



WORTHING BOROUGH  
COUNCIL

Ward(s) Affected: All

**Council's evolving strategy for playing its role in preventing and managing Covid-19 cases**

**Report by the Director for Communities**

**Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to inform all Members about the strategy to prevent and control Covid-19 outbreaks locally and Adur and Worthing Councils role within this.

**2. Recommendations**

Members are recommended to consider and note the report

**3. The Overall strategy for responding to and managing outbreaks**

**3.1 The government response to outbreaks**

3.11 Responding to and learning to live with Covid-19 is extraordinarily challenging. The government's aim is for people to return to a life as close to normal as possible, for as many people as possible, as fast and fairly as possible, in a way that avoids a new epidemic, minimises lives lost and maximises health, economic and social outcomes.

3.12 Identifying outbreaks at an early stage and taking steps to ensure appropriate local intervention is crucial to this. Local outbreaks are being identified and managed through continuous monitoring of the available data and different approaches are being required according to local circumstances.

- 3.13 As part of the broader government response, each local area must have in a place a Local Outbreak Control Plan, the overall leadership for which sits with the West Sussex Director of Public Health, who provides the strategic oversight of health protection for COVID-19 across the county, including prevention, surveillance, planning and response, to ensure they meet the needs of the population.
- 3.14 The Government has also introduced a new self isolation requirement. Residents in Adur and Worthing, along with the rest of the country, will be required by law to self-isolate from 28th September, if they test positive or are contacted by Test and Trace. From 28th September, people who meet the following criteria will be entitled to a self-isolation payment of £500 if they:
- Have been instructed to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, either because they've tested positive or are the close contact of a positive case; and
  - Are employed or self-employed; and
  - Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result; and
  - Are currently receiving Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit
- 3.15 Marshals for local areas have also been announced to help with enforcement issues but as yet no detail about this scheme or funding has been announced. It has however been intimate that this may amount to around £60,000 for areas with a population of around 100,000

## 3.2 The West Sussex Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan

- 3.21 The [WSCC Local Outbreak Control Plan](#) (LOCP) provides the overall plan and framework for outbreak planning and management. An 'outbreak' is defined as:
1. Two or more suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 linked in place or time.
  2. An unexpected rise in the number of observed cases with a clear link to specific cases.
  3. In some instances, only one case may prompt the need to take measures to protect public health.
- 3.22 The plan details how work will be coordinated at the national, regional, county and district levels in the event of an outbreak to prevent and contain the spread of the pandemic and focuses on:
- Preventing and containing the transmission of Covid-19
  - Ensuring a timely, effective and coordinated approach is taken in the event of an outbreak in West Sussex

- Instilling and maintaining trust and confidence by ensuring that the West Sussex residents and stakeholders are engaged and well informed throughout the outbreak

3.23 As part of the governance framework for this plan, the WS Health Protection Board, is responsible for:

- The ongoing development and delivery of the West Sussex Local Outbreak Control Plan
- Making recommendations to relevant public bodies and agencies for the allocation of resources to support the effective delivery of the Plan
- Receiving and acting on data and intelligence from Public Health England
- Overseeing arrangements for all agencies working with local communities and services to make the NHS Test and Trace programme as effective as possible
- Advising on communications strategy for the Local Outbreak Control Plan, especially for the member led Local Outbreak Engagement Board which has overall responsibility for public facing communications
- Making recommendations for the wider COVID-19 response and policy agenda

### 3.3 Managing local outbreaks

3.31 The WSCC Public Health Team receive daily data on cases and outbreaks and analyse and provide regular updates to the district and borough councils. All data is shared with AWCs on a weekly basis (or sooner if there are increasing numbers of cases / outbreaks)

3.32 The WSLOP sets out the local approach for dealing with escalating cases and outbreak controls, with four escalation levels of:

1. Outbreak prevention and containment
2. Raised local alertness
3. Raised local concern
4. Area of concern

Each one of these levels instigates a specific and proportionate response to levels of covid-19.

3.33 In the case of an outbreak, member organisations of the Covid-19 Health Protection Board are notified and, as stated within the WSLOP, a Local Outbreak Team is instigated to help manage any issues.

3.34 The primary responsibility for managing any outbreaks sits with Public Health England and it is their officers that respond to and provide the first response to this, including managing contact tracing requirements.

#### 3.4 Communications about outbreaks

3.41 The WSCC Communications team are responsible for communications to the wider public and this is detailed in the attached document from WSCC (Appendix 1).

### 4. **Adur and Worthing Councils role in outbreak control and management**

4.1 Adur and Worthing Councils (AWCs) role is primarily to support the aims and objectives of the wider West Sussex Local Outbreak Plan and supporting Public Health England and the WSCC Public Health team and ensuring our communities, businesses and places have good and effective control measures in place and prevention activity underway.

