

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD
HELD ON 8 OCTOBER 2020 FROM 5.00 PM TO 5.30 PM**

Present

Charles Margetts	Wokingham Borough Council
Carol Cammiss	Director, Children's Services
Chris Traill	Director Place and Growth
UllaKarin Clark	Wokingham Borough Council
Philip Cook	Voluntry Sector
John Halsall	Wokingham Borough Council
David Hare	Wokingham Borough Council
Susan Parsonage	Chief Executive
Matt Pope	Director, Adult Social Care & Health
Katie Summers	Director of Operations, Berkshire West CCG
Jim Stockley	Healthwatch
Meradin Peachey (substituting Tessa Lindfield)	Public Health

Also Present:

Madeleine Shopland	Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Rachel Bishop-Firth	
Ingrid Slade	Public Health
Peter Slade	Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Partnership Project Support
Martin Sloan	Assistant Director ASC Transformation and Integration

16. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Sam Burrows, Tessa Lindfield and Debbie Milligan.

17. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 10 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and will signed by the Chairman at the next available date.

18. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

20. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure, the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Board Members.

20.1 Rachel Bishop-Firth asked the Chairman of the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board the following question:

Question

What steps is the Council taking to protect our older and our BAME residents who are both statistically at much higher risk from Covid-19 during this current second spike of the pandemic, BAME people currently make up 16.4% of WBC residents, and in particular, will we be helping to publicise the importance of Vitamin D for older and BAME people?

Many medical professionals are concerned that there may be a link between vitamin D deficiency and higher rates of Covid mortality as a deficiency affects your ability to fight infection. While research is still underway, the problems with vitamin D deficiency are so well known that before the pandemic, NHS guidance suggested that BAME Brits should 'consider' taking vitamin D supplements year round (and white Brits to consider a supplement Oct to March). Care home residents have a particularly high risk of vitamin D deficiency.

Publicising this simple step which local residents can take to safeguard their health could be very quick and cost effective.

Answer:

The protection of our residents vulnerable to Covid infection, including older residents and BAME residents is a priority for WBC.

In addition to the extensive work we have undertaken with the care homes via the Care Homes Task Force we continue to work really closely with the voluntary sector within Wokingham and have extended funding to continue our one front door service until March 2021, as I am sure you have seen. This is run by CAB Wokingham, they are taking calls and emails from residents and putting them in contact with any people and organisations that they need. This includes prescription collections or shopping service but also helps with a range of other Covid related effects such as debt advice, job loss, benefit advice as well as important support for mental health and wellbeing. The Wokingham Borough Community Response is an additional support service to the NHS and social services.

We are working with CAB Wokingham, First Days, the LINK Visiting Scheme, Involve Community Services and the Wokingham Volunteer Centre, as well as our Town and Parish Councils, Age UK, Churches Together and other churches and voluntary organisations across the Borough.

In August, the Council launched 'Tackling Racism Matters' which is an online survey providing an anonymous platform for both the wider community and staff to share opportunities to tackle racial inequalities (which affect risk of Covid infections and deaths) in Wokingham. In addition, the Council has launched the Covid impact survey to understand how Covid has affected BAME groups during lockdown. The findings from this survey will continue to inform our response going forward and will obviously effect how we behave.

Working with the Public health team, WBC are cascading tailored health promotion (as developed by Public Health England) to inform specific ethnic groups about minimising their risk to Covid transmission and mortality. The promotion materials have been adapted into different languages.

The NHS test and trace system has been designed to ensure that anyone who develops the symptoms of Covid 19 can quickly be tested to find out if they have the virus, and the service also includes targeted asymptomatic testing of NHS staff, social care staff and care home residents. The test and trace service is an equal-access service that does not discriminate on the basis of age, ethnicity or religious beliefs. You will be aware of course of the recent decision of the Council to procure some tests of its own, testing for emergency use.

In June 2020, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published an appraisal of the evidence relating to vitamin D in the prevention of Covid. This study states that “there is no evidence to support taking vitamin D supplements to specifically prevent or treat Covid-19. However, all people should continue to follow UK Government advice on daily vitamin D supplementation to maintain bone and muscle health during the pandemic”. The UK Government advise that all people should consider taking a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D during autumn and winter months. They also advise that people whose skin has little to no exposure to sunlight and ethnic minority groups with dark skin, from African, Afro-Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds, should consider taking a vitamin D supplement all year round.

Since there is no evidence to support taking vitamin D supplementation to prevent Covid there are no plans to promote the importance of vitamin D with regard to Covid. However, we will keep this fully under review and keep our eyes open for any new evidence that should come to light. If we see anything on these lines, we will of course review that position. As with everything in relation to this pandemic our position is that we are taking the best advice, listening to what is going on, and making the best judgment we can, and just keep moving forwards as things develop.

Supplementary Question

To protect the NHS and care services, free flu vaccinations are available for older residents, and now to shielding residents, care home staff and their families. There are already some worrying signs that there will not be enough vaccinations available for those who want them, with some local providers having no vaccine in stock. Do we believe that there will be enough flu vaccinations available this year and how will we handle any shortfall?

Answer

The CCG and wider BOB flu team are in wider contact with the NHS and Public Health to monitor and oversee the successful supply and provision of flub jab services for patients across Berkshire West. So far, we have not had any issues or delays reported to us re the delivery of pre orders to practices. We anticipate further guidance and advice this week from NHSE, explaining how our practices can order nationally procured vaccines. The getting of this stock is vital to ensuring our practices can further achieve the national vaccination targets, set by NHSE, and meet the additional patient demand that we have seen this year.

Pharmacies will also have access to ordering from the NHSE stock in a few weeks. All I will say is that I know from sitting in other meetings of this Board, that stock was ordered in January before, for the winter. But obviously stock ordered in January 2020 was before the pandemic hit.

Katie Summers:

That response is exactly what we would say as well from Charles regarding the flu. We have not necessarily seen anything at all that is a supply issue at all, at the moment. Actually, we keep on getting general updates directly. We are working very, very closely with the local Public Health teams, as Charles said. We are very much on top of things.

The only comment I was going to supply for the vitamin D piece is that Charles is very, very right. We will actually take a decision when anything physically changes, and one thing that we have in the health service, we have what is known as a Thames Valley Priorities Committee and they respond so, so quickly to the latest evidence. That Priorities Committee, if there is anything that changes relating to the BAME community, they will act on it straight away and there will be policy that goes out across all clinicians to give them the guidance. That is just backing up what Charles was saying about the vitamin D.

Councillor Rachel Bishop-Firth:

I personally have been unable to book for a flu jab vaccination. I spoke to the pharmacy at one of the local supermarkets who said that they did not know when the stock would be coming in.

Katie Summers:

This is the ongoing thing. They are prioritising certain areas and certain groups at the moment. It might be the fact that, Rachel, you look very, very young, and it might be to do with that factor as well. So please do not worry about it. Have you been contacted by your GP practice yet? That might be the reason why then. What they are doing are, they are doing almost like a wave of individuals, so you are probably not in that wave at the moment, so that is the reason why. Please be reassured that it is going to be rolled out. What they are having to do is get the stock in and then they have to do certain waves at certain points, and that is the process that we take forwards.

