

Meeting	City of York Outbreak Management Advisory Board
Date	19 May 2021
Present	<p>Councillors Aspden (Chair), Runciman (Vice-Chair) and Douglas (Substitute for Cllr Myers)</p> <p>Sharon Stoltz - Director of Public Health for the City of York, CYC Siân Balsom – Manager, Healthwatch York Marc Bichtemann – Managing Director, First York Lucy Brown – Director of Communications, York and Scarborough Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust James Farrar – Local Enterprise Partnership <i>[from 6pm]</i> Professor Charlie Jeffery - Vice Chancellor and President, University of York Stephanie Porter – Director of Primary Care, NHS Vale of York CCG Alison Semmence – Chief Executive, York CVS Dr Sally Tyrer – General Practitioner, North Yorkshire Local Medical Committee <i>[from 6pm]</i> Lisa Winward – Chief Constable, North Yorkshire Police</p>
Apologies	<p>Councillor Myers Ian Floyd - Chief Operating Officer, CYC Amanda Hatton - Corporate Director of People, CYC Philip Allott – Police, Fire &amp; Crime Commissioner Phil Mettam - Track and Trace Lead for Humber, Coast and Vale, NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group Dr Simon Padfield - Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, PHE Mike Padgham – Independent Care Group</p>

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In Attendance

Claire Foale - Head of Communications,  
Customer Services and Digital, CYC  
Fiona Phillips – Assistant Director of Public  
Health for the City of York, CYC

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### **136. Declarations of Interest**

Board Members had no interests to declare.

### **137. Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 April 2021**

The Board signed off the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held on 7 April 2021.

There were two actions arising from the April meeting; one to schedule in a further report on vaccine equality and one to schedule in a progress update on the recommendations arising from the recent peer challenge. These have been scheduled into the Board's forward plan.

### **138. Current Situation in York - Presentation**

The Assistant Director of Public Health gave a presentation which included updates on the number of new cases in the last seven days; our position in the region; NHS pathways triages in the previous seven days; the number of people in York Hospital with Covid-19 and ward level detail. The presentation also provided updates on testing; contact tracing and vaccination.

The following were the key areas highlighted

As at 19 May 2021:

- York had the lowest number of Covid-19 cases in the region and a lower number than the national average;
- There were three people in hospital with Covid-19;
- In the most recent period (01.05.2021 to 07.05.2021) there had been zero deaths due to Covid-19;
- There were no specific areas of the city that were a cause for concern in terms of numbers of cases and cases were mostly within the 20 to 40 age group;
- There were a small number of cases within schools but not enough to be classed as an outbreak;
- There were no outbreaks in care homes or work places;

- There was a site at the Designer Outlet for staff testing;
- There was a new test site at St. William's College, set up in partnership with York Minster, for visitors and for people who worked in the city centre.

Work was ongoing to encourage people to undertake regular symptom free testing in light of a number of new Covid variants. Public health staff were door knocking in certain areas of the city to offer home testing kits and to encourage vaccination uptake. There were still people who did not know that home test kits were available and Outbreak Management Advisory Board members were asked to disseminate this information within their own organisations and networks.

The vaccination programme was going well and those in the 30+ age group were about to be invited for their first dose. In light of new variants the programme had also been accelerated for those who had already had their first vaccination and were awaiting their second. Additionally the opening hours of the vaccination site would be extended over the weekend.

The final slide of the presentation covered uptake of the vaccine at ward level. There were some differences and a more detailed report around this was due to be presented to this board at their July meeting. Currently both 'door knocking' in some areas of the city and telephone calls were being made to those who had not yet taken up the offer of vaccination to try and increase uptake. Work was also ongoing to look at a possible city centre venue for vaccination and how pharmacies might be able to support the programme.

The reasons that people were not having a vaccination were being collated and these included concerns around the safety and efficacy of the vaccines and practical issues such as getting to a vaccination site and childcare.

The presentation was added to the agenda following the meeting.

The Board raised the following in relation to the presentation:

- Whether the report being prepared around vaccine inequality would include pro-active interventions to encourage uptake; it was confirmed that it would.
- The Director of Public Health (DPH) confirmed that one barrier identified was getting time off work to go for the vaccination; the DPH would be writing a letter, in partnership with NHS colleagues,

this would be sent to all employers in the city encouraging them to give their employees paid time off to be vaccinated.

