

Health and Wellbeing Board (Local Outbreak Engagement Board)

Sub-Committee

In the Council House at 6th July 2021 at 4.00 p.m.

Present Councillor S. Craddock (Chair)
Mr. S. Gunther, Director of Public Health, Walsall Council
Mr. D. Fradgley, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

**Board Members
Attending remotely** A. Rischie, Clinical Commissioning Group (Vice-Chair)
Councillor I. Robertson
Ms. D. Lytton, One Walsall
Chief Superintendent P. Dolby, West Midlands Police
Dr. M. Lewis, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

In Attendance Councillor M. Bird, Leader of the Council
Mr. K. Beech, Director of Communications, Marketing and
Brand
Ms. E. Thomas, Public Health Intelligence Manager
Ms. L. Jones, Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs
Ms S. Gulzar, Mind Kind Project
Dr. M. Shehmar, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

Welcome

At this point, the Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and explaining that as the emergency legislation which enabled Council meetings to meet virtually has expired, the meeting was taking place in person with a small quorum in the Council House. Other Board Members and Officers attended the meeting remotely.

He reported that only those Board Members physically present in the Council House were able to vote in accordance with the provisions set out in the Local Government Act 1972.

78/21 Apologies and substitutions

Ms. D. Lytton attended as substitute for Ms. M. Dehal.

79/21 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2021, copies having been sent to each member of the Sub-Committee, be approved and signed as a correct record.

80/21 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

81/21 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985

There were no items to consider in private session.

82/21 Questions from the Public

The Chair promoted the opportunity for Members of the public to ask questions of the Board. No questions had been received for this meeting.

83/21 Walsall Covid-19 Data

The Public Health Intelligence Manager updated the Board on the latest Covid-19 data using the Council's weekly dashboard and government data.

She advised that since the pandemic began there have been over 27,000 positive cases in Walsall and in the past 7 days there had been a rate of 169.5 per 100,000 population which represented a 117.9% increase on the previous week. Confirmed cases are higher in young adults who were encouraged to take up the offer of vaccination and ensure they received both doses to have maximum protection.

There had been a total of 852 Covid related deaths in Walsall and current trends showed fewer deaths than would be expected.

Following a question the Director of Public Health stated that the communities in which there appeared to be more resistance in vaccine uptake were workers in domiciliary care and those from Black and Black African communities.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

84/21 Covid-19 Vaccination Update

The Board were updated on the latest situation with delivering Covid-19 vaccines.

Ms. L. Jones noted that Walsall was one of the best performing local authorities within the Black Country and West Birmingham area, with 85% of residents aged 25 or over having had their first dose. This still remained below the national benchmark.

Higher levels of vaccine hesitancy were reported among younger cohorts and the number of vaccinations in Walsall had been consistently lower than the national target for 18 – 29 year olds.

Areas of the borough with lower vaccine uptake amongst the Black British ethnic group included Bloxwich, Short Heath, Streetly and Willenhall. Areas with lower vaccine uptake in unknown ethnic groups included Birchills, Darlaston, Pelsall and Pleck and these areas were to be targeted with vaccination buses and a number of communication strategies.

It was highlighted that all local public bodies need to work together to encourage vaccination uptake.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

85/21 Delta variant

Dr. M. Lewis presented a report to the Board on the Delta variant originally identified in India in January 2021.

He advised the Delta variant appeared to be around 60% more transmissible than the Alpha variant and the risk of hospitalisation within 14 days of contracting the virus was also greater. The Delta variant was identified as the most prevalent variant in the UK at present.

In the UK fewer hospitalisations and deaths were recorded for the Delta variant and this was thought to be due to the effectiveness of the vaccination programme with vaccinations providing a high level of protection.

Mr D. Fradgley highlighted that whilst hospitalisation was down attendance at the hospital was at very high levels and it was important to manage expectations and encourage the public to use services responsibly.

Following this report Councillor Craddock noted that Dr. M. Lewis would shortly be leaving his post in Walsall and publically thanked him for his professional and knowledgeable contributions to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

86/21 Communication with Residents

The Director of Communications, Marketing and Brand gave a presentation highlighting high-level plans, communication data and future plans regarding messages relating to the vaccination programme.

Following a question he advised that some communications would be released in regards to upcoming Euro 2020 football matches to encourage the public to take lateral flow tests before going out and to adhere to Covid restrictions in place.

He introduced Ms S. Gulzar of Mind Kind, a local community interest company who were working as Covid community champions. Ms S. Gulzar shared her experiences of working as a community champion and some successes of the

scheme, suggesting that it would be beneficial if more Covid community champions had the opportunity to share their experiences.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

In closing the meeting the Chair emphasised the rising rates in the borough and highlighted the importance of residents taking personal responsibility to assist in the prevention of the spread of the virus. He promoted the availability of vaccines in the borough and encouraged all to take their first and/or second doses when offered.

The meeting terminated at 5.30 pm

Chair:

Date: