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# Dudley Covid-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan

March 2021



# PLAY YOUR PART...



... so I can cuddle my grandma again



... so I can meet with my friends again



... so I can support my team again



... so I can meet with my family again

[www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)



Play your part -  
protect Dudley borough

Dudley  
Metropolitan Borough Council

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# 1. Foreword and executive summary

We are in unprecedented times there is no doubt; over the last 12 months we have learnt so much about Covid-19, the devastating impact it has had on our residents and communities and on life as we knew it.

Many people have lost their lives and others scarred from the effects of the virus in one way or another. And yet throughout the pandemic the resilience and determination of Dudley people and businesses has shone through.

We want to thank people living and working in Dudley for all they continue to do to keep themselves and their families, friends and communities safe.

Whilst the vaccine brings us hope and we see a slight relaxation of some of the rules, some people may be tempted to bend the rules, but we must all continue to follow the guidance to protect our communities and work our way out of lockdown safely.

We can all play our part by keeping our distance, wearing face coverings, practising good hand hygiene and getting tested.

The Dudley local outbreak management plan (LOMP) has been developed by Dudley Council and its key partners to provide the system-wide response needed to manage COVID-19 and to continue to mitigate the impact on the health and social care system, communities and local economy as well as preparing Dudley for the next phase of the journey to recovery, including living with Covid-19.

## **The plan:**

- aligns Dudley borough's response to covid-19 with the government roadmap, refreshed Contain Framework and local partner and regional plans.
- acts as a touchpoint for the approach to local outbreaks incorporating the knowledge gained since it was first developed.
- builds upon and captures best practice in Dudley using case studies and stories from local communities, volunteers and staff.
- helps inform and provide insights for the regional and national teams on Dudley's approach and response.
- defines the local governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities and partnership contributions to each aspect of the Covid-19 response.
- highlights the importance of addressing inequalities that Covid-19 has shed a light on, including mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on some of our most vulnerable communities.
- will be reviewed with partners on a regular basis.



**Kevin O'Keefe**  
Chief Executive



**Karen Wright**  
Director for Public  
Health

## 1.1 Dudley's Local Outbreak Plan on a Page

### VISION

**Build confident and resilient communities**

### OBJECTIVES

- Reduce spread of Covid-19 and prevent a third wave
- Reduce direct and indirect health, social and economic consequences
- Identify and manage outbreaks and flare ups early
- Enable social and economic activity
- Support high risk settings and vulnerable communities
- Reduce health inequalities
- Increase population immunity through roll-out of vaccination.
- Improve engagement with public to build trust and participation
- Help to return life to as normal as possible

### KEY PRIORITIES

- Improve contact tracing offer - sign up to Local Zero, establish a community team
- Action on enduring transmission
- Continue to strengthen outbreak investigation and rapid response
- Test our processes for surge testing in response to VOC
- Living with Covid-19
- Invest in our voluntary sector to build capacity
- Manage impacts of the lifting of the lockdown
- Develop a resilient and agile workforce
- Promote a MECC approach to supporting Covid-19 behaviour
- Grow the Covid-19 Community Champions programme
- Provide practical, social and emotional support for those who need it
- Renew focus on working in neighbourhoods with communities
- Develop the Future Council/ Forging a Future vision
- Understand the impact of Covid-19 on inequalities and mental health
- Review our rapid testing offer to ensure equality of access

### ENABLERS

- Extensive communications and engagement with our communities
- Monitoring, evaluation and assurance
- Co-design "hyper local" / neighbourhood approaches with communities
- Use intelligence and insights
- Develop strong relationships with our communities and organisations
- Develop sustainable processes
- Build on and share local and national best practice
- Engage, listen and adapt our plans
- Prevention at the forefront of all elements of our plan

## 1.2 Summary of what we have achieved

We have successfully worked jointly with our local partners, organisations, businesses and public to implement our response to the pandemic through:

- creating effective agile systems for sharing hard and soft intelligence at a local, subregional and regional level to inform actions to best protect and support our local communities.
- undertaking a comprehensive and agile communications and engagement to build trust and participation in the response.
- continuing to provide key council services to our residents.
- agreeing a process for data sharing between key local and regional organisations and data integration from a number of sources. Through automation of data reporting we have been able to provide rapid and frequent data reports to all partners. This has ensured that we are able to identify issues, trends, outbreaks at an early stage. As a result, we have responded to concerns in a timely fashion and reduced the risk of transmission.
- ensuring that our frontline and key workers have access to testing. Establishing local testing sites where infection numbers were highest and testing rates were low. We were one of the first areas to roll out asymptomatic testing in the community. We have rapidly extended the testing access by introducing testing in pharmacies. This model is being replicated in other areas now.
- providing a local seven day contact tracing offer which has resulted in an increase in success rates for contacting residents who tested positive and supporting them effectively. We have demonstrated the importance of understanding our local community to connect with and support people.
- providing guidance, support, communications, we have established strong working relationships with our high risk settings and locations and have developed a system wide approach to the issues of Covid-19. Working as a single voice to get message and guidance has ensured that settings can implement Covid-19 secure measures and respond effectively to outbreaks.
- supporting schools and businesses to re-open in a Covid-19 secure manner including rolling out of asymptomatic testing and assisting with putting infection prevention and control measures in the settings.
- providing a community response to Covid-19 in the borough through working with voluntary and community groups and the volunteer sector to mobilise essential social support for the most vulnerable.
- supporting self-isolating individuals who are not eligible for government grant through Dudley local welfare and discretionary grants.
- establishing a team of Covid-19 business advisors to visit public-facing businesses including shops, banks, takeaways and hairdressers to offer advice and support.
- establishing Covid-19 Community Champions programme, with nearly 200 local people, disseminating key messages and feeding back from their networks to inform the Covid-19 response.

## 1.3 Summary of our priorities

Dudley outbreak management plan's vision is to develop a model that will **build confidence and resilience in our communities**, to ensure that they are able to understand and manage their risk appropriately, and they trust and participate in our response to Covid-19 pandemic. We will achieve this through:

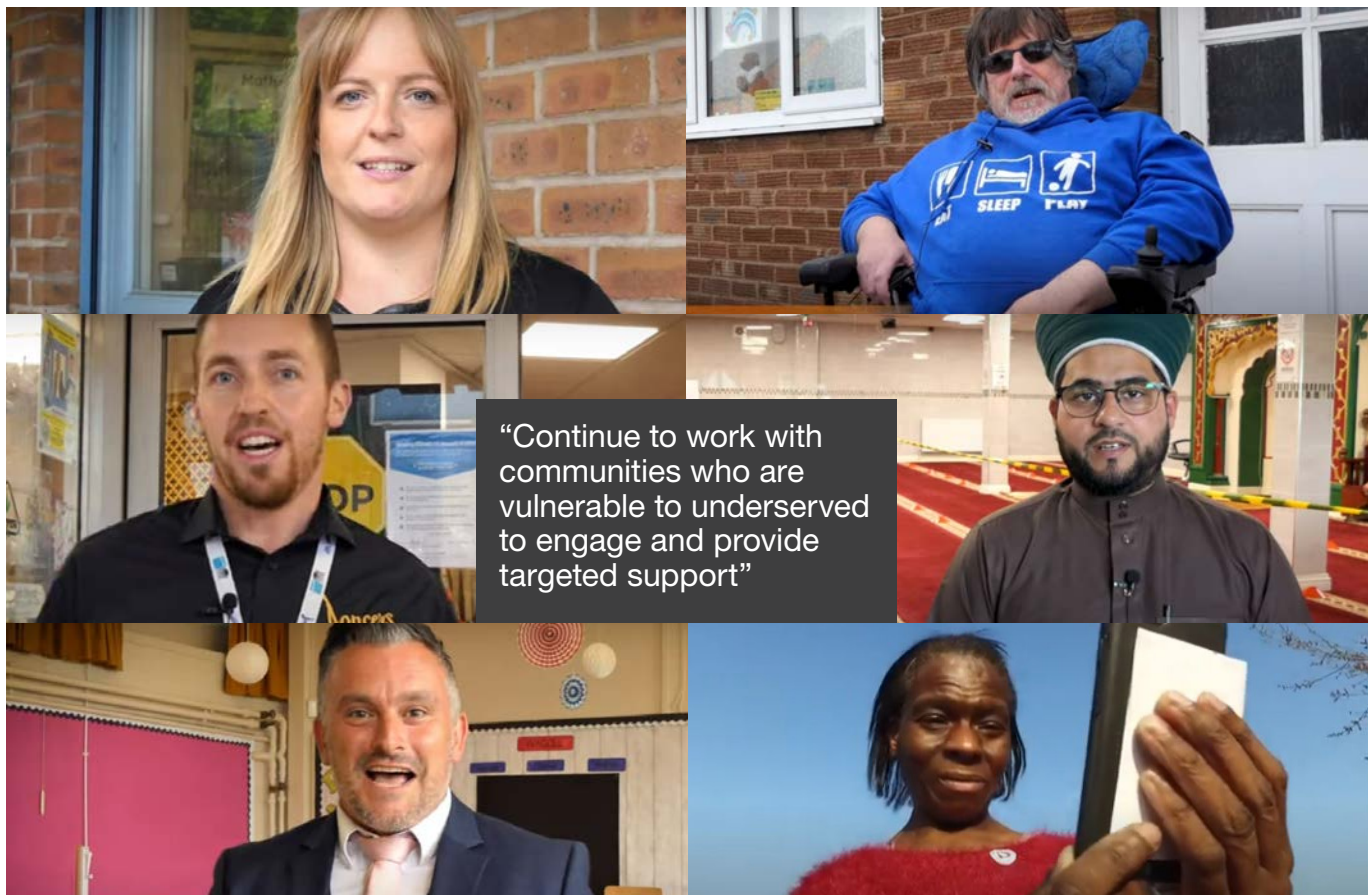
- developing strong relationships with our communities, businesses, educational settings and organisations.
- engaging, listening and adapting our plans.
- co-designing “hyper local”/neighbourhood approaches with communities.
- using intelligence and insights.
- building on and sharing local and national best practice.

**To support this, we will continue to build on our current offer:**

Action	Lead	Deadline
Understand the impact of Covid-19 on inequalities - Health and Wellbeing Board Commissioned needs assessment	Health and Wellbeing Board	June 2021
Develop the Future Council/ Forging a Future approach reflecting the learning, challenges and opportunities	Forging a Future Group	June 2021
Renew focus on working in neighbourhoods with communities- investing in new approaches	Forging a Future Group / DCVS	June 2021
Ensure the resilience and agility of our workforce to implement council priorities and respond to surges and new challenges - People's Strategy	Workforce Subgroup	June 2021
Review our symptom-free testing offer to ensure equality of access and we will be guided by data to ensure the model is fit for purpose.	Testing Subgroup	On-going
Participate in the roll out of the community collect model of the symptom-free testing	Testing Subgroup	March/ April 2021
Test our processes for surge PCR testing	Surge Capacity Group	April 2021
Continue to respond to enduring transmission	Test and Trace Cell	March – June 2021
Provide practical, social and emotional support for those who need it	Welfare Support Sub-group	On-going
Provide financial support for people on low incomes who are unable to work from home and will lose income through self-isolating	Welfare Support Group	On-going
Invest in our voluntary sector to build capacity	Communities Group	On-going
Understand the emerging needs of children and young people and make the most of new opportunities (jobs and approaches to learning)	Children's and Young People's Alliance	June 2021



Action	Lead	Dadline
Survey children and young people via a health-related behaviour questionnaire for insight and lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, to shape our future priorities and recovery planning.	Children’s and Young People’s Alliance	March 2021
Expand our local contact tracing offer by launching “Local 0 (zero)” contact tracing offer including one-stop model of contact tracing and welfare support	Local Contact Tracing Subgroup	April 2021
Improve our contact tracing rates through establishing a community contact tracing team	Local Contact Tracing Subgroup	April 2021
Promote a MECC approach to supporting Covid-19-safe behaviour, including the skills development required across organisations	Health Protection Board	June 2021
Grow the Covid-19 Community Champions programme	Communications and Engagement Group	June 2021
Monitor the impact of Covid-19 on mental health, prioritise improvement of mental health outcomes and undertake suicide prevention activity	Health Protection Board	June 2021
Continue to work with communities who are vulnerable to underserved to engage and provide targeted support	Communications and Engagement Group	On-going



[Click here to view these videos that were launched in September](#)

**40%** of population vaccinated with at least one dose (102,430)



**£46.2m** of business rates retail discount



**£2.8m** of council tax reduction hardship payments



**£77m** of business grants



**£481,000** of test and trace isolation payments



**£994,000** of discretionary housing payments



**4,079** deaths registered by telephone



**3,715** births registered



**315,500** calls to Dudley Council Plus (+11.5%)



# Supporting our residents and businesses

Our response from start of lockdown on March 23 to February 28



**12,661** digital library downloads in February (+94%)

**103** library story time/craft/author Facebook videos viewed 32,466 times



**863** driving theory tests taken online



**1,100** emergency assistance grants awarded for food, fuel and essential items



**30,149** emergency housing repairs



**1,046** void housing repairs



BCFB provided 95 tonnes of food equalling **190,043** meals from 11 centres (+24%)



With partners and hub deliveries, BCFB provided **293,141** meals (+30%)



**15,389** people were provided with a 12-meal food parcel



## 2. Introduction

The Dudley local outbreak management plan (LOMP) has been developed by Dudley Council and its key partners to provide the system-wide response needed to manage Covid-19 and to continue to mitigate the impact on the health and social care system, communities and local economy as well as preparing Dudley for the next phase of the journey to recovery, including living with Covid-19.

### The plan:

- highlights what we have achieved to date and key priorities for the next phase of our response.
- aligns Dudley's response with the government Roadmap out of Lockdown, refreshed Contain Framework, and local and regional plans.
- acts as a touchpoint for the approach to local outbreaks incorporating the knowledge gained since it was first developed.
- builds upon and captures best practice in Dudley using case studies and stories from local communities, volunteers and staff.
- helps inform and provide insights for the regional and national teams on Dudley's approach and response.
- defines the local governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities, and partnership contributions to each aspect of our response.
- highlights the importance of addressing inequalities that the pandemic has shed a light on, including mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on some of our most vulnerable communities.

Finally, and most importantly the plan demonstrates how we will continue to build resilience and confidence at a locality level with our residents and communities to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks of Covid-19 using the principles of:

- what we will do as organisations and employers
- what individuals and communities can do for themselves and each other
- what we can do together

Our first Dudley Outbreak Control Plan was published 1 July 2020. This revised outbreak control plan now takes into account the vaccination programme, the Roadmap out of lockdown, and evolving arrangements for test, trace and isolate.

The Roadmap out of Lockdown provides a national plan to slowly move out of lockdown, get things back to normal and do it in the safest possible way.

The steps for the progressive easing of restrictions are set out at [Covid-19 Response: Spring 2021](#)

The [Contain Framework](#) sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks.

## 2.1 Objectives:

Dudley's outbreak management plan will achieve the following objectives through working with the public, businesses, institutions and other local community partners:

We will:

- reduce the spread of Covid-19.
- reduce direct and indirect health, social and economic consequences of Covid-19.
- identify and manage outbreaks and flare ups early.
- support high risk places and locations, and vulnerable communities.
- reduce [health inequalities](#) linked to Covid-19.
- protect our local health and care system to continue to provide urgent and necessary treatment, care and support for residents.
- help to return life to as normal as possible, for as many people as possible in a way that is COVID secure.
- increase population immunity through roll-out of vaccination.
- enable social and economic activity.
- build and maintain public trust, resilience and confidence.

## 2.2 Principles:

Our outbreak plan continues to be underpinned by the five following principles:

- 1 **Prevention** will be at the forefront of all elements of our plan. All key themes will have preventive and response approaches to meet the objectives.
- 2 The plan will build on our existing **local, regional and national partnerships and systems** to provide a co-ordinated response to outbreaks including provision and **timely response of sufficient resources**.
- 3 The plan will establish new arrangements for **engagement with communities**. This is key to building trust and ensuring public participation in the Test and Trace programme.
- 4 A programme of **monitoring and evaluation** to review whether we are achieving our objectives will be in place. Outcomes will be shared with partners and local boards.
- 5 Develop **sustainable processes** to provide the continued response to Covid-19 and to support the recovery from the pandemic.

## 2.3 Building on existing partnerships with communities and local health and care systems

Dudley has a strong history of collaborative working across local health and care system to improve the health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities across the borough. Our plan is supported by a number of local and regional partnerships:



## 2.3.1. Health Protection Cooperation Agreement

Underpinning our local outbreak control plan to the pandemic, is the Health Protection Cooperation Agreement which sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of partners (Dudley CCG, Dudley Group of Hospitals and other partners) in responding to incidents collectively.

This agreement has been successfully used to bring the various organisations in the borough and region together, to deal successfully with outbreaks of infectious disease. Very early in the current pandemic it has been used to mobilise NHS resources.

The document has also been used by Public Health England as an example of best practice and by other systems to develop their responses.

## 2.3.2 Forging a Future for All - the borough vision

The [Forging a Future for All borough vision](#) sets out seven aspirations for the borough by 2030. This plan will help lay down the roadmap to ensuring that we continue with our planned trajectory to meet these seven ambitions, which were developed with extensive engagement with partners, communities and the public.

An **affordable and attractive** place to live with a green network of high-quality parks, waterways and nature reserves that are valued by local people and visitors

A place where everybody has the **education and skills** they need, and where outstanding local schools, colleges and universities secure excellent results for their learners

A place of **healthy, resilient, safe communities** with high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future

Better connected with **high quality and affordable transport**, combining road, tram, rail, and new cycling and walking infrastructure

Renowned as home to a host of **innovative and prosperous businesses**, operating in high quality locations with space to grow, sustainable energy supplies and investing in their workforce

A place to **visit and enjoy** that drives opportunity, contributing to its ambitious future while celebrating its pioneering past

Full of **vibrant towns and neighbourhoods** offering a new mix of leisure, faith cultural, residential and shopping uses

In Dudley we are inspired by the things that local people do together in their communities. We have listened to stories from local people, we have heard from people we have never heard from before and the stories give powerful examples of the contribution people and groups make to become resilient communities. These stories highlighted the outcomes we should deliver. These are:

- Increased sense of belonging and community - **Feeling part of something**
- Increased sense of social connection to others - **Being together and staying in touch**
- Increased sense of autonomy and control - **Having choice and being able to make my own decisions**
- Increased opportunity to contribute and give back - **Getting involved and contributing**
- Increased sense of purpose - **Having a reason to get up in the morning**
- Increased opportunities to learn - **Sharing skills and knowledge and learning more**
- Increased numbers of people being active - **Getting out and about**

### 2.3.3. Dudley Council 8 point Covid-19 plan

The Council's response to date has been supported by an action plan which summaries our key priorities to address to mitigate the impact on local residents.

