

**Health and Wellbeing Board**

**19 September 2024**

**Health Protection Annual Report**

**For Assurance**

**1. Purpose**

To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) with oversight of the work to protect the health of the population from infectious diseases, screening for cancers, monitor vaccination programmes, and respond to health emergencies.

This annual report details the situation with respect to key health protection issues, and the work being done to address them. This report covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) note the annual report for health protection for 2023/24.
- 2.2. That the Board consider, as part of future business, any opportunities for collaboration on joint issues.

**3. Report detail**

- 3.1 The health protection work programme aims to ensure that every person, irrespective of their circumstances, is protected from infectious and non-infectious environmental health hazards and, where such hazards occur, to minimise their continued impact on the public's health. This is done by preventing exposure to such hazards, taking timely actions to respond to threats and acting collectively to ensure the best use of human and financial resources.
- 3.2 The annual health protection assurance report April 23 – March 24 provides an overview of the status of health protection priorities and key achievements of 2023/24 for the following areas:
  - TB
  - Immunisations
  - Population screening programmes including cancer screening

- Sexually transmitted infections
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Infection prevention and control programmes
- Blood borne virus (BBV)
- Environmental Health / Trading Standards
- Health emergency Planning
- Air Quality
- Oral Health and Fluoridation

3.3 Some of the key health protection challenges during 2023/24 were as follows:

- Childhood immunisation uptake rates have remained low in 2023/24, which has led to an outbreak of measles in Walsall and the wider West Midlands area in 23/24, linked to a national increase in cases.
- Infection prevention and control (IPC) standards have reduced in the care home sector over the last year due to a combination of various reasons such as reduced staffing capacity and high staff turn-over.
- Reduced staffing and resources has had a major impact on the delivery of key services such as the community TB service and environmental health.
- There has been an increase in health care acquired infections such as *Clostridium difficile* in Walsall mirroring regional and national trends.

3.4 These are the health protection priorities that will be addressed in the coming year in our work plan:

- Immunisations – improve the uptake of all immunisations, particularly MMR, and reduce inequalities in the uptake of immunisations.
- Work as a local system to reduce the incidence of syphilis in Walsall through the implementation of the Syphilis Action Plan.
- Work with NHS partners to support the introduction of latent TB screening and awareness raising in the community on signs and symptoms of TB.
- Complete targeted education on the management of urinary tract and respiratory infections to reduce healthcare associated infections in collaboration with NHS partners.
- Refresh pandemic preparedness plans for Walsall and create an exercise to test it.
- Develop a Walsall Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan for Walsall

#### **4. Implications for Joint Working arrangements:**

*Making it Happen, Leadership, Partnership & Resources*

To address health protection challenges across Walsall, it is vital to work as part of a wider strategic system, which takes into account the social and other

determinants of mental wellbeing. The Health Protection Forum provides strategic leadership and is accountable to the HWBB for delivering the Health Protection Strategy and work plan

The key partner organisations responsible for delivering health protection are the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), NHS England, the Black Country ICB, Walsall Healthcare Trust, Black Country Healthcare Foundation Trust and Walsall Council Public Health/Environmental Health/Protection

A Memorandum of Understanding is in place between UK Health Security Agency, the Black Country ICB and local authority health protection teams in the Black Country. This document delineates the roles and responsibilities of these key organisations in the event of a health protection incident or outbreak.

#### 4.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

#### 4.2 Legal Implications

There are no Legal implications directly associated with this report.

#### 4.3 Other Resource implications

There are no other resource implications directly associated with this report.

### 5. Health and Wellbeing Board Priorities-impact:

5.1 The work programme for Health Protection supports the following Council priority "people are supported to maintain and improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life". (need to check this is correct)

5.2 The work programme for Health Protection supports the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, specifically in relation to children and young people, as well as the additional fourth priority linked with older people and prevention.

5.3 This work programme contributes to the reduction of health inequalities, particularly in the uptake of immunisation and screening. In addition, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections are more likely to impact vulnerable communities more severely.

5.4 Safeguarding: there are no adverse implications for the most vulnerable sectors in the community.

### Background papers

The overview detailed above relates to the Health Protection Annual Report for 2023/24 which is attached.

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