

COVID-19 - LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN UPDATE

Relevant Board Member(s)	Councillor Jane Palmer, Chairman, Health and Wellbeing Board
Organisation	London Borough of Hillingdon
Report author	Dan Kennedy, London Borough of Hillingdon
Papers with report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Local Outbreak Control Plan2. North West London Summary out of hospital recovery plan with Hillingdon local plan3. Terms of Reference – COVID-19 Health Protection Board

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	This report updates the Health and Wellbeing Board on Hillingdon's Local Outbreak Control Plan. This plan sets out how the Council and partners are working with residents, businesses, schools and a wide range of other organisations to prevent and control the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
Contribution to plans and strategies	The COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan contributes to Hillingdon's Health and Wellbeing Strategy by helping to protect the health of residents.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial costs arising from the recommendations set out within this report.
Ward(s) affected	All

2. RECOMMENDATION

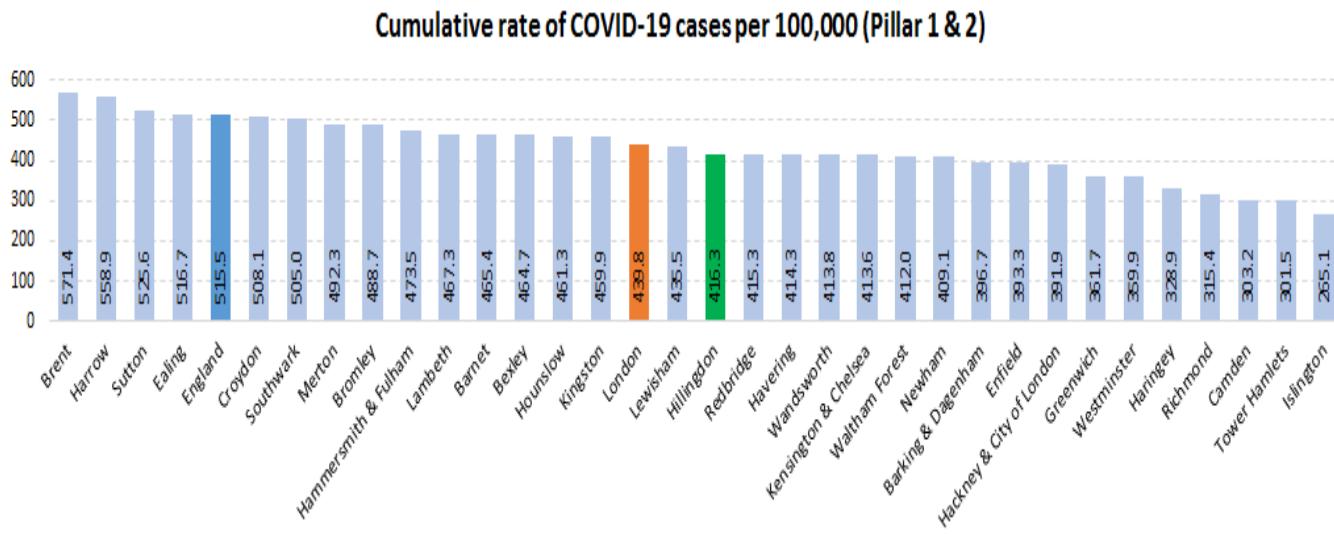
That the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- 1) notes the work to date and underway by the Council and Board Members to prevent and control the spread of the COVID-19 virus; and
- 2) agree to receive regular reports on the action Board Members are taking to prevent and control the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

1. Overall, COVID-19 infection rates in Hillingdon and London remain lower when compared to other parts of the country. Hillingdon's infection rate since the start of the pandemic is 416.3 per 100,000 population (March-Sept 2020). Comparatively, in the London context, this places Hillingdon in 16th place in respect of the highest rates of infection. An overview of this and the comparator against the England and London average is provided in the chart immediately below.



Note: Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 refer to tests undertaken in either a community or hospital setting.

2. As part of the national effort to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, every local authority was required to prepare a Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP) which sets out how the local authority and partners are working together to help reduce the likelihood of further outbreaks of COVID-19, particularly for some of the most vulnerable residents, such as those living in care homes. It is structured around 7 prescribed core themes and, where relevant, also includes the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. The plan presents preventative action as well as what the approach will be in the event of an outbreak. Hillingdon's plan was published on 30 June 2020, on time.