- A question was asked around the opening of hospitality venues in the city and what support was being given to these businesses. In response it was noted that the majority of businesses were committed to working with the council and the public health team to ensure that their businesses were as safe as possible for staff, customers and visitors.
- There was a question around the role of community groups in vaccination uptake and it was noted that sharing information about the vaccine reliably was key and community groups could help with this.
- A follow on question was asked around counteracting misinformation and reference was made to a leaflet in circulation with incorrect information about the vaccine contained within it. The Head of Communications was using the Behavioural Insights Team at Public Health England to myth bust misinformation.

Additionally the Head of Communications took the following away:

**Action:** to look at whether vaccine uptake is lower in the areas where the leaflet containing misinformation had been circulating.

- For the localised contact tracing service, funding was in place until the end of this financial year with current sites being funded until the end of June. Further national guidance was expected about this soon.
- What was happening in York in relation to the variant first identified in India? It was confirmed that there were 13 different variants and only a few of these had been seen in York. However, the variant identified in India was highly transmissible and it may be that cases would emerge over the coming weeks, especially as Covid restrictions were relaxed. Any rise in cases may not have the same impact as they did in December, with the Kent variant, due to an increased number of people having been vaccinated
- Businesses were cautiously optimistic about the relaxation of restrictions although there were some concerns about the final lifting on 21<sup>st</sup> June being delayed
- People were returning to using public transport

The Board noted the update.

### 139. York Outbreak Management Plan

The Director of Public Health confirmed that she had received comments on the draft plan from the Universities and Higher

Education Sub-Group and the areas these related to had been strengthened.

It was confirmed that the section of the plan covering membership would be updated before publication,

The Outbreak Management Advisory Board were asked to approve the plan for publication and were requested to use the plan to raise awareness within their own organisations and networks. This was agreed by the Board.

#### **140. Update from Sub-Group: Universities and Higher Education Establishments**

The Vice Chancellor of the University of York presented the short update report contained within the agenda papers and highlighted the following:

- There had been very few cases within students since last reporting;
- Students were accessing testing and testing rates were high
- Many students had returned to face to face teaching and the low rate of cases in light of this was encouraging;
- Universities and Higher Education facilities were now thinking ahead to the next academic year starting in September and this included a number of different scenarios;
- Planning was underway with Nimbuscare around how a vaccination programme might be delivered for returning students and international students.

The Board noted the update.

#### **141. Communications Update**

The Head of Communications presented the slides included within the agenda papers. This included information on the outbreak communications plan and progress made since the last meeting. She reiterated some of the key messages such as hands, face, space and fresh air and confirmed that there had been increased communications around testing. Additionally there had more communications to encourage people to increase their activity levels to avoid deconditioning.

A question was asked around how much of the information was available in languages other than English and it was confirmed that people could request information in any language. Some written

communications which had been going to all households regularly were now being reduced to quarterly.

The Local Medical Committee representative reported that GPs were now seeing people in surgery who had not been accessing testing. They were presenting, in surgery, with Covid like symptoms which was concerning. She reiterated the importance of encouraging people to access regular and appropriate testing and felt that there was more to do around communicating this. GPs could not routinely provide testing as this could lead to issues around infection control.

It was confirmed that the Our City newsletter included information on how to access testing but the Head of Communications agreed to look at introducing further communications around normalising testing. Additionally the DPH agreed to follow up on the conversation around when testing in GP surgeries might be appropriate and how best to manage this.

**Action:** The DPH to continue the conversation re: GP concerns around testing in GP surgeries with the representative of the Local Medical Committee and the Director of Primary Care at NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group.

#### **142. Items for Next Agenda**

The Chair confirmed that there was now a forward plan for the Board and the additional items identified within the minutes of the last meeting had now been added to this.

#### **143. Dates of Future Meetings**

The agreed dates of future meetings were as follows:

- 9 June 2021
- 7 July 2021

Dates and invites to meetings for September 2021 onwards would shortly be sent to Board members.

#### **144. Any Other Business**

The Board had no other business to discuss.

Cllr K Aspden, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.46 pm].