



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

18 JULY 2024

REPORT TITLE:	ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT ON WIRRAL'S HEALTH PROTECTION STRATEGY 2023-2027
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee with an update on the partnership work undertaken to date to deliver Wirral's Health Protection Strategy. The Wirral Health Protection Strategy was approved at Committee on 23rd January 2023 and sets out our refreshed collective approach for ensuring we have a resilient health protection system and response in Wirral. An effective local approach to health protection is vital to improve health and wellbeing, protect the local economy, and reduce health inequalities.

Supporting Wirral residents and communities to live safely with COVID-19 and protect the health of communities from infectious diseases and environmental hazards is aligned to the ambitions set out in Wirral's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. In addition, the strategy supports the central vision of the Wirral Working Together Plan 2023-2027, in particular through promoting independence and healthier lives and to protect the environment.

This report is not a key decision and affects all wards.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the progress made to date in the implementation of the Wirral Health Protection Strategy 2023 - 2027

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

1.1 The Wirral Health Protection Strategy sets out our refreshed collective approach to ensure we have a resilient health protection system and response in Wirral. The strategy was approved by Committee on 23rd January 2023 with a request to provide an annual update report on progress. Members also requested to receive an interim update, provided in October 2023. This report therefore provides the first annual update of the partnership work in place to deliver Wirral's Health Protection Strategy.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 Strategic planning helps local system partners work together to establish a clear vision, prioritise resources, determine a clear direction of travel, and to set goals and outcome targets. We were the first area within the region to develop a post-pandemic Health Protection Strategy. We could have chosen to not develop a local Health Protection Strategy, however we recognised that this could potentially exacerbate the burden of ill health, impacting negatively on health outcomes, inequalities, system pressures and the local economy.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Built upon the learning from the pandemic, Wirral health and care system partners co-developed a [Health Protection Strategy](#) with the aim of ensuring that as a partnership we are able to i) identify current and future health protection hazards including infectious diseases and environmental threats to health, and ii) provide an effective response to reduce the impacts of ill health. An effective and collaborative local approach to health protection is not only essential for improving health and wellbeing but also helps to reduce disruption to our economy, reduce health inequalities through protecting our most vulnerable residents, support our children and young people to achieve by keeping children in school, and reduces pressure within our local health and social care services.

3.2 Underpinned by local insight and intelligence, the strategy sets out our collective approach for the following seven priority areas and aligns system capacity and resources to deliver greater improved preventive approaches, better equity and improved system resilience:

- Ongoing COVID-19 response, including being prepared for new variants;
- Strengthen infection prevention and control;
- Reduce the impact of antimicrobial resistance (AMR);
- Reduce vaccine preventable diseases amongst adults and children;
- Strengthen preparedness, resilience and response to outbreaks, major incidents and emergencies;
- Reduce health harms from climate and environmental hazards;
- Reduce the harmful impact to health of Tuberculosis and blood-borne viruses, including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.

The strategy and delivery plan outlines what we are aiming to achieve, where we are focusing our efforts and how we work effectively in aligning resources with local partners to achieve our collectively agreed vision, aims and objectives.

- 3.3 Six months following the launch of our local strategy, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) launched its new [3-year national strategy](#) to combat both new and re-emerging threats and to protect health security. The national UKHSA strategic priorities align well with our locally identified priorities, indicating that our local system challenges reflect those experienced nationally.

4.0 Progress to date against strategic priorities

- 4.1 Having strong local partnership approaches in place has enabled good progress in our first year of strategy delivery. Initial steps taken to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy have included:

- Agreeing a strategic lead for each priority area (from across system partners).
- Undertaking a mapping exercise of existing multi-agency forums and groups for each priority, with the aim of enhancing and not duplicating effort.
- Reviewing intelligence to define key areas of focus within each priority area for collective focus (i.e. defining priorities within each priority).
- The development of a strategy implementation plan with priority activities, identified leads, key milestones and metrics identified to measure successful implementation.
- Where appropriate, working at scale with regional partners such as Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care system, and UKHSA Northwest to progress.

- 4.2 Examples of our collective achievements progressed within the first year of delivery include:

- Co-development and exercising a system 'Respiratory infection wave plan.'
- Co-ordinated system action to improve preparedness, prevent and contain potential outbreaks of measles.
- Undertaking an external system peer review of Clostridioides difficile, a health care associated infection (HCAI) of concern.
- Adoption of 'eBug' training resources within a wide range of early years and educational settings.
- Designing and delivering Winter preparedness advice, resources and communications.
- Gaining recognition through a national Infection Prevention Society award for collaborating to reduce the impact of Antimicrobial Resistance by improving the management and diagnosis of urinary tract infections and improving hydration.
- Delivering a range of initiatives which have helped to improve the uptake of key vaccinations.
- Co-developing Wirral's first Air Quality Strategy.
- Achieving the micro-elimination of Hepatitis C.