4.2 The lead officers for this work are the:-

- Director for Communities - sponsor
- Head of Wellbeing -strategic lead
- Public Health and Regulation Manager - operational lead

4.3 Our three main roles are set out below, with examples of the work underway:

- a) **Preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities**, including
- Developing a communications approach that supports and elevates the WSCC campaign and reach into our local communities.
  - Building a network of community leaders that can help with the dissemination of messages about covid-19.
  - Reaching people most at risk of covid-19 with good prevention work, including targeted interventions with people with long-term health conditions and ensuring a better reach of our prevention work around diversity.
  - Continuing to develop our community response work to support those that are vulnerable because of Covid-19.
  - Continuing to lead the work of the AW Community Response Partnership with our charity and health partners
- b) **Preventing the spread of Covid-19 in our businesses and places**

- Ensuring a strong regulatory approach to Covid-19 which focuses on information, guidance and advice and, where needed, enforcement action
- Ensuring good communications for our businesses, through running local campaigns and ensuring key messages are sent to local businesses, e.g. Welcome Back
- Providing targeted visits and inspections as required to ensure businesses are safe

**c) Preparing for and promptly responding to a local outbreak**

- Participation in Outbreak Control Teams convened by PHE
- Undertaking actions as agreed with PHE and WSCC PH in relation to outbreaks using our Environmental Health Officers, e.g. follow up checks/inspections with businesses
- Communications and engagement with communities to ensure good awareness and prevention measures.

4.4 Given the often fast changing nature of the pandemic response we will be reviewing and adapting this plan on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that it reflects our up to date understanding of the national and regional responses that we are coordinating with PHE and WSCC.

4.5 In relation to the self isolation requirements and payments, officers are developing an online application system for customers, which will be live at the time of this Council meeting This will enable people who meet the criteria to receive a payment to support their self isolation

**5. Engagement and Communication**

5.1 Officers have convened a number of groups to help develop good collaboration and engagement with partners and communities about Covid-19 and outbreaks, including:

- The A&W Community Response Partnership, which was established at the outset of the pandemic including a number of partner organisations (local charities, Worthing Homes, NHS partners and WSCC) and this group has continued to meet throughout to share information and ensure a clear understanding of the local picture amongst partners.
- The A&W Safe Towns Group, including officers across Economy and Wellbeing, Sussex Police, WSCC, Worthing TCI and the Adur XX to help coordinate activity around Covid-19 in relation to our businesses.

- 5.2 Officers have also been sharing the work of Covid-19 planning with other groups and networks to ensure a wide reach, including Community Works, the new A&W Food Network (including mutual aid groups) and local GPs
- 5.3 As part of the preparations for outbreak planning, officers have been carrying out a survey with partners, community groups and the Community Response volunteers to help identify trusted community leaders that can help to disseminate information into local communities in the event of an outbreak.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The Government has announced several funds to support local communities tackle local outbreaks and enforce the new restrictions:
- £300m has been allocated to local authorities to support the planning for local outbreaks of coronavirus (COVID-19). West Sussex County Council has received a £3.179m grant from this funding stream.
  - £60m has been allocated to help ensure new lockdown rules are followed, including through new Covid-19 marshals. The details of how this fund is to be allocated between local authorities and the police is not known at the moment.
  - Funding has been made available to fund self isolation payments of £500.00 per person for those on low incomes. The Councils will have responsibility for administering these payments. This scheme is currently being developed although it is expected to be rolled out from 12th October.
- 6.2 As part of the work around outbreaks, WSCC have received funding £X from the Track and Trace Support Grant government and have agreed to allocate each district and borough £75,000 from this grant.
- 6.3 Adur and Worthing Councils will be receiving £75,000 for each Council to assist with the efforts required for outbreak planning, the majority of which will be used to support the capacity of environmental health officers to respond to outbreaks locally.
- 6.4 A Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared with regard to the governance of the money and there will be a requirement for 6 monthly reports on how the money is being spent for the 18 month term. The A&W allocation will be used to increase the working time from part to full time of two Environmental Health Officers to work on the business interventions and

advice over the next 18 months and also buying in contractors to cover the current backlog of Food Hygiene Inspections.

6.5 Funding is also being received to support the provision of self-isolation payments of £500, which will be as set out below.

	<u>Adur</u>	<u>Worthing</u>
Up front budget for mandatory awards	£24,000	£41,500
Admin costs	£23,571.20	£26,175.20
Discretionary budget	£14,579.26	£24,928.58

## 7. Legal Implications

7.1. The legal context for managing outbreaks of communicable disease which present a risk to the health of the public requiring urgent investigation and management sits:

- With Public Health England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With Directors of Public Health under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With Chief Environmental Health Officers under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
- With NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups<sup>1</sup> to collaborate with Directors of Public Health and Public Health England to take local action (eg testing and treating) to assist the management of outbreaks under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With other responders specific responsibilities to respond to major incidents as part of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- In the context of COVID-19 there is also the Coronavirus Act 2020.

