

Name
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Agenda
Item No.

26 January 2021

6

Walsall Covid-19 Update

Ward(s):

Portfolios: Cllr Craddock

1. Aim

To give an overview of the Covid-19 management response in Walsall.

2. Recommendations

That colleagues play their part in the Local Authority and Partner management response to Covid-19 in Walsall and support the government messages.

3. Report detail

There are a number of components in relation to the response to the Covid-19 pandemic in Walsall to date. This report will cover several of these including:

- Barometer (7 key performance indicator overview)
- Outbreaks
- Testing / access to
- Vaccinations
- Schools / care homes
- Hospital situation

The **barometer** offers an overview of the current situation based on five key performance indicators and their RAG ratings (the defined parameters agreed regionally).

All KPIs are rated as RED due to the surge in positive cases, trends and exceedance; the increase in positivity (the proportion of those tested who are positive) and the situation awareness of positive cases across the borough.

There are also two supplementary indicators offering an acute perspective in terms of inpatient numbers and critical beds occupied, both of which have increased.

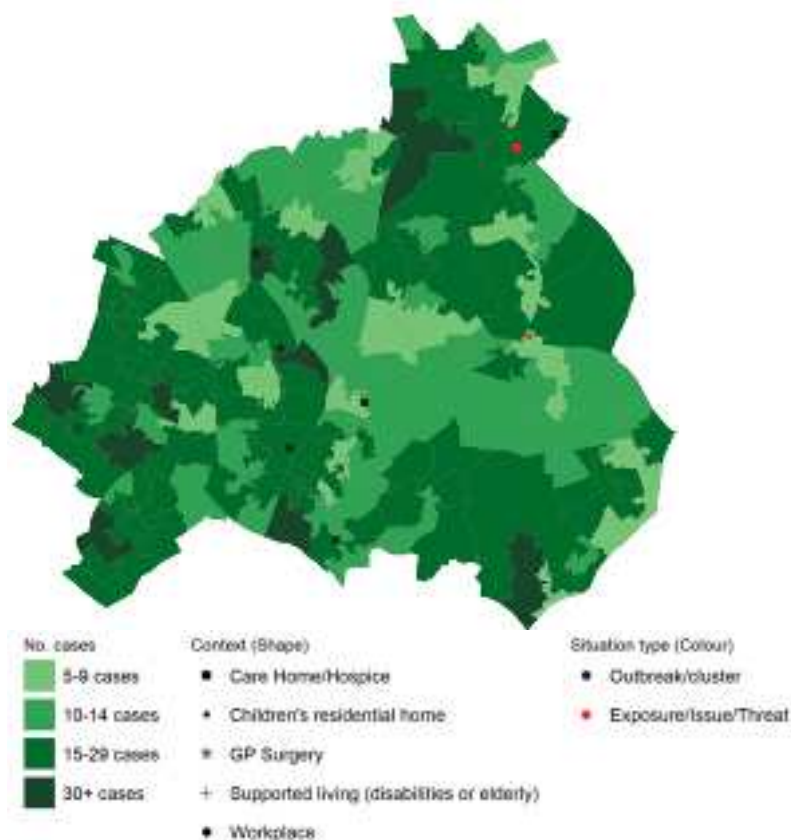
	KPI	Latest Data	Comments	Source
1	7 day incidence	2,220 Cases (29 th Dec to 4 th Jan)	Walsall's cases are INCREASING	PHE Line List (last refreshed 6 Jan) <i>Note the net 14 days are subject to reporting delays</i>
2	7 day rate trends		The rate is currently at 318 per 100,000 population (a significant 85% increase compared to the previous week) (Each bar represents a rate for positive cases over 7 days; the date range for the rate is always earlier than for the case count in KPI 1 due to reporting delays)	PHE Daily Report (last refreshed 6 Jan)
3	Exceedance RAG rating	RED 80/12/20 81/12/20 01/01/21 02/01/21 03/01/21 04/01/21 05/01/21	Walsall is flagged RED in 7 out of the last 7 exceedance reports. NOTE: Daily exceedance should be considered alongside other available indicators.	PHE Daily Exceedance Report (last refreshed 6 Jan)
4	PCR Positivity rate in last 14 days (pillars 1 & 2)	Pillar 1 = 13.1% Pillar 2 = 21% Pillar 1 & 2 = 19.8%	Pillar 2 for Walsall is 21%; compared with W Midlands (17%) and England (17.4%). NOTE: As of 18/12/2020; tests and positivity are based only on PCR testing	PHE LA Report (last refreshed 6 Jan)
5	Situation Awareness	RED	There continues to be community transmission and a range of exposures / outbreaks across the borough	Daily PHE line list mapping / PHE outbreaks & issues / PHE LA Report (last refreshed on 6 Jan)
6	Walsall Hospital NHS Trust inpatients		Total of 137 confirmed COVID-19 inpatients	Daily Trust Sitrep (last refreshed on 5 Jan)
7	HCU/ITU Occupancy		12 HCU/ITU beds being occupied due to COVID-19	Daily Trust Sitrep (last refreshed on 5 Jan)

