safely with covid plan will create effective economies of scale by combining the skills, knowledge and resources from across all three local authorities. This will improve the resilience of each authority and provide a more robust approach to business continuity and outbreak and prevention.

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

8.1 None

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

9.1 None

**10.0 OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

10.1 Not relevant at this stage.

**11.0 OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

11.1 Not relevant for this report

**12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

12.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board notes:

- Implication of the government's strategy to remove the remaining Covid-19 restrictions
- The work undertaken by Greater Lincolnshire Public Health's team to write a 'living with Covid-19' plan
- Progress by HPOM to deliver the themes within the local outbreak management plan

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