

**Minutes of the COVID19 Oversight and Engagement Board Meeting
held at 10.00 am on Thursday 29th April 2020
Public Session held virtually via Zoom**

Present:

Cllr Ian Morris – Chair	West Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Phil Bignell	West Northamptonshire Council
Kathryn Hall	Communications Lead, Public Health Northamptonshire, North Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Jim Hakewill	North Northants Council
Professor Will Pope	Interim Chair, Northamptonshire Healthwatch
Cllr Chris Stanbra	North Northants Council
Cllr Lesley Thurland	North Northants Council
Lucy Wightman	Director of Public Health, Northamptonshire County Council and Director of Population Health Strategy, NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Minute Taker:

Cheryl Bird	Health and Wellbeing Board Business Manager, Public Health Northamptonshire, North Northamptonshire Council
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Apologies:

Cllr Jean Addison	North Northamptonshire Council
Simon Blatchly	Assistant Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police
Joanna Fawcus	Chief Operating Officer, Kettering General Hospital
Angela Hillery	Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
Kate Holt	Chief Executive, Northamptonshire Healthwatch
Cllr Chris Lofts	Liberal Democrat Group Lead West Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Ian McCord	Leader, West Northamptonshire Council
Danny Moody	Chief Executive, Northants CALC
Professor Will Pope	Interim Chair, Northamptonshire Healthwatch
Cllr Russell Roberts	Leader, North Northamptonshire Council
Toby Sanders	Chief Executive, NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group
Julie Shepherd	Chief Nurse, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
Cllr Danielle Stone	West Northamptonshire Council

46/21 Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

47/21 Minutes from the previous meeting 1st April 2021

RESOLVED that: the minutes from the 1st April 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

48/21 Weekly Summary of Local Surveillance Data

The Director of Public Health presented the weekly Summary of Local Surveillance Data up to 18th April 2021 and highlighted the following:

- When a person is identified as a positive case, if they live in shared accommodation with family or others they need to isolate in a separate room to the rest of the household, using separate

towels and cooking utensils. If using shared areas, the infected person should use them last and then clean with a diluted bleach solution.

- The police are working with Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and Community Wardens to ensure regulations are enforced and communications are circulated to the population to remind people of the current restrictions and why they are in place.
- The national four step roadmap to exiting the national lockdown will be governed by data and not by the dates which are an ambition not a deadline. From the 12th April residents of Northamptonshire and across England took Step 2 on the roadmap, which included opening of non essential shops and personal care services, funerals can have up to 30 mourners, weddings up to 15 guests and hospitality venues can serve people outdoors. The next step will not be before 17 May and will only be taken if the COVID-19 data shows that it is safe to do so.
- Residents are reminded to stay alert and stay 2m apart, avoid face to face and physical contact, not to share drinks, avoid shouting and to be aware of surface transmission while outside.
- In a bid to stop transmission of the virus residents are advised to use contactless payments where possible, sanitise/ wash their hands and discard face coverings safely in the bin.
- Residents are reminded of the risk they pose to themselves and others if they do not adhere to the lockdown restrictions.
- A total of 48,604 positive cases have been identified in Northamptonshire to date. Of this number, 285 were identified in the last week, 12th April to 18th April 2021.
- Northamptonshire's infection rate per 100,000 population for the most recent week up to 15th April is 40.8, West Northamptonshire's 34.8 and North Northamptonshire's 33.8, which are all significantly higher than the national average of 24.8.
- All district and borough area infection rates are significantly higher than or similar to the national average. Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering, Daventry and Corby's rates are significantly higher than the national average.
- All district and borough areas except for South Northamptonshire have seen a decreasing or plateauing trend in case rates in the recent week. The case rate in South Northamptonshire has continued to rise since 10th April.
- Wellingborough's rate is currently the highest of the seven district and borough areas and one of the highest in England, but has now started to plateau. Although Corby's rate has decreased notably since the end of March, it remains one of the highest in England and the second highest rate in Northamptonshire.
- For both males and females, the age group with the most positive tests was 10 to 19 year olds, closely followed by 30 to 39 year olds.
- Over the last 4-week period there have been steady decreases in numbers of cases amongst people aged 60+.
- The number of patients in hospital due to COVID-19 has been on a decreasing trend since mid-January, although the rate of decline has recently slowed. The latest data shows a total of 14 COVID-19 patients occupied hospital beds in Northamptonshire on 20th April 2021.
- There have been 4 COVID19 related deaths in Northamptonshire recorded in the week up to the 18th April.
- A number of education settings are still being affected by positive COVID19 cases, with 88% of schools in the period 24th March to 21st April recording no COVID19 positive cases. The routine lateral flow testing process amongst secondary school students and the student bubble system are helping to protect students.
- Currently there are no education settings closed and the Director of Public Health thanked all school staff, students and families for their participation in the school testing process.
- Up to the 19th April there were 5 outbreaks in the county, with 79 associated cases. An active outbreak is only closed when a setting has not had a positive case for 28 days.
- Once a person has received their first dose of the vaccine they still need to adhere to COVID19 secure behaviours to reduce transmission of the virus.

