



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

18th January 2021

REPORT TITLE:	COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Committee with an update on surveillance data and key areas of development in relation to Wirral's COVID-19 response and delivery of the Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan.

This matter affects all wards within the Borough; it is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Adult Social Care and Health Committee are recommended to note the contents of the report, the progress made to date and to support the ongoing COVID-19 response.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 This report gives an overview of how we will work to Keep Wirral well and protect residents from the impact of COVID-19.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 22 May 2020, the government asked all Councils to develop local COVID-19 Outbreak plans. Wirral published its Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan in June 2020, setting out:
- how we will prevent transmission of COVID-19 within the community
 - how we will ensure we have an effective and coordinated local approach to managing COVID-19 outbreaks across different settings within the Borough
 - how we will ensure vulnerable people are protected
 - how we will link with national and regional systems to ensure we get maximum benefit for the population of Wirral.
- 3.2 In December 2020, we published an update to this plan highlighting the progress that has been made to date along with a dynamic strategy for how we will continue to protect our communities from the impacts of COVID-19, as well as the wider effects on the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of Wirral residents. The updated plan can be found on the Wirral Council website: [Outbreak Plan Dec 2020.pdf \(wirral.gov.uk\)](#)
- 3.3 Currently we are again facing a challenging picture in relation to COVID-19 both nationally and locally. We undertake daily and weekly surveillance to understand the local picture – Up to date information on COVID-19 in Wirral is available here: [COVID-19 statistics for Wirral | www.wirral.gov.uk](#)
- 3.4 Due to Coronavirus cases rising rapidly across the country and growing pressure on the NHS the Prime Minister announced on the 4th January, that the country would be put back into a national lockdown. Details of Current National Guidance is available here: [National lockdown: Stay at Home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 3.5 **Wirral Response to COVID-19**

A summary of key progress against the priority actions outlined within the Updated Wirral COVID-19 Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan is provided in the table below;

Priority	Progress to date
1) Effective Surveillance <i>Ensure access to the right local data and</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established and embedded a local surveillance system to capture local outbreak data and provide targeted support to a variety of settings through Wirral's COVID-19 Hub, with an improved approach through Microsoft Dynamics software currently in development.

<i>intelligence to inform local activity to prevent and manage outbreak</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented a local information system bringing together regional and local data that provides a greater understanding of what is happening in Wirral, providing intelligence to inform key decisions when responding to COVID-19. Undertaken daily and weekly surveillance at a local level to understand the epidemiology of current situations and to appropriately direct control measures, community engagement activity and target communications.
2) Governance and Accountability <i>Establish robust governance structures for decision making</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our emergency response governance system, which oversees the Outbreak Plan and its delivery, is now fully embedded. This thread of governance and accountability works across local government teams, and includes work with Liverpool City Region neighbours, community organisations and NHS partners.
3) Engagement and Communication <i>Build trust and participation through effective community engagement and communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wirral's Engagement Strategy and Action Plan has looked to recognise and support the work done by business, community and faith organisations and local people, and to gather insight to inform proactive action. Over 540 local people have signed up to the Community Champions programme. Wirral was the first local authority to establish a system wide COVID Community Champions model, and as a result the Local Government Association (LGA) has invited Wirral to speak at a national event for Councils to highlight the great work undertaken so far. We have worked with local community leaders to establish a black, Asian and minority ethnic engagement group as well as producing a range of communication materials in suitable formats for our diverse local population. Our Community Connector service, working in collaboration with Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, has delivered over 30,000 leaflets to areas with high incidence rates with restriction and support information.
4) High Risk Settings and Communities <i>Identify and support high risk workplaces, locations and communities to prevent and manage outbreaks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wirral COVID-19 Outbreak Hub has been established to prevent and manage outbreaks of COVID-19 across all settings within the borough. Daily multi-agency meetings are held to review case data and share key information, with weekly meetings held to evaluate longer-term themes and issues relating to high risk settings and to proactively provide support where needed. We have increased the specialist infection prevention and control team working with care homes. We have established a dedicated school support team to provide timely advice and guidance for single or multiple cases.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have conducted compliance visits to high risk premises – with around 900 COVID-19 compliance visits having been completed as of December 2020. • We will continue to work with communities, organisations and groups to respond to the needs of local communities particularly at risk of COVID-19 and to safeguard vulnerable people.
5) Local Testing <i>Manage deployment of local testing to ensure access for the entire population</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have successfully deployed five local testing sites across the borough in Liscard, Bebington, Birkenhead, Bidston and Heswall to ensure everyone can access local testing in a timely manner, prioritising front line health and social care key workers. • We have provided an outreach service for vulnerable groups to access testing and deployed mobile testing sites to accommodate outbreaks to ensure local, timely testing to high risk service areas – with home tests delivered for vulnerable groups accessing respite services in partnership with Wirral's Community Trust. • We have developed a Community Testing Programme utilising rapid lateral flow testing technology for people without COVID-19 symptoms. In addition to establishing Four Wirral Community Testing Sites (in operation at the Floral Pavilion, Birkenhead Market and Eastham and Greasby Libraries), we have developed a distributed model for at risk settings to undertake lateral flow tests for their staff and residents and are currently developing a mobile community outreach model to target high risk settings, locations and communities and across the Borough. • Through collaboration with NHS Wirral CCG, and Wirral's Primary Care Networks, we are supporting the role out of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme in Wirral through the provision of sites/locations and resource for vaccinations on a mass scale for Wirral residents.