The 8 point plan assisted the local outbreak control plan by supporting planning and mobilising additional resources as required. Moving forward this plan will be replaced with the Local Outbreak Management Programme Plan (See Appendix 5)

Objectives	
1. Deliver our statutory responsibilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To do everything that we can, within our ability and available resources, to protect the health and wellbeing of our residents, working with the NHS, Local Resilience Forum and our Forging a Future Partnership</li> <li>2. Reviewing and maintaining democratic governance, decision making and community leadership</li> <li>3. Deliver our statutory Public Health responsibilities</li> </ol>
2. Mobilise and support critical council functions and services (including commissioned services)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Continue to review and prioritise business critical functions in line with business continuity plans</li> <li>5. Redeploy staff to focus on areas of greatest priority</li> <li>6. Advice, support and direct commissioned services to support wider system response as necessary</li> <li>7. Preparedness to move through the planning response and recovery phases of the incident</li> </ol>
3. Mobilise community response	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Working with DCVS and the Black Country Foodbank to coordinate and safely manage the offers of help and support from within the community. Supported by council staff who will be redeployed from non-key services</li> <li>9. To take an enabling/facilitative role to support longer term sustainability of the voluntary community sector and to building strong resilient communities</li> </ol>
4. Protect the most vulnerable	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Prioritising support to the most at risk groups in Dudley, such as the elderly and those with long term pre-existing medical conditions, and those clinically extremely vulnerable.</li> <li>11. Fulfilling our responsibility as a corporate parent to support vulnerable children and families</li> <li>12. Providing food, medication social support and shelter to the most vulnerable</li> <li>13. Responding to health and wellbeing concerns arising for other vulnerable groups, such as those facing poverty, those using food banks, those at risk from domestic abuse and the homeless</li> </ol>

5. Support and protect the workforce	14. Continuing to review and updating HR policies and resources to support home-working and redeployment of staff to business critical functions in line with national guidance 15. Providing timely guidance and support to staff on Covid-19 related issues, including infection prevention and PPE
6. Support frontline services	16. Supporting NHS and Social Care partners to manage cases and outbreaks of Covid-19 17. Working with hospitals to support transfers of care and supporting providers of social care with advice, guidance and PPE 18. Ongoing review and expansion of bereavement journey from preparation for end of life to supporting the bereaved post funeral arrangements 19. Support and work closely with all early years' settings and schools including academies to ensure they provide support to vulnerable/ key worker children
7. Support our economy, its financial resilience and recovery	20. Advising local businesses and charities on Covid-19 guidance in relation to business closures, business rate relief, government grants and business loans 21. Allocating business support grant funding in timely manner 22. Overseeing and reconciling the financial and organisational impact
8. Communication	23. Distribute and monitor key messages to key stakeholders and channels: business, community and partners, press and social media, internal, residents, culture/leisure, mayoral/events and members 24. Interpretation, analysis and dissemination of data

It is evident that the pandemic has highlighted the significance of our ambition to be 'home of warm welcomes and close-knit communities'.

Living and working in a place of healthy, resilient, safe communities is even more important to our communities than it's ever been.

5 November - 2 December

## National restrictions

- You must stay at home
- You must work from home if you can
- Only go out for food, medical reasons, exercise or work
- Avoid travel unless essential
- Schools and essential shops remain open
- Remember hands, face, space

Find out more at [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Play your part - protect Dudley borough





### 3. Dudley and Covid-19 - understanding our communities

Dudley borough is proud to be the historic capital of the Black Country. With a rich industrial past, built on the hard graft and work ethic of local people, the borough remains home to a host of innovative and prosperous businesses.

Residents live in close-knit communities across a borough made up of vibrant and diverse towns and neighbourhoods and the borough has a growing visitor economy which contributes to our ambitious future whilst celebrating our pioneering past.

Through its local schools and colleges, including ongoing exciting developments at Dudley College, the borough is working to ensure it is home to the skilled workforce of tomorrow.

And perhaps surprisingly, given our industrial past, Dudley borough is also home to many places of inspiring natural beauty. Approximately 30% of the borough is green space through its range of award-winning parks and nature reserves.

In the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019) Dudley is ranked 74 out of 151 upper tier local authorities.

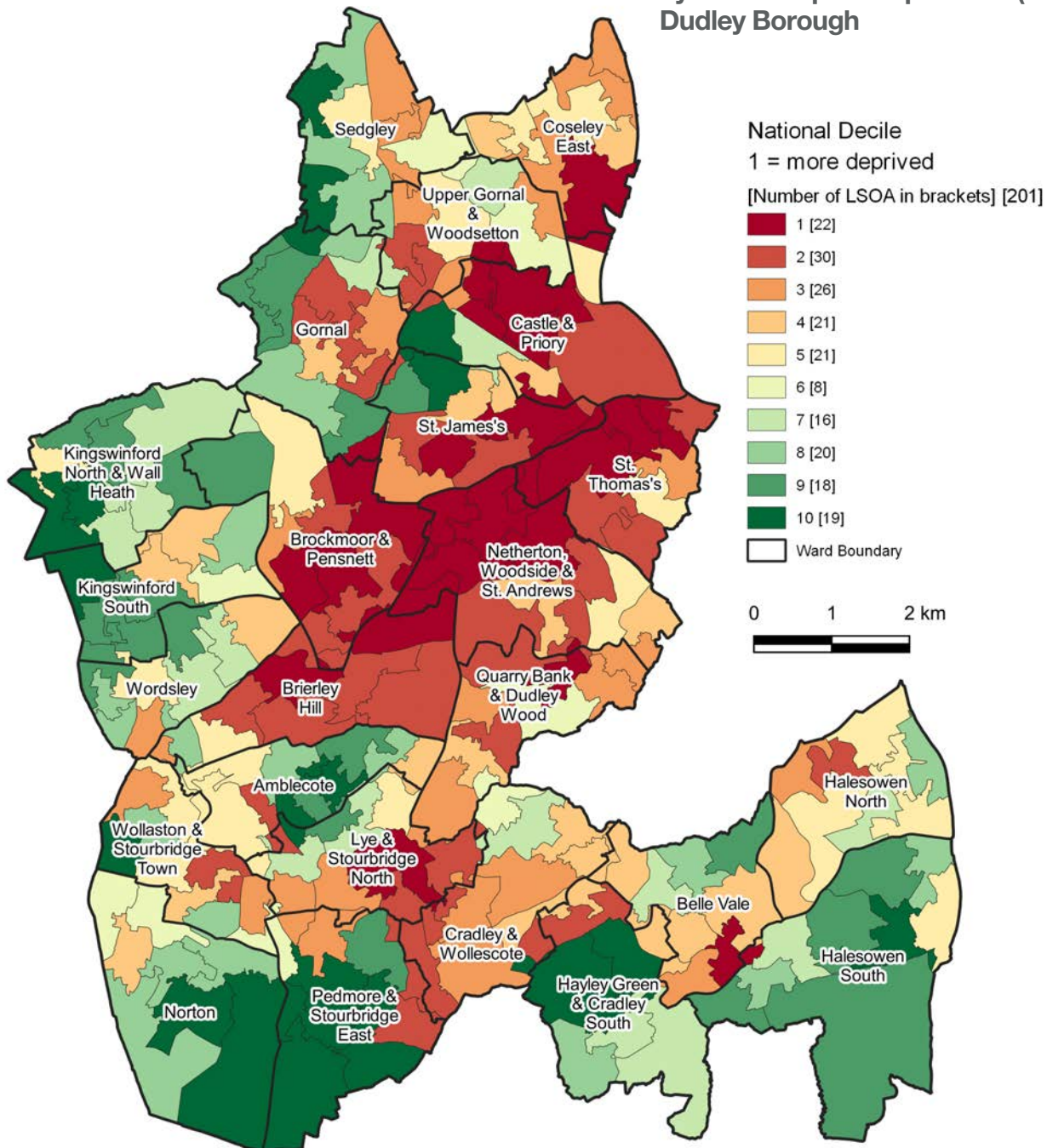


### 3.1 Make-up of Dudley population

Dudley Borough has a population of roughly 330,000 people. The environment is predominantly urban although a number of parks and green spaces are dotted throughout. A greater proportion of the population are elderly compared to the national average.

Most residents are White British with around 11% of residents from ethnic minority groups however the proportion of ethnic minority residents is higher in the younger age ranges. Although Dudley is centrally ranked nationally in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019) this masks significant variation and areas of the borough, especially around Dudley Town and Brierley Hill, area very deprived. For further details please follow the link to the Understanding Dudley report.

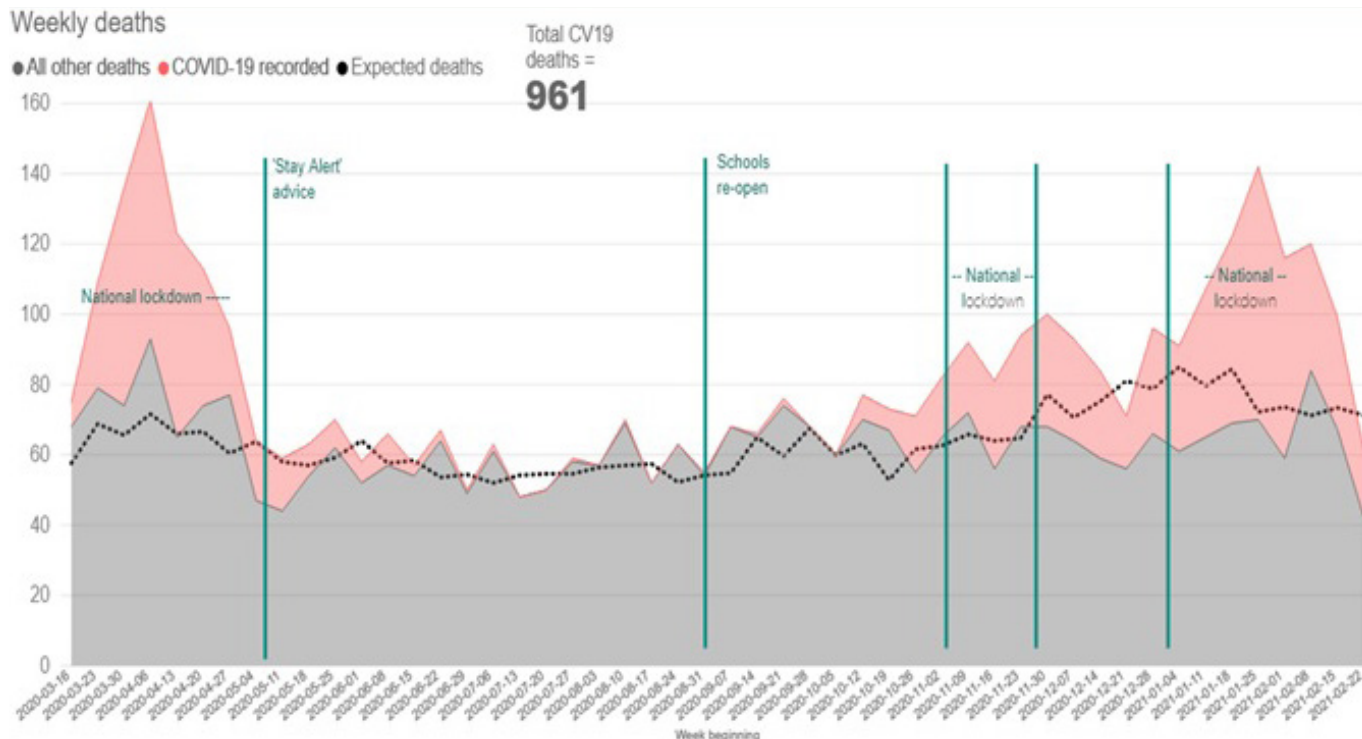
**Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) Dudley Borough**




Source: Indices of Deprivation 2019. MHCLG © Crown copyright and database right 2019. Ordnance Survey 100019596


### 3.1.1. Death rates Covid-19 cases and excess deaths


In total 961 people have died in Dudley with Covid-19 mentioned as a cause of death on their death certificate. This is higher than the figure reported by the Office for National Statistics who only include people who have Covid-19 as a primary cause of death recorded on their death certificate, the ONS figure for the equivalent period is 790 deaths. The chart below shows where deaths are higher than the 5 year average (the dotted line) and how many of the deaths are attributable to Covid-19.





# CORONAVIRUS ALERT: OTHER SYMPTOMS?


  
Persistent cough


  
High temperature


  
Loss of taste or smell


  
Headache


  
Sore throat

  
Sneezing





  
Feeling tired for no reason

  
Aches and pains


  
Runny nose

  
Tummy ache in children

**Book a test at [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119**  
If you're booking a precautionary test, select that your council has asked you to do so

Remember  **HANDS**  **FACE**  **SPACE**  **TEST**

**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**

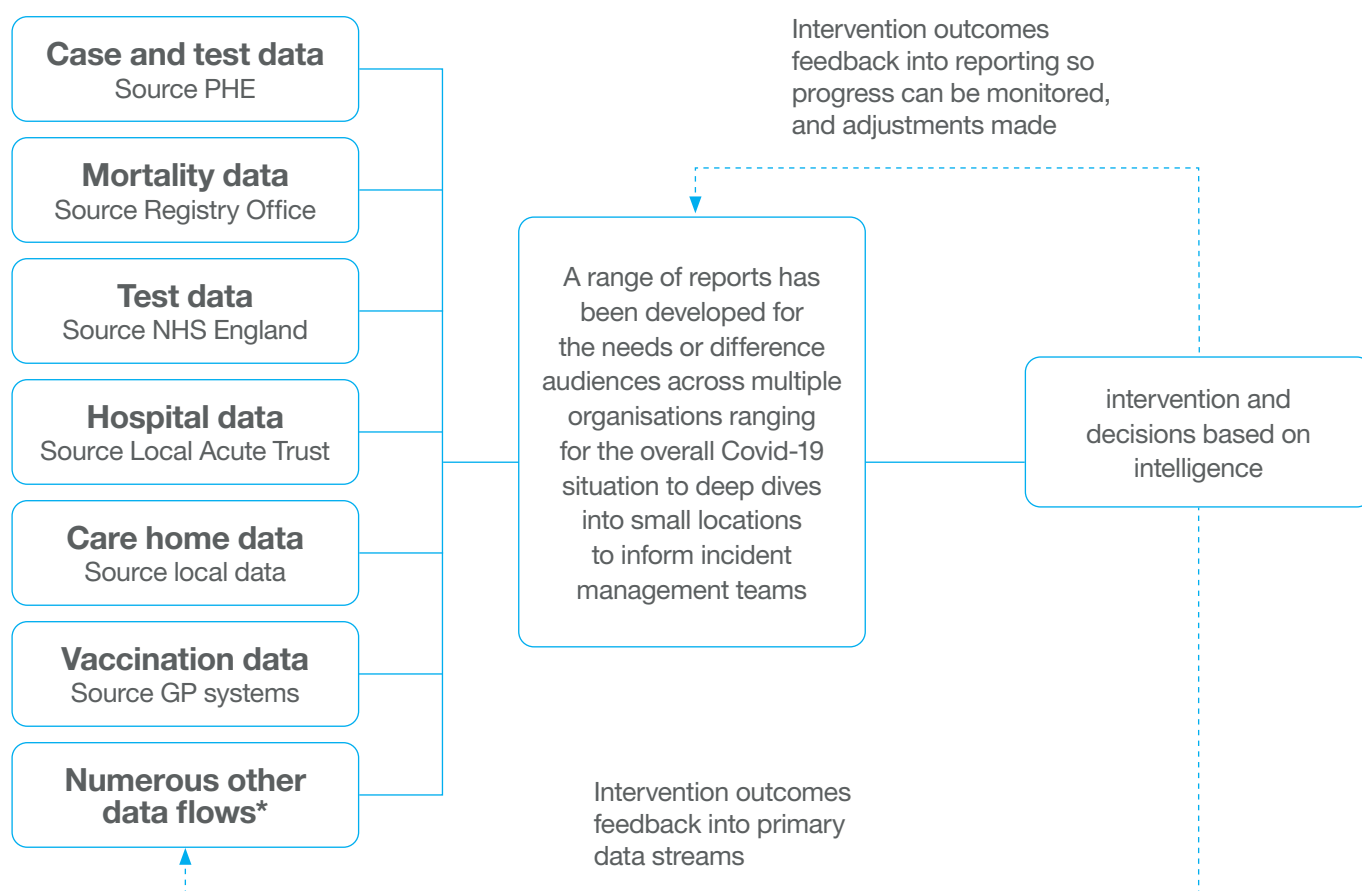


## 4. Data integration and sharing/surveillance

The use of data and intelligence has been revolutionised in the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic. Never has such widespread live data been available to inform decision making and target interventions and preventative action.

To ensure that all agencies have a single understanding of the current situation data sharing between organisations has been improved and rapid reporting has been developed to provide the current picture on a continuous basis.

Daily data is received from numerous partner agencies, analysed and reporting shared with all appropriate organisations. In Dudley we have tried to automate data flows and provide the reporting in Microsoft Power Bi and have therefore been able to provide a much wider range of frequent reporting than has been possible historically.



\* eg [waste water surveillance](#) (Joint Biosecurity Centre)

An example of the benefits of timely detailed reporting was the highlighting and informing activity in an area of Dudley called Wren's Nest. Daily surveillance identified that Covid-19 rates in Wren's Nest were significantly higher than the surrounding area.

A detailed analysis was carried out to identify the demographics and distribution of cases, volume of testing and characteristics of the local population. This data was used to inform a targeted communication and engagement campaign using a range of approaches including an advan, a targeted Facebook campaign and working with communities in the area. During the campaign testing rates increased and subsequently the Covid-19 rate reduced.

The council publishes a [data dashboard](#) so that residents can be kept up to date with Covid-19 situation.

