

RBWM Outbreak Engagement Board

Monday 18th October 2021, 2.30pm, Zoom meeting



Board Attendees:

- Cllr Carroll
- Cllr Werner
- Cllr Price
- Executive Director of Adults, Health and Housing – Hilary Hall
- Communications and Marketing Manager – Louisa Dean
- Consultant in Public Health – Anna Richards
- Executive Director of Children’s Services – Kevin McDaniel
- Executive Managing Director RBWM, Clinical Commissioning Group – Caroline Farrar
- Head of Communities – David Scott
- Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Trading Standards - Tracy Hendren
- Environmental Health Manager – Obi Oranu

Additional Attendees:

- Cllr Hilton
- Cllr Bateson
- Cllr Rayner
- Cllr Baldwin
- Cllr Coppinger
- Cllr Del Campo

Apologies:

- Chief Executive – Duncan Sharkey
- Director of Public Health Berkshire East – Stuart Lines

	Item	
1.	Conflicts of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Carroll declared a personal interest as he was an independent healthcare consultant, infectious disease specialist and vaccines expert and had formerly worked for Sanofi Pasteur. He was currently working as an adviser for the Vaccines Taskforce and Antiviral and Therapeutics Taskforce. Councillor Carroll declared this in the interests of full transparency and to highlight that should for any reason during the meeting, or indeed during future meetings, the Outbreak Engagement Board discussed anything directly related to Sanofi Pastuer’s business he would abstain from the discussion and leave the room as required.
2.	Questions from the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No questions from the public were received.

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3.	Update on Vaccination Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three of the vaccination services within the Royal Borough are continuing including providing the third booster dose and the evergreen offer. The evergreen offer is for people to come forward for the first and second dose. • There is work ongoing to look at the next stage of vaccinations for 12 – 15-year-olds. All vaccinations services will offer this; however the operational detail is still being worked upon due to it being on a consent basis which would negate the walk in process. • There has been several outreach clinics in areas based on the demographic profile. • The CCG have encouraged all the vaccination services to consider co-administration of Covid and flu vaccinations. There are a few operational challenges with this. • There are exceptionally high levels of demand within the system and there is still a pandemic situation to manage which with the infection prevention and control arrangements are difficult to achieve in practice. • Cllr Werner raised a question about the reopening of the St Marks Urgent and Emergency Care Centre. CF confirmed that the CCG have run a lot of engagement exercises with residents about options for urgent care over recent years. The message back from the public is that people would like to access support through their general practice. Staff remain redeployed elsewhere due to the pandemic related demand pressures and no decision has been made regarding the future of the provision.
4.	Local Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 449.9 cases per 100,000 population. This represents 673 cases in the last 7 day period. This is an increase on the previous 7 days. This is slightly higher than the South East average. The South East case rate is 370.4 cases per 100,000. The England average is 383.8. • 184.7 cases per 100,000 population for the 60+ age group. This has also increased and represents 16 cases. • There have been 774 individuals tested per 100,000 population. We are testing more than other local authorities across Berkshire, and also South East. • 8.6% of individuals tested have tested positive. • All of the wards within RBWM have had high case rates apart from the Sunningdale and Cheapside ward. There is some variation, although there are cases in all of the wards. • Weekly case rates at 7th October show the highest rates in people aged 10-14 year olds (2,155 cases per 100,000) and 15 -19 year olds (579 cases per 100,000). There were no cases in people aged 85 and over. • The number of Covid-19 patients has continued to stay at low levels in FHFT Hospitals 4 new admission on 3rd October. On 5th October, 49 patients were in FHFT Hospitals for Covid-19 with 3 on mechanical ventilation. • The number of daily admissions for Covid-19 patients also remains low in Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust hospitals. There were 2 new admissions on 3rd October. As of 5th October, 18 patients were in RBFT Hospitals for Covid-19, with 2 patients needing mechanical ventilation. • It has been a number of weeks since RBWM have had a death as a result of Covid. Week ending 1st October, there were no deaths recorded, however in the weeks prior to that there were a small number of deaths. Mortality rate is in line with previous years.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 679,000 people living in Berkshire have now received dose 1 of the Covid-19 vaccination, and nearly 623,000 people have received both doses. • Even with both of the doses of the vaccine, it is still possible to catch Covid-19. The vaccine is less effective in preventing infection, it is more effective in preventing severe disease and hospitalisation. • In terms of the situation in schools, nationally, cases have been rising in all schools.. As a result of the situation locally, a sub group of the East Berkshire Health Protection Board has met to consider further advice to schools on transmission. A letter has been prepared to go out to heads of schools this week, issued in the names of the Chief Executive, Director of Children’s and the Director of Public Health, to provide strong advice on the rates and measures to contain the rise. The intention is to avoid any more restrictive measures having to be introduced, and to help with the management of infections. Particular attention has been paid to ensure that the correct advice is being given that is proportionate and intended to minimise disruption. The advice is that head teachers implement some enhanced measures due to the high rates. • Household testing is also being looked at. This is to minimise the number of students attending school that could be infected. • There has been a statement on the Berkshire website in regards to the recent issue around analysis of PCR tests. The NHS test and trace team have seen a rising number of positive lateral flow tests and a negative PCR test. This predominantly affected people in the south west of England. Following an investigation, NHS test and trace is working with one particular laboratory to understand the root cause of any issues, which could have led to inaccurate PCR results being issued. Testing has been suspended at this laboratory whilst investigations continue. There is no evidence that there are any faults in the LFT or PCR test kits themselves, so this is an issue relating to how the tests are processed and residents should remain confident. • As of 1st October the functions relating to Covid have moved from PHE to UK Health Security Agency. • The best way for people to protect against the virus is to continue following the Public Health advice. This can be found on www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk • Cllr Price raised the issue of Long Covid which was discussed at the previous Board and suggested that it would be helpful for residents to issue some information about the symptoms of Long Covid. <p>Action – AR to speak to NHS Colleagues on how information on Long Covid can be disseminated.</p>
5.	Refresh of the Local Outbreak Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) is taking place to ensure it remains accurate and in line with guidance. The plan will have two components which are strategic and operational. The strategic component will focus on identifying positive cases, transmission and vaccination. The operational part will be to reflect learning from the management of outbreaks over the course of the pandemic and focus on high-risk settings. • This work is to be completed by the middle of November. • HH asked that the learning identified be brought back to the Outbreak Engagement Board in November for information and discussion.

