

WIRRAL HEALTH PROTECTION CHALLENGES: A CALL TO ACTION

Health protection is a set of functions which acts to protect individuals, groups and populations from the impact of infectious diseases, environmental hazards as well as ensuring we are prepared for and respond to emergencies. It is an essential part of achieving and maintaining good health for Wirral residents.

Protecting the public from hazards has a long history. As far back as the early 19th century Medical Officers of Health were implementing strategies aimed at improving environmental conditions, for example by providing clean drinking water, safe sewage disposal, and safer working conditions.

This long history can sometimes lead to the assumption that the control of infectious diseases and environmental hazards are needed less now than in the past. This is not the case.

Developments in the way we improve the health of individuals, communities and populations must be accompanied by a renewed focus on the basics of how we protect our communities from infectious diseases and environmental hazards. In addition we must adapt and respond to new threats such as antimicrobial resistance and a rise in healthcare associated infections.

No single agency can address this issue in isolation protecting the health of the people of Wirral from infectious diseases and environmental hazards is everybody's business.

This report is a call to action for Healthy Wirral Partners to prioritise and work as a system to ensure we have robust health protection arrangements in place and deliver against identified health protection priorities.

WHY FOCUS ON HEALTH PROTECTION?

- It is a cause of significant morbidity and mortality in Wirral
- The harm caused is avoidable and preventable
- It contributes to health inequalities. Many infectious diseases and environmental hazards often affect our most vulnerable residents; children and older people, people living in less affluent areas.
- Health protection interventions are cost-saving, both to health services as well as the wider economy.

HEALTH PROTECTION PRIORITIES FOR WIRRAL 2018-2020

We have reviewed local data and this has highlighted three priorities which we consider require sustained action across the health and care system. These are:

- 1) The development of a system wide approach to Infection Prevention and Control in order to reduce the incidence of healthcare associated infections
- 2) Reducing antimicrobial resistance
- 3) Reducing the variation and uptake of cancer screening and national immunisation programmes.

These priorities provide a targeted focus on key challenges where improvement is required or needs are greatest. In addition, we will continue to assure that statutory duties to protect health are discharged and that local organisations are resilient to threats to health through effective planning and preparation as well as being equipped to respond to incidents, outbreaks and emergencies.

The local health protection system must work as part of a broader network across Cheshire and Merseyside contributing to the development of health protection functions delivered by Public Health England and NHS England as well as working with other local areas to maximise our resources, reduce duplication and share best practice.

1) The development of a system wide approach to Infection Prevention and Control in order to reduce the incidence of healthcare associated infections

<p>Case for change</p>	<p>Health care Acquired Infections (HCAIs) pose a serious risk to patients, staff and visitors. They also incur significant costs to the Wirral health and care system and cause significant morbidity and mortality to those infected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCAIs lead to people spending an average of 11 days in hospital - 2.5 times longer than non-infected patients. • Patients with a HCAI are 7 times more likely to die in the hospital than uninfected patients. <p>Preventing such avoidable infections will therefore improve patient outcomes and help reduce costs across the health and care economy.</p> <p>Local Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Services work across health and social care setting to reduce healthcare associated infections (HCAIs). However infection prevention control needs to be everybody's business.</p>
<p>Current performance</p>	<p>The Wirral health and care system currently faces several issues related to poor infection prevention and control practices:</p> <p>High rates of HCAIs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C. difficile rates for Wirral were higher than England and the North West for 2017/18 • E. coli rates for Wirral were higher than England and the North West for 2017/18 <p>Transmission in health and care settings in 2017-18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scabies outbreaks (Wirral University Teaching Hospital, four Care Homes) • Flu (approx. 1000 admissions during 2017/18) • Norovirus (ward and visitor closures) • Recurrent outbreaks of influenza and diarrhoea and vomiting in care homes • Carbapenem Resistant Gram Negative Bacteria (CRE) – during 2017/18 Wirral University Teaching Hospital was one of four North West Trusts with ongoing transmission.

<p>System Priorities</p>	<p>In order to reduce the incidence of healthcare associated infections (HCAI) we will ensure effective system wide infection prevention and control (IPC) measures are in place across the whole Wirral health and care economy. We will seek assurance that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Medical leadership for IPC has been identified (via a dedicated Primary Care/CCG Lead). ➤ Current WHCC commissioning arrangements are being utilised to prioritise the basics e.g. bare below the elbow, hand hygiene. ➤ Options for integrated Specialist IPC Services are being explored. ➤ A whole system communications campaign across health care providers to promote IPC basics has been developed under leadership of Directors of Nursing and Medical Directors. ➤ A self-assessment and improvement review has been undertaken and a local plan has been developed to reduce E. coli bloodstream infections ➤ A system approach for HCAI Post Infection Review has been developed and agreed to ensure improvements are embedded and sustained ➤ Infection prevention control practice requirements for care homes with a focus on Transfer 2 assess beds have been developed.
<p>Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observed reduction in Health care Acquired Infections • Reduction in transmission and outbreaks within health and care settings
<p>Accountable Lead/ Group</p>	<p>Wirral Infection Prevention and Control Forum</p>