## COVID-19 ALERT WREN'S NEST & PRIORY

# NEW VARIANT SPREADING FAST RATES ARE DANGEROUSLY HIGH IN THIS AREA!

▶ **STAY HOME TO PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY**

Find out more at [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)

**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**



## COVID-19 ALERT WREN'S NEST & PRIORY

# FEVER? PERSISTENT COUGH? CHANGE IN TASTE OR SMELL? Got any symptoms?

▶ **Stay at home** ▶ **Get a test** ▶ **Save lives**

**It's easy to get a test**

Local test centres are open in Dudley borough

Find out more at [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)



**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**



**COSELEY EAST  
ALERT!**



**WREN'S NEST & PRIORY  
ALERT!**



**QUARRY BANK & DUDLEY WOOD  
ALERT!**

## 5. Test and Trace



**Got symptoms?  
Stay at home.  
Get a test.  
Save lives.**

**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**

### 5.1 Testing

Testing is the central component of our strategy. We have developed plans to deliver an effective and efficient testing service which is acceptable, accessible and equitable.

**Information on testing sites in Dudley is available at [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirustesting](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirustesting)**

#### 5.1.1 Testing for people who have symptoms

##### What we have done

We improved access for testing within the community.

Local access to COVID tests for residents in Dudley had been a challenge. Work was undertaken with the Department of Health and their partners to try and improve this access. Initially two Local Testing Sites (LTS) were identified. These sites were designed to support local communities to be able to “walk-in” in to get a test and were sited in areas with low car ownership and where infection numbers were highest and testing rates were low. A further site was later identified to improve access to the western edge of the borough.

In addition, working with partners at the Merry Hill Shopping Centre a Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) designed to enable drive through testing was established. As rates of infection increased further capacity was added with a further temporary MTU being established at Himley Hall.

### Additionally, we have:

- ensured that our frontline social and primary care staff had access to testing.
- developed and mobilized a rapid response community testing for those not covered by the national response.
- improved access for PCR tests in primary care working with Public Health England to set up a bespoke service.
- working with the Department Health, Lye Community Project and community champions we ensured those without access to technology or whose first language isn't English could gain access to testing, to make sure that nobody without an appointment would be turned away.
- as the pandemic has evolved we have ensured that there is increased recognition of the importance of diffuse symptoms of Covid-19. These include headache, sneezing, general fatigue and in children abdominal pain. As a system we have promoted testing in these additional groups to ensure we capture anyone who may have Covid-19.

### What we will do now

We will:

- work with partners and the Department of Health ensure access to testing in our community remains in place as long as required.
- test our processes for surge PCR testing. We have developed our plans for surge testing including identification of sites for additional mobile testing units, use of pharmacies and door to door drop and collection of testing kits. We have identified and trained a number of volunteers to implement surge testing. Our plans will be tested in April 2021.

**COVID-19:**  
**NEW VARIANT IN YOUR AREA**

**GET TESTED -  
ENHANCED TESTING  
AVAILABLE NOW**

**NHS**  
Test and Trace

**Dudley**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

## 5.1.2 Community symptom-free testing

As government announced asymptomatic testing (lateral flow) as a key component in tackling the spread of the virus, we immediately embarked on an ambitious plan to develop a flexible and convenient community, multiple-route testing offer.

### What we have done

In December we launched a council testing site at Saltwells EDC, Netherton and teamed up with a number of pharmacies to offer twice weekly tests for targeted and key workers.

- An additional site was set up at Dudley Leisure Centre in January 2021.
- Working with Dudley's Local Pharmaceutical Committee and their provider company, Central Health Solutions, together with support from the military, we were also able to launch a ground-breaking and first in the country pharmacy model in on 14 December 2020 with 30 pharmacies offering symptom free tests.
- In recent weeks the pharmacy model has widened its offer by setting up test sites at places of worship, community centres and latterly local colleges.
- We utilised the learning and expertise that was developed through the setting up of the Saltwells site to set up a 'train the trainer' model to support businesses and organisations to start testing their employees on site and at home.

We have also begun to promote the national schemes of symptom free workplace and home testing for parents, carers and anyone else living with a school age child or young person or a member of school staff and their household.

We supported secondary schools and colleges to roll out on-site testing for staff and pupil testing by providing training and resources.

Community development workers have made contact with ethnic minority groups groups and promoted the symptom free testing available and Covid-19 Community Champions are asked to share the message to friends, family and their communities.

### What we will do now

- In support of the government's road map we will ensure that by twice weekly testing we ALL keep the virus contained, limiting asymptomatic cases containing the spread moving forward.
- We will continue to review our symptom free offer to ensure equality of access and we will be guided by data to ensure the model is fit for purpose. The review will be done on a monthly basis.
- We will participate in the community collect model to provide testing kits to households of schools pupils.
- Our accompanying communication and engagement campaigns will continue to promote the need for symptom free tests.
- The campaigns will tie in with our Dudley let's keep going campaign and using the play your part - protect Dudley Borough strapline that runs throughout Covid-19 comms.



**NHS**  
Test and Trace

**Get your rapid symptom-free Covid-19 test now**



1 in 3 people with Covid-19 don't have any symptoms but can still pass it on. That's why we should all get a rapid test regularly.

Get your test locally at  
**Dudley Leisure Centre**

**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**

**Dudley**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

**NHS**  
Test and Trace

**Anyone who needs to leave their home for any reason (such as work, caring responsibilities, shopping, etc.) is being encouraged to get regular rapid symptom free Covid-19 tests.**

Regular, **twice weekly** rapid testing for people without symptoms is a vital part of the fight against Covid-19. 1 in 3 people don't have any symptoms, so don't know they have the virus. Rapid symptom free testing finds hidden cases, ensuring you don't pass it onto family members, friends or workmates, stopping the spread of the virus.

The symptom free test is a painless, quick and easy throat and nose swab and results are back within an hour.

There are lots of places across Dudley borough offering the tests, including pharmacies and community locations. Please do get tested regularly to help protect local people.

Your nearest location is:  
**Dudley Leisure Centre**  
Wellington Rd, Dudley DY1 1UH  
Open: Tuesday - Saturday 7.45am - 7.15pm.  
Walk ins accepted 10am - 5.30pm.

**For more information or to book a test online visit**  
[www.dudley.gov.uk/symptom-free-testing](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/symptom-free-testing), or call 0300 330 2152

**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**

**Dudley**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

## 5.2 Local contact tracing

Contact tracing identifies close contacts of those who have Covid-19 and helps to ensure they self-isolate to prevent onward spread of the virus. Ensuring infected individuals, and their close contacts, self-isolate is one of the most powerful tools for controlling transmission.

### What we have done

Working with Local Tracing partnership, our local contact tracing team receives information on positive cases if the national team is unable to make contact. The local team takes ownership of these cases and contacts them to collate information and provide welfare support. Any complicated situations are escalated to the Dudley Test and Trace Cell for further follow up.

### What we will do now

We will further develop the local contact tracing system working with Public Health England and the national Test and Trace system. This will include:

- Sign up for Local 0 (zero), as part of our commitment to acting early and overcoming the barriers which prevent people isolating. This will mean Dudley Council will be directly responsible for all contact tracing. We are launching Local 0 (zero) in April 2021.
- Provide an “one stop shop” for contact tracing and welfare support. This will ensure that we are providing support and advice to assist with self-isolation and reduce transmission. We have been successful in our expression of interest to pilot this in Dudley and working with through Local Testing Partnership to finalise our arrangements. The pilot will start in April 2021.
- Establish a door-to-door team to support those members of public where we are unable to contact them by phone. Our team will assist these individuals with completing contact tracing and providing relevant guidance and support. The team will be operational in April 2021.

# Case study:



## Community testing - Rapid mobilisation to meet the needs of the community



### Situation

In November and as part of their overall strategy to tackling the virus, the government announced that they would be rolling out symptom free (lateral flow) tests across England and was looking for expressions of interests from local authorities to develop local testing approaches. Each successful local authority would be given 10,000 tests.



### Approach

We determined that we wanted to take a phased, but swift approach; beginning with the decision agreement to develop a large static testing site for targeted staff and individuals from high risk. Our aim was that the site would be supported, and as demand increased, by a roving test team, as well as smaller independent sites through a local pharmacy model and certain community and faith settings as the model develops.



### Results

Within 10 days we had set up a testing site at Saltwells Education Centre, Netherton including ensuring all necessary site adjustments had been made and the delivery requirements met - i.e. cleaners, security guard, registration assistants, test processors, results recorders and onsite test site manager/s. A pool of council staff were deployed to run the site including 8 Public Health park activators from the Place directorate. The council refuge site booking system was modified to meet the requirements for booking a lateral flow test.

This site went live on the 2nd December 2020 offering test initially to targeted staff but by January the offer was widened to include all key workers and latterly now is open to anyone who is having to leave their home. Since its opening in 2020, 4838 lateral flow tests have been carried out at the Saltwells' testing site.

The site has also been used as a training site and has provided observational and practical training for secondary school and college staff who will be focusing on the rollout of testing to help find asymptomatic cases from the 8th March 2021.



### Learning

By setting up Saltwells we were quickly able to use the learning to develop the second site at Dudley Leisure centre and pharmacy model. cases and contacts was undertaken by the site management.

Site managers were trained in the 'Train the Trainer' scheme to conduct regular workplace symptom testing and staff now benefit from twice weekly testing via a combination of a dedicated onsite testing facility and some teams having been trained to conduct home testing.

This model has been recognised as good practice by DHSC, and other Councils including seven in the West Midlands, have now commissioned a LFT service through community pharmacy.

## 5.3 Community symptom-free testing

### What we have done

- We have established a local Dudley Test and Trace Cell (DTTC) which undertakes enhanced contact tracing and outbreak response.

DTTC provides a single point of contact for all partners for notification of situations and outbreaks. The cell is operational 7 days a week from 0900 to 1700 hrs. All situations, outbreaks, notifications and data including testing data, common exposure data and postcode coincidence data are discussed at the cell to identify any issues, trends and next steps. Triangulation of data sources assists to identify 'clusters' of new cases linked to a common setting which may be an early indication of an outbreak. This, and other intelligence, allows us to swiftly investigate and take appropriate actions to prevent wider community transmission.

- We have developed a number of setting specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to respond to outbreaks early and reduce the risk of transmission and have agreed a framework with Public Health England to respond to outbreaks and complex situations. The framework outlines the roles and responsibilities of both organisations. All notifications from PHE are followed up by the cell according to our local outbreak SOPs

- **clusters** refer to 2 or more cases associated with a specific setting in the absence of evidence of a common exposure or link to another case
- **outbreaks** refer to 2 or more confirmed cases associated with a specific setting with evidence of a common exposure or link to another case
- **community spread** refers to sporadic or linked cases on a limited or extensive basis

- We have established a number of subgroups for high risk settings and communities. The relevant subgroups lead on providing a rapid response to outbreaks including risk assessment, review of infection, prevention and control (IPC) measures and provide guidance (cohorting, testing regimes and IPC measures) to reduce transmission of disease.
- Multi-agency incident management meetings or visits (physical or virtual), where appropriate, are held to further support settings with outbreaks of significance including where there is a significant number of cases, sustained transmission of diseases, concerns regarding compliance with infection, prevention and control (IPC) advice, and concerns regarding the capability of the setting to manage/respond e.g. complex environment, lack of leadership, inexperienced staff, history of poor quality standards.
- Learning from these outbreaks is shared with staff, partners and the region.
- Our subgroups have developed strong working relationships with settings. This is evident through a very small number of large outbreaks within Dudley.

### What we will do now

We will:

- continue to respond to outbreaks and complex situations, and share lessons learnt widely.
- continue to monitor data for early identification of outbreaks and clusters.
- review the cell arrangements in April, to ensure that the model is adapted to meet the future needs.
- continue to respond to outbreaks and align our outbreak plans to the national outbreak prevention management response toolkit (published March 2021)



# Case study:

## Contact tracing



### Situation

Dudley Council's Waste Collection service continued to operate throughout the pandemic, with household waste and recycling demand increased by 10% and 15% respectively due to residents staying at home.

Normal service was maintained in very challenging circumstances with often reduced staff numbers due to sickness, shielding or staff undertaking self-isolation due to household members being positive cases. The head of service contacted the Test & Trace cell one morning to advise that 2 staff who shared a cab on a refuse vehicle had tested positive and that the third member of the crew was self-isolating.



### Approach

As well as strong business continuity plans, workplace risk assessments were already in place and the depot accommodation had been made Covid-19 secure with the assistance of the corporate health & safety service. Depot managers responded quickly to identify close contacts who needed to self-isolate, which were few at this stage due to crews working in bubbles of 3 staff per cab. Cases were quizzed about close contacts in the workplace, promoting honesty in disclosure to rapidly identify contacts.



### Results

Over a period of 10 days, the number of cases increased to 10 with 6 staff self-isolating and the first IMT was held. This revealed that robust measures were already in place, with the only action required being consideration of improved winter wellness facilities for the crews as the social distancing measures required in the canteen had resulted in smaller numbers of staff being able to use the canteen.

Monitoring walkabouts by supervisors were increased to check compliance with measures and all staff were written to outlining all test and trace requirements including the need not to attend work if any household members had symptoms.

After a lull in cases, a further episode occurred a few weeks later when community cases were at high levels and a further 13 cases arose with 23 staff self-isolating at various times. Many of the cases and contacts had had no close contacts in the workplace but had household members who were cases. Very few cases overall were determined to be due to workplace transmission.



### Learning

The outbreak was managed with close collaboration between the site management, environmental health and corporate health & safety. Proactive management of cases and contacts was undertaken by the site management. Site managers welcomed scrutiny and unannounced monitoring checks were undertaken by corporate health & safety and subsequently by the Covid-19 business advisors.

There was minimum disruption to the service. Site managers were trained in the 'Train the Trainer' scheme to conduct regular workplace symptom testing and staff now benefit from twice weekly testing via a combination of a dedicated onsite testing facility and some teams having been trained to conduct home testing.

## 5.4 Variant of concern

The council has developed its plans to respond to any Covid-19 variant which is thought likely to be more transmissible or severe than other strains, or that threatens the effectiveness of the vaccine.

The variants are referred to as Variant of Concern (VOC) and Variant of Interest (VUI). The aim of the response is to

- a) **Rapidly identify the variant;**
- b) **Contain the existing cases to avoid further transmission;**
- c) **Identify the extent of the spread of this VOC/VUI;**
- d) **Drive down overall case rates as fast as possible.**

Working with the voluntary sector, the council has identified more than 200 volunteers to support this response. These volunteers have been briefed and trained..

### Our response will include

1. Rapid mass testing of residents (identified through risk assessment and data analysis in collaboration with PHE and DHSC) in a short period of time through a range of methods including deploying mobile testing units, provision of testing at pharmacies and door to door drop and collection of testing kits.
2. Contact tracing the cases and their contacts.
3. Prioritising welfare support for cases and their contacts to assist with self-isolation.
4. Implementing our place-based Incident Management Team (IMT) approach combining enhanced communications, welfare support, test and trace and use additional surveillance and enforcement as deemed by the IMT and involving national and regional teams where needed (as set out in escalation plans)
5. Reviewing and updating SOPs based on new learning and non pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) for example, pedestrian widening.

### What we will do now

- We will stress test our plans in March / April
- We will continue to review and update the plans as required

Published figures on Variants of Concern (VOC) and Variant Under Investigation (VUI) are updated twice weekly and can be found at: **Variants: distribution of cases data - GOV.UK**

## 5.5 Enduring transmission

Key to our successes has been the robust a timely approach for sharing soft intelligence from local communities and partners which, has underpinned our understanding of challenges that are being faced locally and what measures need to be put in place.

The combination of our use of intelligence and grasp of the local context means that we are able to understand enduring transmission in our communities and defined settings such as care homes and high-risk workplaces.

We have called place based IMT where we have concerns regarding increasing or sustained transmission to undertake risk assessments and agree actions including targeted communications and engagement, visiting businesses to review their Covid-19 secure measures, enforcement actions by police and the promotion of testing. This place-based approach has resulted in reduction of transmission

We will move to more placed based IMTs that have more engagement of community partners as part of our future model of working.



## 5.6 Escalation and De-Escalation

The tables below outlines the Dudley response to current and expected future phases of Covid-19.

