

8 October, 2020

## Covid-19 Local Outbreak Management Approach

Ward(s) All

**Portfolios:** Cllr Craddock – Health and Wellbeing

### **Executive Summary:**

Detailing the efforts and processes being actioned by the Local Authority and its Partners for moving from a ‘containment’ approach to a ‘management’ approach for Covid-19 in Walsall.

### **1. Reason for scrutiny:**

To ensure a clear understanding as to the approach Walsall Local Authority and its Partners are taking in relation to the management of Covid-19 in the borough and to raise awareness that the health and wellbeing of Walsall residents remains at the forefront of joint efforts.

### **2. Recommendations:**

That:

- Members reinforce the communications to wash hands, wear a mask and make space
- Members note the detail of this report; ensuring clarification as to the approach Walsall Local Authority and its Partners are taking
- Members familiarise themselves with the detailed information/guidance and related links that is available (Appendix 2)
- Members adhere to supporting officers in their operations, to drive together and achieve a shared outcome
- Members direct / re-route residents to where further support is available, should it be required

### **3. Background papers**

There is a vast amount of supportive documentation and guidance to draw your attention to and ensure you are accustomed to, this has been listed in Appendix 2 for your own perusal.

#### **4. Report Detail - COVID in Walsall**

Walsall has increasing numbers of positive COVID-19 cases. As elected members, we would encourage you to continue with your role in leading your communities through the COVID-19 crisis.

4.1 There are three simple actions to keep on protecting each other. As respected community leaders, please lead by example and reinforce these key messages wherever possible:

1. Wash hands - keep washing your hands regularly
2. Cover face - wear a face covering in enclosed spaces if not exempt
3. Make space - stay at least 2 metres apart - or 1 metre with a face covering or other precautions

4.2 Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 however mild should self-isolate (stay at home) for at least 10 days from when their symptoms started. They should arrange to have a test via the online portal or by calling NHS 119.

4.3 From 28 September, residents could be [fined](#) if they do not stay at home and self-isolate following a positive test result for COVID-19 or if NHS Test and Trace contact them and instruct to self-isolate.

#### **5. Public Health On-Call (Health Protection Hub)**

Since June 2020 the Public Health team has been operating seven days a week 8am-8pm, delivering an on-call service to Walsall businesses, educational settings, faith organisations and community and voluntary organisations.

5.1 During the last three weeks there has been an exponential increase in the number of calls received by the team (monitored weekly by the On-call Data Collection and Reporting system – ODCaR). It is important that elected members use this service wisely and encourage others to do so too. Below explain the parameters for contacting the Health Protection on-call hub.

- **Education settings (Nursery / Primary / Secondary / SEN / Further Education)** can access the hub if they;
  - Suspect a case of coronavirus in their setting
  - Have a confirmed case(s) of coronavirus in their setting. Have 2 or more individuals (pupils or staff) with coronavirus symptoms who are linked e.g. same bubble, class, travel to setting together
  - Experience a high number of absences

- **Businesses** can access the hub if;
  - They have a number of staff presenting with symptoms or a confirmed positive case(s).
  - It is important to note that the health protection advice line can assist the following sector areas:
    - warehouses
    - offices/contact centres
    - retail
    - food/catering
    - hospitality
    - customer services
    - leisure

Businesses should use the following contacts for all other COVID enquiries

- If information is required about any other business sector, then they should contact the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) by phone 0300 790 6787 or visit the HSE website.
- If the query is about how to make a workplace COVID-secure then they should contact Environmental Health at [environmentalhealth@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@walsall.gov.uk)

- **Faith organisations and community and voluntary sector** can access the hub if;

- A number of worshippers, staff or volunteers are presenting with symptoms
- They have 1 or more confirmed case of COVID-19
- Require more information on more complex issues including large social gatherings,

They should use the following contacts for all other COVID enquiries

- If the query is about how to make their venue COVID-secure then they should contact Environmental Health at [environmentalhealth@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@walsall.gov.uk)

- **Residents** can access the hub if;

- They have any specific enquiries relating to settings, isolation advice, etc. and cannot be answered by information on the [government website](#) or [NHS website](#)

Residents should be encouraged to

- Seek guidance from official sources including Gov.uk website, NHS Coronavirus or contact NHS119
- NOT able to access testing for people – this is a national problem so should not call to book a test

- **Elected members** should access the hub if;

- They wish to report areas of concern regarding adherence with government messages in staying safe

They should not use the hub for;

- Finding out how to access testing for their constituents
- For further information on alleged positive cases including an individual, a school or a workplace.

