

Appendix 1: Local Outbreak Management Plan Priorities, Progress to Date and Future Plans, June 2022

Local Outbreak Management Plan Priorities
1) Effective Surveillance <i>Ensure access to timely local data and intelligence to inform local activity to prevent and manage outbreaks.</i>
<p>Daily multi-agency surveillance meetings continue to be held locally in order to understand the epidemiology of current situations and to appropriately direct prevention and control measures, community engagement activity and target communications. Although some aspects of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Situational Explorer Portal have been withdrawn following changes nationally, we continue to use daily case data and local intelligence to identify likely transmission hotspots and multiple cases at high-risk settings. Regular OIRR (Outbreak Identification and Rapid Response) review around this data continues to be undertaken on a daily basis to identify organisations that may require local support.</p> <p>We continue to utilise a local surveillance system to capture timely local outbreak data and provide support to a variety of settings through Wirral's Outbreak Hub. The Microsoft Dynamics case management platform has led to improvements in the collection and reporting of data captured from local settings, as well as proactive identification of exposures and sources of potential outbreaks – with the system scope now broadened to capture details of other infections alongside COVID-19. The Hub's prioritisation criteria continues to be reviewed in response to changes in national legislation and changes in guidance, to ensure capacity is well utilised and directed to support the highest risk settings. Wirral has also been involved in a number of pilot developments around the Microsoft Dynamics system, including utilisation of the platform for vaccine tracing and welfare support.</p> <p>In collaboration with Wirral CCG colleagues, we have also utilised local intelligence to allow us to identify inequalities in vaccination uptake which has allowed further targeted engagement to take place. This process has proved particularly valuable in supporting social care settings to encourage staff vaccination. We will continue to ensure soft intelligence and community engagement feedback is reviewed in conjunction with quantitative data to direct resources appropriately.</p>
2) Engagement and Communication <i>Build trust and participation through effective community engagement and communication.</i>
<p>Colleagues across the Council's intelligence, engagement and communications continue to meet monthly to plan and review activity, examining data, setting parameters for engagement and feeding back insight to inform local and targeted communications messaging. These meetings are also attended by NHS Wirral CCG and third sector representatives to ensure a whole system approach to community engagement.</p>

Wirral's Community Champions network has enlisted 721 local people, with recent improvements to the regular newsletter meaning that it is now easier for the Champions to access and utilise COVID-19 resources.

An evaluation of the Community Champions programme was initiated in Summer 2021, facilitated by Hitch Marketing, as part of the LGA behavioural science project evaluating the effectiveness of the Council's Community Champions role in affecting behaviour change. As COVID-19 restrictions came to an end in April 2022, the programme was reviewed, and a final survey was circulated to the network of Champions to gain insight on their thoughts as well as communicating the long-term goal to continue to build relationships and networks across the borough. 104 Community Champions responded, with some incredibly valuable and positive feedback about the impact of the programme to date. A follow up survey will also be promoted to the general public around behaviours relating to COVID-19. More information on the Community Champions Programme can be found here: [Keep Wirral Well during COVID-19 | www.wirral.gov.uk](https://www.wirral.gov.uk/keep-wirral-well-during-covid-19)

3) Higher-Risk Settings, Communities and Locations

Identify and support high risk workplaces, locations and communities to prevent and manage outbreaks.

The Local Outbreak Hub continues to work closely with local partners to prevent and manage outbreaks in high-risk settings with a robust daily review process and use of local intelligence to proactively target settings at higher risk of outbreaks.

The Hub works in close partnership with Wirral Intelligence Service and community Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) colleagues to ensure positive cases at health and social care settings are identified and supported at the earliest opportunity. In addition to daily case management meetings which act as an opportunity to discuss cases with IPC colleagues, the Hub team continue to support IPC by providing guidance and advice to domiciliary care providers across the Borough.

The Hub School Support service continues to work with Children's Services to provide dedicated support for educational settings in managing COVID-19. Due to recent changes in national guidance resulting in reduced demand, the telephone school support line was stood down on 11th May 2022 – however support continues to be available to educational settings through a monitored mailbox. Since the start of the new school term in September 2021, 532 advice requests and case notifications from educational settings have been managed by the COVID-19 Hub (as at 19/05/22); with the team assisting school settings with a range of support measures from additional controls, to helping reduce transmission, to testing advice. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Schools continue to be supported via the UKHSA escalation process.

The Hub's engagement team continue to meet regularly with stakeholders from across the borough, attending Council meetings as well as partner forums such as the Youth Collective Forum and Digital Enablement and Choice Group to gain insight and promote key messages.

Having undertaken proactive work with businesses and other organisations in early 2022, the Hub's Prevention and Control team have built strong relationships with several local employers and close contact businesses. This proactive support and advice has enabled these organisations to continue to work safely and autonomously, with a number still contacting the Hub to request additional support where required.