RESOLVED that: The Board noted the Summary of Local Surveillance Data

49/21 Test and Trace Update

The Director of Public Health provided an update on Test and Trace and highlighted the following:

- Northamptonshire has had a local test and trace service in place for a few months and this is making an impact on the ability to trace cases. This compliments the National Test and Trace Programme.
- As of 27th April, 91% of all cases in Northamptonshire had been successfully contacted by Test and Trace (either national or local team), which is joint second highest in the East Midlands region.
- The number of cases referred to the local team for follow up by the national programme is reducing due to the overall reduction in positive cases numbers.
- There are still people who refuse to disclose details of the contacts which is the biggest challenge for the local programme, this is currently at 7% of referrals.
- Children who have been asked to self isolate due to being a contact of a confirmed case, are not allowed to mix with people outside the household.
- Self Isolation support packs are posted to people who are unable to access a digital version, these packs provide advice on how to keep healthy whilst isolating, looking after mental wellbeing and how to reduce risks to those sharing a house.
- Regular texts are now being sent out to those who are self isolating, providing encouragement and providing links to wellbeing information and access to support.

RESOLVED that: The Board noted the Test and Trace Update.

50/21 Testing Update

The Director of Public Health provided an update on testing within the county and highlighted the following:

- Those who are symptomatic are encouraged to get a PCR test and those who have to attend a workplace, all other local residents are urged to undertake a twice weekly self test lateral flow routine.
- The lateral flow device provides a result within 30 minutes, it is not as accurate as a PCR test and the result does not confirm whether a person has COVID19, just whether they have a high viral load and are infectious. Even if a negative result is received from a lateral flow test, COVID19 secure practices still need to be maintained.
- There are seven lateral flow asymptomatic testing sites operational in the county Corby, Rushden Hall, Northampton, Brackley, Daventry and Wellingborough, these are open to 16+ age groups.
- Mobile test units offering PCR tests are continuing to rotate across the county, currently located in South Northants, Corby and Northampton.
- There is a regional testing site at Kettering Conference Centre, Local Testing Sites (LTS) are based in Northampton, Corby, Wellingborough, Daventry, Thrapston and Kettering town centres. Home testing kits can be collected from these sites between the hours of 1.00pm and 7.00 pm.
- South Northants currently has no static local testing site, but a MTU is in the Towcester and Brackley area.
- There is still low utilisation at some of the testing sites and local residents are urged to visit the sites if they are not able to complete self testing at home.
- There is a home delivery option for test kits from the government testing website, this option is only for those who are unable to access the local test sites.
- 121 pharmacies across the county are now offering a click and collect service for lateral flow testing kits.
- If you are a private business, a domiciliary care provider, day centre, or care home, work based testing can be accessed via the government and NCC websites.
- Travel to and from a testing site is one of two journeys allowed to make during self isolation.

RESOLVED that: the Board noted the testing update.

51/21 Communications Update

Kathryn Hall provided an update on Communications and Engagement and highlighted the following:

- A campaign was launched in conjunction with step 2 of national roadmap, 'Take care in the open air', with a range of messaging for residents as they start to mix outdoors, to remain socially distanced from those they don't live with, not to share items even if meeting in private gardens and to avoid face to face contact.
- Messages are being circulated to remind residents to discard face coverings safely in a bin and to wash hands regularly if touching surfaces outside, carry and use hand sanitiser and to use contactless payments where possible.
- All the above messages will be on social media, bus stops, local radio stations, GOMO vans, iWalkers, and banners in open spaces.
- Preparation work on step 3 of the national roadmap will begin once central Government release details for step 3.
- Town centres now have new signage, with the 'hands, face, space' messaging.
- Work is continuing with BAME groups, with guidance being provided to the Muslim community on how to celebrate Eid safely, and reiterating the uptake of vaccination during Ramadan is safe.
- The 2nd May is orthodox Easter celebrations, which is celebrated in by Eastern European communities, work is ongoing with community and church leaders on how to celebrate this safely and to address vaccine hesitancy in some of these communities.
- A young person's campaign is underway using a new landing page which called 'this is not a game', where young people can obtain COVID1919 information and play games against each other on the platform. This is being promoted across YouTube, Twitch and on local pizza company boxes.
- A local influencer Tessa Bear has completed videos on how to meet people safely outdoors, social distancing and self testing.
- Competitions for young people are underway and a conference for young people was held this week, which is being promoted through the local media.
- There are question and answer webinars taking place to enable local residents to ask questions about the vaccine and complete some myth busting sessions.

RESOLVED that: The Board noted the Communication and Engagement Update

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be at virtually via Zoom at 10.00 am on Thursday 27th May 2021