## **6 Local Outbreak Management Plan and Member Led Engagement Board**

6.1 In June 2020 all upper tier councils were tasked by the Government to:

- develop a Local Outbreak Control Plan
- establish a member led Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB)
- establish a Director of Public Health led COVID-19 Health Protection Board

6.2 The [Walsall COVID-19 Local Outbreak Plan](#) is to ensure the challenges of COVID-19 are understood, the impact on our local communities are being considered and that we build on our existing plans to manage outbreaks in specific settings and ensure the wider system capacity supports our Director of Public Health.

6.3 As part of the response, Public Health now publish every Tuesday a [weekly COVID-19 dashboard](#) on the council website (a screen shot is available in Appendix 1), this will help elected members to understand the current position in Walsall. It brings centrally together data already in the public domain. The information relates to Walsall, our neighbouring local authorities and the West Midlands region and includes figures on the number of cases, triages via 111/999 and the number of deaths by place.

6.4 Walsall Council's Cabinet considered the arrangements for a Local Outbreak Engagement Board on 17 June and, at the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 23 June, the creation of a sub-committee as the Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) was agreed. The purpose of the Board is to provide political ownership and public-facing engagement and communications in relation to an outbreak response.

6.5 Our constituents now have the opportunity to ask the Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) questions, which are within its remit and the Board, will seek to respond to those questions when it next meets. The next meeting is scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and questions can be submitted to democratic services via an [online form](#), email or post 7 days in advance of the meeting.

## **7 Regional Restrictions**

7.1 From Tuesday 15 September 2020, [Birmingham, Solihull and Sandwell residents](#) are subject to local restrictions due to the rapidly increasing rates of COVID-19. This is law and police can take action against those that break the rules. From 22 September these were also extended to Wolverhampton.

- 7.2 The law is explicit on what you can and cannot do if you live, work or travel in these areas. This includes residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households or support bubble in private homes and gardens, avoid car sharing, face coverings must be worn in education settings for all staff, visitors and pupils in year 7 and above in communal areas, unless exempt.
- 7.3 The government has a predetermined threshold based on the number of cases per 100,000 of the population. If we continue to see an increase in cases in Walsall then we could also be subject to local restrictions. At this point the government and the council will work together to control the spread of the virus. It is likely that Walsall would have similar measures to our local authority neighbours.
- 7.4 For reassurance, the Director of Public Health is in daily contact with Walsall's counterparts in the neighbouring authorities to monitor the evolving situation.

## **8 Roles and responsibilities**

- 8.1 Elected members are encouraged to provide vital local leadership, rather than to become involved in the operational response led by officers. Ward councillors are amongst the people who know Walsall's areas best, and have an important role to play by:
- acting as a bridge between the council and communities
  - amplifying consistent messaging through disseminating council and government information
  - identifying local vulnerabilities, particularly local residents, but also businesses, and feeding this intelligence back into the council - be the eyes and ears of your community
  - working with local voluntary sector groups to provide support and advice for local communities
  - providing reassurance and facilitating support for local residents.
- 8.2 A reminder to Scrutiny of the increase in the number of residents who are sharing or forwarding incorrect information from unsubstantiated sources on COVID-19. It is important that you signpost to information and advice from verified sources including, any confirmed messages [from the council](#) and Director of Public Health.
- 8.3 The [gov.uk](#) website provides the most up-to-date guidance on current measures along with the [NHS111](#) website on health guidance. The [World Health Organisation](#) has put together useful intelligence which debunks some common misconceptions about COVID-19.

## **9. Resource and legal considerations:**

It continues to be the responsibility of all officers, senior managers, Councillors and Partners to work collaboratively in achieving positive outcomes for Walsall residents.

## **10. Council Corporate Plan Priorities:**

The effective management of Covid-19 and consequential action relates to all the priorities below in the Corporate Plan:

- **Economic Growth** – for all people, communities and businesses.
- **People** – have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.
- **Internal focus** – all council services are efficient and effective.
- **Children** – have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
- **Communities** – are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.

## **11. Citizen impact:**

The management of Covid-19 response is to minimise as much as possible the negative impacts on health and wellbeing of the population whilst limiting the impact on health inequalities.

## **12. Environmental impact:**

Action to improve the PHOF within the remit of this overview and scrutiny committee have a direct influence and impact on the environment.