4.3 A copy of the Strategy Implementation Plan for 2023/24 outlining further detail relating to progress and next steps against each priority is included in Appendix 1.

4.4 In addition to the seven strategic priorities, we identified four cross-cutting strategic enablers that help to underpin the delivery of our local strategy. During this first year of strategy delivery, we have ensured a collective focus and approach to these key enablers. This has included:

Insight, intelligence, and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectively reviewing and refreshing local surveillance systems. • Agreeing key system metrics to ensure the measurement of progress and outcomes against our agreed strategic priorities. • Focusing upon identifying and reducing inequalities in key metrics and outcomes. • Ensuring we are undertaking evaluation to ensure we learn and build on what works. • Development of an interactive report to monitor the progress of key metrics relating to the strategy.
Workforce development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing knowledge and upskilling wider system partners to support the delivery of the key identified health protection priorities e.g., training undertaken within care home settings, and delivery of e-bug training within early years and education settings. • Celebrating and sharing successes e.g., winning a national award by the Infection Prevention Society for collaborative work to prevent and manage urinary tract infections, reduce inappropriate antibiotic prescribing, and prevent avoidable hospital admissions.
Communication and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectively working to tailor messages to ensure they reach our local communities. • Building upon the successful Community Champions programme developed during the pandemic to disseminate messages and understand local issues and barriers to action. • Developing a winter communications campaign building upon effective local targeted communications and the Cheshire and Merseyside Simple Things campaign aimed at reducing the spread of infectious disease and keeping people safe and warm during adverse weather.
Clear governance and strong multi-agency partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring progress against the strategy and implementation plan through the multi-agency Wirral Health Protection Board (a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board), chaired by the Wirral Director of Public Health. • At each meeting in addition to reviewing overall progress, we undertake a focussed discussion of two priority areas of the strategy. This allows the collective discussion of risk and issues that Board members can resolve to ensure successful strategy delivery.

5.0 Emerging health protection issues

- 5.1 In our previous update we highlighted the range of collaborative work in place to support migrant health. Our co-ordinated efforts with the asylum seeker hotel in Wirral have helped to provide assurance relating to infection prevention and control measures and have been effective in supporting TB and blood borne virus screening, recognised as best practice across the region.
- 5.2 Local health and care system partners are currently supporting local action to strengthen resilience and mitigate the impact of the national rise in cases of measles. This has included:
- Working collaboratively to provide assurances regarding system preparedness and ability to respond.
 - Ensuring sector specific pathways for preparedness and response are clear, understood and well communicated.
 - Developing pathways for example, Primary Care testing pathway.
 - Sharing of information, checklists and action cards.
 - Providing refresher training (including donning and doffing of personal protective equipment (PPE) and arranging fit-testing for FFP3 masks.
 - Reviewing data and intelligence to support reducing health inequalities and to support the location of the Live Well immunisation Bus.
 - Developing a proposal for local insight work to explore barriers to vaccination which will help to inform a bespoke communications campaign.
 - Engaging with a wide range of settings, helping to promote vaccination and improve preparedness for outbreak response.
 - Planning targeted initiatives to improve vaccination uptake for prevention and as an outbreak response measure.
- 5.3 A Pharmacy within Wirral is now live, offering MMR vaccination to complement the Primary Care, School Aged Immunisation Service and Live Well Bus offer.

6.0 Next steps

- 6.1 We are currently co-developing our 2024/25 delivery plan with system partners. The Health Protection Board have agreed that actions relating to COVID-19 have been completed and that it is no longer a local priority, however, it will be monitored through other overlapping priority areas such as the priority relating to reducing vaccine preventable disease. This will enable capacity to take a renewed focus on cancer screening.

Our key focus for the forthcoming year includes:

- Implementing lessons identified / learned from the COVID-19 public inquiry.
- Co-development of a system improvement plan for *Clostridioides difficile*.
- Continued co-ordinated efforts to improve system preparedness and reduce the potential impacts of measles.
- Continued implementation of best practice for the management of recurrent Urinary Tract Infections in primary care.

- Co-development of a Locality Plan for Wirral, identifying key actions and adaptations to reduce health harms from climate hazards and improve climate resilience.
- Co-design of an indoor air quality research project with Liverpool John Moore's University and Wirral's Environmental Health Service.
- Development of a summer preparedness pack and related communications.
- A renewed focus on screening to support the early diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The strategy places collective responsibility for local system partners to align policy, strategy, and resources wherever possible in protecting and improving health. Oversight and support for the delivery of the local strategy is provided through existing resources and part funded by the public health grant. Where opportunities arise, we work with Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and Merseyside and regional partners to provide greater economy of scale in delivering the strategy.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Director of Public Health requires assurance that the arrangements to protect the health of the communities that they serve are robust and are being implemented effectively.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

9.1 The strategy places collective responsibility for local system partners to align policy, strategy and resources wherever possible, in protecting and improving health. Leads from across sector partners and a number of multi-agency steering groups already exist to help drive progress against the strategic priorities. Resource requirements and implications will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Wirral Health Protection Board.

9.2 The Wirral Health Protection Service (funded until March 2024 by the public health grant) has been instrumental in supporting the delivery of the strategy. Following a recent review, and building on the success of the service, the team is now called the Public Health Delivery Team and will support the delivery of Wirral's Health and Wellbeing Strategy as well as continuing to support the delivery of the Health Protection Strategy. The team will work alongside system partners to enable a more proactive approach to delivery of shared agreed local priorities.

10.0 RELEVANT RISKS

10.1 Local system partners support honest and open discussions regarding system risk and risk mitigation and take collective action to address local health protection priorities that help to mitigate a range of direct and indirect risks that impact on individuals, communities, health services and the economy, including risk of:

- Poor individual and population health outcomes such as ill health, premature mortality, or negative impact on quality of life.

- Insufficient system resilience to support the prevention and management of outbreaks of infectious disease or incidents that affect health.
- Excessive pressure on emergency, health and social care services and related opportunity cost of ill health.
- Personal, societal and business economic impact of ill health.
- Lowered community resilience.
- Impact on system partners' business continuity measures.

10.2 A risk register is held, managed, and reviewed on a regular basis by Wirral's Health Protection Board. Health Protection Board partners also record relevant risks within their own established processes. Wirral Council's Public Health / Health Protection risks are recorded within the Directorate Risk Register and where appropriate, within the Corporate Risk Register.

11.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION

11.1 Protecting the health of the people of Wirral from infectious diseases and environmental hazards requires collaborative action. The strategy was co-developed in consultation with local partners, who have been working effectively together to achieve our collectively agreed vision, aims and objectives.

12.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 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. The Strategy and Implementation Plan seek to positively address equality implications, providing focus on those most vulnerable and at risk.

12.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Health Protection Strategy was undertaken alongside the development of the strategy. The EIA is available at: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments> and is held under the 'Adults Care and Health' section, titled, [Health Protection Strategy – December 2022](#). It has been regularly reviewed and has not required any material changes to date.

13.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Environmental hazards such as air pollution and climate change pose a significant current and future threat to the health of local people. The Strategy Implementation Plan seeks to address these challenges through collective action, with a focus on those most exposed and at risk, in order to reduce inequalities and impact.

14.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

14.1 Health protection interventions not only help to reduce morbidity and premature mortality and improve quality of life, but are cost saving, both to health services and the wider economy. Protecting people and communities in Wirral from the impact of infectious diseases and environmental hazards not only improves health and wellbeing but also helps to protect local business and the economy. Many infectious

diseases and environmental hazards disproportionately affect our most vulnerable residents, children, and older people, and those living in less affluent areas; therefore, a robust and effective local health protection response is vital in helping to reduce health inequalities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Wirral Health Protection Strategy 2023 - 2027 Implementation Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Intelligence Service – Health Protection Strategy:
<https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/our-jsna/strategies-and-plans/health-protection/>

Wirral Intelligence Service – Health Protection Interactive Report:
<https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/our-jsna/strategies-and-plans/health-protection/>

UK Health Security Agency Strategic Plan 2023-26:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-launches-new-strategy-to-tackle-national-and-global-health-hazards>

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee Terms of Reference.

c) all Public Health functions (in co-ordination with those functions reserved to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's statutory health functions).

e) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:

(i) furthering public health objectives through the development of partnerships with other public bodies, community, voluntary and charitable groups and through the improvement and integration of health and social care services.

g) in respect of the Health and Social Care Act 2006, the functions to:

(iii) investigate major health issues identified by, or of concern to, the local population.

(v) scrutinise the impact of interventions on the health of local inhabitants,

particularly socially excluded and other minority groups, with the aim of reducing health inequalities.

(vi) maintain an overview of health service delivery against national and local targets, particularly those that improve the public's health.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	23 January 2023
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	17 October 2023