



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

17 October 2023

REPORT TITLE:	HEALTH PROTECTION STRATEGY 2023-2027 6 MONTH UPDATE REPORT
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 contributes to the Wirral Plan aims, in particular, through promoting 'Active and Healthy Lives'.

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.
2. Agree to receive annual updates on progress against delivery of the Health Protection Strategy from the Director of Public Health.

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 a six-month update report. This report therefore provides the requested update on progress related to the first six months of partnership work 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 could have not developed a local health protection strategy; however, the absence of a post-pandemic plan could exacerbate the burden of ill health, impacting negatively on health outcomes, inequalities, system pressures and the local economy.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fundamental importance of a robust and resilient local approach to health protection. During a time of great uncertainty, Wirral Council and system partners demonstrated significant commitment and professionalism in delivering a dynamic, flexible, and comprehensive response that focused on protecting our population's 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 The [Wirral Health Protection Strategy](#) built upon the learning from our local pandemic response and sets out our collective approach to ensuring we have a resilient health protection system in Wirral. The strategy outlines what we aim to achieve and where we will focus our efforts in order to protect local people from infectious diseases, environmental threats to health and ensure we are prepared for future hazards. No single agency can address these issues in isolation, protecting the health of the people of Wirral from infectious diseases and environmental hazards requires collaborative action. Therefore, the strategy was developed following wide consultation and outlines how local partners will work effectively together to achieve our collectively agreed vision, aims and objectives.
- 3.3 In July 2023 the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) launched its 3-year strategy to combat both new and re-emerging threats and to protect health security. The strategy can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-launches-new-strategy-to-tackle-national-and-global-health-hazards>. Locally we work closely with UKHSA, who are a key member of our local Wirral Health Protection Board, and the national UKHSA strategic priorities align well with our locally identified priorities.

3.3 Progress to date against strategic priorities

Following consultation with a wide range of local and regional partners and reviewing local intelligence, seven priority areas were agreed for collective action and were included within the agreed strategy. This included:

- 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.

3.4 The priorities identified within the strategy were not new and are recognised system challenges for all local partners. We had strong existing local partnership approaches to build on and this has enabled good progress in strategy implementation over this initial six-month period. 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 / groups in existence for each priority with the aim of enhancing and not duplicating effort.
- A review of intelligence to define key areas of focus within each priority area for collective focus (priorities within the priority), for example within the reduce vaccine preventable diseases amongst adults and children priority following a review of local intelligence and insight we have collectively agreed to focus on improving COVID-19, Seasonal influenza, and MMR immunisation uptake rates.
- The development of a strategy implementation plan with priority activities, identified leads, key milestones, and metrics we will use to measure successful implementation.
- Where appropriate working at scale with wider partners to progress e.g., with the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care system, and UKHSA Northwest.

A copy of the strategy implementation plan for 2023/24 outlining progress to date and next steps against each priority is included in Appendix 1. The implementation plan will be kept under review and updated annually.

3.5 In addition to the seven strategic priorities underpinning the delivery of our local strategy are four strategic enablers which cut across all priorities. During the initial six months of strategy implementation, 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.• Agreed key system metrics to ensure the measurement of progress and outcomes against our agreed strategic
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	<p>priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused upon identifying and reducing inequalities in key metrics and outcomes. • Ensuring we are undertaking evaluation to ensure we learn and build on what works.
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. • Celebrated and share successes e.g., submitted and been shortlisted for an award by the Infection Prevention Society for collective 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 worked 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 by encouraging people to carry out simple behaviours, such as, washing hands, sanitising surfaces, covering faces when coughing or sneezing, and keeping your distance from others when unwell: https://www.simplethings-nhs.com/
Clear governance and strong multi-agency partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress against the strategy and implementation plan is monitored by the Wirral Health Protection Board. The Health Protection Board is chaired by the Wirral Director of Public Health and is a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Partners from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Integrated Care Board (ICB), Environmental Health, NHS England (NHSE), Local NHS Trusts, Health and Social Care, Emergency Planning and Public Health are represented. At each meeting in addition to reviewing overall progress deep dives are undertaken for each priority areas. This allows the collective discussion of risk and issues that Board members can resolve to ensure successful strategy delivery.

3.6 Emerging health protection issues

Since the development of the Wirral Health Protection Strategy migrant health has become an area of increased focus for local co-ordinated activity. The Wirral public health team is working closely with colleagues in housing, children's services, NHS Cheshire and Merseyside - Wirral Place, NHS services including primary care, community mental health teams, Wirral University Teaching Hospital, and community and voluntary sector partners e.g., Wirral Multicultural Organisation (WMO) to support the health needs of this cohort. Key activity to date includes:

- Working with NHS colleagues, primary care and WMO to ensure registration with local GP, access to local health services and that appropriate initial health screening is undertaken.
- Wirral TB service is currently engaging with asylum hotels to provide TB screening clinics.
- Ongoing health protection service site visits to asylum hotels providing assurance related to infection prevention and control standards in hotels and to build local relationships to facilitate better partnership working for outbreak prevention and control purposes.
- Ensuring effective and co-ordinated responses to local outbreaks.
- Supporting the development of a Cheshire and Merseyside piece of work to better understand the health needs of those asylum seekers currently housed in hotel accommodation.
- Working with Housing colleagues to seek strategic support across the sub region for increased data sharing by the Home Office for new arrivals into the area. This will facilitate equal access to health care services and limit the risk of infectious diseases and vaccine preventable diseases from occurring in local populations.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 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.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 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.

6.2 The Wirral Health Protection Service (funded until March 2024 by the public health grant) will support the delivery of the strategy. The service is not solely responsible for the delivery of the strategy, as outlined, this relies on a collaborative approach across all system partners. The service provides additional capacity alongside system partners to enable a more proactive approach to delivery of agreed local priorities. Future proposals related to public health funding towards the delivery of this strategy post March 2024 will be included within a planned review of public health expenditure to be undertaken during 2023.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 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.

7.3 A risk register is held, managed, and reviewed on a quarterly 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.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

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

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

9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment for the Health Protection Strategy dated December 2022 is available at: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 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.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 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 2023-27 Implementation Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Intelligence Service – Health Protection

<https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/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