2) REDUCING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

<p>Case for change</p>	<p>There are few public health issues of greater importance than antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in terms of impact on society.</p> <p>Unlike many other drugs used in medicine, the more we use antibiotics the less effective they become against their target organisms. Overuse or inappropriate use of antibiotics allows bacteria to develop resistance which can lead to infections that are increasingly difficult to treat. Infections caused by resistant microorganisms often fail to respond to the standard treatment, resulting in prolonged illness, higher health care expenditure, and a greater risk of death.</p> <p>Coupled to this, the development pipeline for new antibiotics is at an all-time low. We must therefore conserve the antibiotics we have left by using them optimally.</p>
<p>Current performance</p>	<p>Antibiotic prescribing in Wirral has reduced in recent years, however when compared to other areas Wirral still prescribes more antibiotics and more of these are broad spectrum antibiotics (the more we use these antibiotics the less effective they become against their target organisms).</p> <p>During 2017/18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wirral was ranked 40th (where 1 is the worst) out of 195 CCGs for antibiotic prescribing • Wirral was ranked 22nd (where 1 is the worst) out of 195 CCGs for broad spectrum antibiotic prescribing
<p>System Priorities</p>	<p>Preventing infections from occurring in the first place is one of the best ways to reduce the need to prescribe antibiotics and prevent antimicrobial resistance (AMR) – <i>See Priority 1: above</i>).</p> <p>In order to reduce antimicrobial resistance we will seek assurance that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Every Trust has an AMR action plan ➤ We have implemented back-up prescribing for the treatment of upper respiratory tract infections ➤ We have ensured consistent messages are given by all prescribers and all pharmacists. ➤ AMR awareness, stewardship and training is delivered to all

	<p>prescribers, non-medical prescribers and healthcare workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We have delivered public facing media campaigns to aid and inform about AMR e.g. European antibiotic awareness day in mid-November ➤ We have identified dedicated GP, microbiologist and pharmacist time to support AMR stewardship ➤ Primary and secondary care formularies align ➤ Every Trust has implemented the PHE Start Smart – Then Focus Toolkit ➤ Every GP practice is implementing TARGET (Treat Antibiotics Responsibly, Guidance, Education, Tools)
<p>Outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in antibiotic prescribing (all antibiotics) • Reductions in antibiotic prescribing (broad spectrum)
<p>Accountable Lead/ Group</p>	<p>Wirral AMR Strategy Group</p>

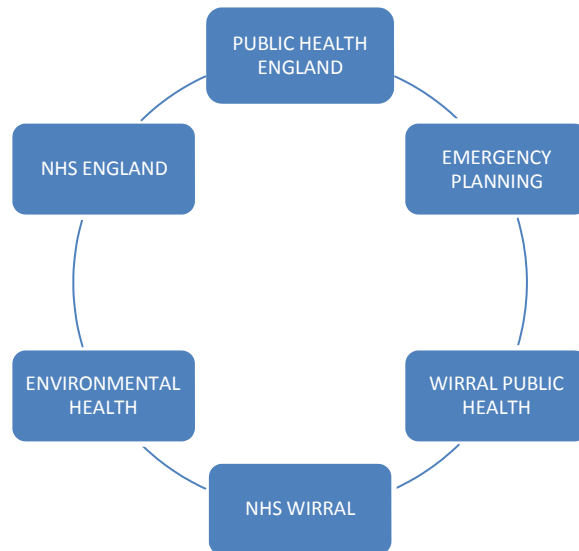
3) REDUCE VARIATION IN UPTAKE OF CANCER SCREENING AND NATIONAL IMMUNISATION PROGRAMMES