7.2 This underpinning context gives Local Authorities (Public Health and Environmental Health) and Public Health England (PHE) the primary responsibility for the delivery and management of public health actions to be taken in relation to outbreaks of communicable disease through local Health Protection Boards and Partnerships and local memoranda of understanding. These arrangements are clarified in the 2013 guidance: Health Protection in Local Government.

- 7.3 At a local level PHE's health protection teams and field services work in partnership with the Director of Public Health, playing strategic and operational leadership roles both in the development and implementation of outbreak control plans and in the identification and management of outbreaks.
- 7.4 The Director of Public Health has and retains primary responsibility for the health of their communities. This includes being assured that the arrangements to protect the health of the communities that they serve are robust and are implemented.
- 7.5 The primary foundation of Worthing Borough Council developing this strategy is to support the aims and objectives of the West Sussex Local Outbreak Plan and to support Public Health England and the WSCC Public Health team.
- 7.6 This legal context for health protection is designed to underpin the foundational leadership of the local Director of Public Health in a local area, working closely with other professionals and sectors.

### **Background Papers**

[WSCC Outbreak data and LOCP](#)

### **Officer Contact Details:-**

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## Appendix 1

West Sussex County Council's (WSCC) Communications and Engagement Team is responsible for the West Sussex Local Outbreak Plan's communications strategy.

A main component of the strategy is to deliver a public information campaign called '[Keep West Sussex Safe](#)'. It aims to encourage residents, businesses and communities to stay alert and follow government guidelines in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus in West Sussex and thereby reduce the need for local lockdown restrictions.

The campaign has been running across West Sussex since July 2020 and will continue to be the team's focus for the months ahead. In addition where there have been local factors that require a more bespoke approach, for example in Crawley where there is a high population of disproportionately affected Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, or where there are increasing cases or outbreaks, further tailored campaign communications have been developed. These campaigns are tailored to reflect and be relevant to the local population. Please see below for further updates on the work being done in the Worthing area.

There are four key messages which remain the constant focus for the campaign:

- **Wash your hands** regularly with soap or hand sanitiser.
- **Keep a good distance** from people not in your household - two metres if possible.
- **Wear a face covering** on public transport, in hospitals and when you are going to confined spaces where it's not possible to keep a safe social distance, including shops and supermarkets.
- If you have symptoms (a new persistent cough, high temperature, changes in your sense of smell or taste) please **get tested**. Visit [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119. If you or your household are asked to self-isolate, then please do so.

As government guidance changes local communications are adopted and key materials and website information updated. For example, promoting the rule of 6, and encouraging residents to download the NHS App.

Since the end of July 2020 a wide range of multi-media communication channels have been used to promote and reach West Sussex residents. This has, and continues to include updates in local newspapers, radio and TV interviews, video messages from trusted and influential people, targeted social media campaigns, outdoor advertising, direct letters/emails to high risk businesses, printed posters and translations of key messages into other key languages or formats.

### Worthing activities

WSCC has worked closely with Worthing Borough Council (WBC) and other local partners to promote preventative key messages to the local population.

Since the end of August 2020 there has been a campaign running across Worthing called 'Keep Worthing Safe'. This has focussed on a targeted digital and social media communication plan, as well as local TV and radio features. This activity will continue but is also expanding to include the following:

- Continued geotargeted social media advertising campaigns (Facebook and Instagram) aimed at Worthing residents. Since starting on 22 August 2020 so far the key messages have reached 51,212 Worthing residents.
- WBC social media accounts regularly promoting key actions and guidance for Worthing residents.
- Dedicated 'Keep Worthing Safe' campaign toolkit for communities with key messages, social media examples, editorial, digital posters, artwork.
- Engaging and consulting with partners and local community leaders on key promotional opportunities. For example, working with Community Works on supporting key messages to local Chinese community. This work continues and will be further enhanced with the results of the survey WBC have been running recently.
- Translating materials into appropriate languages for the Worthing communities.
- Organising digital and hard copy 'Worthing' posters.
- Out of Home advertising (for example bus stops and roundabouts) will also be displayed across the borough over the coming months.

As future data and insight into the types of outbreaks and areas of focus are reported, the West Sussex communication strategy will be reviewed and adapted. For example, further communication messaging is planned for the next month on pubs, sports venues, students and universities.

For further information please contact [communications@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:communications@westsussex.gov.uk)

**Communications and Engagement Team**  
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