

Report of the Director of Place to the meeting of Bradford West Area Committee to be held on 25 February 2021

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Subject: AN UPDATE ON COVID-19 IN BRADFORD DISTRICT

Summary statement:

This report provides an update on COVID-19 in Bradford District. It describes the district response between March 2020 and January 2021. The latest data on cases, admissions and deaths will be reported verbally at the meeting.

The report sets out how the Bradford District COVID-19 response is being managed, explaining the leadership role of the COVID-19 Management Group and the working groups that feed it.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

Data suggests that the correlation between dying from COVID-19 and deprivation is strong. 40% of people who died were residents who lived in the most deprived areas of Bradford District (quintile 1) compared to 7% in the least deprived areas (quintile 5). Whilst everyone is affected by measures to control COVID-19, some groups in Bradford are experiencing disproportionate health, social and economic impacts. COVID-19 has both amplified the existing inequalities in society, and created new risks and impacts for people who may not previously have considered themselves to be vulnerable. There have been three main ways Bradford Council has led the response to COVID-19; with the aim of reducing exacerbation of health inequalities. Firstly through working with communities, secondly through targeting prevention and control activities and finally through targeted research with partners.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Health and Social Care

1. SUMMARY

This report provides an update on COVID-19 in Bradford District. It describes the district response between March 2020 and January 2021. The latest data on cases, admissions and deaths will be reported verbally at the meeting.

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2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At its meeting of 26th November 2020 Bradford West Area Committee received a verbal update on the work of the Council in its response to the Covid 19 pandemic. At the meeting it was resolved:

- (i) *A written report be presented in February 2021 that gives detailed information on Public Health and Council's Covid-19 Programme Management activities, with particular focus on fair and representative recruitment processes for Covid related positions.*
- (ii) *That the spirit of the work ethic of NHS frontline staff including the Ambulance Service be highly praised for their efforts in pulling together and making essential changes to ensure the best possible care for patients during Covid-19.*

2.2 The Council originally developed Terms of Reference for the Covid Emergency Response on the 17th March 2020. This was based around an Emergency Management approach of Gold, Silver and Bronze commands, with Bronze commands established for five thematic areas of work. Since then, the district (as per nationally), has gone through a partial period of recovery but is now experiencing a second wave.

2.2.1 Between March and September, the COVID-19 response was coordinated through the Test and Trace Steering Group chaired by Public Health. This group met weekly and had representatives from environmental health, education, care homes, primary care, local contact tracing, testing, outbreak control, VCFS partners, Bevan House, education and engagement and programme management reporting in. The group was responsible for delivering a work programme and produced regular highlight reports to the Outbreak Control Board.

2.3 The Test & Trace Steering Group put the framework in place for the district response, producing an outbreak management plan, a testing strategy and delivering essential advice and guidance to public and partners, supported by detailed public health intelligence briefings. The Group also commissioned a number of community anchor organisations to deliver engagement and education and to support with testing, outbreak management and support to isolate if required. In addition, a group of Covid Young Ambassadors was established to provide 'voice and influence' for the districts young people. Feedback from these organisation also helps to build a picture of concerns and issues that inform local

responses.

2.4 Mobilising the districts response was challenging and undertaken at speed, although also highly effective and it laid the solid foundations upon which a more sustained and longer term response has now been built.

2.5 The COVID-19 Management Group and working groups

To formalise the Council's response and reporting arrangements for the COVID-19 second wave from October 2020 onwards a new structure was established to ensure that:

- Local response was built on existing solutions wherever possible
- All activity associated with Covid-19 within the Council and was co-ordinated through clear governance and reporting structure, and that decisions could be taken at the appropriate level.
- Actions and tasks requested through all levels of the governance structure could be undertaken and acted upon in a timely manner.
- Issues and decisions are evaluated at an appropriate level, with issues escalated upwards when needed

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The COVID-19 Management Group

Building on the existing strengths in the Neighbourhood Service, the COVID-19 management group meets weekly and is chaired by Ian Day, Assistant Director Neighbourhood & Customer Services and Sarah Muckle, Director of Public Health. The group is fed by a number of working groups, operating under a programme management methodology. The management group produces weekly health intelligence reports which guides the work of all other working groups and also a weekly highlight report made from reports on set key performance indicators from each working group. These reports are shared with the Health Protection Assurance Group and the Outbreak Control Board, which provide a mechanism for the escalation and resolution of any emerging issues or higher level decisions.