## **13. Performance management:**

PHOF is used as part of the routine and regular monitoring for the Public Health Performance Board to critique performance and utilise feedback from colleagues. Additional local knowledge, expertise and insight from commissioned services is presented and discussed for a more specialised perspective.

## **14. Reducing inequalities:**

Improving the measures in PHOF and ultimately reducing health inequalities is a key outcome within the PHOF. Understanding the key causes and drivers of inequalities and taking proportionate action to reduce health inequalities is the ultimate aim for the DPH. Utilising such data within the 3x3 grid, and comparing Walsall with statistical neighbours, allows focused action and an ability to work collaboratively to make a difference.

## **15. Consultation:**

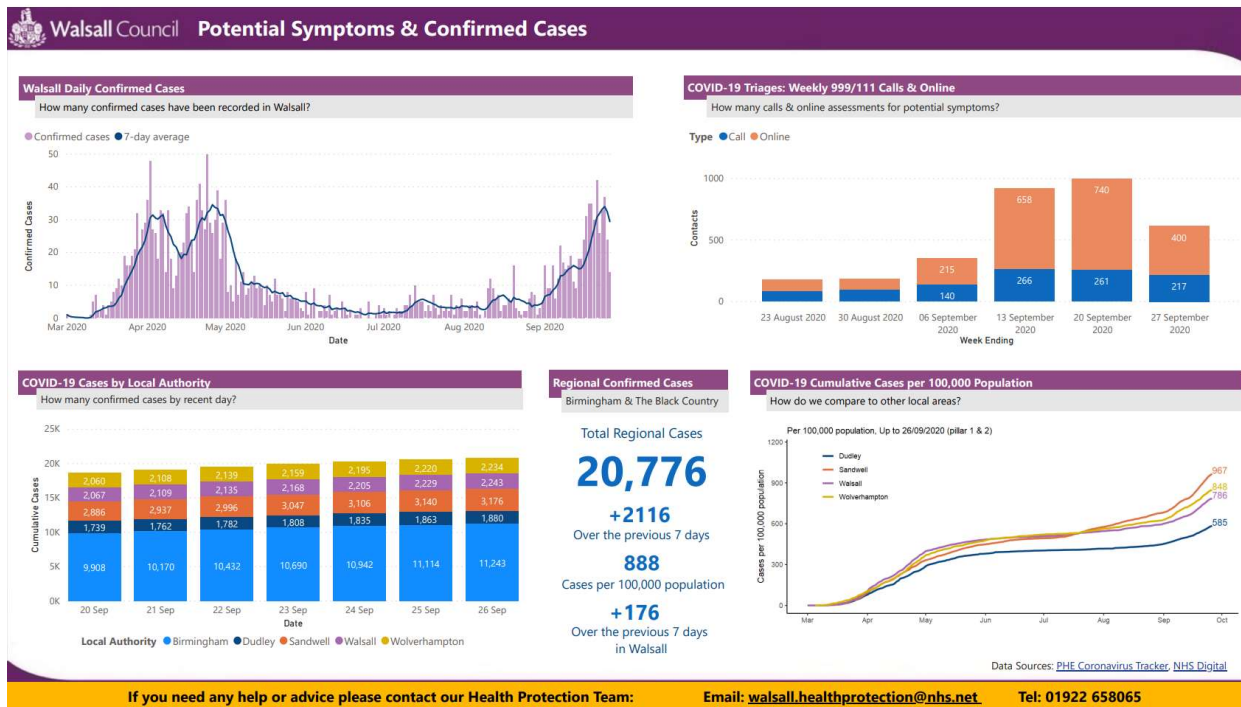
None.