Settings

3. Particular attention is being given to higher risk settings such as care homes, schools and accommodation for homeless individuals to ensure that infection controls are in place and are robustly adhered to. Standard Operating Protocols are in place to set out what to do when there is an outbreak. In most cases, deep cleaning of the premises, rapid testing for the presence of the virus and self-isolation are effective measures to control the spread of the virus.
4. Infection control practice in care homes is prescribed. Care providers are required to follow strict guidelines about the movement of staff and residents in homes, the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as face coverings, and clear guidelines about visitors. Officers from the Council are in regular contact with care providers to ensure that guidelines are being followed and to offer support and advice, where required. Staff in care settings are regularly tested for the presence of the COVID-19 virus. This practice helps to identify and control the spread of the infection.
5. All schools in Hillingdon have completed risk assessments and put in place arrangements which restrict the movement of pupils and staff in the school building, implemented increased cleaning regimes and, where appropriate, introduced staggered start and finish times to minimise the likelihood of groups of individuals gathering on the school site.

6. Housing providers in the Borough have been contacted and provided with nationally published information to share with tenants living in shared housing. This sets out what they can do to keep safe and to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Community Locations

7. Officers of the Council have been proactive in working with retailers and the hospitality sector across the Borough to ensure that every reasonable precaution was taken in line with NHS guidance to support businesses reopening their services to customers safely. This has included providing pavement markings for queues applied to 445 outlets across town centres and information safety posters to display in shop windows.
8. Officers from the Environmental Health Team have proactively visited premises across the Borough to provide advice and support, including:
 - visiting 1,008 shops to offer support and guidance on COVID-19 secure arrangements in advance of opening on 15 June;
 - making contact with approximately 500 pubs, clubs, bars and restaurants to prepare them for opening on the weekend of 4-5 July;
 - making contact with approximately 200 licensed beauty and personal care businesses to ensure that risk assessments were carried out and that effective social distancing measures were in place; and
 - delivering a programme of visits to 70 large employers in the Borough to review COVID-19 protective arrangements.
9. Work is ongoing with the universities and colleges in the Borough as well as transport operators to ensure that high standards of hygiene and compliance with social distancing and the use of face coverings is in place, along with good communications to residents and commuters about their responsibilities.
10. Further work is planned with operators of sports grounds and spectator sports, hotel, conference and event venues. To ensure that compliance with NHS guidelines remains high in the Borough, the Environmental Health Team are undertaking regular unannounced monitoring and compliance checks during the working week, evenings and weekends.
11. Overall, the proactive preparatory work in these sectors has helped businesses to prepare for reopening under COVID-19 secure arrangements and has ensured that a high standard of best practice is operated across the Borough. During monitoring and compliance visits, the overall standard has been extremely good and businesses have felt supported by the Council at a time where they have been extremely vulnerable. All of this action creates better practice within businesses which helps to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. This also helps to ensure a safer environment where residents can shop, eat and socialise.

Testing

12. A key element of the national strategy to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus is to establish a robust testing strategy, targeting specific occupations, such as care staff. Working jointly with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Council has put in place regular testing arrangements for care settings. In terms of the broader approach to testing, in Hillingdon this has involved:
 - mobile testing units visiting on a regular basis;

- access to home testing kits, available to all residents;
- pop-up testing sites as required; and
- local testing sites (walk through).

Contact Tracing

13. In London, contact tracing is led by the NHS test and trace service. Should there be a need, the Council is ready to provide additional capacity to support contact tracing to help keep residents safe.

Monitoring / Surveillance

14. COVID-19 infection rates are closely monitored by the Council on a daily basis (seven days a week) so that any patterns in infection rates are swiftly identified and responded to in order to limit the spread of the virus. Monitoring includes the following:

- The rate of infection for Hillingdon per 100,000 population (the standard measure used by Public Health England which allows for comparison across local authorities);
- The number of new infections registered for Hillingdon in the last 24hrs;
- Cumulative demographic information on gender, age and ethnicity;
- Number of tests completed and the positive infection rate;
- Incidences of infection broken down at Ward level; and
- Comparative information from geographic neighbours (West London and Home Counties).

15. In addition, officers of the Council are working closely with colleagues in the Clinical Commissioning Group and health partners to exchange information to help track changes in infection rates. Analysis and interrogation of COVID-19 related data continues to evolve and develop as the understanding of patterns of infection becomes more sophisticated and the data available to the Council improves.

