

COVID 19 - LOCAL OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND VACCINATION UPTAKE

Relevant Board Member(s)	Councillor Jane Palmer, Co-Chairman
Organisation	London Borough of Hillingdon
Report author	Dan Kennedy, Hillingdon Council Sharon Daye, Hillingdon Council
Papers with report	None

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	This report updates the Health and Wellbeing Board on Hillingdon's Local Outbreak Management Plan, including an update on the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination programme in the Borough. This update is on behalf of the Covid-19 Health Protection Board. 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 contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus.
Contribution to plans and strategies	The Covid-19 Local Outbreak Management 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 work to date and underway by the Council and Board Members to prevent and control the spread of the Covid-19 virus be noted.

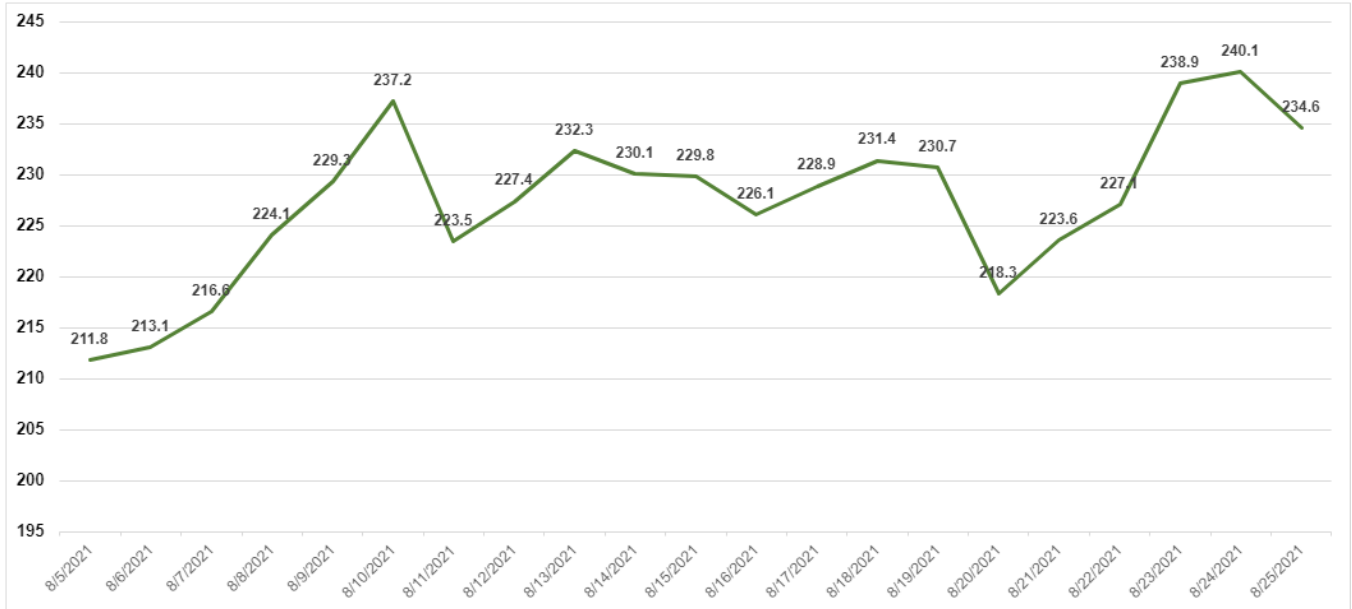
3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

1. As at 23 August 2021, Covid-19 infection rates in Hillingdon are below the London average at 238.9 per 100k population (London average = 275.5 per capita population). Overall, the trend line in infection rates in Hillingdon has fallen during the last two months, but the position remains volatile as the following graph shows (covering the period 5 August 2021 to 25 August 2021). As at 25 August 2021, the infection rate in Hillingdon dropped further

to 234.6 per capita. The higher level of infection rates tend to be in the 10-19 and 20-29 year old age groups (the age cohorts currently with the lower levels of Covid-19 vaccinations).

Table 1 – Covid-19 Infection Rates in Hillingdon Per Capita (5th August 2021-25th August 2021).



- As part of the national effort to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, every local authority has 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. The plan presents preventative action as well as what the approach will be in the event of an outbreak. The plan has been updated for summer 2021 in line with national guidance and will be updated again for the autumn/winter.

Settings

- In general, infection rates remain low in care settings due to most residents and staff being vaccinated and robust adherence to infection control practices. Care homes continue to have multi-agency ‘wrap around’ support to enable them to continue to provide safe services to the residents of Hillingdon, prevent the spread of infection and ensure that safe visiting takes place (where this has been agreed).
- In line with latest guidance, the Council and CCG will manage the discharge of patients who have tested positive for Covid-19 from hospital to designated beds for isolation. All patients that are to be discharged from hospital to a care setting will be tested and their Covid status known. For those residents who are tested negative, they will be discharged to ‘step down’ facilities or to their original care home placement to enable a further period of isolation at home to continue.
- All schools have access to a council link officer who acts as a central point of contact for Covid-19 queries to ensure they can follow the latest government guidance to help keep their schools safe. Education advisors are also on hand to support headteachers with maintaining education provision and provide additional support and guidance, should this be

required. Schools returned to classroom teaching before the end of the school term in July 2021 and are prepared for the return of pupils from the start of the term in September 2021.