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6.	Update on High Risk settings	<p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KMcD confirmed that there has been no feedback from the Bradford trial on air purifiers. • CO2 Monitors will be received by mainstream schools but it is not clear that they had been received. • There is information on clusters that are linked to particular settings, the vast majority of outbreaks at the moment are within school settings. <p>Action – KMcD to check on the distribution of CO2 Monitors to schools.</p>
7.	Engagement and Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is ongoing communications on Covid. There has been promotion on vaccine take ups. Also information on PCR's and LFD's. The covid booster and flu campaign has also been running on Social media. • The team will work with schools on the comms for the vaccine for 12 – 15 year olds. • Continued promotion of the lower my drinking app which is aimed at addressing the issue of increased drinking throughout the pandemic. • The vaccine bus has continued to visit areas throughout the Borough. • In terms of planning, there has been work done with particular communities to try and work out if vaccine take up is an issue. • The team have worked with UK HSA on the false PCR readings to make sure all press enquiries are dealt with by them. • 5 social media posts weekly on Facebook, Twitter and Next Door. The Covid newsletter has continued every fortnight, this has 53,000 subscribers with a 40% click through rate. The Covid info champion emails are also continuing to be shared. • Covid Copy is also going into the bulletins. • Cllr Werner referred to the council event on 21 October. HH and KMcD both confirmed that the council was committed to reopening cautiously. There was a recognition that everyone was now needing to live with Covid and adapt the provision of services accordingly. Many of the council services needed to deliver face to face with residents and this was being managed in the safest and most appropriate way. All the council's communications, both internal and external, were emphasising Covid safety particularly in terms of taking regular LFD tests, wearing face coverings and self isolating if testing positive or showing any symptoms and taking a PCR test.
4.	Enforcement and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a significant decrease in service requests related to Covid. There were 5 requests last week, which related to 4 schools and a local cinema seeking advice on Covid measures. All 4 schools were found to be compliant. • Food inspections are opportunities to give advice to businesses and also advice on the new requirements on labelling of prepacked food which is known as Natasha's Law. • The government recently produced their autumn and winter plan. They have outlined a plan B scenario if the NHS is under pressure. Two of these requirements relate to mandating face coverings in certain settings, and mandating vaccine certifications to access certain venues, such as nightclubs. If plan B is initiated, this may have implications on environmental health who would be required to enforce the requirements.

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5.	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The wearing of face coverings in council meetings was discussed in light of the Government guidance to encourage the wearing of face coverings in crowded spaces. Representatives of the three political groups present at the meeting agreed to go back to their groups to request that members wear face coverings in meetings.
6.	Date of next public meeting	15 th November 2021, 2.30pm, Zoom meeting