

CRF Action Plan in Response to Rapid Increase in COVID-19 Cases

15th September 2020

Key Objectives

- Protect the most vulnerable members of the community
- To prevent wider spread and further outbreaks in high risk setting
- To bring levels of Covid back in line with national average over the coming weeks
- To protect Cheshire's economic recovery

Summary of Epidemiological evidence in Cheshire (14th September 2020)

- All areas of Cheshire have experienced a rapid increase in incidence in the last week.
- More significant increases have been observed in Warrington and Halton.
- The majority of new cases are in people of white ethnic background.
- The majority of new cases in the last two weeks are in young adults and working age groups
- There has not been a significant increase in cases over the age of 65 years
- There is no difference between gender of case, despite early reports of a female predominance.
- Cheshire currently has lower incidence than other areas in the North West, but the rate of increase is of concern
- The NW currently has 24% of England's cases but only around 15% of the national testing capacity
- Appendix One shows latest Covid rates for Cheshire

CRF Action Plan in Response to Rapid Increase in COVID-19 Cases

The table below describes what actions are being taken NOW in response to the rapid increase in Covid-19 cases, and also what future steps are under consideration.

The actions are funded wherever possible from existing test and trace grants to local authorities, and also through the use of and redeployment of existing resources.

However, there is a natural limit to the capacity / resources we have at a local level. All of Cheshire's local authorities are facing huge financial challenges arising from COVID-19, and these challenges are made all the more difficult by the absence of any certainty in respect of future funding, therefore we are also calling for additional resources in the short term and more certainty of such resources in the medium-term.

The opportunity cost of not taking these actions on both health & wellbeing, and on economy is significant.

Priority Area	Level	Actions
Surveillance/Intelligence	Current actions	Daily surveillance at a local level, and twice weekly Cheshire meeting: Understand the epidemiology of the current situation and appropriately target action/ control measures
	Next potential escalation steps	Daily Cheshire intelligence meetings Deep dive epidemiological analytical support

Outbreak Management	Current actions	<p>Local outbreak control plans and outbreak management meeting / health protection boards established and meeting</p> <p>CRF SCG / TCG stood up and meeting twice weekly</p> <p>Testing Capacity/ Sit-Rep Across C&M – Daily Huddle</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Increase frequency of outbreak management / health protection board meetings and CRF SCG / TCG</p>
Clinically Vulnerable	Current actions	<p>Issue direct communication to individuals and families of people who were formally in shielding, advising them to take extra care and attention, think about their contacts, and attending COVID-secure settings only (warn and inform)</p> <p>Promote widely the support available for extremely vulnerable populations through the relevant local authority helplines and contact centres, and in particular considering access to food and medication</p> <p>Confirm process for provision of support to clinically vulnerable should escalation be needed</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Direct advice to shielding population to stay home</p> <p>Request nationally that shielding is reintroduced locally as per national guidance</p> <p>Establish stronger use of volunteers to support those who are vulnerable and voluntarily wish to shield or self-isolation, with food / humanitarian aid</p> <p>Ensure support provision over 7 days per week</p> <p>For those who are vulnerable and voluntarily wish to shield or self-isolate establish clear messages and access to care for poor mental health or crisis support</p>

Care sector	Current actions	<p>Standard precautions (rigorous implementation of current IPC and test and trace guidelines) and advice to visitors (share warn and inform letter directly to all registered visitors)</p> <p>Advice to Care Homes and Supported Accommodation to undertake garden visits only with strict adherence to national guidelines, at least 2m socially distanced, PPE etc.</p> <p>Instruct care homes to close to non-essential visitors, including health and social care staff, due to increasing transmission rates (End of life visits will be supported, with strict IPC measures in place)</p> <p>Targeted communications to care homes reinforcing the importance of staff adhering to social distancing guidance outside of work, and to avoid non Covid safe businesses</p> <p>Work with care home sector to stress the importance of staff not moving around different work place settings; in particular agency staff should be assigned to specific homes.</p> <p>Promote to sector the opportunity to access infection, prevention and control monies if they have not done so</p> <p>Promote and facilitate flu vaccination programme</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Instructing staff to minimise social interactions outside work</p> <p>Explore alternative to use of public transport for staff</p> <p>Consider instructing local care homes to cease visitors altogether, except for end of life</p> <p>Consider exploring with care homes potential for staff to remain within the home to live on a temporary basis</p>
Other vulnerable people	Current actions	<p>Issue a 'Warn and Inform' and support to self –isolate information letter to settings/ services related to vulnerable people (e.g. hostels) and groups who may find it more difficult to isolate</p> <p>Reinforce working from home wherever possible</p>

