

COVID-19 LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN

Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Sir Raymond Puddifoot MBE Councillor Jane Palmer
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member, Social Care, Health and Wellbeing
Officer Contact(s)	Dan Kennedy, Residents Services
Papers with report	Appendix 1 - Local Outbreak Control Plan

HEADLINES

Summary	This report updates the Cabinet on Hillingdon's Local Outbreak Control Plan. The plan sets out how the Council is working with residents, businesses and partner organisations to prevent and control the spread of the Covid-19 virus.
Putting our Residents First	This report supports the following Council objectives of: <i>Our People</i> ; The outbreak control plan aligns with and supports Hillingdon's Health and Wellbeing strategy.
Financial Cost	There are no direct financial costs arising from the recommendations set out within this report.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Social Care, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee
Relevant Ward(s)	All

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet note the extensive work that has been undertaken to help prevent and control the spread of the Covid-19 virus in Hillingdon and respond as appropriate to an outbreak should this arise, to keep residents safe.

Reasons for recommendation

To update Cabinet on the action being taken to help prevent and control the spread of the covid-19 virus.

Alternative options considered / risk management

No alternative options have been considered.

Policy Overview Committee comments

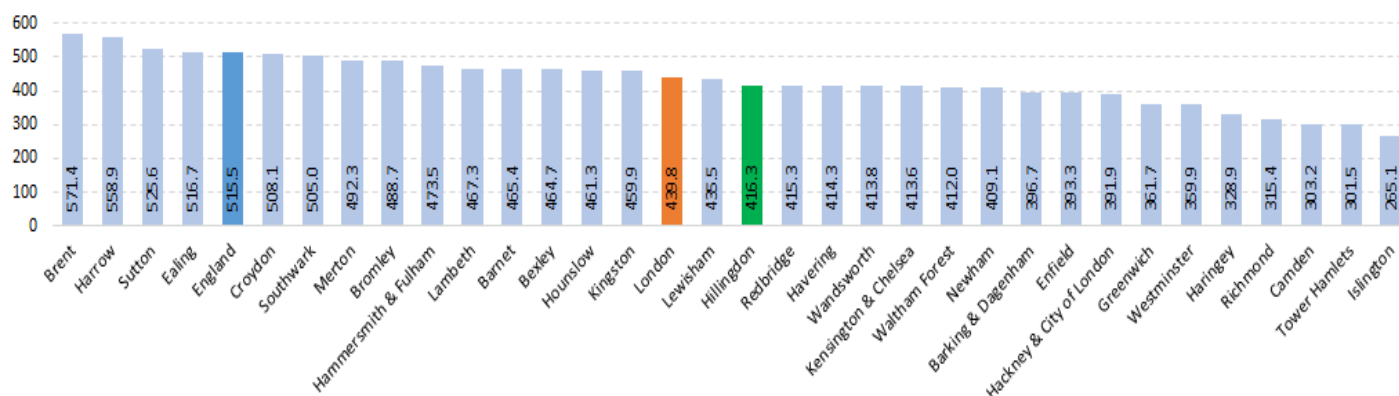
None at this stage.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Hillingdon's Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan

1. Hillingdon Council is committed to putting residents first. From the start of the covid-19 pandemic, the Council has proactively provided advice, support and assistance to residents, businesses and schools to help keep residents safe and minimise the impact of changes to everyday life from the restrictions that have had to be put in place to help protect health and wellbeing.
2. This includes organising and delivering food parcels to vulnerable residents who need them, administering grants to support local businesses and working with a wide range of commercial, voluntary and charitable organisations to put in place protective measures, such as social distancing markers outside shops and schools and the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to care providers and schools.
3. 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.

Cumulative rate of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 (Pillar 1 & 2)



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

- 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 30th June 2020, on time.

Settings

- Particular attention is being given to higher risk settings such as care homes, schools and accommodation for homeless households 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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

9. 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.
10. Officers from the Environmental Health Team have proactively visited premises across the Borough to provide advice and support, including:
 - visiting 1008 shops to offer support and guidance on covid-19 secure arrangements in advance of opening on 15th June;
 - making contact with approx. 500 pubs, clubs, bars and restaurants to prepare them for opening on the weekend of 4th-5th 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;
 - delivering a programme of visits to 70 large employers in the Borough to review covid-19 protective arrangements.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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

14. 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;
- Local testing sites (walk through).

Contact Tracing

15. 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

16. 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;
- Comparative information from geographic neighbours (West London and Home Counties).

17. 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.

Supporting Vulnerable Residents

18. 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.

19. 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;

- 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;
20. 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

21. 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.
22. 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. Membership of the Board includes representation from the Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group, health providers, the voluntary sector, the police and Hillingdon Health Watch. The Board meets monthly and exchanges updates and agrees shared actions. Any decisions required by the Council will be taken in line with the Council Constitution.

Communications and Engagement

23. The Council has and continues to be proactive in delivering health protection messages to residents using a range of communication channels. 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.
24. 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

25. Whilst the Council is confident 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 the Council's communications programme 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 assurance the infection protection arrangements in place in retail establishments and the hospitality sector through unannounced visits to premises;
- 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.

Local authorities have been allocated a Test and Trace service support grant by central Government which can be used to manage expenditure arising from the management of local outbreaks. Hillingdon received an allocation of £1,630k in June.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

The benefit or impact upon Hillingdon residents, service users and communities?

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.

CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed the report and concur with the Financial Implications set out above, noting that there are no direct financial implications arising from the report recommendations and the availability of Government grant to mitigate expenditure arising from the management of local outbreaks.

Legal

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.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil.