

28 September 2021

## Covid-19 Infection and Vaccination Rates Update

Ward(s):

Portfolios: Cllr Craddock – Health and Wellbeing

### 1. Aim

To give an update on the current Covid-19 infection rates in Walsall and the vaccination uptake to date. In addition, inform the committee of details concerning the forthcoming Covid-19 booster.

### 2. Recommendations

That:

1. **Members continue to play their part in the Local Authority and Partner management response to Covid-19 in Walsall and support the government messages for residents to get fully vaccinated;**
2. **Subject, to any comments Members may wish to make, the report be noted.**

### 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 (5 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 increase in positive cases, trends and 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.

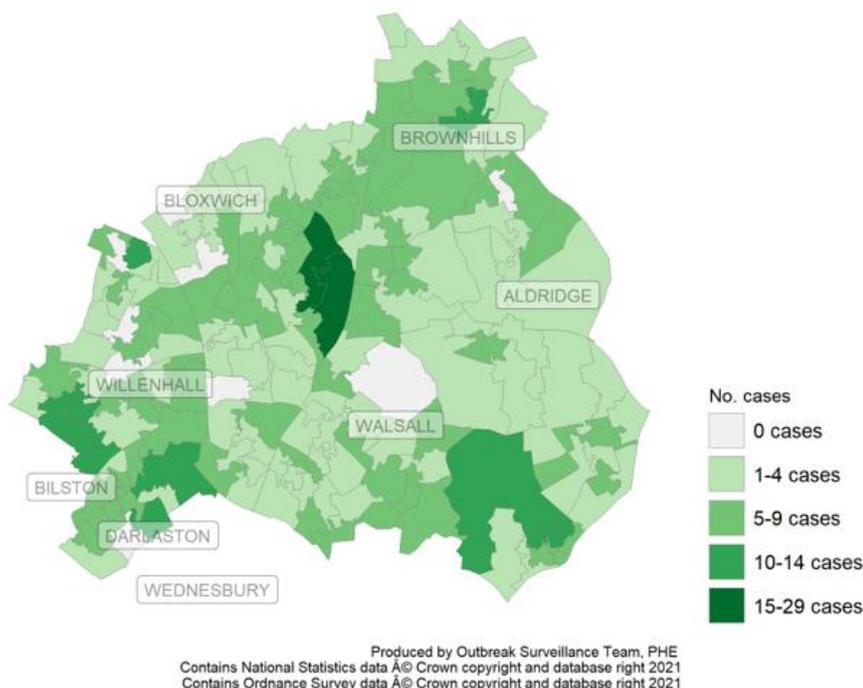
KPI	Latest Data	Comments	Source																																							
1 Weekly incidence (number of new cases)	1,118 Cases (03rd Sep to 09th Sep)	9% increase in a week	PHE situation awareness explorer (last refreshed 15 Sep)																																							
2 Weekly trends (rate per 100,000)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Week ending date</th> <th>Rate per 100,000</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>05 Aug</td><td>280</td></tr> <tr><td>12 Aug</td><td>330</td></tr> <tr><td>19 Aug</td><td>307</td></tr> <tr><td>26 Aug</td><td>346</td></tr> <tr><td>02 Sep</td><td>359</td></tr> <tr><td>09 Sep</td><td>390</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Week ending date	Rate per 100,000	05 Aug	280	12 Aug	330	19 Aug	307	26 Aug	346	02 Sep	359	09 Sep	390	<p>The rate is currently at 390 per 100,000 population. Walsall ranked 59/309 English LTLA.</p> <p>Each bar represents a rate for positive cases over 7 days.</p> <p>RAG dependent on latest rate.</p>	PHE situation awareness explorer (last refreshed 15 Sep)																									
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3 Weekly Positivity (% testing +ve PCR only)	11.5% (Pillar 1 & 2 combined)	Benchmark: West Midlands: 9.9% England: 7.8%	PHE situation awareness explorer (last refreshed 15 Sep)																																							
4 Covid vaccine uptake (%)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age category</th> <th>1st dose%</th> <th>2nd dose%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>16-17</td><td>43%</td><td>7%</td></tr> <tr><td>18-29</td><td>62%</td><td>49%</td></tr> <tr><td>30-39</td><td>69%</td><td>61%</td></tr> <tr><td>40-49</td><td>80%</td><td>75%</td></tr> <tr><td>50-54</td><td>87%</td><td>85%</td></tr> <tr><td>55-59</td><td>90%</td><td>88%</td></tr> <tr><td>60-64</td><td>91%</td><td>90%</td></tr> <tr><td>65-69</td><td>93%</td><td>91%</td></tr> <tr><td>70-74</td><td>95%</td><td>94%</td></tr> <tr><td>75-79</td><td>96%</td><td>95%</td></tr> <tr><td>80+</td><td>96%</td><td>94%</td></tr> <tr><td>Overall</td><td>79.23%</td><td>72.60%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Age category	1st dose%	2nd dose%	16-17	43%	7%	18-29	62%	49%	30-39	69%	61%	40-49	80%	75%	50-54	87%	85%	55-59	90%	88%	60-64	91%	90%	65-69	93%	91%	70-74	95%	94%	75-79	96%	95%	80+	96%	94%	Overall	79.23%	72.60%	Black Country & West B'ham CCG First dose: 74.00% Second dose: 66.89%	IMS Reporting (last refreshed 15 Sep)
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5 Situation Awareness	RED	High community transmission and a range of exposures/outbreaks.	Daily PHE line list mapping / PHE outbreaks & issues / PHE LA Report (last refreshed on 15 Sep)																																							
6 Walsall Hospital NHS Trust Inpatients		43 confirmed COVID-19 inpatients	Daily Trust Sitrep (last refreshed on 14 Sep)																																							
7 HDU/ITU Occupancy		4 HDU/ITU beds being occupied due to COVID-19.	Daily Trust Sitrep (last refreshed on 14 Sep)																																							

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 regularly, with recent LSOA level map demonstrating the impact across the borough.

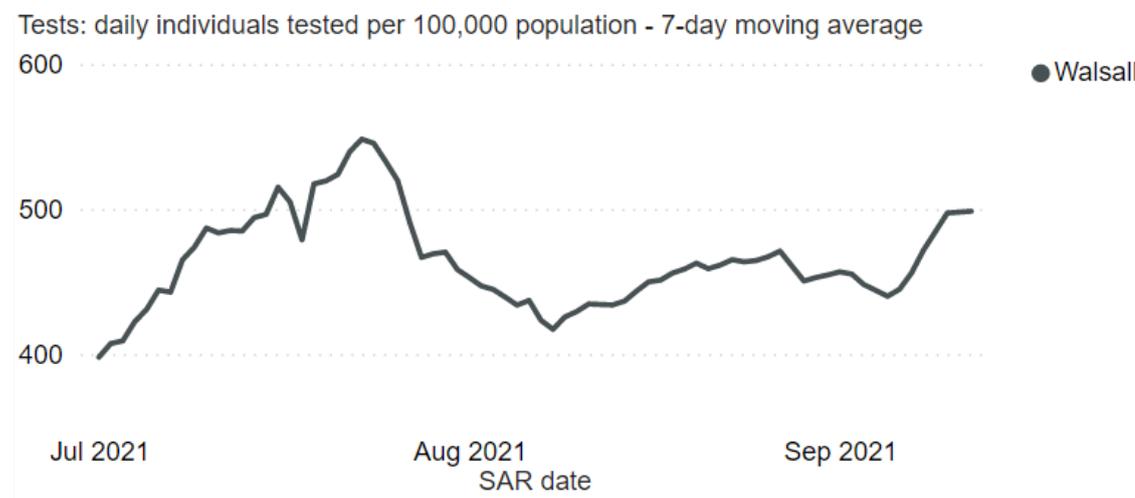
Very few LSOAs are unaffected, with pockets of higher cases across the borough – for example Blakenall ward currently with between 15 – 29 positive cases and pockets within Willenhall South, Darlaston and Pheasey Park Farm with between 10 and 14 cases.

