

# RBWM Outbreak Engagement Board

## Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022, 2.30pm, Zoom meeting

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### Board Attendees:

- Cllr Carroll
- Cllr Werner
- Cllr Davey
- Executive Director of Adults, Health and Housing – Hilary Hall (chair)
- Head of Communications – Louisa Dean
- Executive Director of Children's Services – Kevin McDaniel
- Executive Managing Director RBWM, Clinical Commissioning Group – Caroline Farrar
- Communications and Engagement officer – Louise Page
- Intelligence & Strategy Officer (COVID-19) – Marc Connor

### Additional Attendees:

- Cllr Baldwin
- Cllr Hunt
- Cllr Singh
- Cllr Bhangra

### Apologies:

- Chief Executive – Duncan Sharkey
- Director of Public Health Berkshire East – Stuart Lines
- Consultant in Public Health – Anna Richards
- Head of Communities – David Scott
- Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Trading Standards - Tracy Hendren
- Cllr Price

	Item	
1.	Conflicts of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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 had been 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 this business he would abstain from the discussion and leave the room as required.</li></ul>
2.	Minutes of the last meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There were no matters arising.</li></ul>

	Item	
3.	Questions from the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="454 192 1422 297">I understand for Omicron, vaccine protection starts to wane after about 10 weeks. What is going to happen to those people whose vaccine protection has started to wane?</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="515 338 1422 591"><i>The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) which advises the government has recently published a report on the adult COVID-19 booster vaccination programme and the Omicron variant. This is a good source of factual information. <a href="#">JCVI statement on the adult COVID-19 booster vaccination programme and the Omicron variant: 7 January 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>.</i></p> <p data-bbox="515 631 1422 1066"><i>The report highlights that thus far, the booster programme has provided high levels of protection against severe disease from COVID-19 (both Delta and Omicron variants) across the population. The latest data from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) indicates that while protection against mild symptomatic infection appears to wane substantially by about 3 months after the booster dose, protection against severe disease (hospitalisation) is well maintained in older adults (see <a href="#">Monitoring reports of the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination</a>). This data underlines the importance of booster vaccination and the additional protection obtained against the Omicron variant.</i></p> <p data-bbox="515 1106 1422 1252"><i>For those with a severely weakened immune system, a booster (4<sup>th</sup> dose) is available from 3 months after your third dose. <a href="#">Booster dose of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine - NHS (www.nhs.uk)</a>.</i></p> <p data-bbox="515 1292 1422 1473"><i>The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. They give you the best protection against COVID-19. Walk In vaccination opportunities are now available, please look at the link for your local clinics' opening times. <a href="#">Vaccination clinics   Frimley Health and Care</a></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="454 1514 1422 1767">Looking at the latest healthcare statistics for Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust on the COVID-19 Government Dashboard (updated on 10 February 2022), why is the number of patients in hospital currently much higher than during the month leading up to Christmas Day 2021 (see graph)? The latest 7-day average is 173.0 compared with an average of 71.9 over the month to 25 December 2021.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="502 1807 1422 2058"><i>Infection rates locally have been high throughout this period and we know that hospital admissions lag infection surges by two to four weeks, so this difference is entirely predictable. It is worth emphasising that the Omicron surge is not over, it is impacting very severely on the hospital and there are increased waiting times for planned care once again. Just because restrictions have eased does not mean anything has changed in our daily</i></p>

