

**Minutes of the COVID19 Oversight and Engagement Board Meeting  
held at 9.00 am on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021  
held virtually via Zoom**

**Present:**

Cllr Matt Golby – Chair	Cabinet member for Adults and Public Health, West Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Helen Harrison – Vice Chair	Portfolio Holder for Adults and Public Health, North Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Phil Bignell	West Northamptonshire Council
Simon Blatchly	Assistant Chief Constable, Northamptonshire Police
Kathryn Hall	Communications Lead, Public Health Northamptonshire, North Northamptonshire Council
Danny Moody	Chief Executive, Northants CALC
Cllr Jonathan Nunn	Leader, West Northamptonshire Council
Professor Will Pope	Interim Chair, Northamptonshire Healthwatch
Julie Shepherd	Chief Nurse, Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust
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:**

Shirley Plenderleith	COVID19 Chief of Staff, North and West Northamptonshire Councils
Toby Sanders	Chief Operating Officer, NHS Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Group
Cllr Jason Smithers	Leader, North Northamptonshire Council

**01/21 Welcome**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

**02/21 Minutes from the previous meeting 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

**RESOLVED that: the minutes from the meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 from both the public and private sessions were agreed as an accurate record.**

**03/21 Action Log**

- The final version of the revised Local Outbreak Plan will be circulated to the Board. **Completed. Circulated to the Board on the 12<sup>th</sup> July.**
- The list of dental practices who are taking on NHS patients to be circulated to the Board. **Completed. Circulated to the Board on the 29<sup>th</sup> April.**
- Healthwatch Northamptonshire will review the numbers of complaints for local residents who are struggling to get access to their GP and forward to Toby Sanders. **Completed. Healthwatch reviewed the complaints and have shared the reports through our usual patient experience channels. Healthwatch are currently scoping a project, involving partners, including the CCG, on GP Access.**

## 04/21 Refreshed Terms of Reference

The Chair introduced the refreshed Terms of Reference (ToR) to the Board. The Board discussed the refreshed ToR and the following was noted:

- The Board was originally formed as part of the contain function of the COVID19 response, with the ending of all COVID19 restrictions on the 19<sup>th</sup> July it is unclear whether this Board will continue with its current remit, or move to COVID19 management as the county moves towards business as usual.

### **RESOLVED:**

- a) Danny Moody is to be added into the refreshed membership**
- b) The Board adopted the refreshed Terms of Reference.**

## 05/21 Northamptonshire Police Update

Assistant Chief Constable Blatchly gave an update on COVID19 compliance and highlighted the following:

- Normal police business is now at pre pandemic levels, and COVID19 work is now minimal.
- There is a continued reduction in the number of calls from the public relating to possible COVID19 breaches, with the most common complaint being large gatherings of people.
- There have also been some border force referrals due to foreign travel restrictions.
- The British Grand Prix commences on the 16<sup>th</sup> July and is being treated as a test event, with full attendance of approximately 300k people expected over the three-day period. The biggest challenge for the event will be the testing regime and check in processes.
- Between the 17<sup>th</sup> May and 5<sup>th</sup> July there have been 23 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued, to compared to 1319 issued between the 17<sup>th</sup> January to the 5<sup>th</sup> March.
- From the 17<sup>th</sup> May to the 5<sup>th</sup> July 202 COVID19 related calls were received from the public, compared to 2822 calls between 17<sup>th</sup> January and the 5<sup>th</sup> March.
- Northamptonshire Police have had mutual aid commitments for the G7 summit in Cornwall, and the Euro Football Championships which has added additional pressure to Force commitments. To date there have been no major issues in the county relating to the Euro Football Championships.
- Northamptonshire Police staff continue to complete lateral flow tests before coming into the workplace. The Force is currently awaiting further guidance from central Government once the remaining COVID19 restrictions are lifted on 19<sup>th</sup> July. It is envisaged that Northamptonshire Police staff will continue to wear face coverings in the workplace, as the focus has shifted from absence rates due to illness to Officers having to self isolate, which could lead to resource issues for the Force.
- The Joint Enforcement Team is still operational and will continue post pandemic, with some excellent partnership working taking place within the Team. It is hoped these relationships will continue and be used to deal with other wider crime issues.

