
Report to West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board

26 January 2023

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), following the previous update to the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) in July 2022. An update was not brought to the Board's meeting in November 2022 as no meetings had taken place in the interim period; the meeting scheduled for 9 September 2022 was postponed due to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.

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 HWB, 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 July 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.

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 continues to meet on a quarterly basis as we progress through the Living with COVID-19 stage of the pandemic, with members very much valuing the role of the Board. Meeting frequency is regularly reviewed by the Chairman, and the Board retains the flexibility and ability to regroup more frequently, if required.
- 1.3 The Board has met once (28 November 2022) since the last formal update to the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2022. The meeting scheduled for 9 September 2022 was postponed due to the passing of Queen Elizabeth II.
- 1.4 The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 23 February 2023.

Local Outbreak Engagement Board Progress Update

- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 At the Board meeting in November 2022, the regular agenda was expanded to include an update on Winter Pressures, focused on both the NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Programme and NHS Flu Vaccination Programme, together with a public health update on tackling inequalities including access to vaccination, to increase uptake across the local population. This detailed update was welcomed by the Board.
- 1.7 The Director of Public Health emphasised the key message to the Board that the virus is still present in our homes and hospitals and has the ability to impact quite severely on some of our most vulnerable populations. As we come into the winter period, the need for vigilance of COVID-19 and building our resilience, as we do for flu and other respiratory illnesses that are more prevalent at this time of year, is required.
- 1.8 Both COVID-19 and flu vaccination rates in West Sussex are good, but there are still some clinically vulnerable groups for whom we would want to see a higher level of uptake, for example, those who are pregnant, children, and those who protect the most vulnerable people. We continue to promote both vaccines to increase uptake across the local population.
- 1.9 West Sussex County Council's (WSSCC) current communications approach reinforces the importance of COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, promoting eligibility, access, availability and how to book, including promoting the '[Boost your immunity this winter](#)' campaign on the [West Sussex Wellbeing](#) website.
- 1.10 WSSCC communications are developed in partnership with health partners and include amplifying national and local COVID-19 messages. The WSSCC Communications Team continue to disseminate key communications messaging as widely as possible, exploring every channel that can be used and new ways of communicating/engaging with our residents and communities, to maintain high interest levels moving forward.
- 1.11 Updates were also provided to the Board 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 July 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