



Team Devon Local Outbreak Engagement Board

Decision and Action log

TEAM DEVON (LOCAL OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD)

Date Thursday, 10 December 2020

Present

Dr Louise MacAllister, Councillor Andrew Leadbetter, Councillor Roger Croad, Tony Gravett, Dr Paul Johnson, Councillor James McInnes, Councillor Judy Pearce, Cara Stobart, Sue Wilkinson, Diana Crump, Rhys Roberts, Darryn Allcorn, Nellie Guttman, Sean Fielding and Dan Evans

Apologies

Councillor John Hart, Professor Janice Kay CBE, Dame Suzi Leather, Shaun Sawyer and Sean Mackney

No.	Decision/Action/Message	Who Will action?	When?
No.	Decision/Action/Message	Who Will Communicate / action?	When?
22.	<p>Notes of the Previous Board Meeting The notes of the previous Board meeting on 12 November 2020 were endorsed.</p>		
23.	<p>Urgent Items from the Health Protection Board The Director of Public Health advised that there were no urgent items for escalation from the Health Protection Board.</p>		
24.	<p>Report / Presentation from the Health Protection Board The Board received a Report from the Health Protection Board on current issues, data and matters for information.</p> <p>The presentation outlined there had been a decline in the number of cases over recent weeks due to the impact of lockdown; however, this decline had started to slow and stabilise over the past few days. There had been an increase in cases in care homes, of staff and residents, who were mainly asymptomatic (no symptoms) but had been picked up through regular testing. Some NHS settings, education and workplace settings had also seen increases in the number of positive cases.</p> <p>The testing capacity had remained constant in Devon. Testing through Pillar 2 had reached 15,000 per week in Devon and positivity rates had fallen to</p>		

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	<p>below 4%.</p> <p>The age profile of positive cases had seen an increase amongst the elderly population, in particular in the over 80's and over 90's age category.</p> <p>Matters also highlighted in the Presentation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National overview – a slight increase over the last week in number of cases reported with a mixed pattern around the country; • National number of deaths had decreased slightly since mid-November; • The number of patients admitted nationally had declined for second week running; • National testing – remained high and the availability of testing was very good; • Local dashboard – in Devon there had been 607 reported cases in the past week, and 24 deaths (up to 27 November); • Age profile – increase in positive cases in the over 80's - other age groups have seen a decline over the past few weeks; • The Board looked at rates across different geographical areas of Devon; • It was noted the difference between Devon and Cornwall positive cases was quite stark. 		
25.	<p>Local and National Updates</p> <p>The Chief Executive provided updates around Tiering arrangements, of</p>		

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	<p>particular interest to businesses across the County. A decision would be taken on any changes to the current tier system on 17 December and what impact that may have in Devon.</p> <p>He also advised that he had asked for ReSCG to hold a workshop before Christmas to get some operational awareness across NHS/LRF/Public Health and Local authority resource requirements in light of confusion about the various programmes and concerns about the resource requirements; for example, NHS Vaccination programmes, Community testing, local contact tracing.</p> <p>The Director of Public Health (DPH) updated the Board on local arrangements, including 3 key programmes: Mass vaccination, testing and utilising of lateral flow tests, and contact tracing.</p> <p>Lateral flow tests were quick to administer (within 30 minutes). There was a national programme of pilot tests, offered to universities and care homes. Local DPH had access to additional lateral flow tests and were working well with colleagues in neighbouring authorities to look at how those flexible tests were used to best reduce transmissions and outbreaks. He advised that tests were never 100% accurate and usually identified 3 out of 4 people who had COVID.</p> <p>Contact tracing – in the South West and Devon, the service was contacting 80% of positive cases, and was looking at how to increase this to over 90%.</p> <p>Devon and Cornwall Police advised that over the past three months, they had engaged with 993 people, and issued 17 tickets across the Force. They</p>		

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	<p>focussed on engaging and educating people, with enforcement used as a last resort. The main offence tickets were issued for were Tier 1 gatherings of more than 6 people and participating in indoor and outdoor gatherings.</p>		
26.	<p>NHS Pressures and Vaccination Programme The Chair of Devon Clinical Commissioning Group presented the issues surrounding current NHS pressures, the rollout of the mass vaccination programme and relevant communications.</p> <p>NHS pressures had stabilised since the last peak which saw cases in excess of the first wave. Hospitals now had better management of treating symptoms effectively and were screening staff, patients and visitors more often. They were currently trying to balance the needs of COVID and Non-COVID emergencies and patients.</p> <p>The Nightingale Hospital was now open and had 32 COVID patients being cared for at this setting; taking some pressure off hospitals. However, there was still a strain on staffing, with a number of absences due to having COVID or isolating as being a contact. Regular screening of staff in all hospitals was taking place.</p> <p>The national vaccination programme was already up and running in Devon. It was important to highlight the increase in the number of over 80's getting coronavirus, and the need to reinforce to the public that they were in the high risk group and needed to be targeted in first wave of vaccinations. There was a learning process of the rollout, many logistical challenges with</p>		

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	<p>this vaccine, especially having to keep it stored at certain temperatures making transporting the vaccine extremely difficult.</p> <p>Vaccination Programme – 50 Hospital hubs went live across the Country – Plymouth was the first Hub in Devon. In Devon, 55 individuals were vaccinated on day 1, and a further 90 were vaccinated yesterday; these included the highly vulnerable and care staff. Supply of the vaccine was currently limited and only had a 5-day shelf life.</p> <p>The next phase was to roll out the vaccine to the primary care sector, including care home staff and over 80s. The first 8 sites in Devon were to be announced tomorrow and would receive vaccines next week, each delivering over 900 doses. It was noted that primary care staff had been excellent in stepping up to deliver the vaccination rollout.</p> <p>Once the vaccine could be transported safely, the rollout would be widened across the County. Two large scale sites had been identified in Devon (1 Plymouth and 1 Exeter) – and would be announced early next week. There had been no issues reported in Devon around booking systems and the rollout of the vaccine was being delivered on plan as requested by NHS England.</p> <p>The Board was advised that in order to provide reassurance and monitoring of those receiving the vaccine, follow up appointments and checks were taking place, with individuals returning after 21 days for a second injection, at the same site, to ensure all information was captured and recorded. Feedback from the first individuals in Plymouth had been very positive. The NHS was also working with primary care sites to implement similar</p>		

