

COVID-19 HIGHLIGHT REPORT

SERVICE AREAS:	Public Health
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NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT

Covid-19 response plan spring 2021- roadmap out of lockdown

Supported by the increased protection offered by the vaccination programme, the government is slowly and cautiously beginning to ease restrictions in all areas across England at the same time, guided at all stages by data, not dates.

The roadmap out of lockdown outlines four steps for easing restrictions. Before proceeding to the next step, the Government will examine the data to assess the impact of previous steps.

This assessment will be based on four tests:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully.
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

There will be a minimum of five weeks between each step: four weeks for the data to reflect changes in restrictions; followed by seven days' notice of the restrictions to be eased.

The Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Adviser have made clear that this will give adequate time to assess the impact of each step and reduce the risk of having to re-impose restrictions at a later date.

Contain Framework guidance on updating of Local Outbreak Management Plans

Since publication of the roadmap out of lockdown, national guidance has been produced on the updating of Local Authority Local Outbreak Management Plans. We have updated the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Outbreak Management Plan on the basis of this guidance and have submitted the draft to the East of England Test and Trace Team, who will review our updated Plan as part of a regional assurance exercise. We expect to publish the final version of our Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Outbreak Management Plan by the end of the month.

NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY

Prevention work with communities and businesses

The communications team have developed the 'This Depends on Us' campaign to emphasise that unless we all comply with current Covid-19 rules and keep the spread of infection low, it won't be possible to keep lifting restrictions in line with the government's road map out of lockdown. This is part of a wider proactive communications strategy.

Our Communities and Safety Team continues to work closely with local community and faith leaders and voluntary sector organisations, to ensure that the latest Covid-19 key messages are widely understood.

Public health staff are advising on Covid-19 safe preparations for key events in April and May, including local elections

There is ongoing work in partnership with District/City Council Environmental Health and the Health and Safety Executive to provide advice and support to businesses

Rapid Testing

We continue to offer regular rapid testing for people without symptoms at our seven local Community Rapid Testing Sites in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and are piloting pop-up rapid testing sites in Fenland. We are also supporting local workplaces to introduce their own rapid testing programmes

Considerable work has taken place through the Education directorate to support the safe return of pupils to school, and in particular to enable rapid testing for school staff and secondary school pupils. The new national offer of home tests for the households of schoolchildren has been publicised. More information about the various rapid testing options now available is on www.peterborough.gov.uk/healthcare/public-health/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-rapid-community-testing

Contact tracing

Further appointments have been made to the in-house contact tracing team, which will enable work to pilot enhanced (backward) contact tracing to start. A sustainable model is being developed which combines dedicated contact tracing staff, with surge capacity for peaks of demand through trained staff who can be redeployed.

Self-isolation

The Council's self isolation support centre provides supportive calls for those self isolating and refer them to local services and voluntary groups where necessary. The national Test and Trace support payment scheme for people who are self-isolating has been extended to 30th June 2021, and now also applies to people who have to stay home to look after a child who is self-isolating.

Outbreak management

The Surveillance Group continues to meet daily to review the latest data from Public Health England, NHS Test and Trace, the local NHS and other relevant sources for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This information is summarised and passed on to the public health led Outbreak Management Team which oversees the management of local clusters and outbreak of Covid-19, through the work of multi-agency 'cells'. These cells are:

- Workplace Cell
- Vulnerable Populations Cell
- Care Home Cell
- Education Cell
- NHS Healthcare arrangements.

While outbreaks in care homes and schools have reduced, outbreaks in workplaces which operate with front line staff during lockdown remain relatively frequent.

