

Southend Health & Wellbeing Board

Agenda
Item No.

Report of the Director of Public Health

To
Health & Wellbeing Board

on
7th September 2022

Report prepared by: Krishna Ramkhelawon,
Director of Public Health

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| For information only | X | For discussion | | Approval required | |
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Health Protection Update

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-going management of the COVID-19 pandemic and to advise the Board on the wider remit of the two sub-committees.

We are also advising the Board that we are currently refreshing our Local Outbreak Management Plan which will go before the Health Protection Board on the 27th May 2022.

Background

We are now learning to live with Covid whilst continuously reviewing the evolution this virus and its impact on our communities. Collectively, we continue to play an important role in the ongoing management of local outbreaks.

Other areas of concern for health protection are now our renewed focus, including the emerging challenge pose by the Monkeypox cases across the country. We have also being working to drive up the uptake of MMR, whilst engaging in the planning of the next Covid booster vaccine, likely to be bivalent – in other words, it provides immunity against the original strain of the virus and well as the Omicron variant.

Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP)

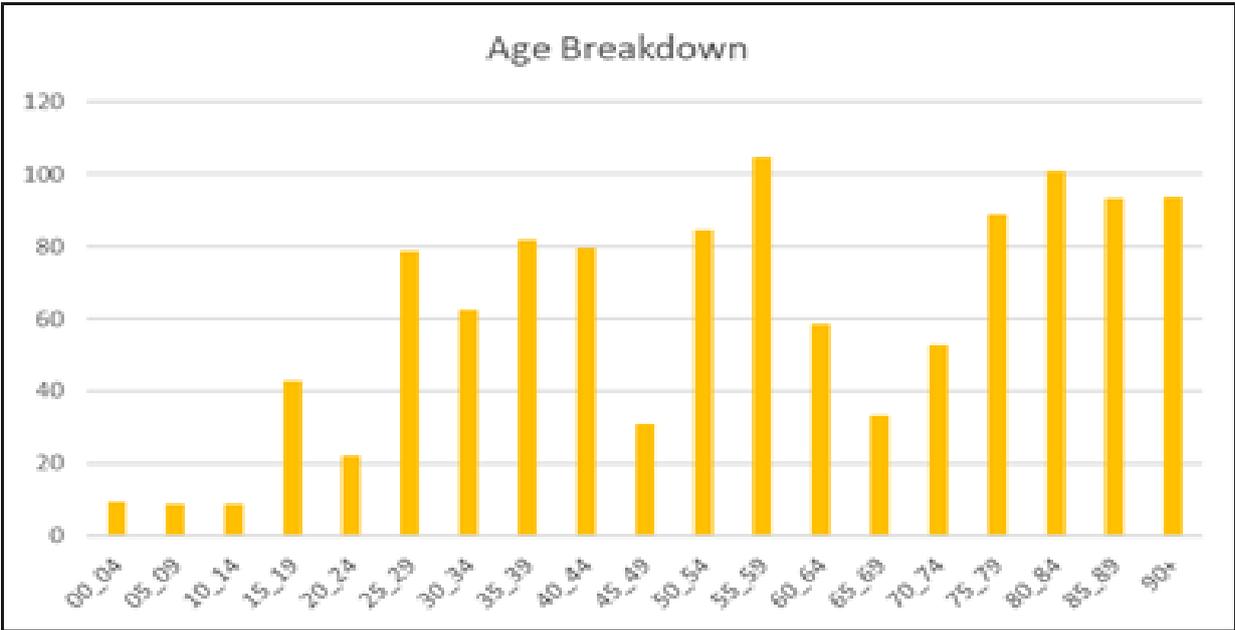
Local planning and response are enshrined in the Southend LOMP which has been revised and adopted by the Health Protection Board. This document will remain active, whilst we await the final publication of the national agreement between UKHSA and Local Authorities, on how we will collective work across health protection matters. The document has been refreshed as required to ensure a safe transition to more local determination and will ensure we remain vigilant in dealing with any potential newly identified 'Variant of Concern', in dealing with any

significant surge in infection rates and in sustaining our resilience in dealing with other health protection risks, especially as we will move into the autumn and winter seasons.

Local Boards & Pandemic Management

The Health Protection Board (HPB) is now meeting monthly and continues to receive the local Health Protection Surveillance Report and necessary actions – last meeting 26th August 2022.

The infection rate has gradually decreased. Our overall rate was 56/100,000 (19th August – EoEng = 70/100,000), and is now the lowest this calendar year we are expecting. We expect to see a continued gradual decrease in infection. This national reporting will remain the best gauge for the level of infection in our communities, although fewer people are testing currently. This is a breakdown by specific age groups (rates per 100,000):



The Council and UKHSA continue to work closely with care homes which are the higher risk settings for transmissions and consequential impact on health and wellbeing. As at the 19th August, we had 3 care homes in Outbreak, another 3 with a Covid Exposure and 5 other care settings with an Exposure.

Our Covid vaccination rates have not changed significantly in the past few weeks and now stand at: Dose 1: 80.9%; Dose 2: 77.1%; Dose 3+: 60.3%. The roll-out of the new vaccine (Bivalent – ability to target the 2 main Covid strains) will start at the beginning of September with care settings. We are currently working with the NHS to finalise our local plans for this booster dose alongside the Flu vaccines. The plan will be shared at the next HPB meeting.

We will continue to manage a small Health Protection team and we are also training (in September) a team of reservist (likely to include a number of agencies) who can be redeployed at short notice, without impacting on key public services.

The Health Protection 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. The Board's remit has moved to cover the wider remit of health protection matters – next meeting is on the 14th September 2022.

The Board will continue to support the NHS in addressing local hesitancy with the COVID-19 vaccination programme and we are now in the planning phase for the next Covid and flu vaccine boosters.

For Noting

1. For the HWB Board to note on the on-going operations and steer of these two sub-committees.