16. The Hillingdon Health and Care Partners Delivery Board has also overseen local input to the NWL out of hospital recovery plan, which sets out the issues for recovery of health and care services post COVID-19. Appendix 2 sets out the summary plan and includes the Hillingdon position at page 9.

Supporting Vulnerable Residents

17. The Council is putting its residents first during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to coordinate support, working with partners for vulnerable residents who need to self-isolate. This helps to keep residents safe by helping to prevent the spread of the virus.

18. Hillingdon's approach to protecting and supporting residents is centred on:

- practising social distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene and wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in line with Government guidance;
- NHS testing for the presence of coronavirus if residents display symptoms;
- supporting the tracing system if residents have tested positive and have been in close contact with others; and
- supporting self-isolation for those who have tested positive or have been in close contact with those who have tested positive for the presence of the virus.

19. The Council and partners will help coordinate support for vulnerable residents who need to self-isolate, including the provision of food parcels and medicines, if these are required. These arrangements are entirely flexible and can be scaled up if required in response to an increase in need. To date, the Council has provided 1,501 emergency food parcels to 735 different residents as well as delivering 2,141 bespoke shopping orders to another 722 residents. In addition, 1,533 food packages have been provided to rough sleepers placed in emergency accommodation.

Governance / Local Boards

20. Within the Council, action has been coordinated and delivered by an officer working group, led by the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director, Residents Services. Regular updates are provided to Elected Members and the Corporate Management Team of the Council.
21. To oversee and govern the arrangements for preventing and controlling any local outbreak of COVID-19, a prescribed 'COVID-19 Health Protection Board' has been established (Appendix 3). Membership of the Board includes representation from the Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group, health providers, the voluntary sector, the police and Hillingdon Healthwatch. The Board meets monthly and exchanges updates and agrees shared actions.

Communications and Engagement

22. The Council, together with partners, has and continues to be proactive in delivering health protection messages to residents using a range of communication channels. For the Council this includes using social media channels such as Twitter (46,000 followers), Facebook (8,600 followers), Instagram (1,750 followers) and LinkedIn (5,650 followers) as well as Hillingdon People, the Council website and press releases.
23. In addition, the Council has held virtual engagement events with community leaders and faith groups to listen to their concerns about COVID-19 and the impact of messaging to help design effective communications to Hillingdon's diverse communities. A strong finding from the events held was the need to ensure that messages are not just delivered in written formats but also delivered verbally to community and faith leaders who will assist in disseminating messages. Established communications are in place with 150+ community and / or faith groups in the Borough to ensure rapid dissemination of health protection messages, should this be required.

Targeted Actions

24. Whilst there is a degree of confidence that the action taken to date has helped to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the Borough, there is no room for complacency. It is recognised, therefore, that there will be a need for a range of ongoing proactive actions to keep COVID-19 infection rates as low as possible. This includes:
- continuing to deliver general and specific health protection messages to residents, using national NHS information. Through partner communications, this will involve using a full range of media channels as well as engagement with community and faith leaders to disseminate messages by word of mouth;
 - working collaboratively to test scenarios to ensure partners are as prepared as they can be to respond, should there be an outbreak in infection;

- being ready to respond quickly to an increase in infection rates with information, advice and support should vulnerable residents require this;
- continuing to organise and coordinate COVID-19 testing arrangements across the Borough;
- continuing to quality assure the infection protection arrangements in place in retail establishments and the hospitality sector through unannounced visits to premises; and
- continuing to work with care and accommodation providers for vulnerable residents to ensure infection protection arrangements are adhered to.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial costs arising from the recommendations set out within this report.

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

Preventing and controlling the spread of the COVID-19 virus will help to keep Hillingdon's residents safe.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The development of Hillingdon's COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan has involved joint working with a range of partner organisations, including the Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS provider organisations and the Police, amongst others. The plan will continue to be kept under review and will be updated, in line with the latest NHS guidance and advice.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Hillingdon Council Corporate Finance comments

Corporate Finance has reviewed the report and concurs with the financial implications set out above, noting that there are no direct financial implications arising from the report recommendations.

Hillingdon Council Legal comments

The Borough Solicitor confirms that the Council's Local Outbreak Control Plan complies with the requirements of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and associated legislation. In addition, detailed legal advice on individual cases is provided whenever necessary to enable the Council to minimise the spread of COVID -19.

Relevant Service Groups

The development of the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan has involved all Council Directorates.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.