



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

Briefing note to Members, week ending 24 July 2020

A weekly round-up of news, issues and updates from the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Beacon team. Keep up to date and find more background information about our work at www.staysafecsw.info

Test and Trace – national activity

The national [Covid-19 contain framework](#) was published last week, giving new powers to upper tier authorities from 18 July in managing serious or imminent threats to public health. These new powers have been created within the existing Public Health Act 1984 framework, and include the powers to close public outdoor spaces and permitted individual premises, to prevent specific events, and to direct district and borough councils to exercise their powers.

The framework sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks. It also clarifies partner responsibilities and sets out who has authority to make decisions to use lockdown mechanisms to manage outbreaks. The framework identifies a range of protected settings (including national infrastructure and defences) which require Secretary of State approval to take steps in the event of an outbreak. Through our Beacon arrangement we will be considering how we will work as a sub-region in relation to new powers announced recently for local authorities within the National Contain Framework.

Beacon update

The CSW Resilience Team with support from Public Health led a **Covid-19 second wave and emergency outbreak desktop exercise** on 21 July. The purpose of the session was to enable the three beacon authorities to test their Local Outbreak Management Plans. The exercise used a number of different outbreak scenarios to facilitate a discussion on the potential response and escalation options that may be required to deal with outbreaks in different setting and with varying degrees of complexity. The exercise was well attended with just under 100 staff from across the beacon area, all of whom engaged well in the session.

A list of pre-assessed sites for **mobile testing units** across the sub-region is due to be finalised shortly. Coventry has identified 6 sites, Solihull 3, and Warwickshire will be finalising sites next week but there are likely to be 13. Areas have also identified reserve sites, should they be required. The sites have been plotted to take the geography of the sub-region and our bordering neighbours into account, to do as much as possible to minimise travel times for members of the public needing to

access a site. Pre-assessment of the sites means that in the event of an outbreak we can act much more quickly to establish a testing unit as close as possible to the outbreak.

We have now launched the [CSW data dashboard](#) on our microsite, giving information on case numbers, deaths, and testing. This is your 'go to' reference point for updated numbers across the sub-region.

We will also be working with the Department of Health and Social Care to shape national approaches and learning in the use of Pillar 2 tests in outbreak management (local swab kits) as part of our work sub-regionally and locally to put in place arrangements for hyper local testing.

Sub-regional themed groups

A central part of the Beacon approach is the shared ownership of 4 themes that are critical to the overall success of our outbreak control approach. The following is an update on progress in each of the themes.

THEME 1: Epidemiology and Intelligence Cell (Coventry-led)

The cell has delivered the CSW dashboard and is continuing to develop data-led early warning mechanisms and ways of working with regional and national data services to develop more robust information to support planning.

THEME 2: Joint Health Protection Cell (Warwickshire-led)

Representatives from all 3 authorities meet weekly with PHE to discuss emerging operational and outbreak related issues. The cell has delivered an updated Standard Operating Procedure to set out how we will work with PHE. The cell has helped test and trace leads in each authority area to learn from outbreak situations across the Beacon and evolve operational responses based on what works well. The cell is also leading on the development and delivery of the Outbreak Control Plan.

THEME 3: Testing Cell (Solihull-led)

Coventry and Warwickshire have launched a joint tender to provide local swabbing and testing to meet their needs and to enhance the MTU and postal testing offer locally. Solihull are scaling up arrangements with their existing NHS provider, using a common sub-regional framework. We are also exploring the potential of having swab kits available locally, as a national pilot: this could proceed once we have resolved clinical responsibility of the return results. The announcement of the new third party commercial provider of mobile testing units is expected very shortly: it will take over responsibility from the military, with responsibility for successful delivery sitting with the Department of Health and Social Care. The current deployment of mobile testing units is being increased to 5 days onsite from 4.

More tests are being accessed across the sub-region, leading to improved identification of positive cases.

From now on, care home staff will be tested weekly, and care home residents, monthly.

THEME 4: Communications, Engagement and Participation Cell (Warwickshire, and Coventry-led)

Proactive and reactive communications are well established across the areas, and aspects of our Beacon programme continue to be featured in regional news outlets. [Coventry has released several](#)

[useful Youtube films](#) to give information on test and trace and answer public questions. [Warwickshire has shared a film on wearing face coverings](#), and how we can all help others avoid infection. The sub-regional microsite has been up and running for some weeks. The group has also developed a protocol for the reporting of outbreaks.

Community engagement approaches are being developed in each area, with Coventry and Solihull developing activity with community-based champions, and Warwickshire developing an engagement approach through cross-sector partners and online webinars to build confidence in messages.

Priority actions

- Ongoing development/ completion of action cards to establish processes in settings identified in Outbreak Control Plans as high risk.
- Recruitment into programme management and operational delivery functions.

Meetings taking place next week (27 to 31 July)

- 27 July – Solihull Covid-19 Health & Wellbeing Board sub-group
- 27 July and 28 July - Joint Health Protection Response Group
- 28 July - Warwickshire Member Engagement Board
- 29 July - Warwickshire Operational Response Group
- 30 July – Solihull Health Protection Board
- 30 July - Warwickshire Health Protection Board
- 31 July – CSW Member Advisory Board