<p>6) Local Contact Tracing <i>Deploy local contact tracing to complement regional and national capability</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed locally supported contact tracing to enable us to reach people who the national system have been unable to contact, embedding this strategy within the key principles of 'Find, Test, Trace, Isolate, Support' to ensure effectiveness of each of these key pillars of the COVID-19 response. • This local contact tracing offer will be flexible in order to meet evolving local need, reaching high levels of cases and contacts and with no individual, group, or community underserved by the contact tracing system. • Work is ongoing to further develop this local contact tracing system, working with Public Health England and the national Test and Trace system. This will increase the numbers contacted and the effectiveness of the system to reduce transmission through isolation.
<p>7) Supporting Vulnerable People and Communities <i>Support vulnerable people to self-isolate and ensure that services meet the needs of diverse communities locally.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have launched Wirral InfoBank to help match residents with needs to sources of local support, with the public making thousands of online searches per week. • We have established a group consisting of over 100 local community groups and organisations working in partnership with the local authority to deliver a range of initiatives to support local communities. • We have co-ordinated funding for local community organisations to be supported as well as facilitating the local response to support clinically vulnerable individuals with food deliveries, prescription collection and wellbeing calls. • We have provided financial support to individuals to enable them to isolate without experiencing hardship.

3.6 Vaccination Programme

Cheshire & Merseyside have commenced delivery of the mass vaccination programme, with over 7,500 vaccines delivered to the highest priority cohort during the first week of operations. This group consists of people aged over 80 years old, and frontline staff, caring for the most vulnerable in residential care homes. Vaccine sites across the primary care network, and additional hospital hubs, will continue to significantly increase capacity.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The delivery of the Outbreak Control Plan is funded via national grant funding as follows:
- Test and Trace Support Service Grant of £2,733,018 awarded to Wirral Council in June 2020.
 - Test and Trace grant funding of £2,701,000 received by Wirral Council when the Liverpool City Region was placed under the Tier 3 'very high' COVID-19 alert level restrictions in October 2020.

- Funding of £2,137,405 for Community Testing agreed as part of the approved Liverpool City Region Business case in December 2020

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. New powers have been provided to support enforcement activities which have been reviewed and appropriately utilised locally.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 This report is for information to Members and as a result there are no resource implications.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 It should be noted that data relating to case rates, hospitalisation and operational management of the COVID-19 response is frequently changing and as a result, some of the information contained within this report is likely to be outdated by the time of publication.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 No direct public consultation or engagement has been undertaken in relation to this report. However, community engagement is a key priority in ensuring an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. Equality considerations were a key component of the actions noted in 3.4 of this report, however there are no further direct equality implications arising..

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct environment and climate implications arising from this report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Julie Webster
Director of Public Health,
Wirral Council
juliewebster@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan December 2020

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Adult Social Care and Health Committee	13th October 2020 19th November 2020