### Phases and objectives

	<b>GREEN</b> Stable	<b>PRE-AMBER</b> Unstable	<b>AMBER</b> Re-emergence	<b>RED</b> Outbreak	<b>BLACK</b> National
Definition	Overall number of cases low and stable Clusters and outbreaks limited to discreet settings - e.g. care homes, schools, businesses, defined small communities	Slow but steady increase in numbers of outbreaks, not confined to single settings.	Overall number of cases moderate and/or rising Evidence of some extended community transmission beyond discreet settings - in one or more ward Increased WM outbreaks Evidence of ongoing enduring transmission	Overall number of cases high and/or rising rapidly Evidence of considerable extended community transmission - in two or more Wards Evidence of ongoing enduring transmission	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Contain framework alignment		<b>Area of Concern</b>	<b>Area of Enhanced Support</b>	<b>Area of Intervention</b>	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Outbreak Objective	Minimise spread of infection <b>Plan</b> to ensure readiness to respond to re-emergence and community outbreaks	<b>Prepare</b> and ready to intervene early and prevent further spread of infection	Intervene early to prevent further spread of infection <b>Prepare and Act</b> - response for community outbreaks	<b>Act</b> to contain community outbreak Minimise impact of spike	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Increase in case rate per 100,000 population in last 7 days	<b>&lt;20% in last week</b>	<b>20-40% in last week</b>	<b>40-70% in last week</b>	<b>&gt;70% in last week</b>	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Other situational awareness	No link identified between outbreaks in different settings Testing rates remain in line with Regional and national averages		Higher case rate or increased case rate cannot be explained by higher rates of testing - i.e. positivity rate is not artificially low compared to previous periods or other areas. Higher case rate or increase in case rate cannot be explained by cases related to one or more outbreaks in discreet settings that could be managed through a targeted response . Neighbouring LA Status Lower testing uptake <450/100k.	Serious concern in the epidemiology (for example suggestive of a variant or enduring transmission) that may pose a risk nationally. Higher case rate or increase in case rate cannot be explained by higher rates of testing - i.e. positivity rate is not artificially low compared to previous periods or other areas. Higher case rate or increase in case rate cannot be explained by cases related to one or more outbreaks in discreet settings that could be managed through a response targeted at these settings.	<b>Nationally defined</b>

## Proposed interventions and activity

	<b>GREEN</b> Stable	<b>PRE-AMBER</b> Unstable	<b>AMBER</b> Re-emergence	<b>RED</b> Outbreak	<b>BLACK</b> National
Potential restrictions	National guidance applies	National guidance plus local measures	<b>Green plus consider:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider advising to limit numbers of people in shops</li> <li>Restrict access to parks</li> <li>Restrict numbers of people attending gatherings including weddings, funerals and religious ceremonies</li> <li>Indoor/outdoor meetings restricted to fewer people</li> <li>Care home visiting stopped</li> <li>Advise greater use of face coverings</li> </ul>	<b>Amber plus consider:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close schools/ nurseries or certain school years</li> <li>Close schools except to children of key workers</li> <li>Travel restrictions into or out of the area</li> <li>Close leisure facilities</li> <li>Close shops</li> <li>Advise indoor/outdoor meetings restricted to a single household</li> <li>Mandate greater use of face coverings</li> </ul>	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Special considerations		Suspend visits to care homes in areas of enhanced rates or geographically close to active community or workplace outbreaks	Close care homes to visitors (other than at the end of life)	Consider advising extremely clinically vulnerable people to remain at home	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Additional priorities	Routine surveillance Management of clusters/outbreaks in discreet settings Define thresholds for Pre-Amber, Amber and Red alerts Plan to ensure readiness to response to Pre-Amber, Amber and Red alerts Local Zero contact Tracing	Improved surveillance Rigorously enforce national guidance Step up compliance and enforcement Plan to ensure readiness to response to Pre-Amber, Amber and Red alerts	As pre-amber plus Step up outbreak management Intensive surveillance Increase efforts on enforcement Place Based IMTs	As amber plus: Step up outbreak management to include regional and national team Intensive surveillance utilising national and regional system indicators High profile enforcement activity	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Communications and Engagement	General communications	Targeted communications to at-risk groups Step up engagement with Covid Champions and community networks	As pre amber plus Enhanced communications to warn public of heightened risk and encourage greater social distancing Increased communications on testing	As Amber plus Special communications to population to convey local restrictions	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Genomics/Testing		Surge testing in one area following single case of Variant of Concern	Surge testing in multiple areas for different VOCs or sustained community transmission of a VOC	Amber plus support in surge testing from neighbouring black country teams (mutual aid agreement mobilised)	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Vaccination			Increasing evidence of infections in people who have been vaccinated OR Partial suspension of vaccine program e.g. supply issues	Increasing numbers of hospital admissions of patients who have previously been vaccinated indicating widespread vaccine failure OR Complete suspension of vaccination program	<b>Nationally defined</b>
Business Continuity	Business as usual		Prepare to step up business continuity plans	Consider declaring a local emergency and instigate business continuity plans.	
Finance and resourcing	Work within current resourcing allocations	As green	Review and reassign resource	Review and reassign resources to support increased activity	

## 6. Covid-19 vaccination

The COVID-19 vaccination programme began in December 2020 and has utilised capacity in general practice, community pharmacy, Russells Hall Hospital and the Black Country Living Museum.

The Dudley programme has been based upon 4 separate delivery models. Progress has been made in accordance with the priority groups or cohorts identified by the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#). At the time of preparing this report, the coverage levels in relation to first doses for those over 65 (cohorts 1 – 5) in the Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs were:

- Dudley CCG - 94%
- Sandwell & West Birmingham CCG- 88%
- Wolverhampton CCG- 90%
- Walsall CCG- 93%.

The CCG and the council Public Health team have reviewed “cohort penetration” and identified areas of lower relative uptake and action is being taken to address these.

The delivery of the programme has depended upon partnership working involving NHS, council, police and voluntary sector partners. This is illustrated by the success of our “roving team” which has vaccinated the Dudley care home population. This has involved colleagues from the CCG, Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust and the council. The staff involved were able to meet the national target to secure the speedy vaccination of this vulnerable group.

Further joint work is now taking place in relation to other vulnerable groups including the homeless and traveller communities.

CCG and council colleagues have met on a weekly basis to review the extent to which coverage has varied between PCNs and within demographic groups. This has identified that vaccine take up in the Dudley and Netherton PCN as well as in Lye and part of Halesowen has been lower than elsewhere.

The take up in areas of relative social deprivation is lower and ethnicity is also a key factor. Work is taking place to address this through contacting patients with the support of health coaches and local voluntary sector bodies to encourage take up. In addition, the availability of “pop up” sites is being considered. This work will continue throughout the programme.





## What we have done to engage communities

- We have gathered stories from local people, celebrating their positive messages about receiving the vaccination through social media, an example of how we use insights based social marketing in action.
- We have hosted joint webinars involving clinical leads to discuss concerns and questions from the Dudley residents and groups representing our ethnic minority communities.
- We have shared links to national webinars and community sessions aimed at key groups - South Asian, Black majority church communities, Yemeni/Arabic speaking communities.
- We have surveyed people working in care homes who had declined to be vaccinated to understand the reasons and provide answers and reassurance to the most frequently expressed concerns.
- Plans are in development to work with the deaf community by providing more signed resources and sessions.
- We have connected GP practices to a health behaviour change specialist project working with ethnic minority communities. The pilot project with two practices tested the effectiveness of supportive conversations to encourage uptake. The approach was successful and plans made to develop it further.

## What we will do now

We will:

- continue to work in partnership in our approach of building vaccination confidence in our communities and workforces through a range of approaches based on what works with different groups to tackle longstanding inequalities in immunisation and vaccination uptake.
- support the provision of pop-up clinics in areas of low uptake, both static and mobile.
- encourage local community champions to become vaccinators, as part of a wider programme promoting immunisation and vaccination uptake.
- support the operational delivery of the vaccine roll-out to ensure risk to uptake are reduced.
- work in partnership with the NHS to identify local vaccination delivery models that support local communities and reduce any barriers to improved uptake.
- horizon scan and plan for future pandemic waves and the need for further Covid-19 vaccination programmes.
- roll out training for practice staff to have richer conversations with the hesitant using a third sector organisation that promotes health and wellbeing for ethnic minority groups.
- use of the same organisation (Tandrusti) to contact ethnic minority patients direct.
- use of health coaches for population conversations about the vaccine.
- continue to effectively promote the vaccine programme.
- broaden our conversations and activity to include other vaccination campaigns - flu, pneumococcal, childhood immunisations for example.

# Case study:



## Addressing inequalities to take up of the vaccine



### Situation

Emerging data has shown areas of low uptake of vaccination associated with key groups: people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people living in deprived areas.



### Approach

We carried out a review of the data which suggested issues of language and culture having an impact on readiness to accept the offer of the vaccine

The council and Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group commissioned Tandrusti, a local project specialising in behaviour change with people from ethnic minority groups. Using their approach grounded in 'Making every contact count' (MECC) principles, the team contacted patients who had refused the offer of the vaccine.



### Results

Under a pilot arrangement they spoke to 60 patients, sharing information and answering any questions raised. Of those contacted 30% had already had or were waiting to receive; 30% accepted the vaccination offer and made bookings; 15% were either out of the country or the details were incorrect and 15% were a definite no.



### Learning

Dudley CCG/Dudley Integrated Health and Care (DIHC) have requested training so that the approach can be adopted across practices in Dudley. It will be used not only for Covid-19 conversations, including vaccine take up but for all interactions between patients and staff making calls.

## 7. Support for those who are self-isolating and welfare support

### 7.1 At high risk of Covid-19

The government identified two tiers of vulnerability based on people's age and health status; the 'at high risk' and the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' (shielding) groups and made specific recommendations in terms of social distancing and self-isolating to these groups.

In Dudley, we worked with the CCG to identify approximately 80,000 who were considered to be at higher risk of Covid-19 due to their age (over 70), pre-existing health conditions or through being pregnant.

### 7.2 Individuals identified by Test and Trace to isolate

Dudley residents who have been informed that they are required to self-isolate either because they have tested positive for Covid-19 or they are a recent close contact of someone who has tested positive, may also be in financial hardship because of loss of income due to having to self-isolate.

### 7.3 Financially struggling

Those people who need financial help and support are known to the council through their contact with our other services such as benefits and housing tenants. During the pandemic **additional grants** were allocated for financially struggling residents.

In addition to advertising the availability of grants, the council worked with its community and voluntary organisation partners working with people who may need this support to direct them to the council for additional help.



## 7.4 Welfare support

### 7.4.1 Food and other support to all vulnerable groups:

Working in partnership with Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (DCVS) and Black Country (BC) Foodbank, a community-based support response was mobilised to support any vulnerable resident in Dudley.

This included the establishment of six locality virtual community support networks, with the principle focus being to identify and provide support for the most vulnerable. A website was set up so people could apply to volunteer. The community support networks were able to help provide essential food, medicines and befriending support.

We also supported other community organisations with food stocks who were providing food parcels to the financially vulnerable including the BC Foodbank and Loaves and Fishes social supermarket.

What was particularly heartening in Dudley, however, was the vast number of people who mobilised themselves to help their neighbours, friends and communities. This is evident through case stories that are being collected through DCVS and Public Health.

DCVS continue to co-ordinate a community response to Covid-19 in the borough, working with voluntary and community groups and the volunteer centre to mobilise essential social support for the most vulnerable. The 6 virtual networks have been collapsed into 1 borough wide community support network.

The network will also continue to provide a single point of access for the co-ordination and mobilisation of support for vulnerable people and families. The DCVS approach will draw on learning from the pandemic to date, for instance introducing volunteer roles which address digital exclusion within our communities.

# The COVID-19 Pandemic

A community response  
in Dudley borough

Dudley CVS  
October 2020



# Case study:



## A volunteer's story\*

I had a telephone call this afternoon from the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Birmingham saying that someone was in there that had a message for me. I was naturally concerned because I wasn't aware of anyone I knew being there.

It turned out to be an elderly gentleman that I've been doing shopping for since the lockdown after being matched with him by Dudley CVS Volunteer Centre (who are doing a fabulous job in our community during this most difficult of times).

I had been given his name and number but no other information. I've been taking his shopping which I pay for, I ring him to tell him I'm on my way and he puts the money in an envelope - I ask if he's ok - he always says the same thing 'I am now I've seen you bless you for looking after me'.

Yesterday he fell downstairs in his maisonette and was found by his neighbours. When the nurse asked if there was anyone they could call I was the only person he could think of. I have only known him five weeks, barely had any conversation, his weekly phone call with his shopping list is always quite short, he always asks how I am and worries that I'm keeping safe.

So why after such a short time with such little contact was I his only 'friend' - what on earth did this poor man do before the lockdown? Who helped him? Who did he talk to? I offered to visit but they aren't accepting visitors -they couldn't even tell me his surname because I'm not a relative.

I felt so bad for him and so very sorry. After all this is over how am I supposed to walk away from him? There must be hundreds of people like him out there.

Please if you live by an elderly person or even someone living on their own - keep yourself safe - socially distance yourself - but knock on their door - drop a note through their letterbox and check that they are okay."

One face, one voice could make all the difference to their day. My thoughts tonight are with a lonely old man who needs a friend...

I'm going to be that friend!"

*\*The Covid-19 Pandemic - A community response, Dudley Council for Voluntary Service DCVS October 2020*

## 7.4.2. Loneliness and mental health support

A range of actions have been implemented including:

- Information and signposting to local support has been included in all communication and advice sent out to residents and is also available on the council Covid-19 website pages. The [Lets Get website](#) was also updated with information including mental health support, financial support and general wellbeing support. <https://lets-get.com/healthy-lifestyles/mental-wellbeing/looking-after-your-health-and-wellbeing-throughout-covid19/>
- A new provider (Beacon Centre) was procured in September to deliver a befriending scheme for older people. This is jointly funded with Dudley CCG. The service specifically targets older people at high risk of loneliness and isolation.
- Engagement has started with partners including voluntary sector organisations to explore impact of Covid-19 on loneliness and isolation on older people to address challenges and share good practice. Network event planning in progress to take this insight work further.
- Working with DCVS volunteers, support is also available locally for 'a check in and chat' and Dudley Council continues to enhance its Pleased to Meet You Service for over to support people who were feeling lonely and isolated
- The Black Country and West Birmingham CCG has also developed a region-wide Staff Psychological Support Hub that Black Country Healthcare is now providing.

## 7.4.3. Housing support

The Coronavirus Act has paused evictions for the last year. Dudley also stopped any enforcement action during the 1st lockdown and contacted all our tenants to offer support and advice on their rent account during the first couple of months of the lockdown.

Throughout the year, there has been ongoing support for our tenants including regular contact via phone, distribution of information leaflets relating to Covid-19 and support available, delivering foodbank vouchers/parcels, assisting with Discretionary Housing Payments applications, welfare visits and referrals to the Emergency Assistance Grant, our inhouse housing support team and Test and Trace services.

## 7.4.4. Self-isolation payments

Dudley residents that are required to self-isolate may be eligible for one of three forms of financial support:

The government's Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme – A payment of £500 which is available to those who must self-isolate and meet the eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria for this payment have been outlined by national government.

The Dudley Council Test and Trace Discretionary Payment – A discretionary payment of £500 which is intended to support individuals who are not eligible for the government's Test and Trace support scheme but are on a low-income.

The Dudley Council Welfare Support Discretionary Payment – A discretionary payment of £250 for individuals who are on a slightly higher income (although earn below a set threshold).

A self-isolation pathway has been developed to help signpost people to the right areas of support. (See Diagram1 over page)

As of 11/03/2021; 3867 applications have been received for the Test and Trace Self-Isolation payments. A total of 1040 applicants have been paid in the main and discretionary schemes. The discretionary scheme has allocated funding to 34 applicants since 01/02/2021.

## 7.4.5. Financial support

The Council set up a web page for residents setting out the range of financial support that was available.

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/emergencies/coronavirus/financial-support/>

The Emergency Assistance Grant (EAG) was allocated to the council by the government and went live in August 2020. As of 09/03/2021 EAG had received 2656 applications (which comprised of approx. 2000 requests for food, 2000 for fuel costs and 1700 for essential household items), we have given awards to 1156 people totalling approx. £281,000.

As part of supporting this, residents are asked if they would like more help reviewing their benefit and income situation and are referred to our Welfare Rights Team.

The Welfare Rights Team have received and contacted just over a hundred referrals. They are also supporting people through the Covid-19 support line. The majority of cases have needed further support such as discretionary housing payments, DWP assessment, applications for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), appeals, referrals to the social supermarket,

Webinars have been hosted by the Welfare Rights team for Elected Members and Voluntary and Community services to advise them of the benefits and support available so that they can better signpost residents to appropriate support. Approximately 120 people attended these webinars.

## 7.4.6. Children eligible for Free School Meals

In the first lockdown partners coordinated the large-scale distribution of meals to families eligible for free school meals with support from DCVS, utilising both council staff and volunteers. Over 25 schools were supported, and meals delivered to nearly 6000 pupils during the interim period before the supermarket voucher scheme was implemented.

At end of March 2020 the national Free School Meals (FSM) supermarket voucher scheme was introduced for schools to issue vouchers to families eligible for free school meals.

For any family where they are not able to leave the house and have no means to arrange collection of the food parcel alternative arrangements are available. Families experiencing problems accessing vouchers were supported with vouchers from the council.

## 7.4.7. Covid-19 winter grant

The Grant has been used to provide families with children and vulnerable adults with support for food, fuel and household appliances. So far £550,000 has been provided to support vulnerable families in the form of vouchers for food, white goods and fuel, along with cash payments. Support has been distributed through schools, Family Centres, the Winter Warmth Team, Dudley Council for Voluntary Services, Citizen's Advice and a range of local voluntary sector groups.

# Dudley MBC COVID-19 Self-isolation pathway

Correct as of February 2021

CEV or vulnerable resident - requests support via NSSS or passed on via partner organisation

Positive COVID-19 case informed by **NHS Test & Trace** to self-isolate along with household. Dudley MBC informed by **NHS Test & Trace**.

Welfare letter sent by Dudley MBC or call made signposting them to support available during self-isolation. Residents can call **Dudley MBC Welfare team** for help accessing all types of support.

## Medication collection support

1. Pharmacy may offer delivery
2. Friend/family may be able to collect.
3. Collection via **NHS Responders**.
4. **Dudley MBC Pleased to Meet You Service** (if aged over 60 years)

## Loneliness and mental health support

1. **NHS Volunteer Responders** - Check in & Chat service
2. **Dudley MBC Pleased to Meet You service** (if aged over 60yrs).
3. **Dudley Talking Therapies** - support with moderate mental health problems
4. In a crisis - **24/7 Black Country NHS Mental Health Support Line** - 0800 008 6516 (press 2 for Dudley) or **Samaritans** (116 123).

## Support with food

1. Family/friend/neighbour may be able to help with food shop.
2. Priority delivery slots from local supermarket or emergency food parcels (subject to availability) – access via **Dudley MBC Welfare Team**.
3. **DCVS** may be able to offer food collection - access via **Dudley COVID-19 support Line**.
4. Food parcels from foodbank for those financially struggling - access via **COVID-19 support line or Black Country Foodbank**.

## Financial support:

Individual unable to work due to COVID related self-isolation and will not be paid for this time off work:

Financial support available for eligible individuals:

- NHS Test & Trace Isolation Payment or discretionary payment (£500) **or**
- Dudley MBC Test & Trace Discretionary Payment (£250).

Apply online at Dudley MBC website <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/covidisolationpayment>

## Other financial support available for those in financial hardship:

(Financial advice available via Dudley Borough Citizen's Advice).

- **COVID-19 Emergency Welfare Assistance Grant\***: up to £300 grant for food & essential supplies for individuals experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- **COVID-19 Winter Grant\*** to assist with the costs of food, fuel and white goods.

- **Fuel and electricity voucher** - Accessed via Dudley MBC Welfare Team.

- Benefits advice line for those affected by COVID-19: 01384 815002

Information on all financial support available at: [www.dudley.gov.uk/covidfinancialsupport](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/covidfinancialsupport)

\*These are time limited - check website for latest support available.

