

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

17 NOVEMBER 2022

COVID-19 LOCAL OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLAN BRIEFING

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Summary

This report will provide a brief update on the Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) and other recent updates in light of the Governments living with COVID-19 strategy. This report will focus on new updates since the last brief was presented to the Board on 1 September 2022.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 As part of the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) COVID-19 response and recovery strategy, Upper Tier and Unitary Local Authorities in England were mandated to develop a COVID-19 LOMP—formerly known as the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan—to reduce the spread of the virus within the community.

1.2 The latest version of the LOMP, published recently on the 24 October 2022, is currently available online and reflects changes in guidance based on the government's living with COVID-19 strategy.

2. Background

2.1 Responding to the Increase in Cases Nationally & Locally

2.1.1 Since the last convening of the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2022, COVID-19 infection rates nationally and in Medway have increased. The increase in cases has been primarily attributed to BA.4 and BA.5 sub-lineages of Omicron and waning natural immunity. The majority of cases are seen in those aged 60 years and above.

2.1.2 The government's guidance on [Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19](#) that was published on 01 April 2022 still remains relevant. This guidance provides actions to be taken in order to help reduce

the risk of contracting COVID-19 and passing it on to others. The main actions that can be taken in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections and protect those at highest risk include:

- Get vaccinated
- Let fresh air in if meeting others indoors
- Practise good hygiene:
 - Wash your hands
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes
 - Clean your surroundings frequently
- Wear a face covering or a face mask

2.1.3 As of October 2022, the BA.5 variant, a sub lineage of the Omicron variant remains the dominant variant in circulation across England. Detailed information on all variants and variants under investigation can be found on the Government website under [Technical Briefing 46](#) published by UKHSA which was recently updated on 10 October 2022.

2.2 Care Home Specific COVID-19 Guidance

2.2.1 The most up to date guidance for care homes and testing can be found [here](#). This guidance outlines the COVID-19 testing available for staff, residents, and visitors for all adult social care services.

2.2.2 Guidance on Infection Prevention and Control in adult social care: COVID-19 supplement can be found [here](#). It should be read in conjunction with the [infection prevention and control \(IPC\) resource for adult social care](#), which should be used as a basis for any IPC response.

2.3 Testing and Tracing Capabilities

2.3.1 Asymptomatic lateral flow testing continues in some high-risk settings, including for some staff in the NHS, staff in adult social care, staff in some prisons and places of detention and in high-risk domestic abuse refuges and homelessness settings.

2.3.2 Symptomatic testing is available for staff of adult social care organisations who are eligible for free testing. Free symptomatic testing is available for residents in care homes and also for residents in extra care and supported living services. Further details can be found in [the COVID-19 testing in adult social care guidance](#).

2.3.3 People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 or a positive test result for COVID-19 are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people. People who have received a positive COVID-19 test result are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days after the day the test was taken. More details can be found [here](#).

2.4 The Vaccination Programme

2.4.1 For the 2022 autumn booster programme, the primary objective is to increase immunity in those at higher risk from COVID-19 and thereby optimise protection against severe COVID-19, specifically hospitalisation and death, over winter 2022 to 2023. Therefore it is important that those eligible come forward for their autumn booster.

2.4.2 JCVI advises that for the 2022 autumn booster programme, the following groups should be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine:

- Residents in a care home for older adults and staff working in care homes for older adults
- Frontline health and social care workers
- All adults aged 50 years and over
- Persons aged 5 to 49 in a clinical risk group, as set out in the [Green Book, chapter 14a, tables 3 and 4](#)
- Persons aged 5 to 49 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- Persons aged 16 to 49 years who are carers, as set out in the [Green Book, chapter 14a, table 3](#)

2.4.3 As of 24 October 2022, over 10 million people in England have now had their autumn booster vaccination. As of 10 October 2022, over 1.2 million people have had their autumn booster dose in the South East.

2.4.4 Vaccination clinics and community pharmacies continue to offer first, second and booster vaccines across Medway for anyone aged five and over.

3. Risk Management

3.1 By running stress test exercises on a variety of scenarios related to the LOMP, we aim to minimise the risks associated with similar events occurring by (i) identifying any gaps within the LOMP, (ii) creating awareness of the communication channels that exist between the agencies, (iii) creating awareness of the roles of different agencies, (iv) clarifying the escalation triggers and process, (v) identifying areas where additional support may be required, (vi) identifying any potential challenges and their solutions and (vii) identifying actions that need to be taken and when. As the system moves from a response to preparedness phase, testing and assurance will be undertaken periodically to ensure plans are fit for purpose.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 For 2021/22 funding continued through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). The unspent funding allocation from 2021/22 has been carried forward to 2022/23 to continue to support outbreak management planning and help reduce the spread of coronavirus.

4.2 There are no direct financial implications for the council arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 Medway Council, under the leadership of the Directors of Public Health, has a statutory duty to protect the population's health by responding to and managing communicable disease outbreaks which require urgent investigation and present a public health risk.

5.2 The legal context for the council's response to COVID-19 sits within the following Acts:

- The Coronavirus Act 2020
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984

5.3 The Coronavirus Act 2020 was first introduced in March 2020 and has enabled the Government to support individuals, businesses, and public services during the pandemic. The Government have expired a number of provisions within the Act which were no longer needed, however a significant proportion remain active.

5.4 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations 2020 ("No.3 Regulations") were in place from 18 July 2020. These powers were revoked on 24 February 2022. Local authorities now manage outbreaks through local planning, and pre-existing public health powers, as they would with other infectious diseases.

5.5 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 were in place from 28 September 2020 and imposed a legal duty on individuals who tested positive and certain close contacts to self-isolate. As set out in chapter 3, the legal duty to self-isolate was lifted on 24 February 2022 and replaced by guidance.

6 Recommendation

6.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to consider and note this update report.

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None