



16th March 2022

REPORT TITLE:	INFECTION PREVENTION CONTROL SERVICE
REPORT OF:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CONSULTANT IN PUBLIC HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for the extension of the enhanced Infection Prevention Control (IPC) service provided by Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust, to maintain increased capacity within the specialist community team to continue to effectively support local settings, in responding to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

It is proposed to utilise Contain Outbreak Management Funding to extend the enhanced IPC Service to cover the period 1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023. The Community IPC contract with Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust will be varied to reflect the additional requirements.

This funding will provide continuity of service, whilst enabling a period of transition, to enhance skills and experience across providers and settings and develop a more sustainable high standard of IPC for the future.

This action supports the Wirral Plan 2021-26 theme, Active and Healthy Lives.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Director of Public Health is recommended to approve additional Contain Outbreak Management Funding of £160,581.00 (1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023) to the substantive Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust Infection Prevention Control contract to sustain a continued enhanced level of support for settings, in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) was issued to Local Authorities for public health purposes in relation to COVID-19, to break the chain of transmission and protect the most vulnerable. COMF has been used throughout the pandemic to bolster existing community IPC services, in order to protect the most vulnerable within our society.
- 1.2 Local, regional and national data and surveillance show the continued prevalence of COVID-19 in our communities, and the clear ongoing risk to population health, particularly for the most vulnerable. Following the publication of the national Living with COVID strategy in February 2022, we know IPC will continue to play a key role in protecting the population, and particularly the most vulnerable, from the effects of COVID-19 alongside other infectious diseases.
- 1.3 Additional funding for IPC will ensure resources continue to be effectively utilised to support the management of COVID-19, in addition to ensuring resilience within the IPC service to maintain a system wide proactive and responsive approach, alongside the management of other infectious diseases, using lessons learnt from the last two years.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Extending this service reflects the ongoing need to support local settings with IPC support to prevent, control and manage the transmission of COVID-19, to protect the most vulnerable from the associated harms this causes to health, and prevent care system temporary closures due to infection control issues. The alternative option considered was not to provide additional funding for IPC. It was felt this would not provide high risk settings with sufficient IPC resource capacity. Therefore, this option was not recommended.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Following a tender exercise during 2021 Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust was awarded the Contract to deliver the Community IPC Service from 1 April 2022 - 31st March 2027. The service aims to prevent infections through provision of evidence-based, infection prevention and control support within primary care settings, and to social care providers. As the incumbent provider they had delivered the service under the previous contract, from 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2022.
- 3.2 Throughout the pandemic, in both 2020/21, and 2021/22 financial years, the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) has been utilised to increase the capacity of the community IPC Service. COMF funding resourced additional posts to support

care homes and other high risk settings in improving IPC standards and their response to and management of outbreaks of COVID-19.

- 3.3 During the pandemic the service, using the COMF resource, has supported a range of high-risk settings in Wirral with IPC measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and manage cases and outbreaks occurring in those settings. The demand on the service over this period has been unprecedented. Over the period 1st December 2021 to 18th February 2022, the community IPC service supported the management of 134 outbreaks, and 79 single cases of COVID-19, across all 24-hour adult social care settings in Wirral.
- 3.4 Wirral continues to experience sustained rates of community transmission. The service is continuing to take a proactive and responsive approach to supporting settings with managing COVID. With the introduction of the national Living with COVID strategy in February 2022, we know IPC will continue to play a key role in protecting the population, and particularly the most vulnerable, from the effects of COVID-19 and wider infectious diseases. Continued investment in our local IPC service over the next twelve months, will support local preparedness for seasonal planning as well as any surges we may experience.
- 3.5 The additional resource to support the substantive contract will maintain additional service capacity, with the aim to:
- Continued enhanced provision to Care Homes, building on the work of the successful Care Home improvement project delivered during 2021/22
 - Extend enhanced support to other Adult Social Care settings e.g. Supported living
 - Ensure a flexible response to the continued pandemic across the Wirral Health and Care system
 - Support Wirral system priorities including facilitating safe and timely patient discharges
 - Ensure specialist IPC skills are used to maximum effect across the Wirral System
 - Enable enhanced visible IPC leadership within 24hr care settings

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Funding will be allocated from the COMF grant, provided to local authorities from HM Government, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the impact of the pandemic on health outcomes. Wirral has received £14,784,032 in COMF grant to date and has confirmation funding can be utilised throughout 2022/23.

The total additional allocation for the Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust IPC service for April 2022 – March 2023 is £160,581.00. This funding will provide continuity of service, whilst enabling a period of transition, to enhance skills and experience across providers and settings and develop a more sustainable high standard of IPC for the future.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The commissioning process for the contracts described in this report comply with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Wirral Council Contract Procedure Rules.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 Staff have been recruited to these roles as part of existing contract arrangements and will continue to deliver services until the grant funding ceases.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 COMF is time-limited, one-off funding, allocated for use during the pandemic to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. It is unlikely further COMF grant will be allocated beyond the current financial year 2022-23. The service will need to effectively plan and manage this transition over the next year, ensuring a sustainable service and maintaining a high standard of IPC across the system.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The service described within this report has been designed based on, and in response to engagement with local services. Local health protection priorities have been considered, in coming to this recommendation.

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.

9.2 The Equality Impact Assessment for the recommissioning of the Community IPC service can be found here: [Recommissioning of Wirral Community Infection Prevention and Control Service - Equality Impact Assessment](#).

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no environment or climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no community wealth implications.

REPORT AUTHOR: Dr Elspeth Anwar
Consultant in Public Health
Tel: 0151 666 5201
Email: elspethanwar@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Infection Prevention and Control Service Commission – Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee Report, 7 June 2021

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE	7 JUNE 2021
COVID 19 TACTICAL CO-ORDINATING GROUP	1 APRIL 2021
COVID 19 TACTICAL CO-ORDINATING GROUP	17 AUGUST 2020
COVID 19 OUTBREAK STRATEGIC CONTROL CELL	10 JULY 2020