

Local Outbreak Engagement Board (Health and Wellbeing Board sub-committee)

Monday 28th June 2021, 1.00pm

Present: Councillor Judith Smyth, Councillor Suzy Horton, Roger Batterbury (Healthwatch), Helen Atkinson (Director of Public Health), Dr Linda Collie (Portsmouth CCG), Louise Wilders (HIVE Portsmouth), Richard Lee (Assistant Director- Regulatory Services, PCC), Matthew Gummerson (Strategic Lead for Intelligence, PCC), Alison Jeffery (Director of Children, Families and Education, PCC), Dominique Le Touze (Consultant in Public Health, PCC), Claire Currie (Consultant in Public Health), Kelly Nash (Strategy Unit, PCC).

Apologies: Cllr Jason Fazackarley, Cllr Jeanette Smith, Stef Nientowalski (Shaping Portsmouth).

1. Notes of last meeting (24th May 2021)

The notes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Local Intelligence Summary

Matt Gummerson provided an overview of the latest data and key messages.

In terms of the local infection data, Matt reported that there have been 274 new cases reported in the last week, with the 7 day infection rate per 100,000 in Portsmouth now at 127.5. The city rate is above that in England and the wider SE region rate. Rates are highest among the 15-29 age group. Areas of fastest growth in infections are areas with younger populations, where a higher proportion are likely to be unvaccinated.

In relation to variants of concern, it is assumed that all infections in the city are now of the delta variant.

In relation to PHUT, there are 11 confirmed cases and 3 suspected cases in the hospital as at 28/6, with 1 diagnosis in the last 24 hours.

There have now been 284 covid-related deaths in the city since the end of October, with none of these in the last 7 days. There have been 365 covid-related deaths in total. The total number of deaths in the city last week were lower than the average week in the previous 5 years.

In discussion, it was noted that there are a number of pressures on the hospital emergency department, and that it is likely to be a very challenging autumn/winter for the hospital. Dr Collie talked through a range of pressures that are currently impacting the system, including the ongoing requirements for clinical staff to isolate in the event of notification through test and trace, or to be at home to care for isolating children. It was noted that staff are very tired as the system has moved from dealing with the pandemic itself to now addressing the new pressures in the system, and noting that a new wave of infections will peak in a few weeks.

3. Long Covid

Helen Atkinson set out a number of details about what is happening in relation to the issue of Long Covid, and reported that a local working group has been established to consider some of the particular issues. The group have had some initial conversations and are now considering what needs to happen in terms of next steps, but this is likely to consider where there are gaps in information for residents and training for professionals. A mapping of current services in Portsmouth has been undertaken and a rapid review of the research for Long Covid. It was agreed to circulate some information slides on this matter to the group.

It was also noted that there is an upcoming meeting with PHUT research team to discuss how some research could be framed to be particularly relevant to the city.

4. Director of Public Health and Head of Regulatory Services Update

Richard Lee reported that all regulations end on 18th July, and these include those which require face coverings to be worn on public transport as well as those that allow business premises to be challenged on their covid-safe practices.

It was also reported that a report has been issued around the findings of research on events. There are 6 main observations that will support measures to make events safer in the future.

CBCOs remain active in the city, and have now carried out nearly 10, 000 interventions in total. The team are currently focusing particularly on areas of common exposure. It was noted that a particular issue is emerging around people seeking to gain access to premises when they should be isolating (flagged red on the NHS app), and noting an increased amount of pushback to CBCOs as they undertake their duties, suggesting an overall level of compliance fatigue amongst businesses and customers.

There were no questions in relation to the update.

5. Test, trace and isolate

Dominique Le Touze ran through an update summarising the test, trace and isolate position.

It was noted that the centre at Eldon has closed and a new site is now established at the old Sainsbury's in the city centre. The intention is that the current Northharbour site will also close and be incorporated into the Sainsbury's provision.

Cllr Smyth asked if the level of self-isolation support continues to be an issue, and Dominique explained that a range of support is being looked at. Louise Wilders noted that the city is likely to see a number of issues developing in relation to financial hardship as the furlough scheme ends, and bans on evictions and debt collection with bailiffs come to an end. It was also noted that volunteer groups are also experiencing fatigue, and so it is harder to maintain the same level of community support.

6. Vaccination programme

Claire Currie reported that nationally, all adults over 18 are now eligible for vaccine. There is also guidance expected to be issued shortly around how students can access the vaccine. It

was also noted that those over 40 are being given the opportunity to reduce the interval between vaccines from 12 to 8 weeks. Consultation about vaccination in care settings has closed, with the recommendation being that this should be mandatory for all staff.

Special events and clinics continue to be developed targeted at particular communities in the city where uptake is lower, and work is underway to look at reaching eastern European communities.

An update is still awaited around vaccination boosters and any programme for vaccinating children.

7. Assurance report

The Board received the report which covered:

- Local context - updated with the information taken from the data reporting (and updated to include information about variants of concern and enduring transmission)
- Local activity - bringing together a range of information about what our work is telling us about our preparedness
- Assurance around high-risk settings, populations and underserved populations.
- Key risks, including relating to the relaxed restrictions.

There were no questions, and the Board noted that on the basis of information and evidence that they have received, they have a high degree of assurance on local arrangements.

8. Any other business

There was no other business.

9. Future dates

Future meeting dates were noted - dates are now in the diary until September.