## **Contact Officers:**

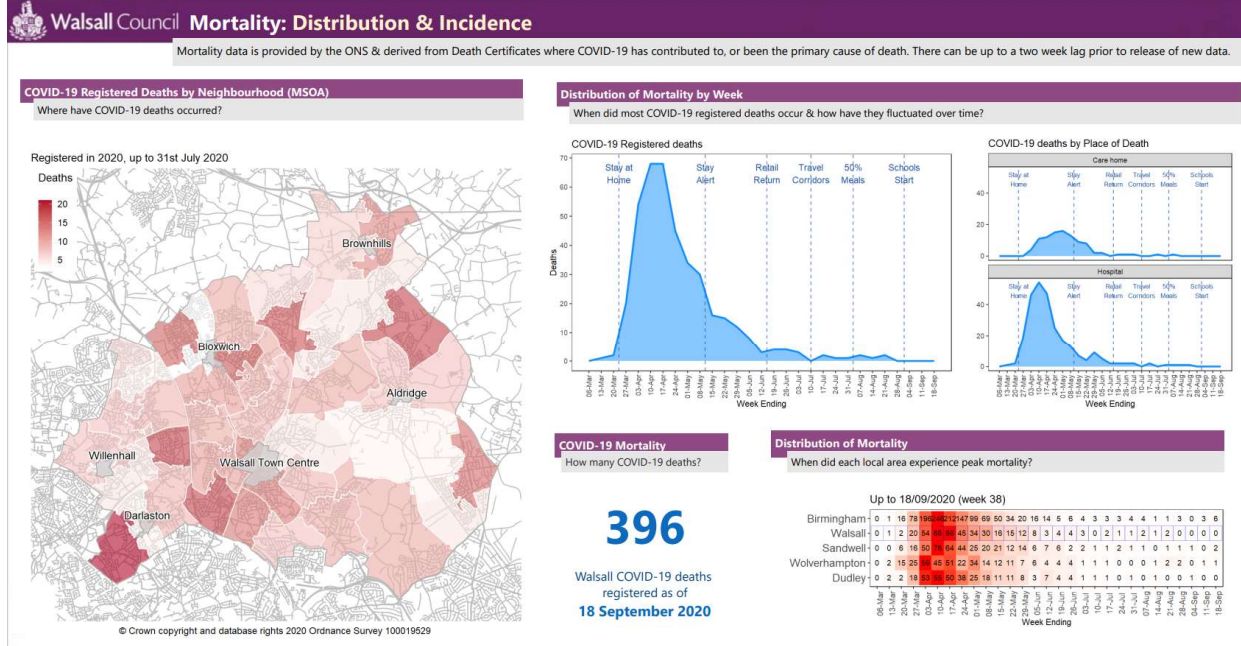
Stephen Gunther - Director of Public Health

☎ 07818 538715 ✉ [Stephen.gunther@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.gunther@walsall.gov.uk)

# Appendix 1 – Walsall Covid-19 Dashboard ([website link](#))



If you need any help or advice please contact our Health Protection Team: Email: [walsall.healthprotection@nhs.net](mailto:walsall.healthprotection@nhs.net) Tel: 01922 658065



If you need any help or advice please contact our Health Protection Team: Email: [walsall.healthprotection@nhs.net](mailto:walsall.healthprotection@nhs.net) Tel: 01922 658065

## **Appendix 2 - Useful Information / Links**

### **Local Contact Details**

Walsall Public Health – Health Protection Hub

Tel: 01922 658 065 or Email: [walsallhealthprotection@nhs.net](mailto:walsallhealthprotection@nhs.net)

Environmental Health – Duty Officer

Telephone 01922 653366 or Email: [EnvironmentalHealth@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:EnvironmentalHealth@walsall.gov.uk)

### **Local Key Documents**

[Read more on the local outbreak management plan](#)

[View Walsall COVID-19 data \(updated weekly\)](#)

[Read more on submitting a question to the Member Led Engagement Board](#)

For Local Outbreak Engagement Board meeting dates and details, please visit the council's [Committee Management and Information System \(CMIS\)](#).

[An explainer on local outbreak plans](#), produced by the Association of Directors of Public Health, provides information to stakeholders, the media and the public.

### **Regional Documents**

[Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull: local restrictions: Find out what you can and cannot do if you live, work or travel in these areas.](#)

### **National Guidance**

#### **Protect yourself and others from coronavirus**

[Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do](#)

[Self-isolating: stay at home if you think you have coronavirus](#)

[How to meet others safely \(social distancing\)](#)

[Face coverings: when to wear one and how to make your own](#)

#### **Testing for coronavirus**

[Get a test to check if you have coronavirus](#)

[Book a test if you have a verification code](#)

[NHS test and trace: how it works](#)

[NHS test and trace: workplace guidance](#)

#### **Education Settings**

[Guidance for teachers, school leaders, carers, parents and students](#)

#### **Workplaces**

[Staying safe at work](#)

#### **Local Government Association**

COVID-19: political leadership webinars for councillors (LGA)

- Part 1 [The role of the ward councillor in responding to COVID-19](#)
- Part 2 [The role of senior councillors, and a detailed look at the role of the ward councillor](#)