The **outbreaks** / exposures currently occurring in Walsall continue to suggest a large proportion of residential dwelling transmission which the local Test & Trace team act upon as soon as data is received.

Mapped positive case data is monitored daily, with recent LSOA level map demonstrating the impact across the borough.

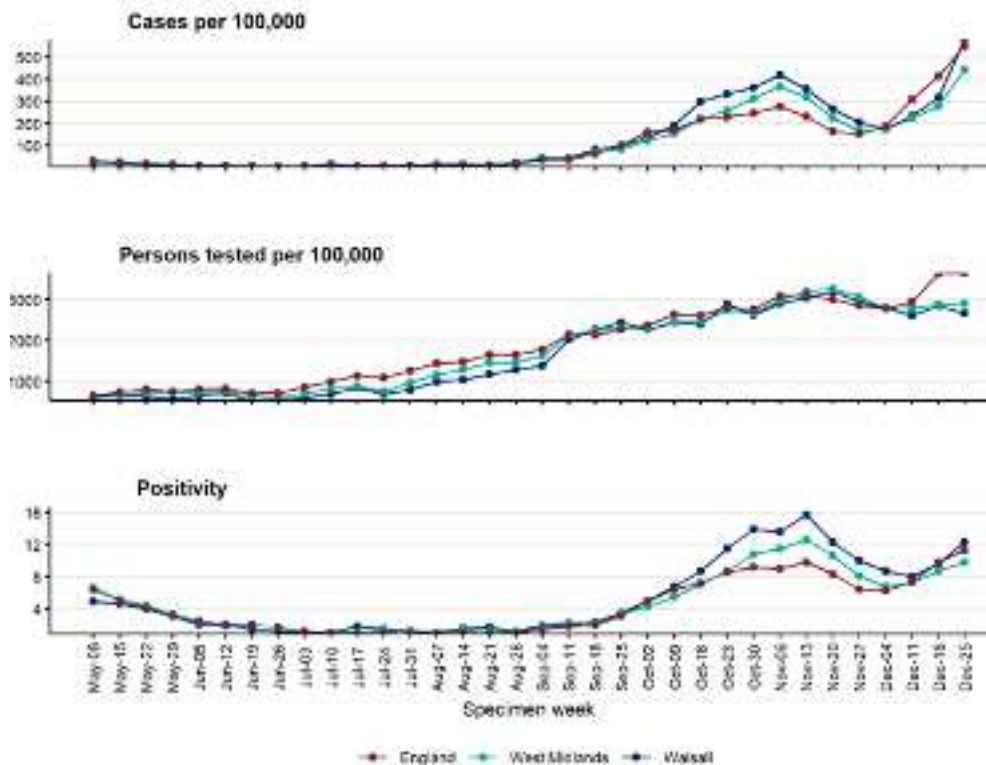
Pockets of high cases exists sporadically across the borough – for example parts of Willenhall South, Darlaston South, Pleck, paddock, Blakenall and Aldridge North & Walsall Wood. What is clear, is that no area is untouched.

Map of new Covid-19 cases from Pillar 1 and 2 testing by LSOA overlayed with new outbreaks / clusters in Walsall (past 14 days 22 December 2020 to 04 January 2021).



Source – PHE Daily LA report

In relation to **testing** in Walsall, data currently available is from PCT testing only which illustrates a slight reduction of Walsall residents taking up a test (compared to national and regional rates). The increase of positivity rates is also a concern.



