
West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

7 October 2021

West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board

Report by: Alison Challenger, Director of Public Health

Summary

This report provides a quarterly update on the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB).

The Board was established as part of the Government's requirements for the COVID-19 National Test and Trace Programme and is accountable to the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, as a sub-group of the Board, providing formal updates at its quarterly public meetings.

Recommendation(s) to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

- (1) Provide feedback on the progress of the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) since the last quarterly report to the Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2021.
- (2) To consider how the LOEB can further maximise its' strength in partnership working to maintain and increase engagement with residents and communities across the county, aligned to the Government's plans set out in the COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021.

Relevance to [Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

West Sussex Public Health's COVID-19 response aims to minimise the impact of the virus on the population of West Sussex by controlling the COVID-19 rate of reproduction (R), reducing the spread of infection and saving lives. In line with the West Sussex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities, this preventative approach also aims to improve the overall health outcomes of West Sussex residents and reduce inequalities, supporting our local population during these challenging times.

1 Background and context

- 1.1 The West Sussex member led Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) is a sub-group of the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board, providing political ownership and public facing engagement and communication for outbreak response during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The LOEB is a key part of the governance structure for the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP). The Director of Public Health drives this

local plan through the West Sussex COVID-19 Health Protection Board in collaboration with the West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) Strategic Management Group (Gold command) and the LOEB.

- 1.3 The LOCP is currently being refreshed following the publication by the Government of the updated COVID-19 contain framework: a guide for local decision-makers [updated 5 August 2021].
- 1.4 The Board welcomed Cllr Lanzer as the new Chairman of the LOEB in June 2021, following local Elections on 6 May 2021 and the implementation of a new portfolio for Public Health and Wellbeing, for which Cllr Lanzer was appointed as Cabinet Member.
- 1.5 The Board continues to meet regularly, with the next meeting scheduled for Monday 18 October 2021.
- 1.6 Since the last formal update was provided to the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2021, the Board has met three times; 17 June, 5 August, and 20 September.
- 1.7 A written update was also provided to Board members on 7 September outlining the latest COVID-19 data and Government policy updates.

Local Outbreak Engagement Board Progress Update

- 1.8 The LOEB remains focused on its role in bringing together key systems leaders across the County Council and the wider health and social care system, applying its collective strength and resources to reduce the spread of infection and save lives across the county.
- 1.9 Agenda items regularly include updates across a number of areas in the COVID-19 response, including a COVID-19 update from the Director of Public Health, COVID-19 data overview, events, testing, COVID-19 NHS Vaccination Programme, communications and engagement, and the Local Tracing Partnership (LTP). The Board has also been updated on quarantine hotels, and the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP).
- 1.10 This approach has ensured that the LOEB remain informed throughout the response, having the opportunity to contribute widely to these areas.
- 1.11 In the most recent testing update to the Board, it was highlighted that the Sussex COVID-19 Support Street Team engages with the public on vaccination, testing and the NHS app, answers questions and hands out Lateral Flow Tests (LFTs). Working in different places at different times, this approach has been effective in engaging with residents and communities.
- 1.12 West Sussex continues to have two Regional Test Centres (RTCs) at Gatwick and Tangmere, and five Local Test Centres (LTCs) in Chichester, Littlehampton, Worthing, Horsham and Bognor. A Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) also rotates around six sites in the county throughout the month.
- 1.13 The Board were delighted to hear about the continued success of the County Council's resident newsletter, with just under 200,000 subscribers. This is a key communication channel to deliver national messages to local residents and

communities, to help keep West Sussex safe. The WSCC Communications Team works close with local NHS and district and borough council communications leads to deliver national messages.

- 1.14 With regards to events, West Sussex Public Health have worked in collaboration with the Goodwood Estate and key partners including Chichester District Council Environmental Health, Public Health England, and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), contributing to arrangements for the Goodwood Festival of Speed (8-11 July), which was a pilot event in Phase 3 of the Government's Events Research Programme.
- 1.15 The Goodwood Revival also took place 17-19 September; West Sussex Public Health worked with Chichester District Council Environmental Health contributing to the arrangements for the event, incorporating learning from the Festival of Speed. Goodwood continued to implement many of the good practice measures of the pilot event at the Revival and also at Glorious Goodwood, to limit transmission of the virus.
- 1.16 Additional communications were put out for this event, particularly in the Chichester area, which emphasised people testing themselves before and after the event.

Key Policy Changes

- 1.17 The [COVID-19 Contain Framework; a guide for local decision-makers](#) was published on 30 July and updated on 5 August.
- 1.18 It highlights that local authorities will remain central to the pandemic response, working with wider systems partners, outlining how local, regional and national partners should continue to work with each other, the public, institutions, businesses, and other local systems partners in their communities to prevent, manage and contain outbreaks of the virus.
- 1.19 Key areas focused on are vaccines, enabling the public to make informed decisions through Government guidance, proportionate test, trace and isolate plans, managing risks at the border and supporting the global response to reduce risk of variants emerging, and retaining contingency measures to respond to unexpected events.
- 1.20 West Sussex Public Health are reviewing the framework and updating the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP), as required.
- 1.21 On 14 September 2021, the Government published the [COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021](#) detailing Plan A, a comprehensive approach to steering the country through autumn and winter 2021/22, including promoting vaccines and focusing on encouraging safer behaviours e.g. ventilation, hand washing, testing, face coverings etc., and Plan B, should it be required if the data suggests the NHS is likely to come under unsustainable pressure. This includes introducing mandatory vaccine only COVID-status certification and legally mandating face coverings in some settings and asking people to work from home for a limited period if they can.
- 1.22 The COVID-19 vaccination is now available to all those [aged 12 years and over](#), and Phase 3 of the programme began rolling out week commencing 20 September with

[booster doses offered to priority groups](#) including care home residents, over-50s, younger adults with health conditions and frontline health and social care workers.

- 1.23 West Sussex Public Health continues to work very closely with the Sussex Health and Care Partnership (SHCP) who are delivering the programme, to increase vaccine uptake, focusing on reducing health inequalities and working with our communities across West Sussex. Further information on the NHS COVID-19 vaccination programme can be found on the [SCHP website](#).
- 1.24 The LOEB will continue to use its voice to engage with residents, communities, key partners, and businesses to deliver national messages to help keep West Sussex safe.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide feedback on the progress of the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) since the last quarterly report to the Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2021.
- 2.2 Views are sought from the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board on how the LOEB can further maximise its' strength in partnership working to maintain and increase engagement with residents and communities across the county, aligned to the Government's plans set out in the COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021.

3 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 3.1 Not applicable.

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Appendices: None

Background papers: None