There is a co-ordinated health and social care response; overseeing capacity, trends, resources, and updated guidance, leading the partnership across the system including voluntary sector, to respond to emerging pressures and system needs. We continue to build on learning to date and work in partnership to ensure our health and care system is able to deliver high quality COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 care.

4) Supporting vulnerable and underserved communities

Proactively support individuals and communities, ensuring services across test, trace, isolate and support systems are accessible and meet the diverse needs of our local communities.

We have maintained excellent community links with over 100 local community groups and organisations throughout the pandemic. The Humanitarian partnership established at the outset of the pandemic has proven extremely valuable in connecting people and providing support for our clinically extremely vulnerable residents. The COVID-19 Humanitarian Cell continues to operate as the Community, Voluntary and Faith Sector Forum – maintaining a focus on how individuals and communities can continue to be supported whilst 'Living with COVID-19'.

The COVID-19 Hub's Engagement Team has continued to focus on digital enablement for those members of the community who are excluded, working with voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise representatives as well as the health sector to deliver a joined up digital support offer. We continue to work with under-represented and disproportionately impacted groups to promote and ensure ease of access to health and social care support. The team of Black and Ethnic Minority Link workers are proactively supporting our local ethnic minority communities and working with local leaders to tackle vaccine hesitancy and promote key messages around health protection.

We plan to maintain communication with our clinically extremely vulnerable residents and continue to ensure that they can access a wide range of support where required. In addition to this, we will be conducting a comprehensive asset mapping exercise of all local areas to ensure that Wirral Infobank (<https://www.wirralinfobank.co.uk/>) contains most relevant and up to date information for residents to access for support.

5) Vaccination

Support the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, identifying and tackling inequalities in vaccine coverage.

Wirral Council, in partnership with Wirral CCG and Primary Care Networks,

continue to ensure an effective delivery model to support the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Wirral.

As of 18th May 2022, 84.6% of the eligible population of Wirral had received the 1st dose of the vaccine, with 80.5% having received both doses. 82.8% have received their booster vaccine (Eligible numbers for the booster vaccine include all residents aged 18+ who are more than 3 months from the date of their 2nd vaccination).

To ensure the vaccine is targeted and uptake is maximised in areas of deprivation and groups at increased risk of illness and mortality actions are coproduced based on local and national data, insight and evidence. The plans continue to reflect the needs of the local community, the socially excluded and socio-economically disadvantaged and those with protected characteristics. Collaboration will continue with key partners to continue to offer first, second dose and booster vaccination to all eligible residents. Broader efforts to increase overall uptake across all cohorts will include walk in appointments and targeted communications as part of the NHS 'Evergreen' offer.

The Public Health team are working with NHS partners and other Council colleagues to develop a regular planned outreach vaccination programme, building on the learning from the summer outreach and pop-up vaccination clinics. These will take place in settings such as retail, sport and leisure, with walk-in vaccinations available. Sessions will take place at varying times and days to ensure a flexible offer for residents. Outreach will be continuously evaluated to ensure that plans are meeting the needs of the borough. Targeted communications and engagement are underway through the Council, CCG and partners, including engagement in local areas in advance of the pop-up sessions to market the offer to local people.

The Council has worked in collaboration with Wirral CCG to establish a vaccine tracing programme to provide enhanced support to Primary Care Networks (PCNs) from the Local Outbreak Hub Team. The Hub have received training to support the follow up with eligible patients who are recorded as being unvaccinated and to target those unvaccinated residents who are most vulnerable. This programme is a 'call and follow up' model, with patients prioritised by cohort, and a holistic wellbeing approach to calls being implemented. The Hub team have been able to make direct bookings for patients, as well as providing further information and guidance to those who are nervous about receiving the vaccine – in addition to identifying and resolving access barriers.

The Council-led programme went 'live' on 4th April 2022, with a project team, including CCG and social prescribing leads, established to oversee the mobilisation and roll out of the pilot. Vaccine Tracing calls are currently being prioritised by vulnerability – starting with those patients who are 65+ with long term conditions and co-morbidities, focusing initially on the 5 wards with lowest vaccination uptake. This is a complex cohort of patients.

In April 2022, 2,021 people were called by the team with 1,280 of these calls answered. Of the answered calls, 21 patients made an appointment over the

phone for a vaccination, 39 agreed to book themselves or attend a walk-in clinic and 8 requested a home visit. Alongside this, 24 people requested further information on the vaccine or their own specific concerns and received support from the Hub team.

The following table summarises the COVID-19 vaccination uptake across staff working in Wirral's CQC registered care homes, as of 19th May 2022. Work is ongoing to continue to increase uptake for this cohort.

