

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

At a remote meeting of the **Health and Wellbeing Board** held on Thursday, 10 September 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor R.R. Dodd
(Chair, in the Chair)

BOARD MEMBERS

Dungworth, S.	Riley, C. (substitute member)
McEvoy-Carr, C.	Syers, G
Morgan, E.	Warrington, J. (substitute member)
Morris, V. (substitute member)	Watson, J.
Renner-Thompson, G.	Young, M. (substitute member)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Batsford, P.	Locality Director for Blyth Valley, NHS Northumberland CCG
Bridges, A.	Head of Communications
Mitcheson, R.	Service Director Transformation and Integrated Care, NHS Northumberland CCG
Todd, A.	Democratic Services Officer

The Chair welcomed Councillors Renner-Thompson and Watson as the new Portfolio Holders for Children's Services and Adult Wellbeing and Health respectively to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from C. Briggs, S. Brown, R. Firth, J. Lothian, P. Mead, D. Thompson and P. Travers.

50. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on Thursday, 13 August 2020, as circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

51. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

51.1 REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Update on the Northumberland COVID 19 Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan

Members were provided with an update on the epidemiology of COVID 19 in Northumberland and developments with the Council's COVID 19 Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan. (Report filed with the signed minutes as Appendix A).

Liz Morgan, Director of Public Health, introduced the report and updated Members on the latest figures and actions agreed at the latest Health Protection Board in response to the increasing rates of infection being seen in Northumberland:-

- It was reported that Northumberland along with the rest of the northeast had seen an increase in the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19. The majority of cases being identified were within the southeast area. It was confirmed that there had now been 1178 confirmed cases in the county.
- Over the last week 56 new cases had been reported and 90 within the previous fortnight. The average age of cases had fallen significantly in recent weeks however the most recent data was showing that the average age was starting to increase again which had been an area of concern.
- It was reported that South Tyneside and Middlesbrough were now on the Government watch list and that it was likely that a number of other local authorities in the northeast would be added over the next few days. It was noted that Durham and Northumberland were less likely to be considered as results were still slightly lower than other local authority areas in the northeast. However, if things were to continue Northumberland could be in the same position in the next few days or weeks.
- It was advised that following the rise in local cases the Health Protection Board had agreed to escalate responses. One new procedure was to start backward contact tracing which involved more in-depth conversations with those who have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace. This would enable a much better understanding of where they had been and who they had been associating with. By carrying out those conversations it would help identify transmission networks, be it there households or social/hospitality venues, to get a better understanding of age groups, the geography, and where people have been in the past week before they became unwell. The value of this work would enable more detailed information about where to concentrate efforts in terms of interventions.
- It was noted that the regional group of directors for Public Health had agreed to work with Public Health England to put in place a similar contact tracing process to those established in Blackburn with Darwen and Leicester. This process would help to identify and contact individuals who had not been picked up within 24 hours by the NHS Test and Trace system. This new model would require a significant amount of work to take place across the northeast but it was felt that it was an important thing to do for the region.
- With regard to schools reopening. It was confirmed that the local authority was to take on the vast majority of inquiries relating to schools after Public

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Health England had received a significant number of queries since the start of the new school year. A meeting with headteachers had been arranged to provide information about this new contact point for schools.