	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Consider rehousing homeless individuals and families</p> <p>Reinstate targeted support mechanisms for marginalised groups to enable them to isolate or shield as needed</p> <p>Ensure hostels and supported living settings are stringently applying guidance and appropriate controls</p> <p>Establish community based targeted support for marginalised communities such as Romany families, to ensure our support is effective and received</p> <p>Request extension of temporary “no eviction” arrangements for tenants/renters</p>
NHS	Current actions	<p>NHS services restarting in line with national direction from NHSE/I</p> <p>Maintain COVID-secure facilities</p> <p>Maintain current restricted hospital visiting</p> <p>Promote importance of social distancing with workforce when not in work</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Reinstate testing on discharge for all inpatients</p> <p>Suspend some services e.g. elective surgery</p> <p>NHS workers asked to limit their social interaction outside work</p>
Essential workers	Current Actions	<p>Assurance around enhanced social distancing and risk mitigation measures in work environment and taking extra care by sharing warn and inform guidance to employers and individuals</p> <p>Issue a ‘Warn and Inform’ letter to all essential workers to protect vulnerable people with whom they work and to maintain business continuity and reduce spread of the virus. Advice to avoid non Covid safe businesses and crowds and maintain robust social distancing</p> <p>Ensure that Covid-secure practice is in place with workers who are moving between high-</p>

		<p>risk settings eg health, social care, schools, early years settings</p> <p>Communicate appropriate testing routes for essential workers</p> <p>Promote importance of flu-vaccination in key workers</p> <p>Increasing stocks of PPE for distribution on an emergency basis</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Prioritise testing for essential workers</p> <p>Consider targeted routine asymptomatic testing of essential key workers</p> <p>Consider limiting movement of peripatetic staff between high-risk settings</p> <p>Restrict social care face to face visits to essential visits only; and use alternative means to visit</p> <p>Essential workers to limit their social interaction</p>
Education, including nursery, and FE	Current actions	<p>Establishing and refining methods of quality assurance and supporting early years and educational settings in applying guidance and in managing cases and contact tracing.</p> <p>Support settings to refine the concept and monitoring of a ‘bubble’ and other prevention control measures in early years and education settings and ask educational settings to review their risk assessments in line with the contain framework</p> <p>Encourage staff to take extra care by sharing warn and inform guidance, including social distancing outside of work</p> <p>Strongly encourage settings to encourage parents use face coverings at drop-offs / pick-ups</p> <p>Recommend use of face coverings in communal areas for both staff and high school students</p> <p>Delivery of training for schools and nurseries on the application of national guidance, best practice and expected prevention controls measures</p> <p>Specific strict advice and guidance on visitors and the use of and temporary staff in schools</p>

		<p>and education settings</p> <p>Assessing the viability of children needing APG returning to school and supporting the development of pathways to support them and families</p>
	<p>Next potential escalation steps</p>	<p>Continued monitoring, improving and top-up training to support quality assurance for early years and schools</p> <p>Targeted visits and support for schools based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-declared assessment of schools processes, control measures and use of bubbles - visit schools with large proportions of children or staff excluded because of a confirmed case - Concerns are raised by child, parents, staff or a member of the community <p>Stronger messages supporting schools to ask parents to use face covering on school premises</p> <p>Dependent upon local epidemiology and context: Advisory rotas in secondary schools and further education colleges</p> <p>Consider routine asymptomatic testing of staff and children e.g. in outbreaks</p> <p>Replenish school stocks of emergency testing kits</p> <p>Work with schools to implement four tier system as defined by the DfE, supporting school preparation for blended learning, for example by making sure vulnerable learners have access to appropriate IT and support, and individual risk assessments are updated for SEND pupils</p> <p>When established, locally introduce and embed the new national team to support schools and early years in single cases management and for advice/ guidance</p> <p>Establish clearer messages, enhanced trauma informed support and care within settings,</p>

		and easier access to care poor mental health or crisis support for staff, children or those' s children whose families are effected by poor mental health or bereavement
Higher education establishments	Current actions	<p>Support universities through CAMPUS Shield programme with developing and exercising outbreak plans and ensuring clarity of process for prevention and management of cases, including testing programme and contact tracing on campus</p> <p>Public Health Messages for students in both university and private accommodation around hand hygiene, social distancing, face coverings, and rule of 6</p> <p>Ensure appropriate risk assessments are in place in settings in line with DFE guidance</p> <p>Support to vulnerable learners is identified and implemented</p> <p>Consider use of face masks in communal areas</p> <p>Work with universities to ensure fresher's events are Covid safe, and unofficial events are cancelled</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	Implementation of online teaching / tiered system
Young adults and working age population	Current actions	<p>Context sensitive messaging around risk reduction – handwashing, physical distancing, face coverings</p> <p>Disseminate a strong message to younger population reinforcing the rule of 6, and advising against large events / gatherings</p> <p>Identify local influencers to support targeted messaging</p> <p>Work with police partners and community teams regarding enforcement response</p>