	Item	
		<i>operational realities. There has been an increase in case rates since November, it has only gone down in February.</i>
4.	Update on Vaccination Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The vaccination programme has been relatively quiet. People are not coming forward for the booster at the same rate as previously and some sites had reduced their hours of operation accordingly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Hospital Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The trust remains in a steady but difficult state. As of last Friday there were 164 patients who had tested positive for covid across the Trust. There have been 20 deaths within the last week which is an increase. There are currently two positive patients in intensive care.</li> <li>There have been a number of outbreaks on the wards, with 14 last week.</li> <li>134 staff are currently off sick with covid and 49 are in covid isolation. This is a continuing impact on the care that the trust can provide.</li> <li>Over recent months there have been cancelled planned operations due to the amount of staff sickness and the lack of beds due to outbreaks within the trust.</li> </ul>
6.	Local Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>772 cases per 100,000 population. This represents 1,168 cases in the last 7 day period. This has decreased by 31% and is in line with the South East average of 743 cases although slightly higher than the England average of 570. All case rates are going down.</li> <li>456 cases per 100,000 population for the 60+ age group. This has also decreased by 24% and is in line with the South East and England average.</li> <li>There have been 505 individuals tested per 100,000 population.</li> <li>12.3% of individuals tested have tested positive. This is also reducing.</li> <li>The cases are reducing from the peak in December and January.</li> <li>There are still cases in all of the wards across the Borough although case numbers are reducing.</li> <li>On the heat map it shows that the higher case rates in July 2021 were in young adults, however as we move to the Christmas period, it shows all age groups begin to be affected with the older age groups being the last to be affected.</li> <li>The winter pressures are increasing within FHFT hospitals with overall numbers of patients presenting at hospital increasing.</li> <li>The number of Covid-19 patients in FHFT Hospitals is increasing with 19 new admissions on 6<sup>th</sup> February. On 8<sup>th</sup> February, 194 patients were in FHFT Hospitals for Covid-19 with three on mechanical ventilation.</li> <li>The number of daily admissions for Covid-19 patients is also increasing in Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust hospitals. There were 17 new admissions on 6<sup>th</sup> February. As of 8<sup>th</sup> February, 77</li> </ul>

	Item	
		<p>patients were in RBFT Hospitals for Covid-19, with one patient needing mechanical ventilation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been 387 deaths up to the 4<sup>th</sup> February. Overall mortality rate is 7% higher than last year.</li> <li>• Over 286,000 people aged 50 and over have now received their three doses/booster Covid-19 vaccination in Berkshire. This equates to 84% of the population.</li> <li>• The vaccination bus was out two weeks ago. There are further dates this week. On 24<sup>th</sup> February the bus will visit Woodlands Park, on 25<sup>th</sup> February it will visit Maidenhead Mosque and on 26<sup>th</sup> February it will visit Cordwallis Road surgery. The test and trace team will also be out on Saturday.</li> <li>• There is a correlation between rates and wards, it shows higher case rates within wards with lower vaccination uptake.</li> </ul>
7.	Update on Long Covid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to staff availability, this item was deferred to the next meeting for a more substantial discussion.</li> </ul>
8.	Update on High Risk settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools continue to have disruption due to absence. There has been a significant fall in numbers, as there have been fewer absences.</li> <li>• There have been a number of classes taught on a remote basis, to ensure that young people have a consistent teacher on a particular subject particularly those with examinations coming up.</li> <li>• It is hoped that the trend over the last two weeks will continue. There have been no school closures since the last period.</li> </ul>
9.	Engagement and Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vaccination campaign has continued with information on the first, second and booster vaccine. The team has promoted local walk-ins and the return of the vaccine bus.</li> <li>• The other campaign that has also been running is 'test don't guess' and also promoting community collection of tests at the leisure centres.</li> <li>• Comms have provided information on where to get help for residents with Long Covid.</li> <li>• The last campaign running is the business grants, which are available for businesses that have been struggling because of the omicron variant.</li> <li>• All of the above messages have been put on all platforms, Facebook, Twitter and Next Door. The Next Door app enables the team to target specific wards which is being used in conjunction with the vaccine bus visiting.</li> <li>• The weekly newsletter is still being sent out. There are 53,000 subscribers.</li> <li>• Weekly covid champion email is sent out which is shared with 123 people to share within their groups.</li> <li>• More comms will be shared once the Government press conference has taken place today on their future strategy for living with Covid.</li> </ul>

	Item	
10	Enforcement and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been no new notifications.</li> <li>• The team has continued to carry out the advisory and reactive role that it has been doing throughout the pandemic.</li> </ul>
11.	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With infection rate and the vaccine take up, we would expect a future variant of concern not to emanate from within the UK, but possible globally from another jurisdiction where vaccine rates are lower. As a general rule, it would be expected that future variants of concern could mutate and evolve. The expectation is that as the virus mutates, it should become less severe in terms of its impact on mortality. Anti-viral treatments are also effective with the vaccine, which will help prevent the virus mutating.</li> <li>• There are an increasing number of re-infections which is to be expected with this disease. However, if people have been fully vaccinated, the impact on them is significantly lower with milder symptoms.</li> </ul>
12	Date of next public meeting	21 <sup>st</sup> March 2022