- Concerns had been raised in relation to parents and carers standing at school gates and not applying social distancing. This was to be discussed at the meeting with headteachers.
- The risk to care homes was discussed and it was noted that several other local authorities in the northeast had closed care homes to all but non-essential visits. It was reported that work was taking place to examine what Northumberland's response should be and officers would be working through this within the next couple of days.
- It was reported that levels of testing continued to increase. Since schools had returned there had been a number of children who had been symptomatic and parents advised to have their child tested. However, reports of people having to travel vast distances to access a testing facility have been received.
- An analysis had been carried out on Northumberland's testing data which had highlighted that about a third of tests have been undertaken in people with no symptoms. Also the data had shown that there were a number of people with no symptoms requesting tests on sometimes a weekly basis which was also putting pressure on the national testing system.
- There had been an exceptional high level of demand for tests and it was envisaged that this would keep increasing. Mobile Testing Units were continuing to operate.
- Two semi-permanent local testing sites had been provisionally identified in Ashington and Blyth. It was hoped to get these sites operational as soon as practicable. This would also help create a greater testing capacity within the county.
- Updates were received regarding the wraparound support teams and work being achieved.
- It was stated that the message from today should be that the testing process was for people who were symptomatic. The process was not designed (outside of those whole care home testing processes) for people who did not have any symptoms and also that having a test would not shorten a quarantine period if you were coming back from a country that required you to.

Ann Bridges, Head of Communications briefed Members on the continued work being carried out by the Communication Team to inform all on the ever changing national messages, local campaigns and targeted engagement. All platforms were being utilised to deliver communications including social media and the Northumberland residents' magazine. The Team were to do some targeted work with schools to create some school gate signage to hopefully make parents/carers aware of not congregating outside of schools at drop offs and pickup times. Partnership work with health colleagues to further raise awareness of key messages was also continuing.

Following the report and updates, a number of points were raised including:-

- Targeted communications with visitors would continue to take place although it was confirmed that there was no clear link that visitors to the area were contributing to the rise in cases.

- There was a big concern that there was still no definite mobile testing available in Ashington and Blyth, even though data suggested that these were high risk areas. It was suggested that elected members raise the concern of mobile testing sites at a national level to see if these could be progressed quicker.
- There was dissatisfaction at the current situation of residents having to travel long distances and out of county in order to be tested. It was hoped once the mobile testing sites were up and running this would alleviate some of the unnecessary travel for residents.
- A query regarding dentists and if they were now open was raised. It was confirmed that dentists were able to open but could not see as many patients. It was agreed to confirm the position with NHS England.
- The need to continue to inform and educate all on the key messages.

RESOLVED that the report and information be received.

51.2. NORTHUMBERLAND FLU PLAN 2020/21

Members received an update from Rachel Mitcheson, Service Director Transformation and Integrated Care and Paula Batsford, Locality Director for Blyth Valley on the Northumberland Flu Plan 2020/21. (A copy of the presentation has been filed with the signed minutes as Appendix B).

The presentation focused on some of the key issues highlighted within the plan and comments made, including:

- It was noted that all GP practices had signed up to deliver mass vaccination.
- Community nursing teams would deliver care home and housebound vaccinations.
- The Northumbria Healthcare FT and CNTW were responsible for vaccination of healthcare staff. Northumberland County Council would also be offering the vaccination to its frontline staff.
- A national campaign was to be launched soon to inform all on this year's flu vaccination programme.
- The health visiting teams would be responsible for vaccinations in 2-3 years and Northumbria FT Immunisation team for school age up to Year 7.
- Colleagues in community pharmacy would be supporting the plan.
- This year there was a wider flu vaccination cohort identified. Plans had been put in place to ensure delivery. There was a concern that there could be a shortfall of stock due to the vaccine needing to be ordered before the wider cohort was identified. It was confirmed that this issue had been addressed within the plan and there was confidence that there would not be a shortfall. However, it was noted that there would be access to a national stock of the vaccine if needed.
- It was confirmed that the most at need would be prioritised to receive flu vaccination first. However, there was a concern that community pharmacies may not prioritise the vaccination as there was often a charge applied. It was advised that community pharmacies were on board with the flu plan and mindful of stock levels.

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- It was confirmed that a weekly planning process was fully established with strong leadership to monitor and deliver the plan.
- It was confirmed that targeted work was about to be launched next week by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust which would focus on priority areas and deliver localised messages.

RESOLVED that presentation be received.

52. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting will be held remotely on Thursday, 8 October 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____