
Report to West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

7 July 2022

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 April 2022.
- (2) To consider how the LOEB can continue to engage with residents and communities across West Sussex, maximising its collaborative strength as we continue progressing through the 'Living with COVID-19' phase of the pandemic.

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 As we progress through the Living with COVID-19 stage of the pandemic, the Chairman continues to regularly review meeting frequency. Following the Board's decision in October 2021 to reduce meetings to every two months instead of monthly, the Chairman has decided to reduce this further to convene on a quarterly basis moving forward. As before, the Board will retain the flexibility and ability to regroup more frequently if required.
- 1.4 The Board has met once (22 April 2022) since the last formal update to the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board in April 2022.
- 1.5 The next meeting will take place in September 2022 – date to be confirmed.

Local Outbreak Engagement Board Progress Update

- 1.6 The LOEB continues to be committed to its role in bringing together key systems leaders across the County Council and the wider health and social care system in West Sussex to reduce the spread of infection and save lives across the county.
- 1.7 At the Board meeting in April, it was acknowledged that we are now in the living with COVID-19 stage of the pandemic, which is reflected in the quantity and regularity of surveillance data, as a result of reduced testing for the general population. It was recognised that face coverings and social distancing are now a personal choice, with many continuing to make these choices.
- 1.8 COVID-19 is still prevalent within our communities, although the impact is less than it was a year ago due to the success of the NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.
- 1.9 Communications during this phase of the pandemic remain focused on amplifying national messages regarding living with COVID-19, including reminding people that the virus is still present and encouraging them to follow basic health protection measures, guidance on what to do if you have symptoms, and the importance and availability of vaccinations.
- 1.10 A range of communications across the County Council's channels were planned for national World Immunisation Week 24 – 30 April (run by the World Health Organisation (WHO)), focusing messaging, in line with NHS partners, to encourage parents to get their children vaccinated for COVID-19, and other vaccinations, such as flu and MMR (measles, mumps and rubella). Additional messaging was planned to continue promoting the importance and availability of COVID-19 booster vaccinations for eligible groups.
- 1.11 NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Programme: a detailed update was received, highlighting that since the programme was launched in December 2020, there has been variation in uptake across the county, but generally, uptake has been excellent, and targeted work has been undertaken to promote vaccination where there have been barriers and inequity, for example roaming and pop-up vaccination sites. People are continuing to attend for their first and second doses, as part of the evergreen offer.

- 1.12 Updates were also provided on COVID-19 data, testing, and care homes (adults).

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 April 2022.
- 2.2 Views are sought from the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board on how the LOEB can continue to engage with residents and communities across West Sussex, maximising its collaborative strength as we continue progressing through the 'Living with COVID-19' phase of the pandemic.

3 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 3.1 Not applicable.

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Appendices: None

Background papers: None