

Covid-19 Update

Ward(s):

Portfolios: Cllr Craddock

1. Aim

To give a progress update on the current Covid-19 infection rates in Walsall and the vaccination uptake, including the booster.

2. Recommendations

That colleagues 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.

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).

At present, all KPIs are rated as **RED** due to the high number of positive cases, recent trends, positivity (the proportion of those tested who are positive) and the situation awareness (community transmission) of positive cases across the borough.

	KPI	Latest Data	Comments	Source																																																								
1	Weekly incidence (number of new cases)	3,570 Cases (10th Jan to 16th Jan)	-38% increase in a week	UKHSA situation awareness explorer (last refreshed 24 Jan)																																																								
2	Weekly trends (rate per 100,000)	<p>Rate per 100,000</p> <p>Specimen week ending date</p>	<p>The rate is currently at 1245.1 per 100,000 population.</p> <p>Walsall ranked 22/309 English LTLAs</p> <p>Each bar represents a rate for positive cases over 7 days. RAG dependent on latest rate.</p>	UKHSA situation awareness explorer (last refreshed 24 Jan)																																																								
3	Weekly Positivity (% testing +ve PCR only)	27.3% (Pillar 1 & 2 combined) as of 15th January	Benchmark: Birmingham & Black Country: 23.4% England: 20.2%	UKHSA situation awareness explorer (last refreshed 24 Jan)																																																								
4	Covid vaccine uptake (%)	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age group</th> <th>1st dose%</th> <th>2nd dose%</th> <th>Booster%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>12-15</td><td>44%</td><td>6%</td><td>100%</td></tr> <tr><td>16-17</td><td>60%</td><td>38%</td><td>40%</td></tr> <tr><td>18-29</td><td>68%</td><td>60%</td><td>46%</td></tr> <tr><td>30-39</td><td>73%</td><td>68%</td><td>55%</td></tr> <tr><td>40-49</td><td>82%</td><td>79%</td><td>68%</td></tr> <tr><td>50-54</td><td>88%</td><td>87%</td><td>81%</td></tr> <tr><td>55-59</td><td>90%</td><td>89%</td><td>85%</td></tr> <tr><td>60-64</td><td>92%</td><td>91%</td><td>89%</td></tr> <tr><td>65-69</td><td>93%</td><td>92%</td><td>92%</td></tr> <tr><td>70-74</td><td>95%</td><td>95%</td><td>96%</td></tr> <tr><td>75-79</td><td>96%</td><td>96%</td><td>96%</td></tr> <tr><td>80+</td><td>96%</td><td>96%</td><td>95%</td></tr> <tr><td>Overall</td><td>71.33%</td><td>65.72%</td><td>74.91%</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Age group	1st dose%	2nd dose%	Booster%	12-15	44%	6%	100%	16-17	60%	38%	40%	18-29	68%	60%	46%	30-39	73%	68%	55%	40-49	82%	79%	68%	50-54	88%	87%	81%	55-59	90%	89%	85%	60-64	92%	91%	89%	65-69	93%	92%	92%	70-74	95%	95%	96%	75-79	96%	96%	96%	80+	96%	96%	95%	Overall	71.33%	65.72%	74.91%	<p>Black Country & West B'ham CCG</p> <p>First dose: 67.25%</p> <p>Second dose: 61.70%</p> <p>Booster (3rd dose): 74.68%</p> <p>Note: Booster percentage denominator is the population currently eligible for the booster.</p>	IMS Reporting (last refreshed 24 Jan)
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5	Situation Awareness	RED	High community transmission and a range of exposures/outbreaks.	Daily UKHSA line list mapping / UKHSA outbreaks & issues / UKHSA LA Report (last refreshed on 24 Jan)																																																								

There are also two supplementary indicators offering an acute perspective in terms of inpatient numbers and the number of critical beds occupied due to Covid-19, both of which are high.