## Key contacts/websites:

- **Dudley MBC Welfare Team**: 01384 818886 / [contacttracing@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:contacttracing@dudley.gov.uk)
- **NHS Volunteer Responders**: <https://nhsvolunteeresponders.org.uk/> / 0808 196 3646
- **Dudley COVID-19 Support Line**: 0300 3302 152 / [www.dudley.gov.uk/covidsupportline](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/covidsupportline)
- **Dudley Borough Citizen's Advice**: 0300 330 9044. For confidential advice on a wide range of issues
- **Dudley MBC Pleased to Meet You service**: 01384 812761
- **Dudley Talking Therapies**: Self-referral <https://www.dhnc.nhs.uk/find-a-service/dudley-talking-therapy-service/> / 0800 9530404
- **Dudley Health & Social Care, Adult Access Team**: 0300 555 0055



## 8. High-risk settings and communities

There are some settings that have an inherent high risk from Covid-19 due to density of occupation (relatively large numbers of people sharing a relatively small space); difficulty in maintaining infection prevention and control, and or the vulnerability of occupants.

We offer proactive advice and support to all settings to help them ensure Covid-19 security and focused on those at high risk.

Locally multi-agency sub-groups have been established for high-risk settings.

- Social care
- Educational settings
- Workplaces/businesses
- Vulnerable groups
- Healthcare settings
- Community, faith and voluntary settings

In addition we liaise with the council's long standing Safety Advisory Group in relation to support and advice on mass gatherings and events as they arise.

The subgroups have built on our experience and learning of working with settings like care homes, workplaces and educational settings. engaging with care homes to identify risks and providing public health and clinical support).

The groups have developed a system wide approach to the issue of Covid-19 in settings. Working as a single voice to get messages and guidance to them.

### The multiagency subgroups lead on:

- identifying high risk places, locations and communities. Information on these will be held on a database with contact details of the key lead for each of these groups.
- identifying/mapping key partners/ organisations for their locations, places and communities.
- providing support to settings to implement preventative measures and early identification of outbreaks and complex situations.
- developing local outbreak plans/ SOPs for high-risk places, locations and communities.
- identifying relevant guidance for their locations, places and communities.
- notifying LA / PHE of any outbreaks and situations.
- identifying scenarios from outbreak plans and defining priority areas for action and associated plans.
- identifying resources including staffing/ partners to support plans for their locations, places and communities.
- identifying training needs.
- providing scrutiny and support through an Incident Management Process.

Click here to see...

### Case study:

[Responding to care homes of concern](#)



## 8.1 Social care

### What we have done

We have:

- ensured that wrap around support has been provided to care homes with cases and outbreaks of Covid-19.
- provided support to ensure that staff and visitors are tested for Covid-19.
- supported the wider NHS to ensure the timely movement of residents to and from social care settings.
- supported the Covid-19 vaccination rollout in care homes which has vaccinated a high proportion of all residents within Dudley's care homes.
- made over 7000 contacts with care homes to support the management of cases and outbreaks. These include calls, visits, virtual audits and risk assessments to monitor standards. As well as providing help and support.
- overseen 95 multi agency incident meetings to review steps to control outbreaks additional support needed for homes including the mobilization of additional resources, and ensure measures are in place to maintain safety.
- worked to develop training packages to support homes. These include joint webinars with Public Health England, train the trainer practical session with the NHS and packages sent to all homes.
- developed a YouTube training package for homes.
- been recognised for its multiagency preventive and reactive approach to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 outbreaks in care homes (training of staff, mobilising teams to undertake proactive and reactive testing).

### What we will do

We will:

- look to further develop the system wide group by June 2021. We will maintain the partnership approach to overcome challenges including for this upcoming winter.
- support the rollout of the second dose of Covid-19 vaccination in our care home residents.
- continue the work to encourage Covid-19 vaccination amongst social care staff.
- maintain the support to our care homes to ensure they feel equipped to deal with any challenges moving forward.
- build further resilience and confidence into our care home workforce, through regular webinars in which care providers share their learning and create a culture of support.
- reinstate the quality improvement and audit programme previously in place by May 2021.

## 8.2 Schools and educational settings

### What we have done to help education settings open safely and stay open

We have:

- provided a single point of contact for all children and young people settings enquiries and to report positive cases.
- developed a reporting system to monitor cases and provide case management support when required.
- ensured all communication channels, partners, settings and parents are utilised as appropriate including Head Teacher weekly meetings, Early Years meetings, webinars for early years, school staff and governors, twice weekly school bulletin and the Revolution portal.

- updated and refreshed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in line with government guidance as it is released, to enable settings to conduct risk assessments and implement Covid-19 secure measures
- prepared a range of advisory documents, including frequently asked questions (FAQs), parent information sheets and letters and posters. Locally we recognised diffused symptoms were prevalent prior to positive Covid-19 testing and so communications were adapted to reflect this and local measures implemented.

### Through partnership working we supported the re-opening of educational settings


We have:

- supported the roll out of the Rapid (symptom-free) Lateral Flow Testing programme to childcare/ education settings.
- supported schools accessing training and insight into setting up on site testing, responded to queries.
- supported setting’s risk assessments in partnership with Health & Safety.
- worked with Health and Safety to enable students with breathing difficulties to safely attend schools.
- supported partners with transport to school advice.
- worked with our commissioned providers to implement Covid-19 measures, so they adapt their offer to continue provision of support to children & young people, in line with the council’s response to Covid-19.
- created a welcome back to school video - and rolled out to thank parents, teachers, children and local communities for supporting the school return.
- took part in joint Spotify campaign with other Black Country authorities aimed at raising awareness of guidelines to young people.
- delivered a school Covid-19 poster competition with over 100 entries.
- set up a bespoke area on the council’s website for parents and carers:  
<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/emergencies/coronavirus/coronavirus-advice-for-parents-and-families>

### What we will do now

We will:

- continue to build confidence and resilience in educational settings in managing response to Covid-19 and supporting each other.
- survey children and young people in March / April 2021 via a health-related behaviour questionnaire for insight and lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, to shape our future priorities and recovery planning.
- understand the emerging needs of children and young people and make the most of new opportunities (jobs and approaches to learning) through working with partners and commissioned providers.
- prioritise support for emotional and mental health and wellbeing.



Click here to see...

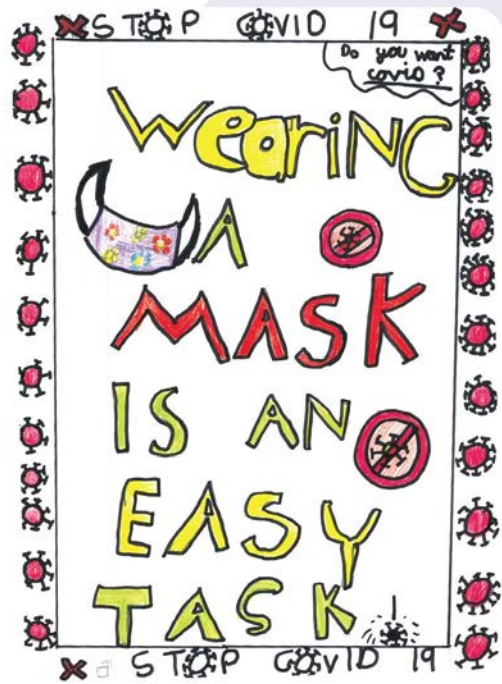
## Case study:

**Outbreak in a small education setting**



**Winner • Emilia**  
aged 10 – Glynne Primary

**COVID-19  
Young Health  
Champion**



**Winner • Isabelle**  
aged 10 – Glynne Primary

**COVID-19  
Young Health  
Champion**

# PLAY YOUR PART

Remember...



**HANDS.**



**FACE.**



**SPACE.**


Protect Dudley borough [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)



## 8.3 Businesses and workplaces

### What we have done

- 541 workplaces outbreaks have been investigated and managed by DTTC to date, ranging from 2 to 51 cases per outbreak. Settings with outbreaks have included factories, production plants, shops, supermarkets, offices, warehouses, licensed premises and other leisure settings.
- We provide a same-day response to new situations ensures employers are assisted quickly in identifying close contacts in the workplace & ensuring self-isolation.
- All high-risk workplaces within the borough were identified and contacted with information on Test & Trace and implementing Covid-19 secure measures. Visits were carried out to supermarkets & smaller food retailers and to a variety of other businesses where complaints or concerns were raised about Covid-19 compliance.
- A team of 16 Covid-19 business advisors was appointed in December 2020 to visit public facing businesses including shops, banks, takeaways and hairdressers to offer advice and support.
- Close liaison occurred between environmental health and the HSE (Health & Safety Executive) on all outbreaks where HSE are the enforcing authority, predominantly factories & production and packing plants. This ensured HSE attended IMTs and carried out workplace site inspections where deemed necessary to check compliance with health & safety legislation.
- FAQs for businesses were published on Dudley Business First website and updated regularly for new legislation and guidance as business restrictions changed during the various phases.
- A number of recovery and reopening campaigns and a series of pedestrian widening schemes funded by the Reopening High Streets Safety Fund (ERDF) were undertaken following lockdowns 1 and 2. A third is planned in April.
- As of March 2021, the council has paid out £79million in business support grants across the various grant schemes in response to 8181 applications from businesses in the borough.
- Joint enforcement operations between Environmental Health Officers and the police were carried out visiting supermarkets, licensed premises and takeaways focusing on Covid-19 secure measures for customers and staff. The Police supported for self-isolation offences during outbreaks, attending upon request businesses and issuing Fixed Penalty Notices to offenders.
- A bespoke area was set up for businesses on the council's website <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/emergencies/coronavirus/coronavirus-business-advice/> and through Dudley Business First <https://www.dudleybusinessfirst.org.uk/>



Click here to see...

## Case study:

[Outbreak in a workplace](#)

## What we will do now

We will:

- continue to support businesses through the next stages by providing advice, support, sign posting and where necessary enforcement including those sectors re-opening after the latest national lockdown.
- share lessons learnt during workplace outbreaks with the wider business community through Dudley Business First website & press releases informing of the common failures which may have contributed to transmission in the workplace.
- continue to roll out lateral flow testing to workplaces through either the Train the Trainer scheme or referral to the government scheme and expand this to businesses re-opening after lockdown.
- encourage employers to continue to implement Covid-19 risk assessments and ensure that their workplaces are Covid-19 secure, emphasising that re-opening of businesses and easing of restrictions does not remove the requirement to provide a safe environment for staff and customers.
- administer the ongoing financial support government grant schemes for Dudley based businesses.
- work with our partners and reach out to businesses to proactively support them in building confidence and resilience to be COVID-19 secure and be well placed to improve the health and wellbeing of their employees.



**Covid-19 doesn't take a break**

**Taking time out? Ensure you:**

- Maintain social distancing
- Wash your hands before and after eating
- Clean all touchpoints (before and after use)
- Follow your employer's guidance on the use of face coverings in communal areas
- Do not share utensils - have your own cup, crockery, cutlery
- Do not make drinks for other people

Remember  **HANDS**  **FACE**  **SPACE**

More advice at [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)

**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**



## Supporting tenants affected by Coronavirus (COVID-19) who have rent arrears

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the UK government has advised people to stay at home or work from home wherever possible, in order to restrict the spread of the virus. These measures are having a detrimental impact on employment, wages and the income of people who are self-employed.

**The income team at Dudley Council can provide reassurance and support during this difficult time.**

**Please contact us if you are struggling financially and:**

- have Coronavirus, or are following guidance to stay at home;
- have lost your job;
- are self-employed and can't get work;
- can't work because your workplace has closed.

You may be feeling worried during this difficult time - we are here to help you and support you to maintain your tenancy.

**When we are speaking to you, our tenants, on any issue:**

- we will urge you to contact us if you are having symptoms or self-isolating and will find it difficult to pay your rent;
- we will take the opportunity to update your contact details including information on your current household make up and any support that is already in place;
- we will make referrals to other appropriate organisations if appropriate;
- we will refer to our in-house support team if appropriate;
- we can supply and deliver foodbank vouchers and parcels;
- we will discuss alternative ways of payment if your current payment method is cash.

**Universal Credit**

**The government has made changes to Universal Credit to increase payment levels and allow claims to be made more quickly.**

If you are unsure about your earnings, you should complete a Universal Credit claim online if this is appropriate. We will provide advice on advance payments, the way in which Universal Credit works and the rent element of the Universal Credit process. You may be entitled to other benefits.



# We are Covid-19 customer secure

**Business name**

**HIGH STREET SUPERMARKET LIMITED**

**Declared Covid-19  
customer secure\*  
when inspected on**

**18/10/2020**

Remember  **HANDS**  **FACE**  **SPACE**

**[www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)**

\* Poster remains the property of Dudley Council and will be removed if the business is found not to be covid secure at a later date.

**Play your part -  
protect Dudley borough**

**Dudley**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

# Case study:



## Covid-19 Dudley Business Advisors



### Situation

Dudley was allocated £171K to recruit Covid-19 Marshalls to support the compliance and enforcement of Coronavirus measures.



### Approach

In Dudley these roles are called Covid-19 Dudley Business Advisors, they work with local businesses and the business community by providing advice and guidance as well as ensuring compliance with Covid-19 Secure measures in a range of different business settings, including council buildings.

Businesses which had the appropriate measures in place when visited by Advisors are awarded a 'Covid-19 Customer Secure' poster by Dudley Council which confirms that on the day of the visit they had Covid-19 measures in place. Those business not considered Covid-19 Secure are visited by an Environmental Health Officer. The advisors also follow up any complaints or concerns received from the public.

The team are now being expanded to support community contact tracing. They will visit those individuals that are unable to be reached by the national and local tracing teams via phone. Their role being to share welfare advice, advice on importance of self-isolation and to gather information on contacts.



### Results

So far 956 shop/businesses have had a first successful visit and have been awarded posters. Of these, 241 have had a subsequent second successful visit and have had their poster updated/replaced with a new one.

There are around 12 places that had unsuccessful visits and are still non-compliant. Obviously, this figure was much higher, but on second (or sometimes third) visits they had put the necessary measures in place to be successful.



### Learning

Businesses have welcomed this approach because it enables them to certify to their customers that they are meeting the Covid-19 secure standards. This approach builds public confidence and the public feel safe visiting Covid-19 secure premises. If public have concerns, they can call the council and those concerns are followed up in a prompt and timely manner.

The team also has flexibility to move from locality to locality to work in Covid-19 hotspots



## 8.4 Community healthcare settings

### What we have done to protect NHS

We have:

- worked closely with health care providers across Dudley, including NHS services (primary and secondary care, pharmacies, dentists), hospice and private hospital to help protect staff and patients, provide infection control advice and lead outbreak investigations.
- helped GPs to identify clinically vulnerable people early in the pandemic to ensure they were aware of the additional support available to them.
- with local partners, explained the importance of wearing appropriate PPE, reminded people about taking breaks safely and have seen fewer outbreaks than we anticipated. Early in the second wave of the pandemic we noticed an inconsistent approach to the use of face masks in non-clinical areas such as reception and office areas, combined with an increase in notifications of Covid-19 in staff in those areas. We also noticed an increase in outbreaks that could be traced to staff breaks.
- when notified of one or more cases in staff in a healthcare setting, we undertake a detailed investigation and risk assessment with key staff members to ensure precautions are in place that enable health providers to continue operating safely.
- developed new Covid-19 bereavement resources, both online and printed.
- provided evidence-based advice and guidance about Covid-19 to settings.

### What we will do now

We will:

- support local health partners with infection control advice and support during outbreaks of COVID-19 in staff.
- provide advice to care homes on outbreak management.
- update local guidance for safe school transport and other transport operators on a regular basis.
- provide health intelligence and access to timely, comprehensive local data on COVID-19 infections, testing rates and vaccination uptake.
- monitor the harm caused to health and the wider determinants of health as a consequence of the pandemic.
- work with local NHS partners on recovery and restoration, in particular to highlight and address the worsening inequalities that the pandemic is causing.





# Case study:

## GP surgery outbreak



### Situation

A local GP informed the council late one Sunday evening that two staff members at their practice had tested positive over the weekend, one of whom had not been consistently wearing one as they had experienced problems wearing a face mask.

Despite regular and thorough cleaning of the building, at first sight it appeared that there could have been more widespread transmission of coronavirus amongst the remaining staff. This would have required the practice to close on the Monday morning for up to two weeks so that all the other staff could self-isolate.



### Approach

By taking a very careful history of the precautions in place to understand the potential risk to other members of staff and patients, it became much clearer how the two staff had become infected and why no other staff had been at risk of exposure.



### Results

The council advised the GP that the practice could remain almost as normal and there were no further cases amongst the staff.



### Learning

This incident clearly showed the importance of wearing face masks correctly as well as the need to take a clear exposure history, especially in a high risk setting such as a health centre. This incident provided much valuable learning that we have applied when managing subsequent outbreaks.

## 8.5. Support for the most vulnerable and under-served communities

There is emerging national evidence of the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on specific communities from a social, economic and health perspective. This includes the ethnic minority communities, deprived communities, those already financially struggling on benefits or low incomes and those with existing long-term health issues that make them at higher risk of serious illness or death due to Covid-19 .



In addition to taking an inclusive approach to outbreak control, assessment and engagement, additional work has also been targeted at specific higher risk communities.

Building on our connections to ensure that all members of our community have access to information about Covid-19 and how to keep themselves and others safe and well. This has included:

- Covid-19 Community Champions scheme established
- Webinars targeted at wide range of audiences
- Providing information in a range of languages and formats to ensure accessibility.
- Existing primary care data on preferred languages was used to help prioritise which languages other than English are most widely spoken in local areas.
- Community leaders and administrators of local social media sites have helped to translate and disseminate key messages to our communities.
- Specific support including translation and interpretation for members of the Roma community in Lye was undertaken to help meet their community needs.
- Co-ordinating targeted community engagement activity with priority groups identified by PHE and local insight. These are ethnic minority communities, single mothers with young children, people aged 65 plus, people aged 18-24 years old, 25-64 year olds in work, teenagers, taxi drivers, faith leaders, the Roma community, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families on traveller sites.
- Community development workers focusing outreach efforts on communities identified as requiring additional support advice and guidance e.g. Lye Community.
- Providing opportunities for continued dialogue with partners and communities to collect stories and capture successes and using feedback from this change in approach to inform communications going forward.
- Further engagement work carried out in specific higher risk wards to identify any potential barriers to people accessing testing. Insight has been used to inform the approaches to community testing
- Established high risk places & settings and the out of hours contacts for each. This included substance misuse services, sexual health services, lifestyle service, HIV support service, borough hostels, commissioned mental health services, sheltered and supported housing, services supporting those with learning disability (non-residential), independent living, domestic abuse services, those working with homelessness & day support for those with physical and sensory disability.
- Same day response to new situations ensure partners are assisted quickly in identifying issues and being supported with clear advice and guidance
- FAQs on current processes for all subgroup partners shared within group forum and updated regularly for new legislation and guidance as changes came into effect.
- Guidance spreadsheet was developed and regularly updated to ensure group members stayed up to date and had links to appropriate government guidance

- 30 Covid-19 council communications shared with subgroup from September 2020 to March 2021 supporting changes to government key messages and local developments and assets. This included gathering data from those with sight disability and guiding on communications required in different languages. This was fed into communications network.
- Offered training to members. Housing colleagues had 3 bespoke test and trace webinars in September 2020.
- Developed risk assessment for voluntary sector to support re-opening of activities. Uploading this to the Dudley Council website pages for sector to use.

