

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

LOCAL OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD (PUBLIC)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2021

Present: Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Shairoz Claridge, Lynne Doherty, Steve Masters, Meradin Peachey, Matt Pearce, Andy Sharp, Davina Nicholson, James Townsend, Ginny Garnett, Martin Dunscombe, Nick Carter and Howard Woollaston

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Mandip Bilkhu and Councillor Martha Vickers

PART I

82 Minutes of the previous meeting dated 18 January 2021

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 18 January 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

83 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

84 'Time to Talk' update

Davina Nicholson, Clinical Lead at Time to Talk West Berkshire, provided an update on their experiences with tackling Covid-19:

- She noted that 'Time to Talk' had seen a significant impact on the mental health of children and young people due to the pandemic
- During the first lockdown referrals dropped to 13 per month
- During August- November referrals to the service were up to 41 per month
- January 2021 had seen 23 referrals
- Normal referrals per month were around 32
- She stated that the service had engaged with young people asking if Covid-19 had affected their mental health, of which 50% responded 'yes'
- She noted that the first lockdown saw many positive comments from young people and that it gave them time to enjoy new activities
- However, since the pandemic had gone on and more lockdowns had been announced, the novelty had worn off and more individuals were reporting anxiety and loneliness
- Many young people had stated that they fear they are trapped with the lockdown and there is no close end in sight

What helps with these anxieties?

- Incorporating exercise
- Time with pets
- Help and engagement from schools
- Helplines

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- Helping young people to feel a part of the 'build back' after the pandemic

Councillor Woollaston asked Davina if she had any tips for better engagement with younger individuals.

Davina Nicholson noted that a big element was making children and young people feel a part of an overall project and that it could be something she would ask if they would like to be involved in.

Councillor Doherty asked Davina if she had any expectations about the future demand on the service, given there seemed to be a slowdown during lockdowns and a rise in referrals after them. She also asked about the services' capacity levels.

Davina Nicholson 30 counsellors within the service who looked after around 8-10 individuals per week. She noted that there were almost 300 young people in counselling at the moment. In regards to a surge in demand, she stated that the service was anticipating another surge after the current lockdown. Furthermore, she noted that the demand would be affected by the exam situation.

Councillor Boeck asked if the service was experiencing new issues or whether young people were experiencing old issues, amplified by the pandemic.

Davina Nicholson noted that it tended to be usual struggles such as depression, loneliness being exacerbated. However, she noted that the service may see an effect on children's development due to what they have missed in terms of socialising in school.

Councillor Bridgman asked if the sessions that the service were doing with parents were proving to be useful.

Davina Nicholson noted that they had been very successful and that it gave another tool to help young people by giving parents more knowledge about how to approach difficult issues and manage them.

85 Health Visiting Service update

Ginny Garnett, Head of Community Children's Services, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, provided an update on the maternity health visiting service in West Berkshire throughout the pandemic:

- She noted that national guidance issued in March 2020 restricted the service to new birth contact and a 6-8 week check on new mothers
- Some staff were redeployed to other areas within the NHS
- Advice was to avoid going into people's homes
- Many parents preferred to have online or over the phone check-ups
- Went through a process of identifying needs and RAG rated parents based on needs
- She noted that domestic abuse questions were difficult to ask online and as such, the service had been using a method of advertising help in the background of video calls
- The service had greatly increased its social media presence, such as vlogs and blogs, to try and reach more parents
- She noted that the service had introduced an initiative called 'Welly walks' where isolated parents could meet up for socially distanced walks

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- Virtual anti-natal presentations to all mothers across West Berkshire
- She stated that it had diminished the ability for new parents to network with others using the service
- She noted that face to face visits were re-introduced in June, with staff wearing PPE

Councillor Masters asked what happened if two parents fell ill and were unable to look after a child.

Ginny Garnett noted that it would be a process of contacting social care, who would then make an arrangement, whether that be kinship care or an alternative arrangement.