3.2 The working groups comprise: Data and Intelligence; Engagement; Enforcement; Outbreak Control; Education Settings; Vulnerable Adults; Testing; Contact Tracing; Finance & Resources, Communications and more recently 'Vaccination'.

3.2.1 Data and Intelligence

A weekly intelligence report is produced to support the work of the group. This report includes intelligence on cases, Bradford District's national ranking in terms of cases, our positivity rate (% of tests which are positive), age groups affected, ethnicity affected, priority wards, data on contact tracing, outbreaks, NHS activity and deaths and insight from local and national reports. The report also includes recommendations for weekly priority geographic areas of focus.

3.2.2 Engagement

The Bradford COVID-19 Hub sits within the Neighbourhood Service and is located at St Margaret McMillan Towers in the centre of Bradford, from where staff are deployed across the district.

The Hub employees in the region of 100 Covid Support Workers, who work shift patterns providing seven day a week cover for the majority of daylight hours.

The hub engages with residents and businesses on a range of activities which varies depending on any particular national restrictions, aligned to the government tiering system and any emerging local priorities. This work includes direct engagement with businesses to reinforce messaging on issues such as 'QR Codes' and face mask usage and work with customers on similar issues, including queuing and personal safety.

The Hub also manages home testing, providing door step tests for up to 2,000 people a week in areas of noted high infection and two 'rapid' testing sites at St Georges Hall and Airedale Shopping Centre in Keighley, where in the region of 2,000 tests on 'asymptomatic people are undertaken weekly, through a 'walk up' facility. More recently new approaches are being tried out to increase take up of tests, including basing staff at community centres and at retail areas.

In advance of 'home testing' and aligned to the rapid testing sites Covid Support Workers spend time in communities to promote these opportunities and engage people in conversations around Covid related matters. Ward councillors have played an important role in encouraging participation in the testing work.

More recently, Covid Support Workers have worked in communities to promote take up of the vaccine and to provide marshalling support at vaccination centres to help queue management and providing support to people that are attending for a vaccine injection. The diverse composition of workforce and in particular 'community language skills' held across the teams has proven to be invaluable in this aspect of the work.

Staff from the Hub are sharing information, resources, skills, languages and experience from across diverse sectors seeking to collectively target engagement with residents in neighbourhoods, parks, open spaces, commercial centres and business corridors where there are challenges with social distancing and compliance.

Community engagement and support is crucial. It is imperative that Bradford residents support efforts to avoid infection from COVID-19 and avoid transmission if infected. This requires communities to understand how COVID-19 is spread, and the consequences of the infection as well as trust in the impact of communal efforts to control COVID-19.

3.2.3 Enforcement

District enforcement is undertaken through a combination of Council (Licensing & Environmental Health), Police and West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service resources. A range of activity has been delivered to support the Four Es model of engage, educate, encourage and then enforcement.

Due to the changing nature of legislation the enforcement role is often challenging. Expectations from the public around what is possible to enforce often don't match with the powers available to the Council or Police. A regular tasking meeting takes

place which also reports weekly to a West Yorkshire Tactical Coordination Group on Enforcement.

3.2.4 Testing working group

The purpose of the Testing Working Group is to implement the Bradford District Testing Strategy. The strategy has four aims:

- Controlling and preventing transmission of the virus by identifying cases, tracing their contacts and supporting cases and contacts to isolate – to break the chain of transmission and prevent and protect the spread of the disease amongst the population
- Surveillance to understand the spread of coronavirus and to target future testing
- Protecting NHS services to deliver testing to support the safety of staff and patients
- Protecting vulnerable groups to reduce the risk of infection in groups, communities or settings where there are greater risks.

The working group brings together colleagues from public health, the COVID-19 response hub, the CCG and adult social care. The working group plans, directs and oversees local testing through: home testing, rapid (lateral flow testing), Mobile Testing Units, locally run testing at Marley Fields for key workers, testing for residential care staff via the national portal and testing at the City Centre Local Testing Site, Bradford University Regional Testing Site and Victoria Hall Local Testing Site.