The Director of Public Health added the following relating to the Silverstone Grand Prix:

- Work has been taken place with Silverstone management team throughout the year. Dr Annapurna Sen and the Director of Public Health have completed site visits, as well as taking part in international calls and conferences. Work has also taken place with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports (DDCMS), and Public Health England (PHE)
- There are two pilots taking place at Silverstone during the Grand Prix weekend, one is for international travel, and the other an attendees pilot, where attendees must have two doses of the vaccine at least 14 days prior to the event or a negative lateral flow test within the previous 48 hours.
- The DHSC and DDCMS are running the two pilots within the Silverstone circuit, with Public Health Northamptonshire providing the testing provision. Any positive test results will be genomic sequenced as soon as possible.
- The Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are working with local camp sites and hotels to ensure they are COVID19 compliant.

## **RESOLVED that: the Board noted the Northants Police update**

### **06/21 Northamptonshire COVID19 Weekly Surveillance Report**

The Director of Public Health presented the Northamptonshire COVID19 Weekly Surveillance Report dated up to the 27<sup>th</sup> June and highlighted the following:

- A total of 51,002 positive cases have been identified in Northamptonshire to date. Of this number, 474 were identified in the last week, 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June 2021, which is a 50% increase from the previous week.
- The number of positive cases in the East Midlands and Northamptonshire is below the English average.
- The Delta variant is now the most prevalent strain in the county.
- Northamptonshire's infection rate per 100,000 population for the most recent week up to 24<sup>th</sup> June is 42.5, a 4% decrease compared to the previous week and is significantly lower than the national average (138.4). The national case rate is rapidly increasing due to the growth of the Delta variant.
- West Northamptonshire's rate is 45.9 per 100000 is a 9% decrease compared to the previous week, is similar to Northamptonshire average and significantly lower than the national average.
- North Northamptonshire's rate is 38.5 per 100000 which represents a 4% increase when compared to previous week, is similar to Northamptonshire average and significantly lower than the national average.
- The lowest infection rate in the county is Kettering with 18.7 per 100000 and the highest infection rate is East Northamptonshire with 76.2 per 100000.
- Mixing between households remains the greatest cause of transmission.
- The age group with the most positive cases was 20 to 29 year olds, closely followed by 10 to 19 year olds. In males, the age bracket with the most cases was 20 to 29 year olds, whereas for females it was 10 to 19 year olds.
- There is a very little morbidity and mortality associated with the increase in case rates due to a large proportion of the population has now received two COVID19 vaccines, which has translated into a small increase in COVID19 related admissions into hospitals. On the 1<sup>st</sup> July there were 3 inpatients in the both of the acute hospitals.
- Due to the impact of the COVID19 vaccination in the elderly and most vulnerable people together with the positive impact lockdown has had on community transmission, no deaths have been recorded in Northamptonshire in the last nine weeks. East Northamptonshire and South Northamptonshire areas have seen no deaths since mid-March, Daventry, Kettering and Wellingborough areas have seen no deaths since mid-April, and Northampton has no record of deaths since 24<sup>th</sup> April.
- There has been a small increase in the number of outbreaks, as of the 28<sup>th</sup> June there have been five outbreaks with 82 associated cases, with the majority of these outbreaks taking place in education settings, with 3 outbreaks and 72 associated cases.
- Education settings are working with the local Schools Cell, PHE and Public Health Northamptonshire to identify outbreaks and contain them as quickly as possible.
- All residents are being urged to complete twice weekly rapid lateral flow tests to reduce onward transmission of the virus.