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	<p>models across other areas of Devon. The geographical isolation in the North of County made transporting the vaccine difficult.</p> <p>NHS Communication messages had also been going out at the same time, to provide reassurance and advice around the vaccination process. Briefing notes from National NHS teams were being disseminated across all partners and webinars for Health and Social Care staff were also taking place and had a positive attendance. A survey was currently taking place to understand people's perceptions of the vaccination in Devon.</p>		
27.	<p>Free School Meals update</p> <p>The Head of Communities updated the Board on the Free School Meal voucher scheme.</p> <p>More than 15,000 children across Devon would receive supermarket vouchers this Christmas in order to combat holiday hunger.</p> <p>The vouchers could be redeemed in major supermarkets across Devon, and arrangements were being put in place for families who could not get to a supermarket. Schools and libraries were also on standby to help families redeem vouchers if they could not access them online. Development of Food Networks that were sustainable and could respond at scale were also happening. They would include kitchens, food banks, cafes and pubs, holiday clubs etc.</p> <p>It was part of a £1 million programme and another £1 million would be spent</p>		

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	<p>in the New Year to cover half-term and the Easter holidays.</p> <p>A new website had been set up containing all the relevant information. https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/free-school-meals-holiday-voucher-scheme/</p>		
28.	<p>Communications and Campaigns</p> <p>The Head of Communications & Media provided an update on Devon County Council communications and campaigns, including the Spread a Little Kindness Campaign.</p> <p>The presentation raised key points, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since December 2, messages had been focused on making people in Devon aware of the Tier 2 restrictions and information they need for the Christmas period regarding travel and bubbles; • there was a compliance campaign running across the Local Resilience Forum area (Devon, Plymouth and Cornwall) thanking people for following the rules, asking people to keep going: it's for now, not forever and reminding them to get information from trusted sources and not to share misinformation; • Communications continued to build and maintain trust in local Team Devon response by being transparent; • Spread a Little Kindness and be an Everyday Hero Campaigns • How to be a Hero at home, Hands, Face, Space messaging - reminding people not to drop their guard at work; and, 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="255 261 1438 335">• The Spread a Little Kindness Campaign – being shared across DCC social media. <p data-bbox="255 379 1438 772">The Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Exeter provided the Board with an update on the ongoing work to ensure the safe return of students home and also back to University in the new year. Since September, the University had been running a testing process to be able to test pupils quickly, get results quickly and isolate quickly. There had been a significant outbreak at the University in the early part of term and since mid-September the University had tested over 7,000 people, with over 1,500 positive cases and 6,000 people were isolated over the last term. In addition, students had been kept in households for an additional month as a further precaution, which had meant that transmission into the wider public had been very low.</p> <p data-bbox="255 817 1438 890">General testing at the University was now recording no positive cases and was numbers were lower than the Devon average.</p> <p data-bbox="255 935 1438 1168">To help students return home for Christmas, the University conducted 6,200 Lateral Flow Tests between 30 November and 9 December. Out of the 6,200 tests done, there were only 2 positive cases. PCR tests were also used for those students that required a certificate for international travel. Approximately 10% of students had remained in university accommodation over the Christmas period, with most having returned home.</p> <p data-bbox="255 1212 1438 1366">For the start of the new term in January, the University had signed up for a Government Scheme to continue testing, which involved conducting 50,000 tests over January. A significant concern was people mixing over the Christmas period and then coming back to university. As a result, and to</p>		

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	<p>help manage the number of tests to be carried out, students return to Exeter would be staggered in three stages, with a schedule for student testing on their return. Every student would be asked to complete two tests and a recent survey showed 87% of students said they wanted to do a test when they come back in January.</p> <p>The Board also noted that the level of detection of the virus in drains and sewers coming out of the university was virtually non-existent.</p> <p>The Board recorded its thanks for all the effort both staff and students at the university had put into testing, monitoring, isolating and managing the containment of the virus to avoid further spread into the community.</p>		
29.	<p>Public/Members Questions for the Board Other questions raised for the Board included:</p> <p>Whether the longevity of the Vaccination was known and whether those individuals who received it would be given additional freedoms over the Christmas period and moving forward? The Board was advised that the duration of the study was 6 months post vaccination, and that evidence suggested those that had received the vaccination had far better protection and immunity than those who had not. There were no plans for those vaccinated to have greater freedoms and it was vital that social distancing be maintained as the effects of the vaccination would take some time before being fully realised.</p>		

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30.	<p>Key Messages to be Communicated</p> <p>The Board and Head of Communications and Media considered the key messages coming from the meeting.</p> <p>These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The start of the vaccination programme was good news but not a signal to lower our guard - the virus was still in our communities and would remain so for some months to come • It was essential that we all kept up our efforts and continued to follow the national rules around space, face and hands • Please continue to use common sense and do not let your guard down now or over Christmas period or we will pay the price in the New Year! • Current Tier 2 arrangements to be reviewed by Government on December 16 and we recognise it will be a difficult balance between lives v. livelihoods. • “Don’t let things slip – use your common sense and make the right choices over Christmas” 		
31.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Members noted the date of the next meeting as 14 January 2021 @ 11.00am</p>		

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