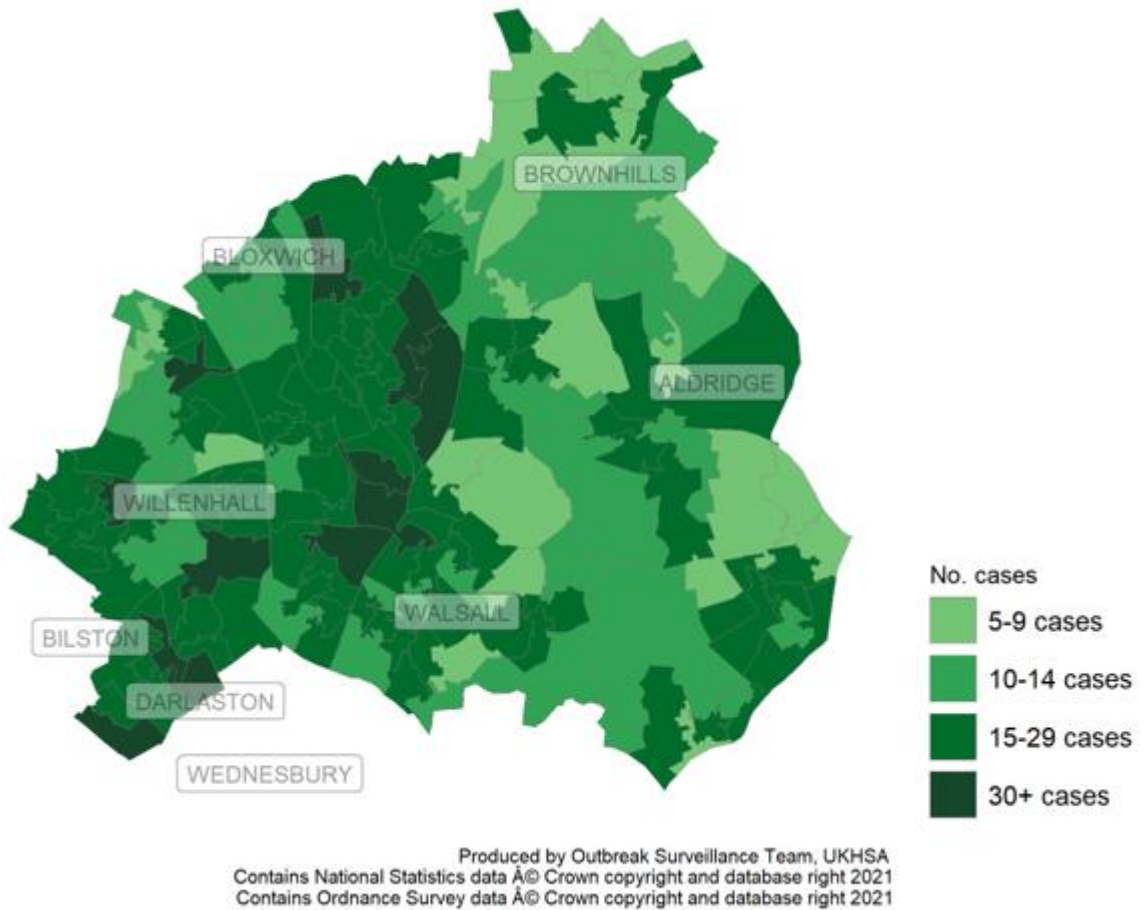
6	Walsall Hospital NHS Trust Inpatients	<p>Total number of confirmed COVID-19 inpatients</p>	80 confirmed COVID-19 inpatients	Daily Trust Sitrep (last refreshed on 24 Jan)
7	HDU/ITU Occupancy	<p>Patients in critical care with/without COVID-19</p>	5 HDU/ITU beds being occupied due to COVID-19.	Daily Trust Sitrep (last refreshed on 24 Jan)

The **outbreaks / exposures** currently occurring in Walsall continue to suggest a 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 the latest Lower super output Area (LSOA) level map demonstrating the impact across the borough (see below).

All LSOAs across the borough are affected, with pockets of higher cases (30+) within Willenhall North, Willenhall South, Darlaston South, parts of Bloxwich East, Blakenall, Birchills, Pleck and St Matthew's.

COVID-19 cases (Pillars 1 and 2 combined) in most recent 7-day period (17 January to 23 January 2022), by Walsall LSOA



Source – PHE LA report

In relation to **testing** in Walsall, rates had been steadily and seemed to have peaked in January 2022, and are declining increasing (this mirrors regional and national trends also and could be a factor of changed testing policy).