Support to District/City Covid-19 Gold Groups and Rapid Response

Public health specialists attend the weekly Covid-Gold and/or Rapid Response meetings in each Council to ensure that they are kept up to date with the latest available public health information on local epidemiology and Covid-19 outbreaks. This enables effective preventive, communications and support work to take place in communities

Enduring transmission

The phenomenon of 'enduring transmission' of Covid-19 is increasingly recognised, associated with social and economic factors. In both Peterborough and Fenland, Covid-19 case rates have been slower to fall during lockdown than in most of the rest of England. This is likely to be associated with a range of factors such as people continuing to work during lockdown in low-wage and insecure employment - including

agency work and zero hours contracts in sectors such as agriculture, packing, distribution and construction. Other factors may be living in crowded housing; sharing transport to work; and lack of information or exposure to misinformation about Covid-19 and preventive measures.

At the end of February a Cabinet Office Covid-19 field team visited Peterborough and Fenland to find out more about the factors that may be causing enduring transmission locally. They met with a wide range of community and voluntary sector representatives, public sector leads, and local employers. The visit was successful and demonstrated the range of activity in place across the system to address the spread of Covid-19. It also stimulated discussion and reflection on the root causes of Enduring Transmission, leading to further actions under development with support from regional and national colleagues.

Local Outbreak Engagement Board

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) meets monthly and is co-chaired by the Chairs of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Boards. At the most recent meeting of the LOEB the Board discussed the latest epidemiology and response for the area, the Cabinet Office Covid-19 field team visit to review enduring transmission in Peterborough and Fenland, the national Roadmap out of Lockdown, and how best to communicate this, and a breakdown of the local allocation of the national Test and Trace Grant and Contain Outbreak Management Fund. The papers for the meeting are available on

[Local Outbreak Engagement Board March 2021](#) and a video of the meeting is on the Peterborough City Council YouTube page.

RECOVERY ACTIVITY

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Local Resilience Forum Recovery Group - Public Health and Prevention Sub-Group

Public health work on recovery has been focussed on a multi-agency approach through the Local Resilience Forum Public Health and Prevention Sub-Group. The five core themes on which this work has focussed are:

- Health inequalities
- Screening, vaccinations, and immunisations
- Health behaviours
- Mental Health
- Housing and health

The work under each theme has been driven forward by small working groups and has now reported.

Looking forward - a key priority is to create sustainable models for the outbreak management, contact tracing and community rapid testing services which have been put in place very quickly in response to national and local requirements to reduce the spread of Covid-19. This is being achieved through the refreshed Local Outbreak Management Plan.

A range of work is taking place to ensure that all communities and residents receive reliable information about Covid-19 vaccines, that any misinformation or lack of trust is recognised and addressed sensitively so that people feel confident to take up the vaccine, and to understand whether there are practical issues around venues or appointment times that could be worked on to support vaccine uptake - such as pop up clinics or mobile vaccination units.

Over the coming months there will be an increasing requirement to work with the new Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Integrated Care System (ICS) on a range of public health preventive measures and actions to address health inequalities.

DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

A paper on the allocation of funds to date through the Test and Trace Grant and the Contain Outbreak Management Fund Grant was taken to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board earlier this month. This lists all the allocations made to date and is available on [Local Outbreak Engagement Board March 2021](#)

NEW FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are now receiving monthly allocations of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund from central government and these have been confirmed until the end of March. Further allocations are under review. It has also been confirmed that Contain Outbreak Management Funds can be carried over into 2021/22, so can be allocated at this point to ensure medium term sustainability of relevant programmes.

WORKFORCE CHANGES

A range of staff have or are being recruited by the Public Health Directorate on short term contracts/agency basis for:

- Outbreak Management Team and C19 Single Point of Contact
- Enhanced Local Contact Tracing Service roles
- To deliver the Community Rapid Testing Programme
- Public health support for vaccination uptake

COMMUNICATIONS

Public health staff work closely with the Communications Directorate to provide public health advice and sign off for a wide range of communication materials - including media releases, leaflets, and social media messaging. Over the past month, key areas of media interest have been the Roadmap out of lockdown including our 'this depends on us' campaign; the higher than average rates of Covid-19 cases in Peterborough and Fenland; the further roll out of the Community Rapid Testing programme; and the reopening of schools.