<p>Case for change</p>	<p>Screening is a process of identifying apparently healthy people who are at increased risk of a disease or condition. They can then be offered information, further tests or treatment. In England we have a range of screening programmes including for breast, cervical and bowel cancer, abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA), diabetic retinopathy, antenatal screening, and new-born screening.</p> <p>The national childhood vaccination programme protects children against diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, meningitis, mumps, measles and rubella. The annual flu vaccination programme offers free flu vaccination to primary school children, those over 65 years of age and those with a long-term health condition. Those over 65 are also offered protection from pneumonia and shingles via annual vaccinations.</p> <p>Screening and immunisations are cost effective and clinically effective approaches to improving population health. Both are key aspects of statutory requirement for the local health system and meeting nationally agreed coverage and uptake targets are an important indicator of quality.</p>
<p>Current Performance</p>	<p>Whilst on the whole uptake for both screening and immunisation across Wirral is in line with, or above, national average there is variation within the borough. Due to the effectiveness in improving health outcomes, inequalities in uptake and coverage exacerbates health inequalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancer screening uptake for Wirral in 2017 was 77.1% (breast), 72.8% (cervical) and 57.7% (bowel). Wirral performs better than the national average for breast and cervical screening, but performs slightly worse for bowel screening. • MMR uptake (both dose 1 and 2) has fallen below the 95% target for herd immunity. • For the 2017-18 flu season uptake was above the 75% target for vaccination of adults 65 years and over. However flu vaccine uptake among pregnant women, at risk groups and primary school children were all below targets. • There is variation in screening and immunisation uptake across GP practices within the borough

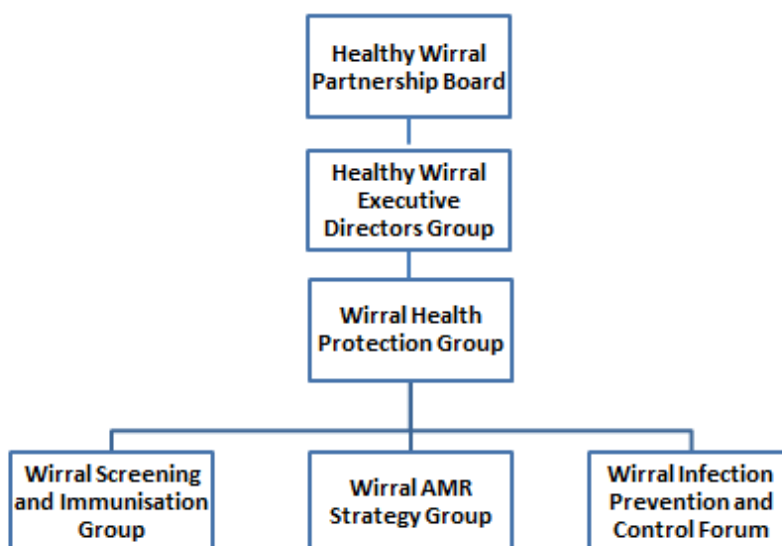
<p>System Priorities</p>	<p>In order to reduce variation in uptake of cancer screening and national immunisation programmes we will seek assurance that we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Developed a Screening and Immunisations Locality Plan for Wirral, identifying key actions and clarifying roles and responsibilities. Initial focus on improving bowel cancer screening, cervical cancer screening and 0-5 immunisations uptake rates. ➤ Developed screening and immunisation intelligence packs for the nine neighbourhood to allow practices to see their variation in relation to the local peer practices. ➤ Ensured all practices have screening and immunisation programme plans in place, and we have agreed processes for sharing and spreading best practice ➤ Developed and implemented a shared communications and marketing plan aimed at increasing the uptake of screening and immunisations and reducing inequality in uptake, taking account of national campaigns and agreed local priorities
<p>Outcome</p>	<p>Increased uptake and reduced variation by GP practice in Screening and immunisation rates</p>
<p>Accountable Lead/ Group</p>	<p>Wirral Screening and Immunisation Group</p>

ENSURING WE DELIVER OUR HEALTH PROTECTION PRIORITIES

The **Wirral Health Protection Group** has responsibility to ensure that Wirral has a robust health protection system which effectively controls and prevents population level health issues. Members of the local health protection system represented on the Wirral Health Protection Group include:



The governance arrangements for the Wirral health Protection Group are displayed below. Multi-agency groups will drive delivery against the three identified priorities. The Wirral Health Protection Group will escalate risks up to the Healthy Wirral Executive Directors Group and Healthy Wirral Partners Board as required.



To work effectively the Wirral Health Protection Group is dependent on the following:

- Comprehensive surveillance systems to identify threats and for preparing, planning and responding to health protection concerns and emergencies
- Access to robust data and intelligence at the right level/time
- Effective communications and marketing
- Information sharing between local partners
- Shared leadership and collaborative accountability
- Commitment to workforce training and development
- Tools and techniques to test plans
- Mobilisation of system resources, including staff, to support priorities
- Localised solutions tailored to community assets
- Priorities embedded into commissioning plans and contracts

HEALTH PROTECTION IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

No single agency can address these challenges in isolation nor can the Health Protection Group deliver these priorities independently. In order to deliver the action plans outlined for each of the three health protection priorities we need all Healthy Wirral partners to renew their focus upon these priorities and commit to action.