

Southend Health & Wellbeing Board

Agenda
Item No.

Report of the Director of Public Health

To
Health & Wellbeing Board

on

15th December 2021

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Director of Public Health

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| For information only | X | For discussion | | Approval required | |
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Coronavirus Pandemic Management Updates from the Health Protection Board and the Oversight and Engagement Board

Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

Purpose

This is to provide an update on the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan implementation of the national Contain programme.

Background

The national COVID-19 Contain Framework was updated in August 2021. This is a guide for local decision makers in England. It sets out how national, regional and local partners should continue to work with each other, the public, businesses, institutions (including schools, prisons, hospitals, care home and homelessness settings), and other local system partners in their communities, to prevent, manage and contain outbreaks of COVID-19.

Test, Trace and Isolate has an important ongoing role in the management of local outbreaks. It is a core element of our shared ambition to break chains of COVID-19 transmission to enable people to maintain a more normal way of life, living safely with COVID-19.

Local communities are at the heart of this. It's important that there is a continued strong local, regional and national partnership to support people in understanding and complying with advice and guidance designed to protect their health..

Local authorities and their local system partners are an integral part of the response to COVID-19, working closely with national health protection teams (HPTs – part of the UK Health Security Agency) and the wider COVID-19 regional partnership teams.

As of the 8th December 2021, the government has announced the introduction of new measures – referred to as Plan B – to help curb the spread of the new Omicron variant and deal with the increasing demand on health and care services.

Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP)

Local planning and response are enshrined in the Southend LOMP which was published at the end of July 2021 and is currently being updated following two recent local table-top testing exercises and the introduction of new restrictions. Response includes a local containment strategy, the implementation of which is expected to be achieved within the existing legal framework and by appealing to the public’s sense of civic duty and working with local community leaders. This can be accessed [here](#).

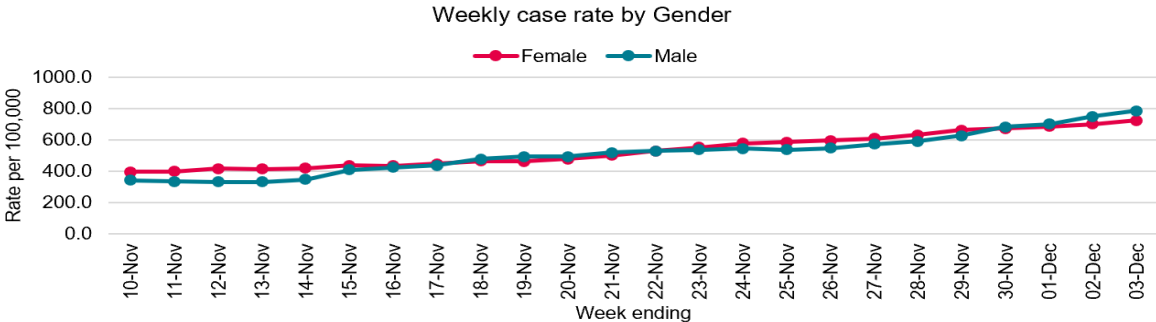
Local Boards & Pandemic Management

The Health Protection Board (HPB) now meets fortnightly and receives the local Pandemic Surveillance Report monitoring of our testing capabilities, infection rate, mortality rate, positivity rate, level of contact tracing, progress with vaccination and any report and case reviews of local outbreaks and the impact on health and social care. We also review our joint approach with Essex Police on compliance and enforcement.

