

Health Protection Board

Agenda

Tuesday 25 May 2021

1.	<p>Attendance/apologies Katherine Fairclough – Chief Executive, Cumbria County Council</p> <p>Members Stewart Young – Leader, Cumbria County Council (Chair) Hilary Carrick – Leader of the Opposition, Cumbria County Council Deborah Earl – Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities, Cumbria County Council Michelle Skeer – Chief Constable, Cumbria Constabulary Vivian Stafford – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Peter Thornton – Deputy Leader, Cumbria County Council Colin Cox – Director of Public Health, Cumbria County Council Andrew Slattery – Assistant Chief Constable, Cumbria Constabulary; Chair, Local Resilience Forum Gillian Shearer –</p> <p>Guests Fiona Musgrave</p>	
2.	<p>Review of Outstanding Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agreed the minutes and the action log	
Epidemiology and Overall Situation Reporting		
3.	<p>Epidemiology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colin provided an update on the epidemiology at a local and national level• Nationally looking complex, still a low level but have not changed• Rising trends being seen in the North West and Midlands• Locally, position is very similar with very low levels per 100,000	CC
4.	<p>Variants of Concern</p> <p>Background and available data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colin shared a document to highlight the background of the variants of concern• S gene represents Kent variant• Up to the end of March, almost all COVID cases were the S variant• Now, almost 70% of cases are not S gene• Potential that Indian variant is taking over the rate of COVID cases• There is a concern in the North West of S gene target drop out <p>Position in Cumbria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Last week, had information from PHE suggesting that the week before there had been 7 cases of a variant of concern• By the middle of last week, there had been 15 cases where the S gene had been detected• On Friday, informed that the data we had been given were wrong, all of the cases that had been identified as S gene drop off, on the national system had actually been S gene not sampled• Of those 7 cases of concern since the start of May, one was in Liverpool who has stayed there, the other lives in Bolton (and a member of their household), another in Preston College (and their father), one connected to Glasgow, and the other connected to Leeds	CC

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not too worried, given that numbers are so low, but given the proportion of the S gene from the amounts of test, still need to be on our guard 	
	Strategy Implementation	
5.	<p>Response to Variants of Concern</p> <p>Consideration of key issues for Cumbria</p> <p>Peter M asked if those that are becoming infected with the new variant are younger and therefore not vaccinated?</p> <p>Colin responded that they are unlikely to be vaccinated based on age.</p> <p>Peter T asked if those becoming infected are getting more ill with the new variant?</p> <p>Colin informed the group that they are seeing people in hospital, but doesn't seem to be at any greater rate than if it were Kent, and doesn't seem to be any vaccine escape for those who have had two vaccines. Unlikely to cause a huge wave of hospitalisations and death.</p> <p>Stewart asked if there are any actions / comms we should be putting out regarding the new variants of concern? Or do we just wait and follow national guidance.</p> <p>Colin said that we are trying to get message out regarding LFT positives, need to be sure that people follow this up with a PCR test to avoid false positives.</p> <p>Stewart asked, with regards to self-isolation, is there anything further that could be done to encourage self-isolation for those who are either not getting a test / not isolating for financial/employment issues</p> <p>Colin reiterated that we have got extra financial initiative and social support in place, but might be that people are not taking the test at all in case they think there is no support. Could be that we put more comms out to make them aware of the support available.</p> <p>Andy said that we should be aware of the fact that some areas are being told not to travel (where variant levels are high), as this has the potential to cause friction.</p> <p>Colin asked that in terms of planning preparedness, should Cumbria be included in the 'essential travel only' category, is there anything more this board should be doing?</p> <p>Stewart responded that it is currently out of our hands, central government will be the ones making the decisions. Hard to plan/prepare for that.</p> <p>Peter T agreed with Stewart's point and said that basically how we would we support people should there be another lockdown, nothing really to do with us making the decision.</p>	All
	Other Key Business	
6.	<p>Feedback to national co-ordination meetings</p> <p>To agree key feedback points</p> <p>Stewart said the message would have to be, if there were to be more restrictions on Cumbria / nationally, need further support for these businesses.</p> <p>Concluded the item, keep monitoring the situation and wait and see what the result of bank holiday / half term is.</p>	All

	Andy said that the situation looks like a long way until lockdown, but if the lifting of restrictions on 21 st June is delayed, this will have an impact on us in terms of big events such as Kendal Calling, Appleby Fair. Might be something we need to plan for in terms of a plan B.	
7.	Any other business None	