### 8.5.1 Ethnic minority communities

As part of the Health & Well Being Board’s response, a sub-group has been established to oversee and coordinate work across the system. The group will consider the wider inequalities issues raised in recent Public Health England report “Behind the data: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on BAME groups”

### 8.5.2. Older community

- We set up [dedicated webpages](#) for older and vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable - these have been kept up-to-date with the latest information and advice and early during the first wave of the pandemic Dudley GPs wrote or sent text messages to all older and vulnerable patients to direct them to this information
- A detailed booklet containing information and details of practical support for older and vulnerable people was mailed and promoted online during the first wave.
- Unpaid carers of family members or friends have been communicated with via a campaign over summer 2020. A booklet for carers was also produced and mailed/available online.
- The council’s quarterly magazine which is mailed direct to all borough homes has contained a helplines and support section in each issue since spring 2020, especially useful to older and vulnerable people. There has been a particular emphasis in the magazine on support to address loneliness and isolation.

<https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/emergencies/coronavirus/coronavirus-advice-for-older-or-vulnerable-people/>

#### What we will do now

We will:

- share lessons learnt during the Covid-19 pandemic and continue to communicate with each other, gathering local intelligence and sharing feedback.
- encourage the partners/ stakeholder to implement Covid-19 risk assessments and ensure that their settings are Covid-19 secure to return/ increase social activity.



Click here to see..

Case study:

[Addressing the needs of communities](#)

# Case study:

## Residential setting outbreak



### Situation

The Dudley Test & Trace cell were notified of 5 staff and 3 residents testing positive in a residential setting for a vulnerable community. There was concerns that residents were reluctant to be tested, were not complying with requests to isolate and were leaving the building, with the staff team to manage the situation being reduced due to self-isolation. The setting had 60 residents and 11 staff.



### Approach

An Incident Management Team (IMT) was initiated with the provider of the residential service and partner organisations, including WM Police, CCG, Adult Safeguarding, Health Protection, Environmental Health, PHE and Pharmacy representative.



### Results

The service provider was assisted by the council in providing additional round the clock on site staff to manage the situation. 3 further residents were confirmed as testing positive in the first few days. Due to residents continuing to mingle after the first cases were confirmed, all residents were deemed to be close contacts and a letter was sent to all residents outlining the legal requirement to self-isolate for 10 days. The police attended the setting to support compliance with self-isolation.

Support continued with daily IMT updates. Measures put in place included daily welfare calls to each resident, food bank deliveries to all residents with additional fresh food being provided daily, provision of additional PPE and the review of required medication over the self-isolation period with delivery of medication. On-site lateral flow testing for asymptomatic residents was provided by a local pharmacy on 3 separate occasions with the majority of residents being tested and no further positive cases arising.

The integrated substance misuse service provided alcohol plans for residents and daily scripts for those requiring support. Extra mental health resources were put into the scheme and resident wellbeing was closely monitored. The police attended regularly to provide continuing support.

As a result of the prompt action taken by the partnership organisations, there were no further positive cases amongst staff or residents during the period of the outbreak and the residents' safety and welfare needs were met. The outbreak was confined to 11 cases in total.



### Learning

The provider has since reviewed the procedures in place to deal with an incident of this nature and put in place a bespoke emergency plan/business continuity plan to ensure residents health and welfare needs can be fully met in a similar situation and to ensure cover arrangements where staff levels are reduced due to self-isolation or other absences.

## 9. Communications and engagement

### 9.1 Communications

Our residents remain at the forefront of all our communications. Supporting communications has been critical right across the borough, including caring for the vulnerable, supporting businesses, kerbside refuse collection and other essential functions as well as working alongside DCVS, such as when providing school meals to the most deprived.

A communication and engagement framework was agreed across the partnership and provides the overarching strategic direction and approach to both communication and engagement to support Covid-19 outbreak control, test and trace programme and latterly rollout of the vaccine.

The success of the Test and Trace programme and Covid-19 outbreak control relies on the willing participation of the communities and stakeholders to recognise symptoms, get tested, provide contact details and self-isolate when requested and get vaccinated when offered, in addition to following guidance on social distancing and hand hygiene. Enforcement is not effective as a first line measure and is limited as a measure of last resort.

Dudley's communities have been incredibly supportive of lockdown measures and have been critical in the emergency response delivery, particularly in providing care and support to the most vulnerable. They have also advised on areas of need and raised concerns, working collaboratively with statutory agencies to address issues.

#### What we have done

- Partnership communication and engagement meetings take place fortnightly to oversee activity.
- Partnership briefings are emailed weekly.
- A communications and public affairs officer has been assigned to each subgroup in order to support communications to vulnerable settings, residents and businesses.
- The member led engagement board continues to meet on a monthly basis to oversee communication and engagement.
- At every level the Communications and Public Affairs team has been linked in and prepared supporting communications with senior officers around the public health messages and impact on Council services for residents, including those who are vulnerable, businesses, service users and members.
- An amplification campaign 'Play your part and protect Dudley Borough' utilising all communication channels including press, the Council newsletter Your Borough, Your Home, social media, advertising and engagement with residents has delivered government and local support messages.
- Messages and approach have evolved during the year to communicate Tiers 1-4, Christmas and the three national lockdowns requirements. At each stage we have utilised national assets and developed our own to compliment and encourage safe behaviours and prevent the spread of the virus. The three strands of the campaign include:
  - National lockdown/government guidance
  - Safe behaviours, hands face space
  - Symptoms and when to get tested

- Latterly vaccine rollout has been added to the campaign.
- Individual campaigns have been developed to cover specific activities including #Dudleystayshome a campaign to support residents, parents and carers during lockdown and promote available safe and virtual activities.
- Recently we have developed a campaign to support the rollout of Dudley’s symptom free offer and we have run two recovery and reopening of the town centre campaigns following lockdowns one and two.
- Weekly resident bulletins are issued and include information on affected council services, safe behaviours support for vulnerable etc and a one-stop Coronavirus area has been created on our website [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- Elected councillors and Members of Parliament have attended 7 webinars and receive weekly Connected Councillor bulletins as well as the partner bulletin.
- When the data or local intelligence indicated a concern the Council’s Public Health and Communications and Public Affairs teams have responded by amplifying or targeting communications messages.

**What we will do now**

Dudley’s outbreak plan is underpinned by public engagement to build trust and participation. Utilising a wide range of traditional and digital communications channels the council will continue to deliver effective communications at pace, that:

- are customer focused to keep stakeholders and key target audiences informed of
- key national government and public health messaging
- variant of concern (surge) communications
- local support on offer and the impact of the virus on Council service delivery.
- connects the Council with our communities to enable them to take control of their own lives and others.
- are creative in sharing key messages in a simple and consistent manner for all and adaptive to ensure equal and fair access to the much-needed services, while ensuring continued public engagement in local democracy during these unprecedented times.

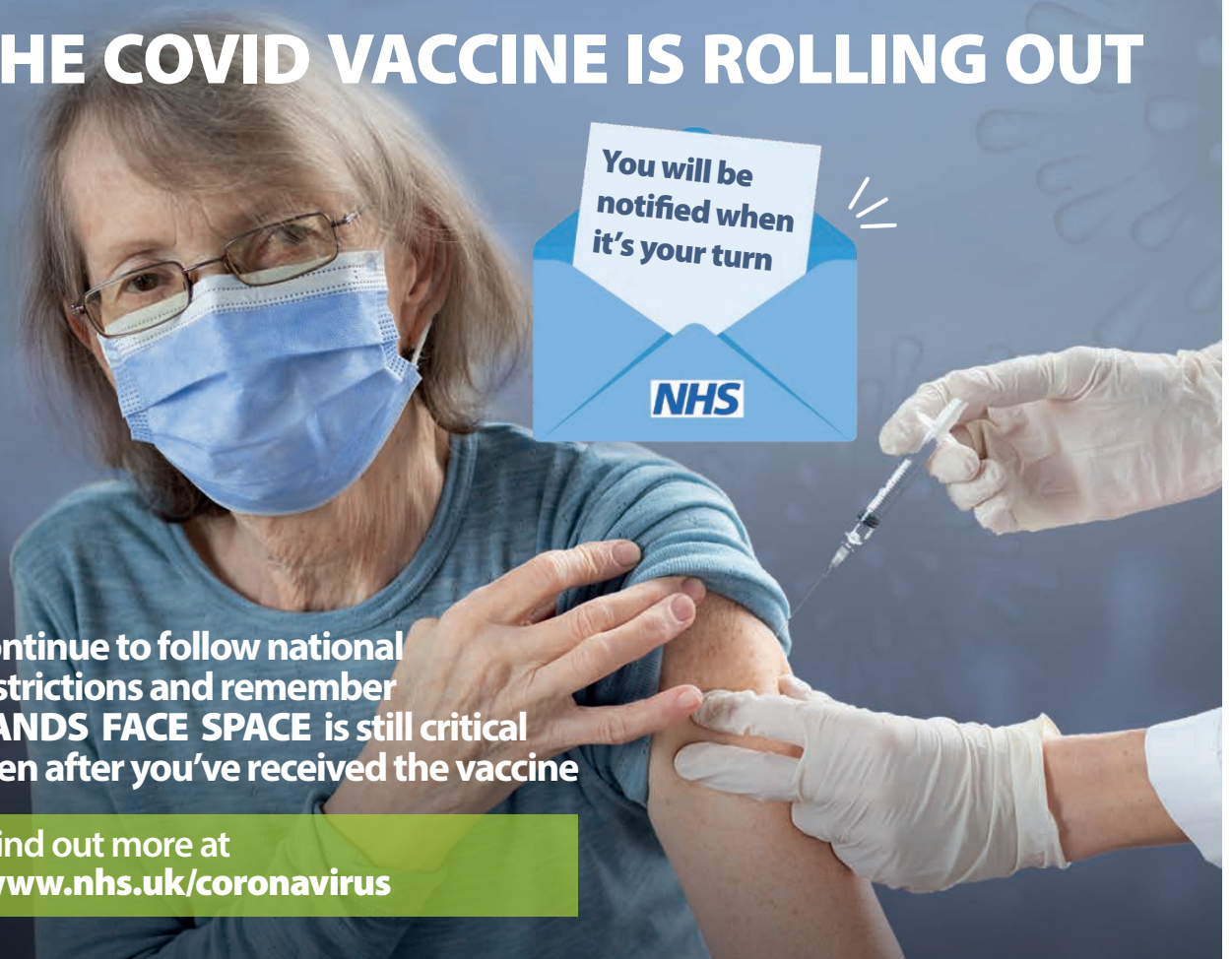


Spring 2021

# Your borough **YOUR HOME**

News and information for Dudley borough residents

## **THE COVID VACCINE IS ROLLING OUT**



Continue to follow national restrictions and remember **HANDS FACE SPACE** is still critical even after you've received the vaccine

Find out more at  
[www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**



**DUDLEY BOROUGH**  
**A GREAT PLACE TO CALL HOME**



**IN DUDLEY BOROUGH**  
[www.dudleyboroughvision2030.org.uk](http://www.dudleyboroughvision2030.org.uk)



# DO YOU USE... HACKNEY CABS/PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES FOR ESSENTIAL JOURNEYS?

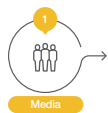
Follow our **COVID-19 safety advice**  
Visit [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)



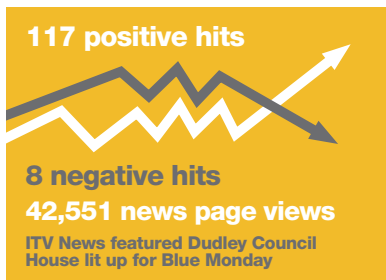
**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**



## Communication analytics January 2021



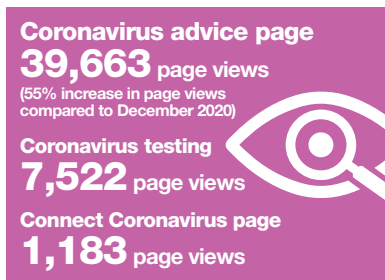
**Media  
in January**



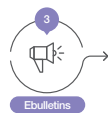
Communications and public affairs team



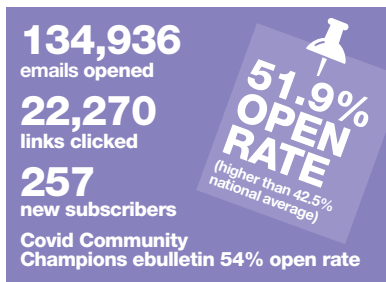
**Website  
in January**



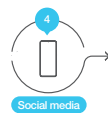
Communications and public affairs team



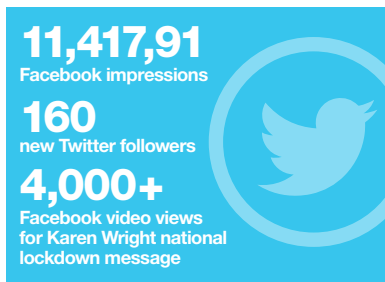
**gov.  
delivery  
in January**



Communications and public affairs team



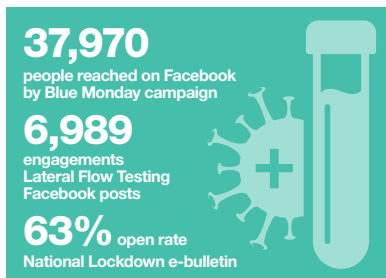
**Social  
media  
in January**



Communications and public affairs team



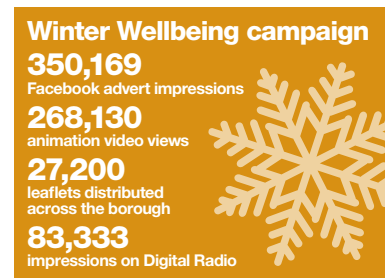
**Campaigns  
in January**



Communications and public affairs team

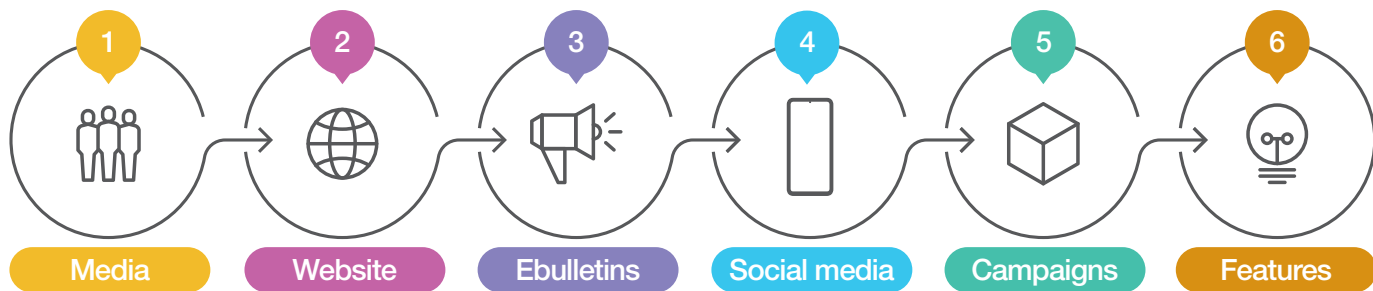


**Features  
in January**



Communications and public affairs team

# Communication analytics



## Communication analytics July 2020 - March 2021

### Digital activity

- **Media**  
The Dudley Council news page has a total of 405,419 page views
- **Website**  
The coronavirus advice and guidance page has a total of 287,631 page views
- **Social Media**  
On Facebook, we posted 2,267 times, had 12,628,879 impressions and 655,282 engagements. Videos on YouTube have a total of 60,305 views, 2,300 watch time (hours) and +441 new subscribers.
- **E-bulletins**  
E-bulletins are one of the most effective ways we've sent latest Covid-19 information to our residents. We sent 337 e-bulletins, 2,580,820 emails were opened, links were clicked 438,679 times and our average open rate was 39.6% (the national average is now 42.5%).

### Your Borough Your Home magazine

We delivered five [Your Borough Your Home](#) magazines to thousands of households across the borough. We also sent out digital versions of the magazine via gov. delivery to 40,000+ recipients each edition. [The average open rate was 50%](#).

### Campaigns

- **Government campaigns**  
We consistently shared government campaigns in 2020-21 including information about staying home, #DudleyStaysHome, national lockdowns, [tier information](#), [support bubbles](#), [self-isolation](#), [vaccination safety](#), [Covid-19 symptoms and testing](#) and the importance of [Hands Face Space](#). We also ensured the [NHS Covid-19 app](#) was consistently promoted – highlighting the apps privacy policy to reassure residents it's safe to use.
- **Posts had over 7,000,000 impressions**
- **Symptom Free Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)**  
Throughout January, we informed residents that people with public facing jobs can access LFT at participating pharmacies and Saltwells Education Centre. On Facebook, posts reached a total of 64,835 people and 6,989 engagements

- **Play your part – protect Dudley borough**

The Play your part protect Dudley borough campaign calls on everyone to play their part and protect themselves, friends, family and Dudley borough.

- **4 videos** were featured on Facebook & Instagram (6-26 November) (delivered by AJB) to encourage residents to stay safe. All four videos had a total of 23,400 impressions, 3000 clicks, 18,700 video plays and 12.81% click through rate.
- Covid-19 e-bulletins were sent to over 300,000 residents' inboxes.
- The campaign has been regularly played on Black Country Radio, Raaj FM and New Style Radio, has regular monthly press adverts (print & digital) featured in Dudley E&S and Chronicles and a variety of posters are distributed across the borough at town centres, local businesses, schools and community centres

- **Back to school safely (August/September 2020)**

The government launched its back to school safely campaign to reassure parents and students that schools and colleges are ready for their return in September. A media release was published on the council's news page. An e-bulletin was delivered to 11,023 residents (40% open rate) highlighting the importance of following school guidance, not sending children to school with coronavirus symptoms, socially distancing and advice when returning from foreign travel. Facebook posts reached 12,722 people and had 327 engagements. We also supported West Midlands Network to encourage students to wear face coverings and to travel more safely.