3.2.5 Local contact tracing working group

The Council has built up a local contact tracing team operating within the Council's Customer Services team. All engaged on this work have received specialist training provided by Public Health England. Co-ordinated with the national NHS Test and Trace service, the local team receive details daily of individuals testing positive for COVID-19 in the BMDC area, that the national team have been unable to reach, following these up by text, phone call and home visit.

3.2.6 Outbreak control working group

Response to outbreaks is overseen by the Outbreak Control working group. The definition of an outbreak in a COVID-19 scenario is where two or more people with confirmed COVID-19 (positive test) are linked by a common setting.

The working group includes representatives from Public Health, Environmental Health, Infection Prevention and Control, as well as Voluntary and Community Services. The team work closely with the Public Health England Health Protection Team (Yorkshire and Humber) to provide robust outbreak and complex case management. The team also work proactively to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through engagement and site visits to ensure COVID-19 risk assessments are in place, implemented and adhered to.

3.2.7 Education settings working group

Public Health works closely with schools and the education sector to provide timely public health advice on preventing and managing COVID-19 cases in school.

There is a dedicated national Department of Education (DfE) support line for new cases. Schools are asked to report all new cases to the DfE, but also the Local

Authority so that the severity of any COVID-19 clusters can be assessed and support offered

3.2.8 Vulnerable adults working group

The Vulnerable adults working group ensures there is appropriate support for vulnerable adults across Bradford District. The council's Department of Health and Wellbeing has developed a COVID-19 Support Team. This team provides a dedicated care liaison support role for independent care providers in the response to COVID-19. The team supports local providers of residential/nursing care and community based services to vulnerable people providing advice, guidance and support in their response to COVID-19. This includes advice on infection, prevention and control; latest guidance; routine repeat asymptomatic testing of staff and residents and links to support to manage outbreaks. The team works in partnership with providers to promote the wellbeing and safety of service users and staff within the sector.

3.2.9 Finance and Resources

Oversight of finances and resources is managed by the finance and resources working group. This group leads on the coordination of recruitment and monitors expenditure of Covid related activity, ensuring that costs are managed and budgetary provision is made available for necessary costs.

The Council's Human Resources team has taken a lead on the recruitment of staff for the Covid Hub and are also involved in the recruitment of staff for the wider vaccination programme, working with the 'Skills House' partnership.

The role of Covid Support Worker was created in order to establish a generic frontline Covid response role that could conduct those roles and responsibilities lead from the Covid Response Hub. The Hub is managed through a district-wide arrangement overseen by two Hub Managers who are supported by six Operations Managers, Covid Support Workers and an administrative support team. (structure is attached as Appendix A). An initial recruitment process for these roles yielded approximately 30 members of staff. As the work of the Covid Response Hub continues to increase, it was felt that a further recruitment process was needed to increase the numbers of people in the Covid Support Worker roles.

In November 2020, a large scale recruitment process was developed with the assistance of 'SkillsHouse' colleagues. Further to the Council's recent investment in the partnership, SkillsHouse has been upscaling its model to implement a localities based multi-agency approach. This has enabled greater reach in terms of promoting the roles and engaging residents across diverse communities. To ensure that recruitment to these roles was as timely, inclusive, and efficient as possible, it was agreed that the council's usual recruitment processes would be streamlined as much as possible, without reducing the integrity of the process in either the quality or suitability of candidates appointed, or in the candidates' experience of the recruitment process.

In order to ensure that the opportunity of applying for these available roles was made available to all aspects of Bradford's diverse community, a number of methods were adopted to ensure that as many people as possible were informed about the roles. As well as the roles being made available on the 'Skills House'

website, Bradford Council's external recruitment website and also the schools HR recruitment website 'Prospects', the Bradford Covid Response Hub used a range of social media platforms extending from Facebook, Twitter, email distribution lists and groups on 'What's App' to promote the Covid Support Worker opportunities. In addition, a wide range of trusted local contacts and voluntary infrastructure groups such as CABAD, REN, local faith networks as well as Ward Officers (to cascade to local contacts) and Youth Workers also supported sharing information extensively across their contacts. The vacancies were also promoted through the wider SkillsHouse delivery partnership including VCS partners across the District, the three FE Colleges, Incommunities, JCP and the University of Bradford.