There are currently three 'local testing sites' within the borough, located at Walsall Town Hall, Darlaston Community Centre and University of Wolverhampton campus. In addition, there is a 'mobile testing unit' currently located at Wakes Ground Car & Lorry Park in Willenhall.

With the release and availability now of the Covid-19 **vaccination**, 'Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust Vaccination Centre' has been operational since Tuesday 8th December 2020. Since then it has been:

- Working as part of Walsall Together Partnership which includes many of the PCNs
- 0800-2000 and expanding to 0700-2200 in January 2021
- Flow 500-600/Day stepping up to 1000-1200/Day as second doses required in early Jan 2021
- Updated national guidance issued 30 Dec 20 highlights updated scientific and political advice (strategic review on implications for Walsall underway)
- Capturing high risk/BAME NHS staff at Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, WMAS and key WBC Care Home and hospice staff. Looking to increase Over 80 in/out patients and then all other Hospital/WMAS staff
- Manor site remains as a frontrunner nationally with flow and numbers

Working within Walsall Together Partnership has seen:

- Walsall Local Authority support, including assessing community sites for vaccination centres
- Working with Oak Park Leisure centre to set up and go live as combined PCN/Walsall Together hub for East on Friday 8th January 2021

- Saddler Centre planning being prepared for mid Jan (TJ Hughes site) - awaiting date
- PCNs in East and South working with Walsall Together and Walsall Healthcare Community Division, going out to vaccinate in care home residents and some staff.

Focus on:

- Reviewing updated national guidance
- Sustaining operational model at Hospital Hub and Planning/Co-ordination Cell
- Rapidly operationalising Over 80 and Over 75 cohort pathways in hospital (in and outpatients)

As part of the response / management of Covid-19, schools and care homes have been a particular focus. The Public Health On Call Cell has been operational since the summer 2020, 7 days a week, 12 hours a day and has supported / advised / guided over 3,000 contacts, with the majority being from care homes and schools. Additional resource has been taken on to continue this dedicated service.

Contact details for this service – walsall.healthprotection@nhs.net (01922) 658065.

Finally, the impact of Covid-19 has / is having from an acute (**hospital**) perspective. The KPIs on inpatients and critical care bed occupancy have increased and although managing at present, the need for the national lockdown was precedent in order to help protect the NHS.

As a Local Authority, collaborative joint working will continue to ensure the best possible outcomes for Walsall residents.

4. *Financial information*

Funding for response to the Covid-19 pandemic is supported by a grant of £1.3m. Further funding is also provided by government for those residents who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEVs).

5. *Reducing Inequalities*

The impact on Walsall residents as well as staff Covid-19 has had continues, however there will come a time where it will diminish and the learning from this pandemic can be put into perspective. Some of this work, such as the recent resident survey and the enablement of remote working is already taking place.

In addition to responding to this pandemic, the organisation continues to work hard on reducing inequalities in Walsall be that through the refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to identify focussed priorities; through other corporate strategies such as the Corporate Plan and through the transformation work.

6. Decide

Response to the pandemic continues with a Partnership approach. The pace of increased cases at present (locally within Walsall, but across the country as a whole) has led to a management approach as opposed to a containment approach. Those key organisations and Partners continue to meet weekly as part of IMT to work collaboratively and will continue to do so at present.

There are also weekly Outbreak Plan meetings involving a broad range of colleagues across the Local Authority and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust. These meetings have a core agenda and cover - Business insight, risks, schools, local businesses, care homes, regulatory services, local test and trace and communications.

Regular meetings across the region also assist with future decision-making.

7. Respond

As individuals, we all have a responsibility and can do our part, however small. The message of “hands, face, space” is imperative.

The Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) (a sub group of the Health and Wellbeing Board) meets regularly to discuss core Covid-19 related matters and questions are encouraged from members of the public. The meeting can also be watched live through YouTube. The next one is 19 January 2021.

8. Review

Covid-19 is reviewed regularly through a vast number of avenues and throughout the hierarchy of the organisation.

Key general information is available on the Walsall Council website - [HERE](#) with subsections covering FAQs as well as weekly refreshed data.

Background papers

Key links to Covid-19 related intelligence include:

- [Walsall Council](#)
- [gov.uk website](#)

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