*Map of new COVID-19 cases from Pillars 1 and 2 testing by LSOA in Walsall (7<sup>th</sup> September to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021)*



Source – PHE LA report

In relation to **testing** in Walsall, which illustrates a tapering off of residents taking up a test, following an increase, linked to the returns to school / college and university.



There continues to be the message locally and nationally to test regularly, with various options available – home testing or an LFT test centre. Uptake has been generally good, but recent data shows an improvement towards the south in particular with testing uptake.

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, and has supported / advised / guided over 7,600 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](mailto:walsall.healthprotection@nhs.net) (01922) 658065

## Vaccination

Overall vaccination uptake/coverage is now being monitored at System and Place levels against the NHSE targets. According to the latest published NHS England figures, weekly uptake percentages at system level are as follows:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>

### First dose % (using ONS denominators)

Age group	BCWB	England
80+	91.0	92.6
75-79	94.5	100
70-74	97.0	97.5
65-69	95.3	95.5
60-64	99.0	100
55-59	95.4	98.7
50-54	93.4	93.5
45-49	84.8	88.3
40-44	90.0	92.3
35-39	79.1	85.4
30-34	71.3	82.5
25-29	61.6	74.4
18-24	62.6	72.2

## Second dose % (using ONS denominators)

Age group	BCWB	England
<b>80+</b>	89.3	90.9
<b>75-79</b>	93.3	100
<b>70-74</b>	95.7	96.4
<b>65-69</b>	93.3	94.0
<b>60-64</b>	96.1	97.8
<b>55-59</b>	91.7	95.5
<b>50-54</b>	89.1	90.2
<b>45-49</b>	78.8	83.7
<b>40-44</b>	81.0	85.6
<b>35-39</b>	67.7	76.0
<b>30-34</b>	57.7	69.8
<b>25-29</b>	45.5	57.8
<b>18-24</b>	41.7	50.1

The BCWB ICS has delivered 1,689,965 vaccines since December 2020 (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>), an enormous achievement which has meant that those most vulnerable were protected early from the serious effects of COVID-19. The BCWB CCG is working with Local Authority Public Health colleagues in each of the five places to ensure that we are reaching into communities, using local champions to support people with the right information upon which to make decisions around the vaccine and we have a large number of vaccination sites to ensure good access to the service. All this great work will continue.

Our teams are contacting everyone eligible to urge anyone aged 18 or over who has not yet had their vaccine to walk in or book at a local site. In addition, following The Governments acceptance of the JCVI recommendations the NHS is now putting plans in place to vaccinate over 12s. We are asking that people in this cohort wait to be contacted for their vaccination.

Unfortunately there has been some aggression towards staff at vaccination sites, particularly in relation to people wanting their second doses early. This is unacceptable behaviour towards our staff and volunteers and it will not be tolerated. The NHS is offering second doses, 8 weeks after the first and this message is being communicated widely.

The NHS is urging expectant mums to get the Covid-19 vaccine after new data shows the overwhelming majority of pregnant women hospitalised with the virus have not had a jab. The BCWB ICS will soon be mirroring the Wolverhampton model with vaccination clinics on site in each maternity unit so that the vaccine can be offered during antenatal appointments to women and their families. The overarching message is to reassure pregnant women that Covid-19 vaccines

are the safest and best way to protect them and their baby from severe illness and premature birth. Any pregnant women who have questions or concerns about the vaccine can speak to their GP, midwife or obstetrician to get more information and advice. Even if they have previously declined the vaccine, they can book an appointment to get their jab on the NHS National Booking Service website or call 119 between 7am and 11pm.