Tests: daily individuals tested per 100,000 population - 7-day moving average



There continues to be the message locally and nationally to test regularly, with various options available – home testing or an LFT test centre. Generally, uptake has been good, but particularly so to the north and north-east of the borough.

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 almost 9,600 contacts, with the majority being from care homes and educational settings.

Contact details for this service – 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+	92.1	93.2
75-79	96.1	100
70-74	97.0	96.1
65-69	97.0	97.1
60-64	98.9	99.8
55-59	94.2	97.8
50-54	94.3	95.4
45-49	88.5	90.8
40-44	91.2	94.1
35-39	83.2	89.5
30-34	77.3	87.8
25-29	68.8	81.3
18-24	70.1	80.5

Second dose % (using ONS denominators)

Age group	BCWB	England
80+	91.3	92.5
75-79	95.2	100
70-74	96.0	95.3
65-69	95.5	95.9
60-64	97.0	98.3
55-59	92.0	96.0
50-54	91.5	93.1
45-49	84.9	87.9
40-44	85.8	90.1
35-39	77.0	84.4
30-34	69.6	81.2
25-29	60.4	73.9
18-24	60.1	71.1

% of cohort (not just those eligible) who have had a booster or 3rd dose (using ONS denominators)

Age group	BCWB	England
80+	85.0	88.0
75-79	90.2	97.9
70-74	89.7	91.3
65-69	86.4	90.1
60-64	83.8	89.2
55-59	75.3	84.2
50-54	70.7	78.6
45-49	58.1	68.7
40-44	52.8	65.1
35-39	41.9	55.2
30-34	33.1	48.1
25-29	25.5	39.2
18-24	22.7	34.3

The BCWB ICS has delivered 2,438,567 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 have contacted 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 Government's acceptance of the JCVI recommendations the NHS is now putting plans in place to vaccinate over 12s. This is being handled via the Saddlers Centre Team in Walsall who have arranged at least one visit for every secondary school for the 1st dose. Arrangements for vulnerable 5 to 11 year olds are currently being planned to start from the end of January 2022 via the Saddlers Centre.

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. Vaccination clinics have been arranged 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.

The Booster vaccination programme has been delivered from the same combination of the MVS at the Saddlers Ctre, GP LVSS and Community Pharmacists. Coverage to date is shown in the third table above.

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 have and are being used in a bid to improve uptake. Including grassroots outreach within local communities by the Community Champions, vaccine buses have targeted 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 30 November, the government set out its ambition to offer all eligible adults the chance to get their top-up/booster jab by the end of January. In response to the emerging threat of the Omicron variant, the target was brought forward with the aim of offering all eligible adults a booster by the New Year. This target was met.

The campaign led to a huge increase in vaccination rates, with over 8 million top-up jabs administered in just over 2 weeks in England (a 45% increase), between 12 December and the end of December. This increase was mirrored in Walsall with significant increased activity at the Saddlers Centre, and GP LVSs.

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 7.30am-8pm, seven days a week, while vaccinations are also offered at selected local pharmacies, and GP-led sites.

Vaccinations are being delivered from an increasing number of local GP surgeries as an alternative to a single LVS within each PCN. This has led to some people coming forward for their first dose at their local GP practice who had previously not visited the LVS. The process of delivering the vaccination from more GP surgeries will continue and this will mean that having a single LVS in each PCN may no longer be necessary.

There is currently some uncertainty as to whether there will be a fourth Booster Programme. This is leading to some consideration of the future of the MVS at the Saddlers Centre because such a large site may no longer be viable depending upon the degree to which the programme can be delivered from a combination of GP surgeries, Community Pharmacists and perhaps a smaller clinic site. The outcome of these considerations will be reported at the next Committee.

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 December 2022 is £0.960m.

5. *Reducing Inequalities*

The impact Covid-19 has had on Walsall residents as well as staff continues, however there will come a time where it will ease 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.

A link to our Walsall JSNA, can be accessed via the [Walsall Insight website - JSNA](#)

6. *Decide*

Response to the pandemic continues amongst Partners with a management approach as opposed to a containment approach. Those key organisations and Partners continue to meet regularly 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.

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 (usually every Tuesday), is available [HERE](#).

Background papers

Key links to Covid-19 related intelligence include:

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

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