Councillor Doherty noted that the new birth and six to eight week assessments were used as a way of spotting post-natal depression. She asked if it had proved to be difficult to pick up on this and whether there had been an increase or decrease in detections.

Ginny Garnett noted that her belief was that they weren't being picked up as much online. She stated that health visiting was a relationship of trust and this was more difficult to build up online. She also noted that the absence of friends and family during this time was also playing a large part. She further noted that there was a significant decrease in cases of post-natal depression compared to previous years.

86 Covid-19 situational report

Matt Pearce provided an update on the Covid-19 situation in West Berkshire. He stated that all data presented was correct as of the 13 January 2021. He also noted that the slides being presented were now in line with the rest of Berkshire and would be published on the Berkshire Public Health website.

Restrictions:

- The whole of Berkshire remained in a national lockdown
- Further information could be found via:
<https://www.berkshirerepublichealth.co.uk/covid-19-dashboard>

Situational awareness (data correct for the week 1st February 2021):

- He noted that the positivity rates per 100,000 had decreased across all Berkshire authorities compared to the previous week and now stood at 200 per 100,000 in West Berkshire, which was the lowest rate in Berkshire. Slough had seen its rate come below 1000 per 100,000.
- The positivity rate was 9.6% in West Berkshire
- West Berkshire had now had 5,420 cases of Covid-19
- The number of new confirmed cases in West Berkshire over the previous 7 days was 355
- He noted that the new variant of Covid-19 was playing a big part in the continual high level of cases

Epidemiology of cases:

- There had been 47,116 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Berkshire. 69% of these had occurred since the beginning of December.

Hospital activity

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- On 19 January 2021, 264 patients were in hospital with COVID-19 in the Royal Berkshire Hospital. 31 of these were on mechanical ventilation. The hospital admission rate was increasing.

Community Testing

- 1/3rd of Covid cases are asymptomatic
- WBDC will soon be offering community testing twice per week to eligible workers (key workers) who are most at risk of catching and spreading Covid-19
- The first testing site would go live in Newbury next week, with further sites in the following weeks
- Testing would be via appointment and invitation only

Councillor Bridgman asked if asymptomatic cases were more prevalent in any particular age groups.

Meradin Peachey stated that the answer was largely unknown given the amount of data it involves, but more research was on-going. She also noted that around 1/3rd of cases in care homes were also asymptomatic so it wasn't just a case of it being amongst younger age groups.

Contact tracing:

National test and trace data:

- 90% of people who test positive had been contacted
- 86% of contacts had been traced

West Berkshire test and trace:

- Averaging 10 new daily case referrals from NHS test and trace (since Jan 2021)
- 36% higher than Oct/ Nov
- 60% of referrals had successfully been contacted and given advice

Measures to prevent Covid-19

- The most effective method of stopping transmission of Covid-19 is to wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, to use a face mask in shops and enclosed public spaces and to keep 2 metres apart from others.

87 Communications update

Martin Dunscombe provided an update on the work of the communications team during Covid-19. He noted that:

- Much of the communications work had been focused on messaging around the national restrictions
- Community testing was a key focus at the moment and the messaging around how they will work and general awareness that they will be introduced
- Appointment booking for community testing was being worked on
- Local contact tracing issues with individuals not providing workplace details had been addressed

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- Working with the Public Protection Partnership to develop communications for business to ensure they were following the guidelines
- Also working with the PPP on the introduction of covid-19 marshals
- Vaccination programme communications were on-going and continually being updated
- Information on support for vaccinations that would be included on the website, keeping residents engaged with the vaccination rollout
- Information pack on what to do if required to self-isolate had been released on the website
- Working with Community United on a workshop on the vaccination programme that would provide more detail on vaccinations
- BBC Panorama did a piece with Sara Ross looking into what it was like working on the frontline during Covid-19 and with bereaved families
- The team were continuing to signpost residents to mental health services during the lockdown

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.10 pm)