	Next potential escalation steps	<p>CHAMPS behaviour change campaign in development and specifically aimed at young adults</p> <p>Consider restrictions on night time gatherings</p> <p>Consider restrictions to off-site sales of alcohol</p> <p>Explore messages for temporary workers who frequently change work location, and distribution of warn and inform letters, using BEIS</p> <p>Establish clear messages, workplace trauma informed support and easier access to care for those experiencing poor mental health or in a state of crisis</p> <p>Work with national government on additional measures to restrict local restrictions on meeting socially/ households (all ages/cross generational)</p>
Business and hospitality	Current actions	<p>Disseminate a strong message to businesses advising that customer facing staff wear face coverings, they use booking systems where possible, and that they communicate their expectations of customers around the use of face coverings</p> <p>Communicate to public the importance of only visiting Covid-secure settings / businesses</p> <p>Advice to hospitality entertainment venues on risk reduction; Monitoring and regulation of proposed large events/gatherings</p> <p>Disseminate a strong message to businesses and community settings about the requirement of staff to seek a test on the development of symptoms; to self-isolate until they receive the test results; and to follow Government guidelines if the test is positive</p> <p>Disseminate an updated version of the Business Pack, including PHE Action Cards, to support Covid-secure practise, and to next steps in the event of a single case / outbreak amongst staff</p> <p>Follow-up the workplaces identified via case follow-up</p> <p>Undertake targeted visits to premises that intelligence suggest are unable or failing to maintain social distancing / Covid secure practices, or where there are specific geographical areas of concern</p>

		<p>Targeting high risk settings such as beauty premises and gyms</p> <p>Work with police on enforcement powers and approach – eg fixed penalty notices</p> <p>Promote existing police line about reporting possible breaches</p> <p>Close down businesses who are creating a public health threat, and communicate our interventions widely to the public</p> <p>Review local planned events over the next few months. Discuss with organisers around safety and standing down events, relevant closure of events if an imminent public health threat (CRF maintained list)</p> <p>Reinforce and reintroduce 2m in all shops / hospitality businesses</p> <p>Push working from home message wherever possible</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Request national government to support powers to issue fixed penalty notices</p> <p>Food and drinks establishments may only operate takeaway and delivery services; restrict opening times of licensed premises</p> <p>Explore closure of high risk settings and specific sectors with additional national government support e.g. limiting food hospitality to takeaways, closure of pubs and restaurants</p> <p>Explore use of dispersal orders for gathering crowds</p> <p>Enforce working from home</p>
Transport	Current actions	<p>Work with Merseytravel to communicate key messages to staff and customers</p> <p>Work with taxis / private hire industry to communicate key messages to staff and customers</p>

		<p>Ensure schools transport cell continues to meet to resolve issues</p> <p>Ensure schools follow guidelines when they have to send children home to avoid public transport where possible</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Enforcement of use of face coverings in all transport settings</p> <p>Explore with government powers of restricting taxi drivers / hackney cabs from outside Cheshire coming into the area (due to them being unable to earn income in their own lockdown area)</p>
Leisure activities	Current actions	<p>Communication of key public health messages</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Closure of (non-essential) sport and leisure activities, e.g. leisure centres, swimming pools, gyms, sporting events with spectators / community participation, and libraries</p>
Communications Strategy	Current actions	<p>Strong communications strategy coordinated through CRF</p> <p>Use of community champions and local celebrities to get high impact messages across</p> <p>Development of local authority led community champions model to disseminate messages throughout Cheshire, and focussing on younger people and those of working age</p> <p>Communications around forthcoming events such as Halloween and Bonfire night (CRF held list of events) to ensure Covid safe practice</p> <p>Reinforce importance of hand hygiene, social distancing, use face coverings on public transport and other settings, and rule of 6</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Champs insight work to inform behaviour change campaign esp. regarding young people</p> <p>Additional Behavioural Science support to ensure messages are targeted to different communities</p> <p>Greater focus on mental health and suicide awareness messages – reducing stigma and</p>