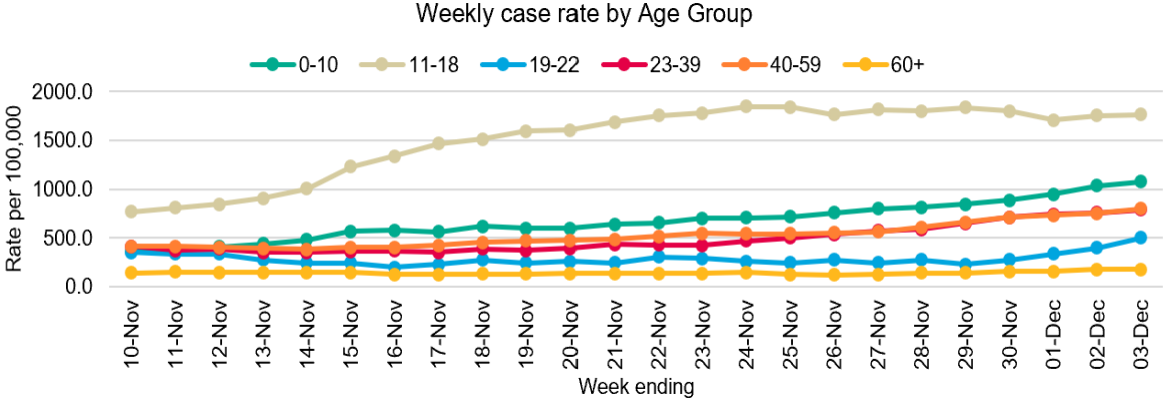
The number of cases locally is rising rapidly since the last week of November 2021. At 725 cases per 100,000, Southend has the highest rate amongst upper tier local authorities in the East of England.

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|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Bedford | 482.6 |
| Cambridgeshire | 570.4 |
| Central Bedfordshire | 660.7 |
| Essex | 557.5 |
| Hertfordshire | 484.8 |
| Luton | 435.1 |
| Milton Keynes | 642.9 |
| Norfolk | 359.9 |
| Peterborough | 451.1 |
| Southend-on-Sea | 677.9 |
| Suffolk | 389.6 |
| Thurrock | 580.0 |
| East of England | 501.2 |

The infection rate has gradually increased from 400/100,000 to over 760/100,000 in the past 3 weeks to 3rd December, and is still showing no sign of reducing.



We are seeing some differences in virus transmission in age groups, remaining high in the younger age groups, especially people aged 0-18yrs as well as the wider family-aged groups. We continue to explore new ways to engage and communicate the risk of virus transmission with them.



We have been working closely with the schools to support the safe management of activities over this festive period. We issued a 3-level risk assessment, agreed with fellow directors of public health in the East of England and with positive feedback from the headteachers, who were keen to adopt a sensible but consistent approach. Community home testing will remain a key component of keeping infection rate low and in continuing to suppress the virus.

Our Southend-specific contact tracing and support service was launched on the 1st October 2021. This has enabled us to respond more swiftly, with better local insight, as we approach the winter season. We are currently supporting contact tracing around a few suspected Omicron cases.

The vaccination programme is running effectively across Southend: the larger centre is now based at the Civic Centre. At least 79.7% of the 12yrs+ population have received their first dose in Southend, and at least 72.6% receiving their second dose (data at 5th December). Although none of the age groups are flagged as a concern for the coverage of vaccines, we continue to experience a low uptake amongst those below the age of 18yrs – 47% compared to an average of 53% across the East of England.

We are closely working with our NHS partners to identify and engage local sub-groups (e.g. BAME, Deprivation level, Care Home staff, Faith groups, etc) to help reduce vaccination hesitancy locally, across four wards with lower coverage. We have been running pop-up clinics for both Covid and flu vaccination.

Following on from the lessons learnt audit on care home Covid-related morbidity and mortality, all the agreed recommendations have been implemented to better manage the response to care home outbreaks and to ensure all infection prevention and control measures were being followed effectively.

The Outbreak Control Oversight and Engagement Board continues to lead on a number of communication and engagement activities, including refreshing our messaging to the public and local businesses. We continue to hold regular webinars with schools and we are actively engaged with a multi-media social marketing campaign in promoting our key messages of maintaining social distancing, hand hygiene and using face covering in the appropriate settings. We have been holding regular community engagement events to provide reassurance, respond to local concerns and gain more insight to support our local response.

The Board is actively supporting with promoting the community LFD testing programme and supporting the local NHS in addressing any hesitancy with the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

All our actions and local interventions are reviewed and shared with the Regional Test and Trace Support and Assurance Team.

Recommendation

1. For the HWB Board to note progress and ongoing implementation of the Local Outbreak Management Plan by the Local Health Protection Board and the Outbreak Control Oversight and Engagement Board.