Whilst we await further guidance we are planning Phase 3 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. We know this will start soon with boosters for those most at risk and we are looking to plan the vaccination capacity carefully to ensure we can deliver flu vaccines too.

### **Monitoring current vaccination inequalities**

We are now reporting regularly overall vaccination coverage and inequalities at Borough and Ward/Middle Layer Super Output (MSOA) resident population levels. The latter is important as it will allow tracking of the impact of CCs and practice interventions in small areas. We use small area (LSOA) Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores summarised into quintiles and deciles to report coverage by deprivation.

Uptake in the Black/Black British ethnic group and mixed / multiple ethnicity is still low in Short Heath, Streetly and Willenhall North. Similarly, uptake in the Other/Unknown ethnic groups is low in Birchills and Pelsall.

As noted in previous reports first and second dose coverage is highest in the White and Asian major ethnic groups, and much lower in other ethnic groups.

A variety of methods are being used in a bid to improve uptake. Including grassroots outreach within local communities by the CCs, the vaccine bus service targeting local pockets of low uptake, targeted advertising via social media and radio, direct messaging via schools and other education partners, Walsall FC players filmed, vox pops produced of people getting vaccinated, videos with health professionals, toolkit for workplaces, information and reassurance in multiple community languages, and frequent press releases and local media appearance.

### **Service detail**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021, NHS England announced new targets for the programme because the rate of increase in coverage, particularly in younger age groups, has been slowing markedly. The new national coverage targets are as follows:

- 89% minimum uptake in cohorts 1-10
- 85% minimum uptake in cohorts 11 and 12
- 2nd doses for cohorts 1-10 to be completed at 8 weeks
- All cohorts must receive at least 3 invites to access the vaccine
- Each PCN as a minimum in each cohort 75%.

The task is more challenging for any Places which are not affluent and/or mainly White British. Motivating younger people to get vaccinated will be an added challenge as they frequently perceive themselves to be at low risk. To make vaccination as convenient as possible, the Saddlers Centre vaccination service has extended its opening hours to 8am-7pm, seven days a week, while vaccinations are also offered at selected local pharmacies, and GP-led sites including Forrester Street surgery and Oak Park Leisure Centre, both of which run frequent walk-in clinics.

In addition to existing Vaccination Centres (VCs), a wide range of interventions have been deployed, including targeted communications activity (see section 2.4 above), pop-up clinics, and two vaccination buses which will visit priority locations including areas with low uptake and high-footfall sites such as major employers.

COVID Community Champions (CCs) have mobilised to locally promote visits of the vaccination buses, accompany patients and act as marshals at the sites of visits. CC groups are also linking up with GP practices. They will be supporting the second bus in the same way as the first.

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, with the pending flu season, careful planning will continue in line with the messaging to encourage residents to take up their offer of a flu vaccination as well as the Covid-19 booster.

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

#### **4. Financial information**

Public Health has received funding of £9.558m in relation to the 'Contain Outbreak Management Fund', this funding is being used to support the Local Authority's direct response to COVID-19. This funding has been used to support the following to date:

- Walsall's vaccination programme including the vaccination bus initiative and operational costs for various sites across the borough
- Walsall's COVID testing programme including maintenance and operational costs for various sites across the borough
- Contract tracing, COVID administration and an extended Health Protection Team
- Support to maintain outbreaks with Adult Social Care and educational settings.

In addition to the above further funding is from DHSC to support the Lateral Flow Testing regime across the borough. This funding is based on actual costs incurred and is reimbursed through monthly submissions. Forecast funding for April 2021 to September 2021 is £0.800m.

#### **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**

High level COVID-19 messaging continues to be shared across a wide range of channels, including website, social media, and newsletters, as well as community networks across a range of partners and trusted voices in the Walsall community.

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 meetings can also be watched live through YouTube. The last one was Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 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](#) and a Covid-19 data dashboard, updated weekly, is available [HERE](#).

## **Background papers**

Key links to Covid-19 related intelligence include:

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

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