		clearer messages on how people can help themselves/ each other
Testing / contact tracing	Current actions	<p>CHAMPS hub model for follow up of complex cases</p> <p>Individual local authorities enhanced contact tracing model for index cases failed to be contacted within 24hrs</p> <p>Individual local authorities follow up on outbreak situations</p> <p>Individual local authorities testing plans, coordinated through Cheshire level test and trace group.</p> <p>Coordinated testing capacity approach across Cheshire established</p>
	Next potential escalation steps	<p>Substantial additional testing capacity requested from national team</p> <p>Dedicated contact tracing support from national team</p> <p>Test kits for GPs</p> <p>Explore hospital testing capacity</p>
REQUESTS FOR JBC		<p>Deep dive epidemiological support</p> <p>Additional testing capacity for Cheshire, for both symptomatic and asymptomatic testing as required (Population level symptomatic testing, Asymptomatic testing in outbreak situations (e.g. schools), Asymptomatic testing for high risk settings (protect vulnerable), Prioritisation for essential workers / testing strategy)</p> <p>Need national support for swift testing and results of key workers</p> <p>Need national support for swift testing and results for staff and learners in educational settings</p>

		<p>Dedicated contact tracing support from the national team for Cheshire, including additional resources as required</p> <p>Additional local resources to support public health, environmental health, licensing, and enforcement activity</p> <p>Roll out of NHS App earlier than 24th September</p> <p>Pausing any restart of sporting and entertainment events such as leisure centres / swimming pools, park run, football, rugby, athletics events etc</p> <p>Cheshire as pilot site for rapid testing facilities</p> <p>Additional enforcement powers and support with closing down pubs, organised events, and private parties</p> <p>Additional Behavioural Science support to ensure messages are targeted to different communities</p>
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Cheshire and Merseyside COVID Surveillance: 17th September 2020			CONFIDENTIAL - NOT TO BE SHARED EXTERNALLY							
			Cheshire					North West		
Local Authority		PHE threshold for escalation	Cheshire East	Cheshire West and Chester	Halton	Warrington	Highest LA	Lowest LA		
Daily exceedance rating			RED	RED	RED	RED				
Alert levels	Confirmed cases (Last 7 days)		93	108	79	233	607	5		
	Incidence 7 days*	Rate per 100,000	>50 per 100,000	24.4 (22.1) ↑	31.7 (16.4) ↑	61.5 (23.4) ↑	111.2 (35.3) ↑	212.7	7.3	
	Weekly positive tests	%		2.3% ↓	2.2% ↑	4.5% ↑	7.4% ↑	11.7%	0.6%	
	Incidence 14 days*	Rate per 100,000	>100 per 100,000	47.3 (31.3)	48.5 (24.1)	85.6 (28)	148.9 (43.9)	349.0	10.2	
Contact tracing	Contacts in NHS Tool	Total		1789	1780	679	1792			
		Completed		1234	1204	400	1126			
		% Completed		69%	68%	59%	63%			
	Contacts in Level 1	Total		1948	1408	298	782			
Completed			1948	1400	298	761				
% Completed			100%	99%	100%	97%				
Outbreaks	Care Home	Last 7 days	1	2	1	0				
	School setting	Last 7 days	1	1	1	3				
	Workplace settings	Last 7 days	0	1	0	2				
	Total community	Last 7 days	0	1	0	6	6	0		
Deaths	Week number 36		1	1	0	0				
			Merseyside							
Local Authority		PHE threshold for escalation	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	St. Helens	Wirral			
Daily exceedance rating			RED	RED	RED	RED	GREEN			
Alert levels	Confirmed cases (Last 7 days)		149	498	141	178	298			
	Incidence 7 days*	Rate per 100,000	>50 per 100,000	99.6 (34.1) ↑	100.6 (39.6) ↑	51.2 (35.2) ↑	98.9 (26.1) ↑	92.2 (49.2) ↑		
	Weekly positive tests	%		6.7% ↑	7.6% ↑	4.3% ↑	7.5% ↑	4.9% ↑		
	Incidence 14 days*	Rate per 100,000	>100 per 100,000	135.7 (42.1)	142.1 (54.6)	86.8 (46.8)	127.7 (32.8)	145.7 (79.2)		
Contact tracing	Contacts in NHS Tool	Total		1082	3849	1461	1338	2824		
		Completed		667	2295	906	807	1842		
		% Completed		62%	60%	62%	60%	65%		
	Contacts in Level 1	Total		105	1460	773	726	1066		
Completed			105	1457	760	723	1066			
% Completed			100%	100%	98%	100%	100%			
Outbreaks	Care Home	Last 7 days	1	0	2	1	1			
	School setting	Last 7 days	0	12	0	0	4			
	Workplace settings	Last 7 days	0	4	0	0	0			
	Total community	Last 7 days	2	3	2	5	3			
Deaths	Week number 36		0	1	0	0	0			