

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL
HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

At a remote meeting of the **Health and Wellbeing Board** held on Thursday, 10 December 2020.

PRESENT

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

BOARD MEMBERS

Bailey, M. (substitute member)	McEvoy-Carr, C.
Brown, S.	Renner-Thompson, G.
Dungworth, S.	Riley, C. (substitute member)
Jones, V.	Thompson, D.
Lothian, J.	Travers, P.
Mead, P.	Warrington, J. (substitute member)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Brown, J.	Consultant in Public Health
Bridges, A.	Head of Communications
Hush, Y.	Public Health Manager
Taylor, M.	Director - Business Development (Care Services)
Todd, A.	Democratic Services Officer

62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from N. Bradley, C. Briggs, R. Firth, J. Mackey, E. Morgan, Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson, G. Syers, C. Wardlaw and Councillor J. Watson.

63. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on Thursday, 12 November 2020, as circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

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64. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

64.1 REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(a) 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).

Jim Brown, Consultant in Public Health introduced the report and updated Members on the latest figures and actions agreed in response to the increasing rates of infection being seen in Northumberland:-

- It was suggested that positive cases were plateauing and this seemed to be true across North of Tyne and in other parts of the North East.
- Northumberland was seeing a change in the geography of where positive cases were now being reported. In the south east of the county case rates had decreased. However, in the west of Northumberland there had been a significant increase in positive cases.
- The area of Haltwhistle had seen a very high rate of cases with this partly being down to a number of discrete outbreaks. It was noted that a mobile testing unit had been established in Haltwhistle to increase the ability of people with symptoms to access testing. It was advised that a communication and engagement exercise to inform all on the new testing site was taking place.
- It was reported that the data were now showing a reduction of positive cases within schools.
- Testing rates remained stable.
- There had been a reduction in the number of positive cases in the 65+ and 75+ age groups.
- The number of new notifications of positive results in care homes seemed to be decreasing in the past few weeks.
- Lateral flow testing to enable visits to a care homes had started although it was stressed that this was a risk reduction exercise with PPE and infection prevention measures still needing to be adhered to.
- The potential for visitors to be able to see loved ones in care homes was seen as a very positive step after what had been a very stressful time for not only family and friends but care home residents.
- A regional approach to the use of targeted rapid community testing was being developed as part of the work of the LA7 which would focus on economic recovery (focused testing in strategic and/or high risk workplaces), communities (those in contact with the most vulnerable groups) and staff (to support business continuity in key operational frontline public sector staff). It was noted that the NHS Trusts were already testing their own staff.
- Testing in Domiciliary Care was to be rolled out to domiciliary care staff on a weekly basis.
- It was reported that the first batch of the Pfizer vaccines would be delivered to the hub at North Tyneside General Hospital, the second to Wansbeck, and the third to

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NSECH. This would then be repeated until either the vaccine became more portable or another was used. Priority would be given to in patients and outpatients who were over 80, then care home staff and NHS frontline staff.

- It was advised that there would also be capacity issues that would need to be resolved in order to deliver the vaccine, to create a regional test and trace system and roll out targeted rapid community testing.
- It was believed that the area probably would remain in Tier 3 from 16 December.
- It was stressed that everyone should continue to get tested if they develop any of the main symptoms of COVID 19.
- The concern that the Christmas break could result in an increase in cases and admissions to hospitals in January.

Members of the board then made several comments, which included:

- In response to a question raised it was confirmed that the positive cases in Haydon Bridge had been from an outbreak at the local high school together with an increase in community transmission in the area. It was noted that work was still ongoing with the school and local community to offer support and guidance to all regarding COVID 19 issues.
- Regarding the 16 December decision, discussion took place regarding the implications for businesses if the area remained in Tier 3. But also the confusion and mixed messages that could result from constantly changes rules and guidance to the public if the decision was to move to Tier 2.
- It was noted that at present there was no plan to produce any certification that a person had been given the Pfizer vaccine but it was noted that stringent medical records were always kept.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the report be noted;
2. the infection rate in Northumberland and current issues, be noted;
3. comments on the progress of the local COVID 19 Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan be noted, and
4. the approach being taken for rapid community testing be supported.

(b) Update on Mental Health and Wellbeing in Northumberland

Members were provided with an update from Yvonne Hush, Public Health Manager on mental health and wellbeing in Northumberland including (potential) impact of COVID 19 on mental health and wellbeing. (Report filed with the signed minutes as Appendix B).

It was reported that there had been progress made since the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2018. This included development of an ACE Aware Plan; support for schools to adopt whole-school approaches promoting mental health and wellbeing; prioritising mental wellbeing in the workplace as part of the North East Better Health at Work Award; initiatives which increased social connectedness (being innovative due to COVID 19); and a cross sector commitment to prevention through the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health. Strong partnership working had also enabled a prompt response to increase capacity and ensure the right response to support mental health and wellbeing.

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The report referred to an initiative being developed for barbers and hair professionals to have special training on mental health issues, given that most men will come into contact with them. It was suggested that gyms may be another possible option for this type of approach, while also seeking assurances that there was as much work going on in schools that catered for boys as there was for girls. It was confirmed that work had been taking place in schools with a focus on building resilience in younger children. It was also reported that most schools in the county now had a designated mental health lead following an educational psychologist being appointed to roll out the wellbeing for education training programme. It was hoped the programme would support staff working in schools and colleges to respond to the additional pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a direct result of the pandemic, as well as to any emotional response they or their teachers may be experiencing from bereavement, stress, trauma or anxiety over the past months.

A query was raised regarding the voluntary sector and whether any additional funding would be made available to help the sector meet the extra demand following the pandemic. It was reported that work was taking place to consider how to support the community sector in order to be able to maintain continuing support. It was acknowledged that the pandemic had and would continue to have an effect on people's mental health. However, it was reassuring to note the excellent partnership working already taking place in Northumberland.

Board Members agreed to continue to support the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health.

RESOLVED that:-

1. the report be noted;
2. progress made on Recommendations in Director of Public Health Annual Report 2018- Mental Wealth be noted;
3. feedback from our Services/Providers in the attached Mental Health Scoping Paper including new ways of working during COVID 19 be noted, and
4. comments made on local response to provide extra capacity and the right response to support mental health and wellbeing be noted.

64.2 COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT SUB-GROUP

Ann Bridges, Head of Communications gave a communications and engagement update (a copy of which has been filed with the signed minutes). The update included:-

- It was noted that the Communications Team continued to support the Wraparound Groups.
- Posters had been produced for the shops in Haltwhistle and Haydon Bridge to help inform all of the COVID guidance. There had also been work to promote the new mobile testing unit being established at Haltwhistle.
- It was stressed that the Communications Team continued to build on and create new means of getting the consistent messages to members of the public.
- The North East LA7 behaviour change campaigns had been launched. The campaign was using real people in videos and photographs in real life settings. It

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was reported that care had been taken to lead on the insight work and what people had told the campaign and the reasons for it.

- Additional insight work was planned around care homes specifically. Work was to extend over the LA7 and include questions about vaccination and any potential barriers. It was hoped that this work would resonate with local populations and be made available to GP practices.
- The need for all partners and stakeholders to share the message as widely as possible.
- The positive response to the Northumberland Community Champions and the work that they were undertaking.

RESOLVED that the information and work of the Communications Team be noted.

65. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD – FORWARD PLAN

Members were presented with the Health and Wellbeing Board Forward Plan (a copy of which has been filed with the signed minutes as Appendix C).

RESOLVED that the forward plan be noted.

66. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED that the next meeting will be held remotely on Thursday, 14 January 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____