- **Shop Visit Explore Local**

In August 2020, people were encouraged to shop, visit and explore local as part of a campaign supporting borough businesses and tourist attractions. People were advised to stay safe by adhering to social distancing guidelines, wearing face coverings in indoor locations where required and washing hands regularly. Posters were also delivered to key locations across the borough.

Halesowen High Street had the best footfall recovery rate in the UK.

- **#DudleyStaysHome**

#DudleyStaysHome is a campaign to encourage Dudley borough residents to stay home, save lives and protect the NHS. On Twitter, the campaign had 1,064,845 impressions. Dudley Police also used the hashtag and shared our posts.

## Dudley Council shortlisted national Covid-19 Communications Awards November 2020



**Play your part - protect Dudley borough** 

**For more information visit [www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)**

## 9.2 Engagement

Our approach to engagement in Dudley is evolving. Over the last few years, we have been working collaboratively with partners in the borough to create a vision for increasing community participation, in order to grow strong, connected, involved communities.

We have learned that there is a need for a range of diverse models and approaches for participation and we have identified barriers and enabling factors to create the conditions for even more community participation to take place.

We have also started to have a different type of conversation with partners and communities; one which focuses on assets and strengths and seeks out opportunities for greater collaboration. Through the Health and Wellbeing Board we are working to inform a new conversation and relationship between the statutory and voluntary sectors and the community.

This approach has proved invaluable throughout our response to Covid-19 as our regular conversations with community leaders and partners working with communities has provided us with rich insight into the things which have worked well and which we need to continue and grow, as well as the things which have not worked so well and which need to be done differently.

Regular dialogue with partners will ensure that we can respond promptly to the intelligence we gain and, particularly in more complex settings, provide relevant and timely communications, support to prevent/ manage an outbreak. Plans have been put in place by the subgroups to ensure that the relevant partners and leads are notified of the outbreaks and complex situations in their locations, places and communities.

These regular conversations, based on mutual trusting relationships, provide a firm foundation for our communications and engagement work.

This informal and collaborative approach is enabling a shared response to the challenges we face with Covid-19 and is involving people in becoming part of the solution.

### What we have done

- The council has established Covid-19 Community Champions programme, with nearly 200 local people disseminating key messages and feeding back from their networks to inform the Covid-19 response
- Engaged with key population groups through CVS partners to shape public health messages that will best resonate with 'people like me'
- Used existing CDW relationships and established new contacts to provide information and support and for two way communications throughout the pandemic
- Engaged regularly with community, voluntary and faith partners to develop plans for outbreak management, support the establishment of LFT and PCR sites, and identify and respond to situations of concern We have also set up a dedicated area for faith voluntary and community settings on [the council's website](#)
- Provided guidance through webinars, FAQs and on a case-by-case basis to enquiries

### What we will do now

- Promote a 'Make Every Contact Count' approach to supporting Covid-19-safe behaviour, including the skills development required across organisations
- Continue to listen to communities and take an assets-based, co-production approach to working with them in our Covid-19 response and recovery

- Grow the Covid-19 Community Champions programme
- Monitor the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and undertake suicide prevention activity
- Use the 'As One' initiative as a means for communities to come together to support their Covid-19 recovery and post-Covid-19 resilience
- Give health literacy greater focus in communications and engagement
- Promote vaccine-safe behaviour and amplify the national 'Let's Keep Going' campaign messages

## 10. Compliance and enforcement

The key priority for the outbreak plan is compliance through cooperation. However, it is recognised that enforcement might be required in rare cases to protect the public, e.g. failure to comply with self-isolation or with health and safety regulations.

Legislation would only be used if all other measures are unsuccessful, and in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy and in collaboration with partners including where necessary PHE and the Health and Safety Executive.

The specific pieces of legislation available to the local authority includes:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Various coronavirus restrictions regulations made under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984, relating to business activities
- Health Protection (Local Authority Powers) Regulations 2010-
- Health Protection (Part 2A Orders) Regulations 2010
- Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.3) Regulations 2020

Public Health England (PHE) also have powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020 in relation to enforcing screening, assessment and/or self-isolation of coronavirus cases or suspected cases.

West Midlands Police have enforcement powers under the various coronavirus restrictions regulations in relation to movements and gatherings applying to the wider public as well as businesses and additionally also have enforcement responsibility for the wearing of face coverings in certain public places and workplaces where this is compulsory.

The police have adopted an Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce approach to the Covid-19 response in the West Midlands area. This approach has been effective in Dudley and has prevented the need for enforcement action except for serious or continuing breaches. The local authority continues to work with police colleagues and the community to prevent the need for escalation measures.

In addition, communications regularly highlight the precautions the public can take to limit the spread of infection as well as the legal requirements they are required to observe, both on a day to day basis and in the event that they are required to isolate.

# 11. Resourcing

## 11.1 Finance

Resourcing the Local Outbreak Management Plan is a combination of the use of specifically allocated resources from central government, the use of council and partner resources along with the flexible and sustainable deployment of our workforces across the system and communities. This is referenced throughout our plan and supported by the workforce planning that is in place.

Dudley council has worked closely with partners to deploy the Contain Outbreak Management Fund and to plan for the ongoing use of resources to enable us to implement our Local Outbreak Management Plan.

We will continue to apply the same approach, ensuring that we apply our approaches of building resilience and confidence in our communities and remain agile in responding to developing needs, such as outlined in our triggers for escalation table. We are aware of and have factored in the changing context as ‘business as usual’ services are stepped back up, whilst the ongoing additional demands continue due to the pandemic. This is where our approaches of recruiting and training staff, and deploying teams to work is key to the resilience of our approach.

In terms of additional financial resource Dudley has been awarded £1,941,764 in respect of the Test & Trace Support Grant, and £7,718,304 Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

The Test & Trace Support Grant has been fully allocated in financial year 2020/21, and any unspent funds in relation to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund will be carried forward into 2021/22 to continue with the activities detailed in the table below.

Use of our funding /Areas of Spend	Lead Organisation/ Partnerships	Delivery teams
Lateral flow Testing-implementation	Dudley Council Pharmacists Solutions for Health	Test and Trace Team
Local Contract Tracing and welfare support.	Dudley Council	Test and Trace Team
Communications and engagement	Engagement Board Dudley Council Forging a Future Partnership	CAPA and Healthy Communities
Enabling compliance and enforcement	Forging a Future Partnership Dudley Council West Midlands Police	Environmental Health and healthy Communities and Trading Standards

Use of our funding /Areas of Spend	Lead Organisation/ Partnerships	Delivery teams
Enhanced communication and marketing (e.g. towards hard-to-reach groups and other localised messaging including social media campaigns, ad vans and road signs)	Dudley Council Forging a Future Partnership Engagement Board	CAPA and Healthy Communities
Providing support to vulnerable people classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.	Dudley Council Health Protection Board	Healthy Communities Team
Providing assistance grants to sectors, temporary accommodation for to facilitate self-isolation	Dudley Council Forging a Future Partnership	Welfare Team
Delivery of essentials for those in self-isolation	Dudley Council Forging a Future Partnership	Dudley Council Plus
A range of community-based support for those disproportionately impacted such as the BAME population, care home residents (including increasing staffing resources to provide guidance and support, a series of webinars for BAME population and community champions)	Dudley Council Engagement Board	Finance Team
Surveys to identify the impact of Covid-19 on the local population.	Dudley Council Engagement Board	Housing Team
Increase capacity within local voluntary sector, Covid-19 champions	Dudley Council Dudley CVS	Healthy Communities Team
Staffing resources to support educational settings including specialist public health advice to schools	Dudley Council	Healthy Communities Team
Project Management, Specialist analytical support, Test and Trace Cell Support, Outbreak Management	Dudley Council Health Protection Board	Intelligence Team
Developing community confidence and resilience	Dudley Council/ Forging a Future Partnership	CAPA

## 11.2 Workforce capacity

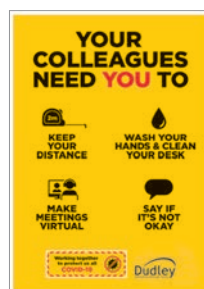
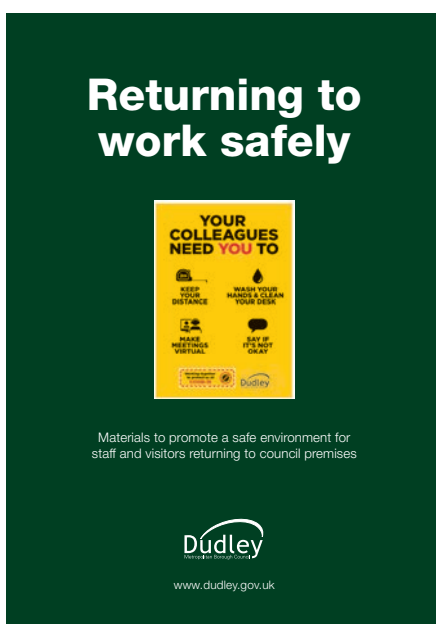
Our aim was to develop a sustainable workforce model for contact tracing and outbreak response. We have trained both specialist and generic staff within the council on our standing operational procedures.

Additionally, we have recruited interim health protection nurses and environment health officers to assist with our response. This has enabled us to step up our capacity when rates have increased.

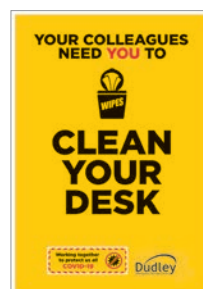
We continue to develop a robust test and trace staffing infrastructure. For example our local contact tracing team is led by Dudley Plus team who have trained a number of existing or new staff to provide a seven day offer. The core team is providing this support and we have additional capacity to call upon if needed.

### What we have done

- Delivered at pace, HR support to ensure all services and schools remained active during the pandemic and met the challenges of the Covid-19 crisis. Completed a large-scale recruitment campaign to establish a central team of casual employees to work across a range of Covid-19 related activities.
- Produced new HR policies, guidelines and FAQs in line with emerging guidance – e.g. vaccination policy, temporary working from home policy etc.
- Deployment of staff to critical service areas following the establishment of the deployment pool, including pre-induction training, upskilling
- Deployment of whole teams and large numbers of employees for calls to shielded residents in partnership with DCVS
- Provided HR advice and support to multiple directorates across the authority.
- Ongoing support to Employment Tribunal processes and hearings
- Maintained provision of Advice and Enquiry line 8.30-4.30 Monday to Friday and whole team cover to support managers with any people related issues or enquiries
- Continued to deliver training for managers as and when possible (22 sessions to date)



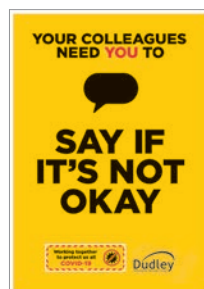
Colleagues - YS1



Clean your desk - YS2



Virtual meetings - YS3



It's not okay - YS4



Wash your hands - YS5



Max Kitchen - YS6



## 11.2.1 Employee support and engagement:

We introduced a number of initiatives to support employees' health and wellbeing both for those continuing to attend work and those working from home i.e.

- Keeping staff safe – risk assessments, appropriate PPE equipment, Covid-19 secure buildings.
- Staff counselling service.
- Promoted the importance of physical activity and mental health initiatives.
- Responded to emerging evidence around risk to ethnic community groups from Covid-19 and implemented engagement sessions within 2 weeks of this.
- Use of data to inform decisions e.g. engagement sessions informed policy decision making and development of risk assessments. Understanding the data and having good insight into the issues enabled a more tailored approach to plan interventions.

### What we will do now

- Virtual Pre-employment checks will be the norm going forward as it has proven to be an efficient way of working and reduces time to hire.
- Proactive Trade Union engagement has been effective using virtual meetings we will continue with this approach.
- We will establish the core skills set of the workforce to enable us to deploy staff at pace in the future.
- In Recognition of the significant increase in feelings of stress/anxiety amongst our workforce, we will invest in employee assistance programmes (EAP) where staff can obtain confidential external, non-clinical support
- We will support the authority in wider adoption and delivery of services via approved digital technologies.
- We will continue to ensure Business Continuity Plans are current, reflective of Covid-19 experiences and lessons learned .
- Covid-19 pandemic has been bigger than our emergency planning arrangements for pandemics and therefore we will be updating our emergency planning arrangement to reflect the lessons learned across the board.
- We will use workforce data and lessons learned to inform the Council's People Strategy and work on Future Council 2030.
- We will actively support new support staff as existing staff begin redeployment to substantive roles and we resume 'business as usual' activities when exiting lockdown.
- Invest in voluntary sector to build capacity.

Ensure that we have the additional capacity within the workforce to deliver both our covid response , support covid recovery plans as well as focus efforts on the inequalities outcomes that Covid-19 has exposed.

## 12. Governance

Dudley's Director of Public Health (DPH) has the responsibility to produce the Local Outbreak Control Plan. The DPH in consultation with key partners has put in place governance arrangements to oversee the development, implementation, delivery and monitoring of the plan

### 12.1 Partnership governance arrangements:

The DPH chairs a multi-agency Covid-19 Health Protection Board which oversees the development of this plan.

The Board works closely with the Local Resilience Forum, Strategic Co-ordinating Groups and a Member led public-facing Engagement Board to implement the plan. The Engagement Board leads on communications and engagement build trust and participation among members of public.

#### 12.1.1 Dudley Council governance arrangements:

Internally the outbreaks plan is overseen by the Covid-19 Incident Co-ordination Group and Strategic Executive Boards

##### **Scrutiny:**

Dudley Council undertook a detailed scrutiny process looking at all aspects of its approach to dealing with the pandemic in an attempt to make the most of the learning when it can have the most value .

The adult health and social care scrutiny committee has looked at a number of key issues at the council including stocks of PPE, emergency planning procedures and links with partner organisations. Cross-party members looked at how the council had responded to the challenges of the pandemic through a scrutiny process which has received national attention.

The timing of the scrutiny, occurring whilst the pandemic was still very much ongoing, puts Dudley ahead of the curve nationally, but elected members felt it was vital to undertake the work whilst its relevance and impact had most value.

The first of the Covid-19 scrutiny sessions were held on September 3 featuring emergency planning, PPE and communications whilst the October 15 meeting covered scrutiny of the impact on frontline council services and the work of partner organisations to ensure a full system-wide scrutiny is undertaken.

The final scrutiny meeting took place on November 4 with a specific focus on how regional partnerships and national government activity has linked up with the local authority's response to the crisis.

**For more information please go to the council's website at <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/media-centre/communications/covid-scrutiny-report/>**

## 12.1.2 Clinical governance:

Clinical governance will also be provided through the governance structures in place for the plan.

The Public Health Senior Leadership team will be responsible for ensuring the relevant assurance processes required for Covid-19 response are followed.

## 12.2 Monitoring and assurance:

Monitoring of the programme will be overseen by governance boards. Updates are regularly provided to Health and Wellbeing Board and scrutiny committees.

Health watch will be providing a 'mystery shopper' exercise, working with Covid-19 champions to provide independent feedback on peoples experiences and support during Covid-19.

A desktop exercise was undertaken in summer 2020 to check our plans. Further exercises will be undertaken to ensure that we are reviewing are plans are providing assurance to our residents.

## 12.3 Programme delivery

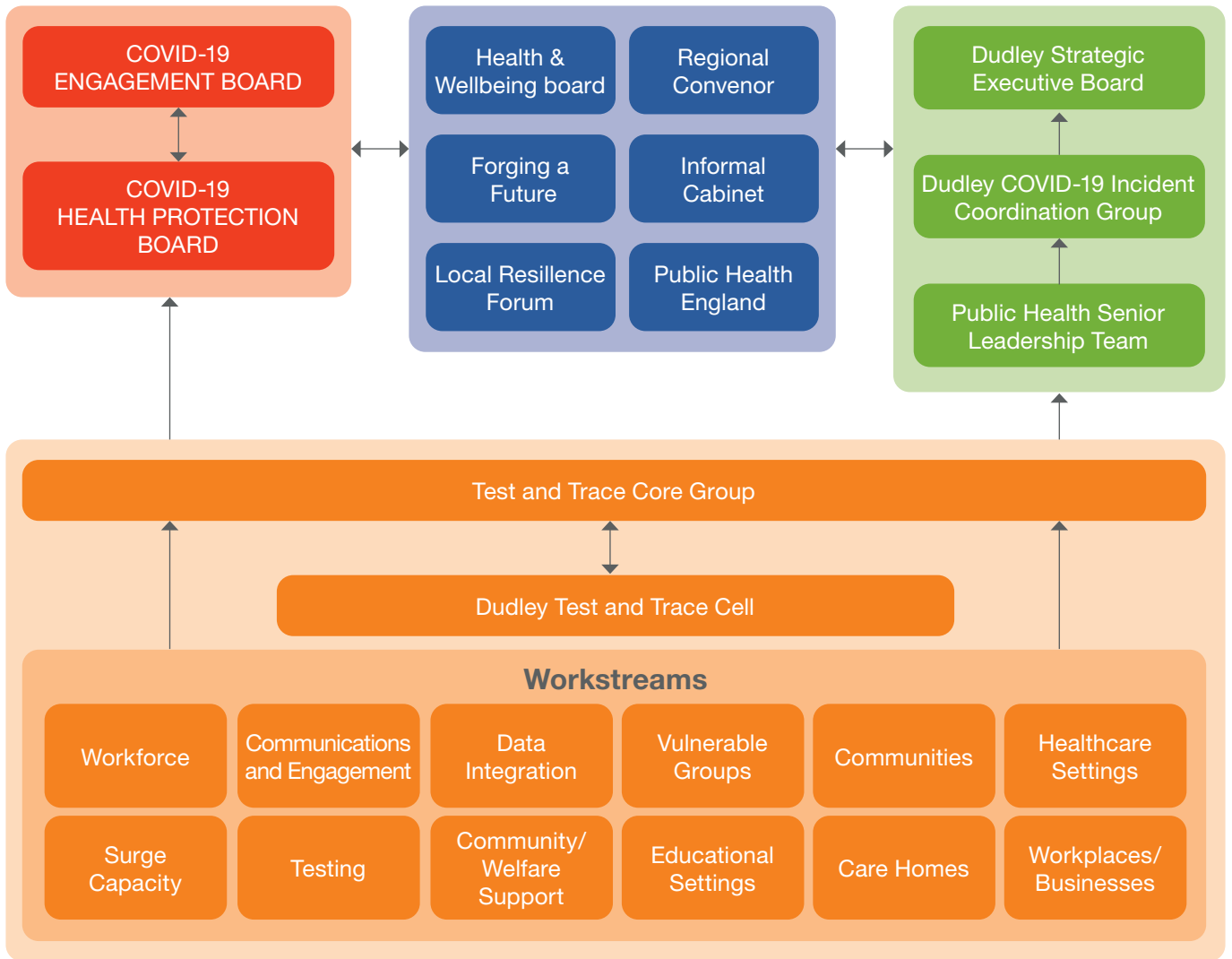
Delivery of Dudley's Local Outbreak Management Plan is underpinned by utilising a rigorous and trusted programme management methodology (Managing Successful Programmes - MSP).

