

ENGAGEMENT BOARD (COVID-19)

MINUTES OF MEETING Wednesday, 18th November 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Brett (in the Chair); Councillors Daalat Ali, Dearnley, Emsley, Heakin and Rowbotham (Rochdale Borough Council); Dr C. Duffy and D. Dawson (Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale NHS CCG), K. Bertram (Action Together) and K. Jones (HealthWatch Rochdale).

OFFICERS: A. Fallon (Director of Public Health), G. Hopper (Director of Public Health), J. Rooney (Assistant Director – Information, Customers and Communities), W. Meston (Consultant in Public Health), D. Brierley (Head of Communications), D. Gardner, M. Hall, A. Threlfall (Public Health Directorate) and P. Thompson (Resources Directorate).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: A. Mitchell and L. Schofield (Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale NHS CCG).

7 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

9 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Engagement Board (Covid-19), held 30th September 2020, be approved as a correct record.

10 INTELLIGENCE UPDATE

The Director of Public Health reported on the latest intelligence available for use by the Council and its partners to attempt to counter the spread of Covid-19 in the Borough.

In terms of direct impact on the Borough, the Board was informed that the most vulnerable groups, susceptible to the virus, are those who are elderly and frail, those in care homes and older people with multiple health conditions. These people had a case fatality rate of 5% or more. It was therefore crucial to prevent spread in these groups.

In addition many other people over 50 years of age were also vulnerable, if they have existing health conditions but the case fatality rate was much lower (less than 1%). Only a small proportion of people younger than 50 with multiple health issues were vulnerable. The vulnerable have seen increases in hospitalisations, all causes of deaths and Covid-19 deaths. Care homes were reporting more cases – it was likely that there would be an increase in Covid-19 deaths in care homes, across the Borough.

In terms of the indirect impact of the virus on vulnerable people it was noted that the response to the virus was causing harm. Most vulnerable includes those at risk of decline because of isolation, financial distress, lack of care and treatment. In addition some of the most vulnerable may be hidden or less obvious and could include: Young people with anxiety; people trapped in abusive relationships; wealthier people seeing their life's work in ruins; homeless and people with unaffordable mortgages.

The full impact of Covid-19 on the different vulnerable groups in the Borough was not yet fully known. The response of the Council and partners, to the virus, was though producing hope and benefits. Working together, focussed work in care homes, recognition of issues, increased focus on importance of good mental health, walks in parks, family and friends and communities coming together to help those in need, were all examples of what could be achieved.

Resolved that the report be noted.

11 HEALTH PROTECTION BOARD & OUTBREAK PLAN UPDATE

The Director of Public Health presented a report which detailed a five point plan to manage and control, in the Rochdale Borough, the outbreak of Covid-19.

1. The first issue was testing - there was an ongoing review of local testing capacity and testing mechanisms to ensure that the most appropriate testing mechanisms were being used across for the Borough's population. An alternative testing site in Rochdale was required to be located and operational by 4th December 2020, to ensure that there were no gaps in testing capacity.
2. In terms of Contact Tracing there was uncertainty around the continuity of the new case management system. There was an identifiable need for the escalation of wrongly identified contacts by the national team and the Department for Education's helpline. There was also a requirement to: improve the number of cases contacted via T2 contact tracing service; to enhance Tier 2 service calls to build intelligence of activities/behaviour which result in people contracting the infection.
3. Protecting the vulnerable and keeping people safe - Work was ongoing to better understand ventilation as an important factor to mitigating against the risk of transmission and to attempt to understand if there is a link to the recent increase in outbreaks. Care Homes were undertaking detailed risk assessments to support the new visiting guidance. There were efforts to increase prevention work and to explore how lateral flow could be more effectively utilised.
4. Prevention, Settings and Enforcement – the key, it was reported was to continue with a joint Council and Greater Manchester Police approach to enforcement; to continue to undertake proactive monitoring of compliance; to continue to provide reactive responses to complaints of

noncompliance; and to continue to have multi-agency patrols both during and outside office hours

5. Vaccination – this was to be hopefully achieved via a ‘Directed Enhanced Service’ that was to be published by the end of November 2020, and would work through ‘modelling assumptions’ and through locally ‘sense checking’ the delivery profiles and workforce supply. There would need to be the identification of a suitable estate for delivery, which would have suitable storage space to store medicines and the capacity to administer a minimum of 975 doses per week. It would also need the ability to deliver services 7 days per week from 8.00am to 8.00pm, including Bank Holidays (if required). It would also be large enough to accommodate the current ‘social distancing’ regulations.

In considering this matter the Board requested that, for the next meeting, a report be prepared which details statistics relating to the numbers of deaths and hospital admissions in the Borough as a result of Covid-19. The Director of Public Health was asked to circulate to Board Members an update on testing arrangements in the Borough.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. The Director of Public Health be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of the Engagement Board, which details statistics relating to the numbers of deaths and hospital admissions in the Borough as a result of Covid-19.
3. The Director of Public Health be requested to circulate, to Board Members, an update on testing arrangements in the Borough.

12 FEEDBACK FROM THE EQUALITIES ASSEMBLY

The Engagement Board was advised that the Rochdale Borough Equalities Assemblies was a series of quarterly events, for people who work in and contribute to the borough, including grassroots organisations, statutory partners and volunteers.

The aim of the assemblies was to ‘listen and learn’. Conversation topics were brought to the Assembly by people who understood inequality, through experience, though supporting others or through insight, data and intelligence.

The last gathering of the Rochdale Borough Equalities Assemblies meeting was held in October 2020. Attendees broke into working groups to consider a number of key themes.

- Inequalities within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities
- COVID19 and Older People
- Choices and Chances for young people
- Black History Month and 'Back to School'
- COVID19 and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Inequality
- COVID19 and Patient Access

- Black Lives Matter
- Learning Disabilities and the Disability Forum
- Multiple Disadvantage, Mental Health and Addiction
- Digital Poverty and Inclusion
- 'Open Space' inequality discussion

The event was attended by over 100 people and a wide variety of organisations. It was facilitated by Action Together and planned with Rochdale Council, Public Health and Communication partners, HMR CCG Equality Diversity Inclusion Strategic Lead and VCFSE sector partners. Healthwatch Rochdale captured demographics of the attendees. Statutory Partners provided us with details of who attended the event.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

13 PRESENTATION - SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE AFTER LOCKDOWN

The Director of Public Health delivered a presentation which outlined support and the range of services that would be available to people, in the Borough, who were classed as being vulnerable to the Covid-19 virus, when the current lockdown period ends in early December 2020.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted and welcomed.