To date, as a consequence of this recruitment process, we have received over 500 applications. Through the subsequent consistent shortlisting process 286 people were interviewed with approximately 60 people having been appointed to the Covid Support Worker roles in a variety of full and part time roles, working during the daytime, evenings and weekends, to maintain the 7 days a week Covid Response Hub operation.

The recruitment process remains 'live', with a number of applications still being received each week. It is planned that a further advertising campaign will take place over the next few weeks, to again approach Bradford's diverse communities to increase awareness of these roles and seek further applications, with the aim of ensuring that our workforce is representative of the community and district that it serves.

The successful candidates now working in these roles, represent a broad cross section of ethnicities, ages, socio-economic backgrounds and other characteristics found within the diverse Bradford district. The diversity of those recruited has provided the Hub with staff who can speak languages extending from Urdu, Bengalis, Hinko, Pushto, Slovak, Polish, Serbian, Romanian, Arabic and many others. In addition, these staff have been integral to taking part in discussions and opportunities to shape culturally appropriate and sensitive services.

3.2.10 Communications

The Communications approach for Bradford has been delivered through a partnership which includes the Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). VCS partners include CABAD, the Council for Mosques and the Racial Equality Network who work with a network of 21 community based anchor organisations. Regular meetings take place to coordinate activity. This model allows for agile and targeted communications that build on deep understanding of communities, operating as part of a wider joined up communications effort.

3.2.11 Vaccination

More recently and sitting within the governance of district Health partners a highly complex set of arrangements has been put in place to organise the delivery of vaccines to eligible district residents. The vaccine is currently being administered through three hospital sites, ten primary care networks (GP surgeries) and a community pharmacist location in the centre of Bradford. A larger community vaccination site has also opened at Jacob's Well. All vaccination sites are

appointment based and the community pharmacy site and Jacob's Well also serve people from a 45 mile radius, extending beyond the districts boundary.

3.3 The current situation: epidemiology

Due to the fast changing nature of infection rates, details on the current position will be provided verbally at the meeting.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

Government support includes specific funds which are targeted at containment of Covid outbreaks, test and trace, surge enforcement and the clinically extremely vulnerable and it has been confirmed that as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review statement in November, the chancellor announced the continuation of emergency grants into next year. The Council will also receive separate funding for the work it is doing on lateral flow testing. Furthermore, where the Council is supporting the NHS on the vaccination programme, all additional costs will be recovered.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Risks are managed within the governance of the district response and there are no direct risk management and governance issues within the context of this report.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

There are no legal issues apparent.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no sustainability implications within the context of this report.

7.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

There are no greenhouse gas emissions within the context of this report.

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Enforcement of any breaches of Covid 19 restrictions are undertaken through a combination of the Council's Licensing Team, Environmental Health Officers and Bradford Police Division.

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no human rights implications apparent within the context of this report.

7.5 TRADE UNION

There are no trade union implications apparent within the context of the report.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Infection rates vary by ward and local response is adapted accordingly. These can and do change over time and deployment plans are reviewed weekly. Where the Hub deploys staff to a particular ward, local ward councillors are informed and invited to participate in any engagement work.

7.7 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

There are no Area Committee Action Plan implications apparent.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

There are no corporate parenting implications apparent.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

There are no issues apparent.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

Bradford West Area Committee is asked to consider the district response to the Covid 19 pandemic and the latest data on infection rates locally. The Area Committee may determine to make any recommendations for change.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Bradford West Area Committee notes the contents of the report and the work that is taking place across district to respond to the Covid 19 pandemic.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A – Bradford Covid Response Hub structure.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Bradford District Outbreak Control Plan (June 2020)
<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/5921/bradforddistrictcovid-19outbreakplan.pdf>
- C-SAG bradfordresearch.nhs.uk/c-sag/
- Cases – coronavirus cases in the uk: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/cases>
- Deaths - Death registrations and occurrences by local authority and health board:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/causeofdeath/datasets/deathregistrationsandoccurrencesbylocalauthorityandhealthboard>
- National restrictions https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november?utm_source=4ec0c5c2-dae1-4d85-81b0-bdd531c4bc31&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

