

## **Slough Outbreak Engagement Board – Meeting held on Thursday, 20th January, 2022.**

<b>Present:-</b>	Councillors Pantelic (Chair), Anderson, Hulme and Mann	
	Ramesh Kukar	Voluntary and Community Sector Representative
	Dr Sohail Bhatti	Interim Service Lead Public Health
	Kate Pratt	Group Manager, Communications
	Alan Sinclair	Executive Director of People (Adults)
	Richard West	Executive Director Customer & Community
	Neil Bolton-Heaton	Healthwatch East Berkshire
	Rhian Warner	Associate Director of Primary and Community Care Transformation, Frimley CCG

### **PART 1**

#### **18. Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

#### **19. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 14 December 2021**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

#### **20. Communications Update**

The SBC Communications Manager provided an update on the key communications activities and messages since the last meeting of the Board and advised that:

- Communications had focussed on heavily promoting the vaccine bus on social media and other media.
- Both vaccine centres now offered walk-in and pre-booked appointments.
- Comms were stressing the importance of negative lateral flow tests and uploading test results.
- The Council's covid web pages and staff intranet had been updated to include the latest information.
- A forthcoming meeting of the vaccine champions would focus on low uptake cohorts.
- Her team were continuing to support health colleagues in promoting and running the vaccination centres.
- Her team were looking into the implications of the changed covid regulations

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Following questions, the Board was advised that:

Thirty nine thousand residents had yet to receive the first dose (this figure was down from forty three thousand in November). The Government had allocated £485k funding for the vaccine champions project to tackle vaccine hesitancy until the end of July 2022. The project would be delivered in collaboration with Community and Voluntary Sector partners.

**Resolved:** That the update be noted.

**21. Local Covid-19 Status Report**

The SBC Interim Public Health Service Lead provided a summary of Slough's current Covid-19 status. He advised that:

- There had been a significant rise in case numbers, which had peaked at 1700 cases per 100,000 in recent weeks, but this figure was now declining.
- The rate among the over 60s continued to be high.
- Recording case number would change from recording people to the number of episodes as some people had multiple covid infections.
- There were around 1700 new cases in Slough per day.
- Most of those affected were in the working age population (25-59 age range) which mirrored vaccine uptake figures.
- Return to school had caused a significant rise in case rates.
- staff and students in schools had been affected by covid.
- In terms of ethnicity profiles, a significant number of those infected fell in the 'white other' and in the South Asian cohorts.
- The vaccination rates among care workers in care homes was high, though lower among domestic care workers
- There had been a significant increase in the number of calls (and assessments) to the NHS 111 number.
- The death rate had slightly reduced.
- The NHS was facing some challenges with regards to safe and speedy hospital discharges following recovery from covid.
- Currently, thirty nine thousand residents were eligible to receive the first dose of the vaccine (but had not yet done so) and thirty two thousand were eligible to receive the booster, but had not yet done so.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

**22. Vaccine Update**

The Associate Director of Primary and Community Care Transformation at Frimley CCG and the Interim Public Health Lead advised that:

- One in four people in Slough had yet to receive the first dose of the vaccine.

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- By mid-December 2021, 44.3% of the eligible population had received the booster, that figure had increased 70% by mid-January 2022. It was important to note that an individual could only be vaccinated 28 days after contracting Omicron.
- The position on first and second doses had improved slightly recently.
- GPs were doing an enhanced call and recall of patients aged 12-49 years.
- The CCG were supporting a number of schemes aimed at tackling vaccine hesitancy, e.g., the PCNs were taking the lead with initiatives aimed at the elderly and those with autism.
- Further work focussing on vaccine hesitancy among school-aged children (and their parents) and comms targeting pregnant women was in the pipeline.
- Data regarding covid admissions was not provided, however, there was data setting out the number of people in hospital with covid.
- Numbers at Wexham Park remained static, though it should be noted that not all patients at Wexham Park were Slough residents and many were from Buckinghamshire. Staffing levels within primary care continued to be of concern. The hospital had seconded staff into the hospital to ensure adequate cover.
- The number of people being supported in the community following hospital discharge had doubled since same time last year, however, those hospital beds were being refilled quickly.

The representative from the CVS advised that specific cohorts would be targeted as part of the vaccine champions' initiative. Sixteen different charities had been commissioned to take comms messages and translate them into other languages designed to influence their specific communities and would rely on peer influence to get the message across.

Following questions, the Board was advised that:

- The levels of immunity in the population had changed since the onset of the pandemic. A new variant was predicted and the pandemic of long covid, would have far reaching effects on health and the economy.
- The vaccine had been mandated for all health and social care staff and the deadline for receiving the first dose was 3 February 2022. Further government guidance was expected regarding this. 1% of primary care workforce were unvaccinated.

The Board undertook to promote the work of the vaccine champions. Panel discussions both online and in person (when it was safe to do so) would be arranged.

**Action 1:** That future vaccine updates include an update on the work of the vaccine champions.

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**Action 2:** Panel discussions on the topic of vaccinations, led by elected members and local GPs, both online and in person would be arranged in the spring of 2022.

**Resolved:** That the update be noted.

**23. Interim Plan for the Winter & Spring of 2021**

The SBC Interim Public Health Service Lead stated that the plan outlined in previous meetings had been implemented and was working well.

**Resolved:** That the Plan be noted.

**24. National & Local Key Messages**

The national and local key messages were summarised as:

- To promote the national campaign aimed at encouraging pregnant women to be vaccinated.
- To continue to encourage and reach out to vaccine hesitant cohorts to be vaccinated.

**Resolved:** That the key messages be noted.

**25. Date of Next Meeting**

24 February 2022.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 5.48 pm)