

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BOARD

At a meeting of the **Health and Well-being Board** held in County Hall, Morpeth on Thursday, 14 October 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Councillor B. Flux
(Chair, in the Chair)

BOARD MEMBERS

Bailey, M.	Sanderson, H.G.H.
Brown, S.	Simpson, E.
Lothian, J.	Syers, G.
Morgan, E.	Thompson, D.
Pattison, W.	Watson, J.
Riley, C (substitute)	

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

L.M. Bennett	Senior Democratic Service Officer
K. Bush	Specialty Registrar in Public Health
P. Hunter	Senior Service Director
R. Mitcheson	Northumberland CCG
L. Sprudd	Rise North East

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from R. O'Farrell, and P. Mead.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 9 September 2021, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair:

22. UPDATE ON THE EPIDEMIOLOGY OF COVID 19 AND ON THE NORTHUMBERLAND COVID 19 OUTBREAK PREVENTION AND CONTROL PLAN

Members received an update on the epidemiology of COVID 19 and the Northumberland COVID 19 Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan and COVID Deaths in Northumberland. (Presentation filed with the signed minutes).

Liz Morgan, Director of Public Health, gave a presentation to the Board and key points included:-

- National Overview
 - Infections increasing but hospital admissions remained relatively stable.
 - Deaths were decreasing for the first time since June 2021
 - More than 4 in 5 adults were fully vaccinated and more than 9 in 10 had antibodies.
 - Social Distancing had reduced over time but was now levelling.
- ONS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Study Infection Survey showed the percentages of people testing positive week by age group ending 2 October 2021. Rates were highest in secondary school pupils that week.
- NCC Dashboard showed figures for Northumberland up to 11 October 2021. Northumberland was currently in the top third of Local Authorities for case rates.
- Outbreak Control Plan
 - Efforts were being concentrated on more high-risk areas. The national framework was being followed including encouraging use of face coverings, improved ventilation, and testing.
 - Outbreaks had occurred in residential home settings, high risk settings and HMP Northumberland. Many cases had been associated with the Lindisfarne Festival in early September.
 - The contact tracing model was being extended and there was a national review of testing sites.
 - The NHS was very busy and pressurised but was not all due to COVID.
- COVID-19 Autumn and Winter Plans A and B. Plan B included additional measures such as mandatory face coverings in some settings, vaccine passports, and working from home.
- Vaccination Programme – 500,000 doses had been administered in Northumberland. Uptake was high in comparison with the rest of the region and England. It was still early days for vaccination of 12-15 age group.
- Vaccination of children and young people would be carried out by mixture of School Immunisation Teams, PCNs, local pharmacies, or walk in clinics.
- Phase 3 Autumn/Winter Boosters – Booster jabs would be offered to cohorts 1-9 and should take place no sooner than six months after the first dose.
- Next Steps – vaccination was being encouraged particularly in priority cohorts such as pregnant women and other high-risk groups
- Delivery of seasonal flu vaccinations
- Deliver 3rd doses to eligible immunosuppressed individuals.

The following comments were made in response to queries:-

- It had been hoped to co administer the flu and COVID booster jabs, however, logistically this was not always possible as COVID vaccine supplies were not arriving in line with flu vaccines. It was important not to

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delay either job. Practices were attempting to co administer where possible.

- The situation at HMP Northumberland was challenging and it was hoped that the vaccine uptake rate would improve. There was an important balance to be struck between security and the safety of staff and inmates.
- Walk in clinics were being made available at local pharmacies and at some practices.
- It was important to reinforce the positive messages about vaccination for children.

Members received a presentation about COVID -19 Deaths in Northumberland from Dr. Kathryn Bush, Specialty Registrar in Public Health. (Presentation filed with the signed minutes).

Key points included:-

- Northumberland pandemic deaths overview
 - The number of deaths within 28 days of a positive test peaked early in the pandemic and again over winter 2020/21. There were long periods of no deaths. Rates were beginning to rise again.
- Variations in death rates according to age and ward
 - Death rates were low in the younger age groups and higher in older age groups.
 - Details of death rates according to ward was provided along with case and death rates per 1,000 people.
 - The number of deaths in a ward was not necessarily linked to the rate of infection in that ward. Some wards may have an older population or be in a more deprived area.
- Excess deaths – The number of deaths from all causes, above what would have been expected during a given time period. This was calculated by comparing the average number of deaths over the same time period in the preceding five years.
 - The total number of excess deaths in Northumberland was 365. This figure was lower than expected and could be due to social distancing, use of PPE, the test and trace programme and vaccination programme.
- Breakthrough cases - Where infection had occurred in someone who was fully vaccinated against COVID19
- Breakthrough deaths – A death involving COVID19 that occurred in someone who had received both vaccine doses and had a first positive PCR test at least 14 days after the second vaccination dose.
- These cases and deaths would increase as the number of people vaccinated increased. This was expected statistically and did not mean that the vaccine was ineffective.
- Positive cases were rising but deaths and hospital admissions were not rising at the same rate.

The following comments were made in response to queries:-

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- Northumberland had a relatively stable population which enabled reasonable comparisons with other Local Authority areas to be made.
- Communications and Engagement policy and practice had been effective. The number of deaths in Northumberland was lower than predicted and this was because the public had complied with regulations. The vaccination programme had also worked to prevent deaths and reduce infection.
- There were some areas in Northumberland which had not done so well, particularly those which were more deprived, more care homes etc. It was important to understand this and consider what could be done about it.
- Lessons learned from the pandemic should be considered and it was noted that this was already planned by the Systems Transformation Board.

RESOLVED that the two presentations be received.

23. COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Members received a presentation updating them on current communications and engagement from Phillip Hunter, Senior Service Director. (Presentation filed with the signed minutes).

The following key points were made:-

- Local and national messages were being amplified and included the importance of handwashing, being vaccinated, how to access vaccination and testing etc.
- Ongoing work for the Communications Team included supporting the Outbreak Prevention and Control Wraparound Teams, Member and MP briefings, communication with the Cabinet Officer, supporting the Community Champions Programme and the BeatCovidNE campaign.
- Further development was ongoing with the Community Champions programme and further recruitment would take place. There were 38 active Champions reaching 7,196 individuals. Their locations were being mapped to identify areas to be targeted.
- The BeatCovidNE campaign encouraged 'Acts of Kindness' and had been widely covered by local TV, radio and newspapers. Awards to celebrate those who had gone above and beyond were due to be announced in late October.
- The next steps would include continuance of all above and supporting the vaccination programme and vaccination hesitancy work, along with further insight work across the North East.

The following comments were made:-

- The 12-15 age group was not a difficult group to reach but was a difficult group to convince about the need for vaccination. Further support in this area would be welcomed.

- NHS, nationally, was using its resources to target young people via social media.
- COVID-19 was no longer regularly in the news headlines.

RESOLVED that the report be received.

24. SEND REVISIT MAY 2021

Members were informed of the findings of the SEND Revisit from Ofsted and CQC and of the next steps to be taken.

Rachel Mitcheson, Northumberland CCG, provided the following presentation:-

- The Ofsted HMI Lead Inspector and CQC Inspector visited in May 2021 and focused on progress in three areas of weakness.
- Strengths highlighted during the inspection included:-
 - Collegiate approach to the delivery of SEND developments.
 - Revitalised strategy for children and young people with SEND.
 - Improved quality of Education Health Care Plans.
 - Strong waiting times for children and young people to receive support for mental health.
 - Good understanding of the importance of early identification and the graduated approach from SENCOs with needs being met more consistently across schools
 - Strong Parent Carer Forum providing challenge to the SEND Partnership.
 - Academic outcomes were improving and exclusions for learners with SEND had reduced year on year for three years.
- Outcomes of the inspection included:-
- Progress in addressing the previously identified areas of weakness.
 - Formal quarterly support and challenge visits from DfE and NHS England to cease.
 - Seismic change in leadership and culture since October 2018 inspection.
 - Context of judgement
- SEND Strategic Priorities
 - Working Together
 - Delivering the right support and the right time.
 - Inclusive education
 - Preparation for adulthood

The following comments were made:-

- This was a pivotal time for the system with opportunities for joint commissioning and co design. There were exciting times ahead.
- Very significant progress had been made and officers were thanked for their contribution to these improvements.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the contents of the report be noted
- (2) the next steps to be taken be supported.

25. NORTHUMBERLAND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

Members received a detailed update on the progress of the Northumberland Physical Activity Strategy from Lee Sprudd, Strategic Director (North of Tyne) for Rise North East.

Members welcomed the report and a number of comments were made:-

- There were plans to make improvements to or rebuild leisure centres around the county. A new leisure centre had recently opened in Ponteland and another would open soon in Berwick. Good facilities were already available in Hexham and Ashington. Nationally, swimming pools were being closed down but in Northumberland they were being opened.
- It was recognised that it was unfortunate that some schools were reluctant to open up their facilities for the community. A lot of work and evaluation was ongoing to build evidence of the benefits of opening up these facilities. Some young people may feel more comfortable engaging in activities if they were in a familiar school environment.
- The potential cost to local groups of opening up school facilities could be a problem. Individual requests for support could be looked at outside the meeting. It was noted that it was important for a sustainable solution to be found.
- Discussions should be opened with Headteachers to encourage the opening of school facilities. It was also noted that it was crucial to provide encouragement to the public to use facilities offered.
- There were a number of strategic partners involved with the strategy as none of this work could be done in isolation. Physical activity needed to be built into systems such as the Local Plan and infrastructure.
- Private sector should be involved and some providers were being contacted. The stakeholder group met quarterly and its membership was continually under review to ensure that it included appropriate bodies.
- It was noted that the public's work and activity patterns had changed as a result of the pandemic.
- It was important to focus on obesity and mental health issues which had become more common during the pandemic.

RESOLVED that the Health & Wellbeing Board

- (1) The importance of the physical activity strategy taking a multi-agency approach in tackling the complexities around physical inactivity in the county be understood and acknowledged, and more public and third sector organisations be supported to connect with the strategy's aspirations and

be part of the solution.

- (2) The complexities associated with tackling inactivity and the excellent ongoing collaborative work with strategic stakeholders to implement the countryside physical activity strategy be recognised.
- (3) The immediate impact of implementing this strategy, targeting out most vulnerable communities hit hardest by the COVID 19 crisis be noted.
- (4) The significant benefits of using a preventative approach to tackle rising physical inactivity levels across the county against the wider health, social, educational and economic priority outcomes be noted. This aimed to ensure people were better prepared to live happy and fulfilling lives as members of more sustainable and resilient communities.
- (5) The benefits of developing place-based approaches and the current work ongoing in Berwick as a tool to reduce inequalities across the county be acknowledged.

26. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD FORWARD PLAN

Graham Syers referred to ICS and STB Update scheduled for the next meeting and stressed the importance of the Health & Wellbeing Board dovetailing very well with system based place work. Over the next few months, consideration would have to be given to how what the Board perceived as the needs of the population and feed this in with wider partners. A full discussion at a future meeting once further information was available would be welcomed.

RESOLVED that the forward plan be noted.

27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 11 November 2021, at 10.00 a.m. in County Hall, Morpeth.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____

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