

EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 13 January 2021

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

PERFORMANCE

Covid-19 vaccination

The COVID-19 vaccination programme has commenced and is being led by the NHS. Acute Trusts commenced the roll out prioritising inpatients and identified outpatients who are over 80, care home staff, vulnerable staff and other staff groups. Arrangements for roll out across primary care has also just started and prioritising care home residents.

Community testing

Following a number of national pilots and early adopter sites we expect local community testing of asymptomatic residents to commence in late January. We will use a targeted approach with a focus on high risk communities and essential workers (e.g social care workers and high risk businesses) with the aim to protect vulnerable people and break down the chain of transmission in areas where there is observed clustering or higher concentration of positive cases. It will be important to ensure that testing is accessible across vulnerable groups as well as more broadly and we are working closely with our network of COVID-19 champions to enable this.

For PCR testing of individuals with symptoms, local sites remain available capacity remains sufficient to meet local demand. We are also exploring feasibility for an additional local testing site in the East of Middlesbrough.

Local tracing partnership

Public Protection staff have been engaged in contacting COVID-19 cases to prevent further spread of infection, identify household contacts and potential high risk locations. During the second lockdown period officers have been contacting those COVID-19 cases who have not responded to contact from the national NHS Test and Trace Team. Local information can help with contacting these cases and in addition to telephone calls Public Protection staff will also email and send letters primarily to obtain information about their illness, identify their contacts and ensure they are isolating. With effect from 9th December, officers have been given direct access to the National Contact Tracing System so that they can update on these “failed” cases and contacts for follow up by the National NHS team.

Rapid Testing in Care Homes

Rapid (lateral flow) tests have been distributed to some care homes across the country (beginning with care homes with more than fifty places) to support the enablement of family and friends to visit loved ones in a care setting. While rapid testing can reduce the risks around visiting, it does not completely remove the risk of infection. In addition to using testing, care homes must use robust infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, visitors must continue to wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), observe social distancing in general when in the care home and good hand hygiene, and follow any guidance the care home itself provides on physical contact with the person they are visiting. It is important to note, that in line with national guidance, implementation of the testing is entirely up to the care home and the home must have the facilities to enable the testing process to take place away from the main body/care of the home to reduce the risk of transmission.

COVID-19 advice and support for schools

Due to high demand from schools across the North East, at the beginning of September Public Health England requested that local authorities established their own support/response to positive COVID-19 cases/queries for all educational settings covering early year's foundation through to key stage 4.

Working alongside our two health protection teams and education, Public Health South Tees established a local response to schools Monday through to Sunday via a dedicated email address and central telephone number. The response provides:

- Answering any queries from educational settings or key partners
- Logging positive cases, identifying infectious periods and providing guidance on tracking of close contact
- Logging numbers isolating due to a positive case
- Providing regular updates at Strategic Education Boards
- Supporting communication with communities
- Contributing the intelligence to support the local outbreak planning
- Reporting to key partners on school bubble closures
- Established a pathway between education and social care so that social care are informed of any vulnerable children & young people who are isolating
- Support schools with risk assessment planning via school visits in partnership with Health Protection, Education and Health & Safety

As at 14th December we have supported 73 schools reporting 658 cases which has resulted in 673 staff and 10,409 pupils having to isolate.

COVID-19 National Testing Programme: Schools and Colleges

The department for Health and Social Care announced that from January, all staff in secondary schools and colleges will be eligible for weekly on the spot lateral flow covid tests. This will help identify asymptomatic cases – which make up a third of all cases – limiting the spread of the virus. This will be backed up by daily testing for staff and students that have been in close contact with a positive case therefore preventing the need for close contacts to isolate at home; allowing them to continue to come into school or college if the daily results are negative.

Here is a summary of the key details of the announcement:

- Weekly rapid tests available to all secondary school and college staff from January
- Staff and students who are close contacts of cases will be eligible for daily testing preventing the need for immediate self-isolation. Only if a daily test returns a positive result will the staff member/pupil need to isolate.
- Guidance and training will be available to secondary schools and colleges from this week and throughout January so they can start to use the new testing capacity as soon as possible.
- All Schools and colleges will be supported to roll out testing as rapidly as possible over the spring term, with daily testing for close contacts available to all staff and students, and regular weekly testing available to staff.
- Test kits will begin arriving at secondary schools and colleges for the first phase of rollout to staff from the first week of January.
- Schools will be allocated with funding to support the roll out.
- Public health together with Local Authority Education Colleagues are currently exploring how we can support local schools with the implementation of the testing programme.