21. STRATEGY INTO ACTION

Ingrid Slade presented the Strategy into Action.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Three Actions Groups were being established, each of which aligned with one of the three key priorities of the Wokingham Wellbeing Strategy; creating physically active communities, reducing social isolation and loneliness, and narrowing health inequalities. The aim of each group was to develop a stronger understanding of the performance and successes of work being carried out both inside and outside the Council, to help with future planning.
- The Physically Active Communities Group would be co-chaired by Sports and Leisure. The first meeting of the group would take place in the first week of November.
- The Reducing Isolation Group would be co-chaired by Phil Cook of Involve. Discussions would take place regarding available evidence to assess the level of need in the Borough. The Group would hopefully meet before the end of the year.
- The Health Inequalities Group would work closely with Children's Services. It would hopefully meet for the first time in early December.
- Draft terms of reference had been drawn up and would be agreed by the individual Groups.
- The Groups would have a standard reporting mechanism into the Wellbeing Board.

- Councillor Margetts suggested that Jake Morrison from the voluntary sector be invited to be involved with the Reducing Social Isolation and Loneliness Group. Covid would have a huge impact on the work of this. Ingrid Slade re-emphasised that the voluntary sector would be heavily involved in this group. Phil Cook commented that he was co chairing as part of the Friendship Alliance (Age UK Berkshire, LINK visiting scheme and Wokingham Volunteer Centre) which had been very involved in the Covid response. There was a Voluntary Sector Action Group meeting every Monday.
- Martin Sloan added that part of the reason for establishing the Friendship Alliance was to tackle social isolation. Funding had been put in place to tackle social isolation. Martin Sloan suggested that a presentation on the progress being made in tackling social isolation be provided to a future meeting.
- Katie Summers commented that many of the long-term success markers for the Reducing Social Isolation and Loneliness Group, related to children. She questioned how the education support services would be involved in this. Ingrid Slade and Carol Cammiss agreed to take this forwards. They were also to have involvement of care leavers or representatives of care leavers.
- With regards to the Narrowing Health Inequalities Group, Katie Summers indicated that the NHS had been set an action plan on reducing health inequalities and had eight impact changes that had to be delivered by December next year, including; to protect the most vulnerable from Covid, restoring NHS services inclusively, digital inclusion, proactive engagement and prevention, mental health, leadership, completing timely data sets, and collaborative local plan and delivery. Increasing the accuracy and availability of data was vital. Katie Summers offered to work with Ingrid Slade to help tie these eight priorities into the work of the Reducing Health Inequalities Group.
- The Board were informed that there had been some changes to the GP contract and that each GP practice had to increase the coding of ethnicity in their patients as it was now mandated within their contract.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the progress in the establishment of three Action Groups, as outlined in the accompanying presentation (Appendix A), to deliver on the Wellbeing Board objectives, be reviewed.
- 2) the co-chairs, key stakeholders/membership, Action Group objectives, proposed terms of reference, meeting agendas and frequency of meetings and deliverables, be noted.
- 3) input from Board members on these Action Groups and progress to date be invited.
- 4) the summary of progress captured to end of September 2020 be noted. These short summary reports will remain in place and until formal reporting is implemented (Appendix B).

22. DESIGNING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS UPDATE

Martin Sloan provided an update in Designing our Neighbourhoods.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- Martin Sloan advised the Board that the workshop would put back until later, due to other priorities around Covid. However, work was still ongoing at neighbourhood level.
- Katie Summers referred to the successful focus on mental health. With the support of the Citizens Advice Bureau, the 'One front door' service was being rolled out. Some motivational interview training had also been carried out and 30% of attendees had been from the Council.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

23. COVID SITUATION REPORT

Ingrid Slade provided an update on the Covid situation.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The national and local picture was of a rise in Covid cases. Wokingham had had 820 cases since the beginning of the outbreak, a rate of 479 per 100,000. This was well below the England average of 827 per 100,000.
- The increase in cases represented an increase in community transition. There had been a rise in cases across the Borough.
- Wokingham Borough continued to have no excess mortality due to Covid at present.

RESOLVED: That the Covid situation update be noted.

24. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Board considered the forward programme.

Councillor Margetts advised the Board of prioritisation sessions regarding the Joint Berkshire West Health and Wellbeing Strategy on 5 November 2-3.30pm and 10 November 2-3.30pm.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be noted.