Following questions from the Board the Director of Public Health added the following:

- There is a detrimental effect of prolonged lockdowns on local resident's mental health and physical health as well as the economy, which is associated with people's long term outcomes.
- We are now having to move to a position where there is a recognition of the ever present risk of COVID19 and to take steps to mitigate this risk wherever possible.
- With most other infectious diseases there is very little asymptomatic transmission and is easier to manage, which is the opposite to COVID19.
- Continuous testing has benefits and flaws, but when used in conjunction with vaccination, good hand hygiene and social distancing measures this will help to mitigate the risk by up to 60%.

- The age groups affected in the majority of outbreaks in education settings are secondary school students. Some primary school students have been infected but mainly through transmission within a household of a secondary school student.
- Evidence is still coming through about the different COVID9 variants and length of efficacy of the vaccine. A booster COVID19 vaccine is currently being scheduled to commence in September alongside the flu vaccination programme.
- Guidance on whether vaccination for under 18's will take place is awaited from central Government, along with whether regular lateral flow testing for staff and students will remain in schools post September.
- Test to release is being trialled in some schools nationally, this is when there is a confirmed case, rather than self isolating the school bubble tests completes a lateral flow test on a daily basis and if the test is negative they be able to go to school and if they test negative for a consecutive five days they can return to school and go back to twice weekly testing.

The Board recognised the effort schools have made in getting children back into school and maintaining COVID19 safe protocols in their settings.

**RESOLVED that: the Board noted the Northamptonshire COVID19 Weekly Surveillance Update.**

### **07/21 COVID19 Vaccination Update**

The Director of Public Health provided an update on the COVID19 vaccination programme and highlighted the following:

- Up to the 6<sup>th</sup> July, 825203 vaccines have been administered within the county, 407688 being first doses and 349115 second doses.
- The breakdown of vaccinations is as follows:
  - 18-29 years 62.9% have received their first dose,
  - 30-39 years 75.1% have received their first dose
  - 40-49 years 85.3% have received their first dose.
  - 50-54 year 86.1% have received both doses
  - 55-59 years 93% have received both doses
  - 60-64 years 94.8% have received both doses
  - 65-69 89.8% have received both doses.
- There are lots of drop in appointments available at the mass vaccination centre in Moulton Park which is open from 8.00 am to 7.30 pm daily.
- There will be a pop up vaccination centre in the Market Square Northampton on the 10<sup>th</sup> July for anyone over the age of 18.
- Due to the low vaccination uptake in central Northampton, leaflets are being designed by street geography to provide local residents with vaccination information and complete some myth busting.
- There are now 10 community pharmacy sites offering vaccination, and an eleventh will be opening soon in Corby.
- A Consultant in Public Health works two days a week on the vaccination programme, looking at inequalities and vaccine uptake, to identify the reasons for poor vaccination uptake. Also working with engagement teams from the two unitary councils and meeting with community groups to understand what the barriers are.
- A deep dive was joined by community leaders, Public Health Northamptonshire, vaccination leads and engagement leads to provide an insight into vaccine hesitancy people including the physical and mental barriers.
- Multiple vaccinations are delivered regularly for other diseases and trials have taken place over the past few months to assess the safety of giving both the flu and COVID19 vaccination at the same time. Trials has also been taking place on the efficacy of having two different vaccine doses being administered, as well as the having different strains of COVID19 within the vaccine.
- COVID19 Vaccination does not stop you becoming infected with COVID19 but reduces the severity and duration of symptoms and reduce the likelihood of transmitting the virus. It is

important that vaccinated people continue to complete lateral flow tests and self isolate when instructed to do so.

- COVID19 vaccinations are now available to everyone aged 18 years and over, and both doses are required to give the protection required from the dominant Delta COVID-19 variant.
- Vaccination rates for all staff in Northamptonshire NHS Trusts are currently at 89.8%, this excludes residential care workers, primary care workers and social care workers. Social care staff are now mandated that they are fully vaccinated within the 16 weeks and a consultation is being circulated about mandated vaccination for healthcare staff.