INVOLVEMENT AND PROMOTION

Middlesbrough Handyperson Service triumph's at national awards

Middlesbrough's Handyperson Service have been commended for their excellent work in supporting people to live independently at home at the National Healthy Housing Awards 2020.



Having been a runner up in 2019, the service, which forms part of Middlesbrough's Staying Put Agency (SPA) went one better this year by taking the title of Handyperson Service of the Year. SPA has grown its handyperson service over the last seven years and during 2019-20 it completed 2,200-repairs and adaptations and 460 home improvements while also supporting more than 800 telecare customers. In

recent months, staff and volunteers have been at the vanguard of the local Covid-19 response facilitating safe hospital discharge amid rising demand and distributing PPE and food parcels.

Warm and Well Winter Support Project

The Staying Put Agency have team up with local charities this winter to make sure older people receive the help they need, delivered straight to their door.

The new Warm and Well Winter Support Project, which will see a coordinated response by the Teesside Family Foundation, Ageing Better Middlesbrough and the Staying Put Agency, will pool resources to provide essential supplies to older people to help them stay warm, active and busy over the festive period.

Many older people have been hit particularly hard hit by the pandemic, having been cut off from family and friends and unable to access the internet, so it's hoped this service can go a long way towards helping those who need it across Middlesbrough.

As well as crucial help with home heating and boiler repairs, the team can also provide heaters, hats, gloves, blankets, activity packs and wellbeing items. A telephone service has also been set up for those who would like a friendly phone call.

Keeping Well at Home TV Programme

On the 23rd November an 11 week TV Campaign was launched in collaboration with Public Health South Tees (PHST) and Age UK Teesside, with funding awarded by Sport England, working with 'Local TV', which is a network of 8 UK channels, including Teesside TV and Tyne and Wear TV and on all major TV platforms including Freeview, SKY and Virgin Media and also includes a huge social media following.

Colleagues in PHST, Health Development Team and the Mental Health Lead, have featured in a number of short videos that aim to help older people, who are digitally excluded, to keep well at home and are also accessible on social media and via YouTube links.

The videos include a demonstration of simple exercises that can be undertaken in the home, as well as nutrition advice, falls prevention advice, mental wellbeing and how to stay safe and well during the winter.

Programme features are approximately 4 minutes long and broadcast on North East Live on Freeview Channel 7, Channel 117 on Sky and Channel 159 on Virgin Media, 6 times per day, 5 days per week, with some repeats on a weekend.

A comprehensive communications plan includes a number of digital and offline activities with support from the MBC internal communications and marketing team, to help promote the 11 week TV campaign and Information has gone in a number of partner newsletters, including Age UK Teesside, Ageing Better Middlesbrough and University of the Third Age (U3A) to help engage older people.

TV and Social Media analytics have been provided by Local TV to understand the impact of the campaign. Total programme reach on Teesside TV and Tyne and Wear TV in the first week was 429,000. PHST is working with 2 post graduate student from Teesside University, to help with the programme evaluation and will collect qualitative and quantitative data from a sample of programme participants. A survey will establish the extent to which the programme has achieved its objectives, and as part of this, assess how the different topics have been received.

Covid Champions Network

Local Covid Champions are helping us to spread the message around keeping safe and preventing the spread of Covid-19. Covid Champions are based within organisations that work with our most vulnerable communities. These organisations have all received grants to create messages in their own ways which will resonate with their target communities and keep them updated on Covid-19 safety measures. These include video messages, social media routes, and printed information. Each organisation has their own Covid Champion that has joined the network to ensure all information is correct and to enable them to work together, share ideas and feed back to the Council on any queries from their communities.

VCS Sustainability Grants Awarded

The Council has been able to support local VCS organisations that have been negatively affected by the impacts of Covid-19, to help them in continuing to deliver support to our most vulnerable communities. Grants have been made available to VCS services that have seen their normal income streams or ways of working severely impacted by Covid-19. The grants aim to allow them to work differently and re-establish their programmes to continue reaching those most in need of their services.

COVID-19 Education Offer:

Children and Young People's Emotional Mental Health and Wellbeing - HeadStart, Tees Valley CCG, TEWV and VCSE providers have collaborated to offer schools 4-6 weekly sessions of issue based group work to help support those pupils that are struggling as a result of COVID-19. Issues to be addressed are low mood, anxiety, self-harm (Inc. substance misuse), difficulty managing routines (Inc. sleep problems) and transitions. Nearly all schools have accessed support in some way. The Headstart Team have supported 8 schools in Middlesbrough to date.

Councillor Dorothy Davison
Executive Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health