

Appendix 2: Wider Health Protection Work

Below are examples of the proactive and preventative work undertaken to date by the Wirral Outbreak Hub team beyond the direct COVID-19 response, across the wider Wirral health protection priorities.

Vaccine Tracing

Vaccine Tracing calls are being carried out by the team. Line lists are provided to the team 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.

Supporting Environmental Health colleagues in undertaking Alternative Enforcement Strategy AES (Food Hygiene Project)

This project aims to focus specialist environmental health resources on those food businesses which present the greatest risk by utilising Hub colleagues to undertake inspection questionnaires for completion with low-risk businesses over the telephone. As of the 27th May the team have undertaken 246 AES interventions with low-risk food businesses. This has ensured that local businesses have the most up to date information about food handling operations therefore reducing the number of on-site inspections that may need to take place.

Kinder Chocolate / Salmonella Outbreak

Creating joint working opportunities, the team are providing support to Environmental Health by undertaking spot checks of local food premises in respect of the Salmonella Typhimurium outbreak associated with Kinder Chocolate. The Food Standards Authority (FSA) are suggesting that there may still be products on the shelves in retail shops which should have been withdrawn/recalled.

Nationally children have been unwell and some hospitalised as a result of the outbreak and the FSA are therefore asking that we undertake checks within retail premises. The team have visited nearly 300 local businesses and found recalled products within 64 of these premises. Following the visit the product was removed from sale.

TB Project, “Not Every cough is Covid”

Since April 2022, the hub team are carrying out this project in order to raise awareness of TB, including advising on the common symptoms and the actions to prevent, control and treat the infection. This involves contacting hostels and high-risk housing settings as well as third sector organisations, who support vulnerable people who may be more at risk of contracting TB. An initial email is sent out to managers of settings to introduce the project and give an overview of TB which is then followed up by a call from the team to complete a pro forma to gather further information on the setting and their current knowledge and practices around TB.

Welfare calls

There is no longer a legal requirement for people with coronavirus (COVID-19) infection to self-isolate, however the public health advice is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test result. In order to support and encourage Wirral residents to stay at home, the contract tracing team has been undertaking welfare calls. The service has been provided by the team since April 2021 and it has changed its scope to be in line with new 'Living with Covid' guidance.

Improving hydration to reduce avoidable urinary tract infections, inappropriate antibiotic prescribing and hospital admissions among local vulnerable residents.

Wirral CCG are high prescribers of antibiotics for urinary tract infection (UTI), while also having one of the highest (5th) UTI admissions rates in England. The team are working in partnership with Antimicrobial Stewardship Lead and Community Infection Prevention and Control team to deliver a Hydration project across Wirral. The aim is to increase awareness of dehydration and improve hydration, particularly among elderly people. Keeping hydrated is a simple way to decrease the risk of Urinary Tract Infections. The project is expected to be run during summer and target settings such as day centres, retirement houses and third sector organisations.