
West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

28 January 2021

West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board

Report by Dr Tony Hill, Interim Director of Public Health

Summary

This report provides an update on the progress of the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) since its' inaugural meeting in July 2020.

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.

Recommendations to the Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to;

- (1) Acknowledge and provide feedback on the progress of the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) since its' inaugural meeting in July 2020.
- (2) To consider how the Board could further increase engagement with communities across West Sussex throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the spread of infection and save lives.

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) has been established as a sub-group of the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board to provide 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 \(LOCP\), published on 30 June 2020](#). The Interim 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 Chaired by Amanda Jupp, Chair of the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, membership of the LOEB includes Cabinet Members with portfolio responsibilities for community development, health and adults services, children and families, West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) directors with commissioning responsibility for Public Health, Adults Services, Children's Services, Communities, Head of Communications and Engagement, and representatives from West Sussex district and borough councils, West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and Healthwatch West Sussex. The Leader of West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) is invited to attend as an 'optional guest.'
- 1.4 The Board meets on a monthly basis and has met six times during the period July 2019 to January 2021. The next meeting is scheduled for 11 February 2021.

Development of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB)

- 1.5 The LOEB has firmly established itself as a public-facing board led by elected members, providing political ownership and public-facing engagement and communication for outbreak response.
- 1.6 By bringing together key systems leaders across the County Council and the wider health and social care system, the LOEB applies its collective strength and resources to reduce the spread of infection and save lives throughout the communities of West Sussex.
- 1.7 To further build upon this, in October 2020, the LOEB invited the Director of Communities to become a member of the Board due to the significant amount of community engagement required throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and in November 2020, the Board formally invited the Leader of West Sussex County Council to attend as an 'optional guest,' receiving Board agendas and papers.
- 1.8 Whilst it does not meet in public due to the Official Sensitive content of meetings, the LOEB provides representative oversight and influence, communicating with the public during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to provide key information. This includes highlighting the latest data, providing public health prevention messages, emphasising the Keep West Sussex Safe campaign ("Hands, face, space, get a test"), and changes to Government policy, aiming to positively influence behaviours, reduce the spread of infection and keep case rates low across the county.
- 1.9 The Board does this in a range of ways including working with communications teams from partner organisations, such as WSSCC, district and borough councils, and the NHS, to coordinate key messages, using their voices in and across their organisations and communities. This is a two-way process, with the Board receiving feedback from members and their communities, for example, Healthwatch West Sussex, enabling them to understand the key issues faced, helping to resolve them collectively where possible.

- 1.10 Additionally, the LOEB are keen to support the WSCC Communications Team to utilise all communication channels including multi-media channels (radio, TV, social media, videos etc.), outdoor advertising, leaflet drops, and using WSCC library building windows, to advertise Council services which are available to support residents during the pandemic, such as the Community Hub.
- 1.11 Standard agenda items for LOEB meetings include a COVID-19 update by the Interim Director of Public Health, COVID-19 data overview, communications and engagement, West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan updates (when required), and more specific operational updates when needed, such as local COVID-Alert Levels, the Local Tracing Partnership (LTP), COVID-19 testing, and the NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.
- 1.12 As the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to evolve, so too has the LOEB, focusing on supporting the local implementation of Government policies and initiatives and communicating them to its local population, adapting and changing as required.
- 1.13 An example includes the launch of the Local Tracing Partnership (LTP) in West Sussex and East Sussex (November 2020) to support the national NHS Test and Trace system. The LOEB emphasised the need for contact numbers of the LTP to be publicised widely, and to ensure the Council's local authority role within the overall national NHS Test and Trace service is clear in all communications to help residents understand how it will work with the national service to help keep West Sussex safe.
- 1.14 Furthermore, the Board were keen for WSCC Public Health to provide guidance to event organisers across the county on how to be COVID secure (when events are permitted by the Government) and areas to consider. In December 2020, a webinar was held with event organisers across the county, covering various areas including data, the events application process and basic information regarding supporting outbreak management. *Please note, attendance at the webinar did not mean event organisers were considered 'COVID secure,' the purpose was to provide an overview of the process and areas to address.*
- 1.15 The LOEB will continue to use its voice to engage with local communities across West Sussex emphasising key messages to keep West Sussex safe. A further update will be provided to the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board at their next meeting on 24 June 2021.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide a formal quarterly update to the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board on the progress of the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) since its' inaugural meeting in July 2020.
- 2.2 Board members are encouraged to provide feedback on its' progress and to consider to how the LOEB could further increase engagement with

communities across West Sussex throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to reduce the spread of infection and save lives.

3 Consultation, engagement and advice

3.1 Not applicable.

Contact: Alison Thomson, Public Health Lead – Partnerships Tel. 0330 222 4132
Email: alison.thomson@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendices: None