



The National Test and Trace service – Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Beacon

Sub-regional briefing note to Members, week ending 12 June 2020

Background

The national Test and Trace service is designed to control the spread of COVID-19 by using data to identify local outbreaks, and tracing people who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. The Government has recruited an additional 25,000 people to increase testing and diagnosis capacity and trace those who have been exposed. A smartphone App is being developed and intends to speed up the identification of people who have been in contact with an infected person. Once operational, the App will help the NHS reach people quickly using dedicated centralised staff.

Together, Warwickshire County Council, Coventry City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (CSW) working alongside West Midlands Combined Authority were selected as Beacons to work with national leaders to rapidly develop and test Local Outbreak Control Plans. As one of 11¹ national Beacons our work will identify common themes, innovate to develop faster approaches to testing and tracing, and identify opportunities to upscale the programme rapidly. We will share best practice on operational responses to complex local outbreaks.

Our Beacon approach

The CSW resilience approach is one of full partnership in line with our well-established ways of working. We will share a single COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan to clearly set out how we will work together, what our priorities are, and how we will measure our progress in tackling the spread of infection and controlling outbreaks. Officers from across CSW will take the lead on specific workstreams to maximise the benefit of expertise within our own and our partners' workforces and to 'do work once, well'.

We are working with partners from grassroots to regional level and feeding into the national picture through the overarching Beacon programme. Mechanisms to support our partnership approach are being scaled up at pace, with resources drawn in where needed to make sure we have a robust offer that will achieve positive results for our residents in terms of limiting new cases and keeping transmission rates low. This week

¹ Tameside, Warwickshire, Leeds, London, Devon, Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Surrey, Norfolk, Leicestershire, Cheshire West and Cheshire.

we have introduced a Beacon-wide programme management role with the specific remit of capturing the CSW progress, issues and impacts that we will reflect back to the relevant regional and national bodies.

Funding allocation

The Department of Health and Social Care announced the individual funding allocations to Local Authorities from the £300 million national Test and Trace award on 10.6.20:

- Coventry - £2,041,190
- Solihull - £1,010,717
- Warwickshire - £2,137,781

These are proportionate allocations based on the 2020/21 Public Health Grants, and are to be used for costs incurred in relation to the mitigation against and management of local outbreaks of COVID-19.

Outbreak control

The CSW Outbreak Control Plan is in draft format and is being reviewed by the membership of our 3 Local Health Protection Boards (encompassing various Health, local government, Education, PHE, community and other services) for sign-off in late June. The Boards will implement the plans locally. We have already set up sub-regional workstreams to support delivery of the plans: Data/intelligence; Joint health protection response; Testing; Communications; plus, Local focus on homelessness, shared settings (e.g. schools, care homes, workplaces) high-risk settings and communities.

The Outbreak Control Plans will feed into the West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Resilience Forum to ensure alignment with testing, PPE supply and recovery planning.

Prevention remains a significant part of the local response to infection control, and we will continue to refine and target our communications on hygiene and social distancing alongside other relevant Government guidance to engage residents to work with us.

A new national data dashboard to map infections and outbreaks is in development and will support our local data systems.

Communication

A single communication strategy has been developed to align messaging across the 3 areas. The strategy recognises the need for flexibility at the most local level, in order to ensure robust geographical reach and within communities of interest where the data and intelligence suggests that we would benefit from targeted messaging to reduce rates of infections. Communications leads from the 3 authorities have been identified to collaborate on delivery of the strategy, and they are meeting regularly to discuss and review media opportunities and responses. The communications strategy also encompasses community engagement, and this aspect of the work is in development.

We are building a microsite for the CSW Beacon programme which will host information on our sub-regional offer including signposting to the national service and hygiene and

social distancing information to support prevention. This will go live in late June/early July.

Elected Members across the sub-region will receive a briefing note weekly to give an overview of the Beacon's collective activity.

Governance and decision making

A Councillor-led CSW Test and Trace Board has been established, comprising the 3 Council Leaders, Regional NHS, and the Chief Executive and Director of Public Health from WCC on behalf of the 3 authorities.

Member-led public-facing Boards are being established in each of the 3 authorities.

Priority actions

- We are required to publish our Outbreak Control Plan at the end of June, and circulated a draft plan for comment to stakeholders this week.
- Finalise the local governance structures imminently.
- Review and refine data flows including establishing clear links with the Joint Biosecurity Centre.
- Ensure pillar 1 (NHS) and pillar 2 (local, mobile and postal) testing works quickly and effectively and can be rapidly mobilised to respond to local need or outbreaks.

Meetings that took place this week (8-12 June):

- 8.6.20 Coventry Informal Health & Wellbeing Board
- 9.6.20 Coventry Health Protection Mobilisation Group
- 9.6.20 Solihull Health and Wellbeing Board
- 10.6.20 Sub-regional Advisory Board
- 11.6.20 Warwickshire Health Protection Board
- 12.6.20 Solihull Member Board
- Solihull Health Protection Board – twice-weekly

Meetings taking place next week (15-19 June):

- 16.6.20 Coventry Health Protection Board
- 16.6.20 Warwickshire Member Engagement Board
- 18.6.20 Warwickshire Health Protection Board
- 19.6.20 Coventry Members Advisory Panel
- Solihull Health Protection Board – twice-weekly