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. Landlords of shared accommodation and their tenants have been written to by the Council setting out practical advice and guidance to prevent the spread of the infection.

Helping Residents to Shop Safely

7. The Council has undertaken a proactive programme of providing advice and inspections to support business to re-open to keep residents safe. Since the start of the pandemic, licensing and environmental health and regulatory officers have:
 - Completed over 10,000 business compliance visits
 - Issued over 250 written warnings
 - Issued 40 Fixed Penalty Notices for breaches
8. Council teams have been supporting businesses and venues to safely reopen:
 - 108 free pavement licences issued to Hillingdon businesses
 - 1600 advice and support visits from specially trained officers
 - Covid-19 marshal patrols in all shopping areas
 - Support to hospitality sector for the Euro Tournament
 - Licensing visits and advice to beauty and personal care businesses

Testing

9. 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).
10. Testing will continue to be kept under review and targeted where this is needed and arranged at the convenience for residents (e.g., promoting home testing kits).

Local Contact Tracing

11. The Council is continuing to support contact tracing by using its local knowledge to successfully trace hard-to-reach individuals. The team makes contact with these residents either by text, phone or email to enable them to capture information about their activities in the days prior to their positive result. Home visits are arranged where necessary.

Covid-19 Vaccinations

12. The NHS is continuing to offer the Covid-19 vaccine to people most at risk, in priority order.

The vaccine, like all vaccines in the UK, has been approved for use after meeting the strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. So far, reports of serious side effects, such as allergic reactions, have been very rare. No long-term complications have been reported.

13. Hillingdon remain top in delivery of vaccines to residents in London. As at 23 August 2021, 72.8% of Hillingdon's population had received their first dose (London average = 66.7%) and 63.8% their second dose (London average = 57.2%). 16-17-year olds and those aged 12+ with a vulnerability are being supported to access the vaccine.
14. Operational guidance was issued in August 2021 to all care homes by the Care Quality Commission on the requirement for Covid-19 vaccination of staff deployed in care homes. All relevant Council staff have been issued with a letter advising them of the requirements. A vaccination webinar for Hillingdon Care Home staff took place in August to promote the uptake.

Monitoring / Surveillance

15. Covid-19 infection rates are closely monitored by the Council on a daily basis 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); and
 - Vaccination take up.
16. 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.
17. The take up of the vaccine is being closely monitored by the NHS and the Council.

Supporting businesses

18. The Council has provided a range of targeted support and guidance to businesses throughout the pandemic, ensuring that financial assistance is given to those who are eligible. The Council has paid out grant funding as follows:
 - Local Restrictions Support Grant (£16.6 million)
 - Additional Restrictions Grant (£9 million)
 - Restart grant (£11 million)

Supporting Vulnerable Residents

19. 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, particularly important for those that are clinically extremely vulnerable.
20. 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) where required, 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, in line with NHS guidance.
21. During the pandemic the Council has maintained a Covid-19 Community Hub within the Council's Contact Centre to respond to Covid-19 enquiries. It is open from Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. The Council has a dedicated contact centre which responds to resident queries. The Council is supporting local foodbanks to provide food parcels where required and signposting residents to Hillingdon 4 All and other charities to provide support.

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.
23. Since the start of the pandemic, the Council and partners have publicised key guidance to residents and businesses, ensuring that they are aware of:
 - Important health, testing and any restriction/lockdown messages.
 - The impact on Council events and services.
 - The Council support available i.e. community hub.
 - Various government campaigns.
 - The easing of restrictions and subsequent recovery of Council services.
 - Maintaining infection control practices – promoting government messaging.
 - The benefits of the Covid-19 vaccine and how to get vaccinated.
24. Coronavirus messaging has been widely communicated using all available Council channels, including the Council's website, social media platforms, media relations, regular e-newsletters, GP texting, Hillingdon People, JC Decaux boards, refuse lorries, lamp post banners, posters and signage, and internal communications.
25. Communications plans and localised assets for raising awareness of coronavirus, local outbreaks and promoting the take up of the vaccine have been produced.
26. The team is also working with a range of services to support their messaging, ensure consistency and amplify/target messages to their audiences. This has included services working with schools and universities, businesses, and community and faith groups.
27. Corporate Communications has also linked up with a variety of communications colleagues from neighbouring, pan-London and outer London local authorities, PHE and partner

agencies to share best practice and resources, and in the case of partners amplify messages via each other's channels.

28. The Council is supporting health partners and the rollout by sharing NHS information and messaging to ensure that residents are well informed about the Covid-19 vaccine. The Council is encouraging residents to have the vaccine when they are told that it's their turn so that they can protect themselves, their friends, families and local community – and keep Hillingdon safe. The Council is also working with H4All (a collaboration of local charities) to deliver the Community Champions scheme to support those most at risk from Covid-19 and boost vaccine take-up by providing advice as well as tackling misinformation.
29. The Council has already built a strong network of community, faith and voluntary sector groups since the start of the pandemic, working closely with health partners. The Community Champions scheme will further strengthen this by working with trusted local champions from faith and community groups to help reach older people, disabled residents, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Targeted Actions

30. 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.

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.

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.