Total Staff 3806			Total Agency/Bank Staff 150		
1 st Dose	2 nd Dose	Booster	1st Dose	2nd Dose	Booster
3,728 98.0%	3,709 97.5%	1,981 52.0%	105 70.0%	100 66.7%	34 22.7%

6) Testing

Identify cases of COVID-19 by ensuring access to testing for those with and without symptoms and for outbreak management.

In February 2022, national government announced the conclusion of the Targeted Community Testing programme which had been operational since December 2020 in Wirral following the setup and handover from the military personnel. With the end of the national programme, funding and test kit supply on 31st March 2022, Wirral's Community Testing Service concluded, carrying out the last assisted asymptomatic tests and distributing home test kits to residents and communities from various locations.

Wirral's testing service has effectively managed local capacity for Lateral Flow and PCR testing for the most vulnerable and high-risk cohorts during a period of significant increased demand, helping to ensure essential workers were prioritised and to manage local supply, due to national shortage/delays. Care homes and NHS partners were supported by the Council's local testing service to supply required test kits to help keep staff and residents safe. Local large clusters and outbreaks were contained by a responsive local testing service, carrying out testing on location to help identify cases, and break chains of transmission.

Between December 2020 and March 2022, Wirral's Community Testing team have carried out 183,655 assisted tests and distributed 2,144,363 test kits – breaking the chains of transmission, reducing the spread of infection, and saving lives in the borough.

7) Contact Tracing

Effectively deploy local contact tracing to reduce the onward transmission of COVID-19.

Local Contact Tracing has now ceased as a result of changes in the national COVID-19 response and transition into the Living with COVID-19 plan, however

welfare calls to positive cases continue to be undertaken by the Local Outbreak Hub team.

All established local contact tracing governance and operational processes are documented as part of the Hub's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and could therefore be quickly and effectively re-implemented, in the event of a surge requirement in the future.

Wirral's contact tracing performance summary between October 2020 and March 2022 highlights the impact of the local team, with 77,746 (83.1%) of Wirral's total cases of COVID-19 completing their contact tracing journey.

8) Support for Self-Isolation

Ensure access to support, including where appropriate financial support, to ensure people who need to self-isolate can do so.

Despite changes to national legislation around contact tracing and self-isolation, the Local Outbreak Hub has continued to proactively support local people who are self-isolating because of a positive test, with case data shared through Wirral Intelligence Service (WIS). Practical support continues to be available for residents that are self-isolating via the Community Connectors.

In April 2022, 204 positive local cases were successfully contacted, with 40 people declaring a support need to the local contact tracing team – some cases were given direct advice and signposting around support to isolate with others being referred to the Community Connector Team. Of the 40 cases declaring a support need, 34 went on to receive assistance following triage, predominantly with shopping assistance, fuel support and prescription delivery.

9) Responding to Variants of Concern (VOC)

Develop robust plans and working with local, regional and national partners to enable surge capacity, to respond to local outbreaks and VOC.

Local outbreak and consequence management processes are now well established and continue to reflect the increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant by triggering a multi-agency response where required in order to put actions into place as quickly as possible to control and manage the virus. These processes have been retained despite the change in national guidance and escalation processes to UKHSA contacts, the Department of Health and Social Care and North-West local authority colleagues are in place, to ensure we have the most effective local processes in place for managing outbreaks linked to a VOC.

10) Compliance, Enforcement and Living with COVID-19 (COVID secure)

Work collaboratively to guide, inform and support local compliance with regulations and restrictions, support local enforcement where necessary, and plan for gradual re-opening of wider society.

We have an established system in place to ensure effective partnership working

and communication between the Local Outbreak Hub and local Environmental Health and Enforcement teams, to promote and support safe working practices across Wirral. We have monitored the operations and compliance of local businesses including responding to reports of non-compliance across hospitality, close contact services, supermarkets, retail, and other premises.

As legislation changes, we move to increased emphasis on personal responsibility and health and safety requirements, as well as the continued importance of a risk-based approach to learning to live and operate safely during COVID-19 and being prepared to adjust plans if necessary.

Council Health and Safety, HR, Enforcement, Licensing and Communications teams, as well as wider partners continue to work with the Local Outbreak Hub to promote awareness for residents, staff, businesses, community groups, around the importance of maintaining up to date health and safety risk assessments that are regularly reviewed, to ensure safe working environments.

11) Governance, accountability, and resourcing

Establish robust governance structures for decision making with clear accountability and effective resource use.

We will continue to actively participate across the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire & Merseyside forums to work collaboratively, and share learning and best practice, as requirements of the COVID-19 response have evolved.

Plans are in place for the Wirral COVID-19 Hub to be retained until September 2022, with a restructured Health Protection service in place post-September in order to build resilience in our experienced and established local teams. We plan to keep our local capacity and capabilities under constant review, as well as continuing daily intelligence monitoring and taking a flexible and agile approach, to ensure we have a sustainable local system throughout the next phase of the pandemic.