**Resolved that:**

- a) Kath Hall to provide a small briefing on vaccination and testing for Healthwatch Northamptonshire to include in their monthly newsletter.**
- b) The Board noted the vaccination update.**

## **08/21 Contact Tracing**

The Director of Public Health provided an update on contact tracing and highlighted the following:

- The National Test and Trace programme are still trying to make the initial contacts, if they are unsuccessful after 24 hours the case is then passed to the local test and trace service.
- The local test and trace system also ensure that those they contact advising to self isolate have access to food, medication, social support and nutrition advice. The support pack circulated to those who are self isolating by the local team has been adopted by other councils as best practice.
- As of 7<sup>th</sup> July, 91% of all cases in Northamptonshire had been successfully contacted by Test and Trace (either national or local team) and Northamptonshire are second in the East Midlands region.
- The number of cases the local team have to contact is relative to the transmission rate circulating. There has been a 207% increase in the number of people who needed to be contacted in the week prior to 28<sup>th</sup> June.
- If the local team do not have telephone details for those who need to be contacted, door knocking and letter dropping takes place.
- 6% of cases passed through to the local team refuse to disclose details of the contacts, which is the biggest challenge for the local programme.
- Information collated by the local and national test and trace teams is only used for the purpose of identifying those who may have been exposed to the virus, in order to reduce transmission of the virus and that those who have to self isolate have the correct support in place.

**RESOLVED that: the Board noted the Test and Trace update.**

## **09/21 Testing update**

- There are 5 symptomatic PCR local testing sites across the county, located in Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Northampton and Wellingborough.
- A regional PCR testing site is based at the Kettering Conference Centre.
- There are five mobile PCR testing units located across the county, they stay in one location for a week and then move to the next venue. These mobile testing units are placed where case rates are at their highest or where an outbreak has occurred.
- There are four options for completing a lateral flow test:
  - Attending a lateral flow testing site in Corby, Northampton, Wellingborough and Daventry.
  - Ordering a postal home test kit
  - Collecting home test kits from local pharmacies, there are over 100 pharmacies in the county who are able to provide these tests.
  - Getting a lateral flow test at work or at school.
- As a result of poor utilisation the DHSC have asked local areas to provide fewer static sites and use more mobile options. In Northamptonshire vans are being hired and made into testing

units to travel to areas where there are high transmission rates, low rates of testing or vulnerable isolated groups.

- There is lots of capacity within the lateral flow and PCR testing sites in the county.

**RESOLVED that:**

- a) The Chair and Vice Chair to circulate the Contact Tracing and Testing Update slides to their respective elected members.**
- b) The Board noted the Testing update.**

## **10/21 Communications Update**

Kath Hall provided an update on the communications work taking place and highlighted the following:

- There have been 'Every touch could leave a trace' and 'Take care in open air' campaigns running during the first half of 2021, this included outdoor signage displayed on buses, in bus shelters, Childrens play areas and public spaces. These campaigns helped people make decisions and consider risks appropriate to them.
- As step three in the easing of COVID19 restrictions took place in June, evidence was used to identify the challenges and risks people are facing when mixing more.
- The testing messages have been promoted and this will continue moving forward. Lateral flow tests taken twice a week are able to detect high levels of infection and a useful tool in protecting others. Posters are being displayed around town centres in businesses and hospitality venues to promote the benefits of completing lateral flow tests twice a week in stopping transmission of the virus.
- Once the remaining COVID19 restrictions are lifted on the 19<sup>th</sup> July, communication campaigns will focus on helping people to make the right choices for themselves and to assess risks.
- Work is continuing with the influencer Tessa Bear, who has a big following on Tik Tok, and was recently filmed receiving her vaccination.
- Posters have been completed for the campsites outside the Silverstone circuit for the British Grand Prix weekend, reminding people we are still currently in step 3 regulations and to remember COVID19 safe protocols.
- Geolocate targeting will be used to target people in specific areas through mobile phone targeting.
- Messages for 'Thank You' day have been well received across the county.
- A leaflet is being produced to be handed out at the Mass Vaccination Centre to promote other public health services running in the county.
- Work continues with BAME communities and those who do not have English as their first language, including elected members, community leaders and community colleagues from the two unitary councils.

## **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be at virtually via Zoom at 9.00 am on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2021.