Each area (planning theme) is defined and structured in line with MSP processes and management tools; that ensures the core elements are captured, defined and addressed to maximise the chances of success.

However, adoption and utilisation of this programme management approach is only one strand of delivery. If implemented in isolation it could leave the overall progress prone to error and lacking in quality. To complement this process, Dudley Council has recently developed a rigorous Programme Assurance Framework, which captures best practice from across various industries and the UK Cabinet Office guidelines.

This framework provides assurance that delivery can be measured in a tangible manner (through the council's existing governance structures) via specific criteria that can determine the likelihood of success and failure. Through this framework, key themes will be continuously scrutinised and measured (themes ranging from scope, team leadership, financial management, timelines/milestones and outputs/benefits) to ensure management have complete oversight of progress in a transparent manner. This means any deviation in progress can be flexibly managed in a timely manner.

Although in early stages, implementation of this programme management and assurance process can ensure Dudley has an increased chance of delivering what is required for the population. See Appendix 5 for the Dudley Local Outbreak Management Programme Plan



**ASK YOURSELF...**  
**IS YOUR JOURNEY REALLY ESSENTIAL?**

**Play your part - protect Dudley borough**

**Dudley**  
 Metropolitan Borough Council

## 13. Living with Covid-19 and opportunities

In writing this plan consideration has been given to both what we need to do in the immediate future but also how we continue to build upon our strengths and assets to further develop resilience and confidence across the system and amongst communities and residents of Dudley.

In addition to national research we have also undertaken work to help us better understand the impact of Covid-19 at a local level this includes;

- Case studies and stories captured of volunteers, workers, employers communities. We plan to continue and build upon the positive 'story telling' approaches that have worked so well in Dudley in the past.
- An assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on the local population's health and wellbeing is being conducted as part of the Health and Wellbeing Board's (HWBB) Joint Strategic Assessment process. We will continue to use data and intelligence to inform our response
- Determining the impacts at a local level will assist in the development of priorities and inform the reset of the HWBB's strategic purpose during the post-emergency phase of the pandemic. The consequences of Covid-19 will be considered across the life course, including the social, economic, behavioural and mental health impacts, and those that have arisen due to the postponement of NHS activity during the lockdown period. There will be a focus on health inequalities throughout. The final report is due to be completed April 2021

**In living with Covid-19 we will:**

### **Test and Trace**

- Develop a locality /neighbourhood model where IMTs will ensure representation from locally connected people
- Continue to enhance the community pharmacy testing model ;providing services by those trusted in the community

### **Educational settings**

- Continue to work with all partners to build on good practice and respond as new guidance emerges to reinforce the measures needed in place to keep children & young people safe
- Communicate clearly and regularly with the population to maximise understanding and adherence to guidance

### **Vulnerable settings**

- Maintain relationships and contacts with partners post pandemic to build future positive outcomes, such as effective communications, additional support and resources and promotion of Public Health services.

### **Business**

- Develop our Covid-19 Business Advisors offer by showcasing those exemplar businesses and building on those hyperlocal relationships made to support recovery

## Resources

- Take stock of the workforce to ensure more flexibility and suitably adaptable to deliver any future challenges.
- Develop a core skills matrix to assist the deployment of staff across the organisation to critical services area to meet any future challenges.
- Update Business Continuity Plans to incorporate the requirements of living with Covid-19 in terms of sustainable resources to ensure capacity going forward
- Implement cultural changes relating to ways of working and more collaborative working, including our work with Trade Unions
- Develop policies that support a range of work styles including more flexible and agile working.
- Learning from the past 12 months of Covid-19, ensure that we use positive change as a catalyst to inform our thinking of future council e.g. the 'hybrid' worker/working from home.

## Communications and engagement

- Support the co-production of the recovery and resilience stage of the response to Covid-19. There is a range of positive learning and activity from the period of the pandemic to capture and sustain. This will be encompassed by a piece of 'Story Telling' based work, which will also aim to shape ongoing assets-based collaborative working with our communities and community partners.
- Continue to develop the Covid-19 community champion model and support living with Covid-19 at a locality level.
- Working with partners, continue to monitor deaths by suicide in the Borough and identify priorities for intervention, to be reflected in the local Suicide Prevention Plan.
- Continue to nurture the relationships established and strengthened as a result of the pandemic to support the delivery of engagement, community resilience and public health outcomes. Connections with our faith communities and places of worship have been extended in particular, and offer potential for future joint-working, for instance in relation to community development and public mental health.

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**PLAY YOUR PART...**

*... so I can cuddle my grandma again*

Play your part - protect Dudley borough

Dudley  
Metropolitan Borough Council

HANDS FACE SPACE TEST  
[www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/coronavirus)

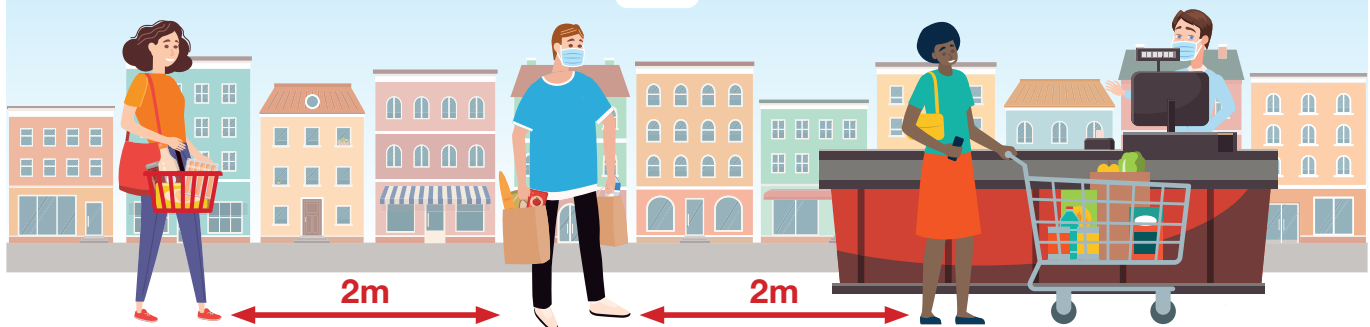
## 14. Risks, issues & challenges

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
1 Community fail to adhere to Covid-19 control measures post lockdown	Rates of infection may increase causing pressure across the system and available resources	Continue to prioritise this work and increase partnership working further to ensure key messages are continuously re-enforced
2 Little control on travel across geography meaning little control on cross-border transmission	Spread may increase if regional approach is not agreed and implemented	To work with partners across West Midlands region to ensure consistency of approach when implementing 'living with Covid-19' measures
3 Other VoC emerge pressurising the system	Resource may be insufficient to cope with variant demand	To build internal and cross partner resource that can respond in a rapid and flexible manner to address any further Covid-19 demands
4 Vaccine uptake slows	Lower levels of vaccine uptake could affect the overall immunity levels with Dudley meaning greater risk of further infection surges	To ensure vaccine delivery methods remain current and relevant to meet community expectations whilst addressing any concerns they may have. Community engagement and ongoing communications are key to successful delivery
5 Government funding/grants reduced	Unable to manage ongoing Covid-19 defence work whilst supporting the Dudley community recover from the pandemic	Seek assurance from central government on ongoing financial support and ensure localised offers of support are available for the local community

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
6 National asymptomatic testing programmes are discontinued	Reduced coverage of asymptomatic testing	Seek confirmation from central government that these will be ongoing throughout 2021/22 or whether alternative local programmes will be required
7 Powers of enforcement are limited and do not extend to supermarkets about which there are steady stream of concerns about non-compliance	Control of spread will be difficult if legislation does not maintain control on high-risk workplaces	Request that central government include supermarkets in the category of businesses that can be subject to local Directions.
8 Covid-19 vaccine supplies are insufficient to achieve the national target to offer vaccination to all adult 50 and over by 15 April and all adults by 31 July	Lack of vaccine supply will limit overall area immunity	Seek assurance from central government that vaccine supplies will be sufficient
9 Recovery of normal services across the community	Reopening of key public services to a normal schedule may take longer due to continued Covid-19 work. Back-log of work will continue to grow placing indirect pressure on the system	Continue to press with Track, Trace and Vaccinate to expedite recovery timeline.

# Stay safe when visiting town centres

Many shops in our town centres are still open but for buying essential items only, such as food and medicine. Please shop responsibly.



**Thank you** This will help keep everyone safe





## 15. Glossary

SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
BCFB	Black Country Food Bank
CAPA	Communications and Public Affairs (Dudley Council)
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group (Dudley)
CDW	Community Development Worker Cohorting
DCVS	Dudley Council for Voluntary Service
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
FSM	Free School Meals
HWBB	Health and Well Being Board (Dudley)
IPC	Infection prevention control
LA	Local Authority
LFT	Lateral Flow Testing (Symptom Free Testing)
LTS	Local Test Site (walk in)
MECC	Making Every Contact Count
MSP	Managing Successful Programmes is a quality assurance framework
MTU	Mobile Test Unit (drive through)
PCN	Primary Care Networks
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction test for people with symptoms
PHE	Public Health England
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
VOC	Variants of concern
VUI	Variant under investigation

# Case study:

## Responding to care homes of concern



### Situation

The control of Covid-19 within care settings, requires all agencies to work in partnership if we are to limit spread.

Feedback from partners identified issue relating to two care homes where there were increases in positive Covid-19 cases. These included poor communication, lack of engagement with local authority and NHS colleagues.



### Approach

The same day, a multi-agency task group was set up to ascertain all facts and a plan of action formulated. The home was informed of the concerns and it was agreed that a team would be sent to the home.



### Results

A joint team from Public Health and Social Care Commissioning audited the homes, to seek assurance, provide advice and ensure good practice was in place. This identified multiple issues within each home and provided advice and corrective measures

Information from the visits were reported back to the homes that day at a multi-agency Incident Management round table meeting, chaired by the Director of Public Health and attended by the Care Quality Commission, Public Health England NHS and Dudley Council colleagues. This included the results of the visits, the findings, and the expectation placed on the home now and moving forward.



### Learning

Following the intervention, no further cases were identified and the homes and the response to help and support from all partners has improved. Learning from this outbreak has contributed to the successful management of subsequent outbreaks in similar settings.

# Case study:

## Outbreak in a small educational setting



### Situation

The children and young people's team were informed of 3 positive cases (1 child and 2 staff) at a private day nursery in one of the more deprived areas of the borough.



### Approach

A public health case manager was allocated and discussions were had with the owner who also manages the nursery on a daily basis.



### Results

The nursery was advised to test all its staff and for children with any diffuse symptoms to be tested. A standard diffuse symptom letter was sent out to all parents.

As positive cases in staff increased all children were advised to test as a precaution. 92% of staff tested positive.

The parents were sent a standard letter advising them to test their children. Most parents were compliant in this with 4 families needing some influence from the public health case manager to undertake the test. This resulted in 100% of staff and children who needed a test being tested which prevented further spread of Covid-19 in the community.

The relationship with the owner was excellent. She engaged fully and complied with everything asked of her from the team. She liaised with parents regularly to check on children's welfare. Her engagement and the positive working relationship prevented further spread and ensured the welfare of the children in her care. Throughout the outbreak the manager regularly communicated with the public health case manager and together they discussed when the nursery could successfully reopen.



### Learning

Good two-way communication was key in dealing with this outbreak. The decision to all test all children at the setting proved to be correct preventative measure as 19% of asymptomatic tested positive and this approach was carried out in all subsequent outbreaks.

# Case study:

## Workplace outbreak



### Situation

PHE informed the Dudley Test & Trace cell of a single positive Covid-19 case at a warehouse and office complex spread across 4 separate buildings in close proximity.



### Approach

Initial contact was made with the Company who confirmed 4 employees had tested positive; they worked in 2 offices on the site. The workforce total was 300 of whom 180 worked at the site at any one time. The company were assisted in identifying any further close contacts and arranged for more employees in the offices to work from home. A risk assessment was completed by the case officer and the company's Covid-19 risk assessment was obtained and some initial recommendations for improvement advised.



### Results

Over the next 12 days, the number of cases rose to 24 positives across 3 offices on the site with a further 14 employees self-isolating as close contacts or whilst awaiting test results. An Incident management team (IMT) was convened.

Detailed discussions with the company representatives at the first IMT revealed that the 2m social distancing rule had not been followed strictly enough by employees.

Shared refreshments and multiple handling of papers were highlighted as potential contact areas that were not being adequately controlled. The adequacy of mechanical and natural ventilation to the offices was raised as an area of concern.

Further actions taken by the company included identifying further staff who could be set up to work at home, enhanced cleaning of touchpoints and introduction of staggered breaks. The company increased its auditing and monitoring of compliance of employees with the Covid-19 risk assessment controls.

Two further cases did arise after the initial outbreak; both worked in the warehouse which had not previously been affected. A further IMT was held and the company encouraged to send employees for lateral flow testing and recommended to further investigate the adequacy of ventilation in the office accommodation.

A local pharmacy came to the site and provided lateral flow testing with 100 asymptomatic workers being tested in one day, all tested negative, giving some assurance to all parties that asymptomatic workers were not the ongoing cause of workplace transmission.



### Learning

The outbreak was managed and contained in cooperation with the company. In total there were 48 positive cases and 12 further employees needing to self-isolate. A ventilation engineer was appointed, and levels of CO2 measured which indicated inadequate air circulation in the offices which led to further improvements being carried out.

The company continue to encourage employees to undergo lateral flow testing, continue to monitor ventilation levels and continue to monitor compliance of employees with Covid-19 controls in the workplace. Learning from this outbreak led to additional preventative messages being cascaded to businesses and workplaces on the benefits of ventilation, social distancing.

# Case study:

## Addressing the needs of communities



### Situation

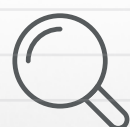
Growing concerns in community of disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on ethnic minority population in Dudley.



### Approach

Development of a new partnership of local organisations in Dudley to respond to an urgent need for the local ethnic minority communities to receive high quality health information to protect their health and wellbeing.

Together Cornerstone Community Church, Transforming Communities Together and Dudley Council Public Health created and delivered a programme of online seminars based on the latest health research and information. This was well received and successful in addressing an immediate need to reduce fear and equip ethnic community groups with access to potentially lifesaving information and advice. Subject experts spoke about long-term conditions that increase risk, mental health, self-care and workplace and welfare advice.



### Results

230 people registered for the webinars, 68% from ethnic minority communities, with between 52 and 70 attending each webinar. A retrospective survey indicated that a third of those responding had changed their behaviour as a result of their learning from the seminars and 30% of those responding had invited others or had shared information about the seminars.



### Learning

The feedback identifies an appetite from ethnic minority communities to be more involved and the recommendations from the webinars will inform the workplan of the new ethnic minority subgroup.

An evaluation report on the webinars giving more detailed information is available on request from the Public Health and Wellbeing Directorate.

## DUDLEY LOCAL OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLAN (March to December 2021)

No.	Action	Lead	Start Date	Deadline	Status	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Notes
<b>STRATEGIC</b>																
1.1	Understand the impact of Covid-19 on inequalities - Commission a needs assessment	Health and Wellbeing Board	4/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>Not Started</b>											
1.2	Develop the Future Council/ Forging Futures approach reflecting the learning, challenges and opportunities	Forging Future Group	4/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>Not Started</b>											
1.3	Monitor the impact on mental health	Health and Wellbeing Board	4/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>In Progress</b>											
1.4	Renew focus on working in neighbourhoods with communities- investing in new approaches	Forging Future Group	4/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>Not Started</b>											
1.4	Empower communities through Cluster Connect Model	Forging Future Group / DCVS / Early Years partnership	4/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>Not Started</b>											
<b>TESTING</b>																
2.1	Work with partners and the Department of Health ensure access to testing in our community remains in place as long as required	Testing Subgroup	6/1/2020	9/1/2021	<b>In Progress</b>											
2.2	Test our processes for surge PCR testing.	Testing Subgroup	4/1/2021	4/30/2021	<b>In Progress</b>											We have developed our plans for surge testing including identifications of sites for additional mobile testing units, use of pharmacies and door to door drop and collection of testing kits. We have identified and trained a number of volunteers to implement surge testing. Our plans will be tested in April 2021.
2.3	continue to review our symptom free offer to ensure equality of access and we will be guided by data to ensure the model is fit for purpose	Testing Subgroup	1/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>In Progress</b>											Increased accessed through pharmacies and community sites
2.4	Continue to roll out lateral flow testing to workplaces through either the Train the Trainer scheme or referral to the government scheme	Testing Subgroup	2/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>In Progress</b>											
2.5	participate in the community collect model to provide testing kits	Testing Subgroup	3/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>In Progress</b>											support through CAPA and Community Development workers
2.6	Communication and engagement campaigns will continue to promote the need for symptom free tests	Testing Subgroup	1/1/2021	6/30/2021	<b>In Progress</b>											
<b>CONTACT TRACING</b>																
3.1	Sign up for Local Zero, as part of our commitment to acting early and overcoming the barriers which prevent people isolating	Contact Tracing Sub-group	3/1/2021	4/1/2021	<b>In Progress</b>											Weekend contact tracing team recruited.







For more information about  
the information contained  
within this plan please contact  
Communications and Public Affairs  
on 01384 8124148 or by email at  
[corona.updates@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:corona.updates@dudley.gov.uk)

