

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - COMMUNITY SUB-GROUP  
12 JANUARY 2021  
(5.00 pm - 6.32 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Rebecca Lanning (in the Chair),  
Councillor Oonagh Moulton, Councillor Eleanor Stringer,  
Rob Clarke, Mark Creelman, Abi Fafolu, Dr Vasa Gnanapragam,  
Martin Miranda, Kalu Obuka, Dr Mohan Sekeram and  
Dr Dagmar Zeuner

IN ATTENDANCE Barry Causer (Public Health Commissioning Manager),  
Hetty Crist (Senior Communications Officer, Public Health),  
Louise Fleming (Democracy Services Manager),  
Clarissa Larsen (Health and Wellbeing Board Partnership  
Manager) and Farzana Karamat-Mughal (Democratic Services  
Officer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Dave Curtis (Healthwatch Merton).

2 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

4 COVID-19 UPDATE (Agenda Item 4)

The Director of Public Health presented an update on COVID-19 in Merton, outlining the latest data on infection, asymptomatic testing and current restrictions in place.

In the ensuing discussion, members raised a number of questions and comments and the Director of Public Health addressed the following points:

- It was explained that the asymptomatic testing was mainly targeted at front line staff and voluntary sector workers exposed to daily contact with other people.
- It was clarified that ten community pharmacies were currently providing asymptomatic testing, and that other local pharmacies had also expressed an interest and were completing training and risk assessments to ensure testing was delivered safely and effectively.

- Members welcomed the comprehensive data provided. It was requested, if possible, that the age groups between 60 and 80 and over 80s were split in order to track the impact of the vaccination programme.
- The need to address vaccine hesitancy was raised; particularly as the groups that were most impacted by COVID-19 were often those that were most hesitant.

Members were asked to continue to promote the main prevention messages on COVID-19. Members were enthusiastic about the testing programme and were keen to provide any help to work with local pharmacies. Information on the portal and how to book a test at a community pharmacy or Morden Assembly Hall was available via the website [www.merton.gov.uk](http://www.merton.gov.uk).

## 5 COVID-19 VACCINATIONS (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair Merton and Wandsworth CCG Borough Committee, the CCG Clinical Director (and local GP) and the Locality Executive Director provided an update on COVID-19 vaccinations. Recognition was given to primary care colleagues for their hard work on the rollout of the vaccination programme.

It was advised that current priorities for vaccination was those over 80, residents and staff of care homes and health and social care staff. There were currently two sites across Merton for vaccinations and those in the priority categories were being contacted and invited to an appointment. It was anticipated that the current priority groups would be vaccinated by mid-February. It was recognised that this was a challenging time frame but that primary care colleagues and others were working very hard to achieve this.

Members were asked to promote the key messages to the community and it was explained that people should not attend a vaccination centre unless they have an appointment.

Communication and engagement work had been undertaken to reach out to communities, including faith leaders, to build trust in the vaccination. It was planned to publicise information on vaccinations in range of different languages, including, braille, to ensure that the most vulnerable communities were reached.

In response to members' questions and comments, the following points were highlighted:

- Government had set a target for the vaccination programme to be rolled out to the priority groups by 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2021. It was acknowledged that it was important to reach out to care homes to help achieve this target and noted that the AstraZeneca vaccine allowed more flexibility in terms of the offer to care homes.
- Following the Community Steering Hub meeting, concerns had been raised around transport and whether there was provision in place for residents who were housebound and could not get to vaccination sites. It was assured that

where this was the case the vaccine would be brought to those who were housebound.

- Prioritisation of those who receive the vaccine was questioned with the suggestion that teachers might be included. The Director of Public Health explained that prioritisation had been made by JVICI (Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation) on the clear basis of reducing mortality.
- Volunteers had been effectively recruited to help as stewards etc. at vaccination centres and gratitude was extended to the people of Merton for their patience and cooperation in helping the rollout of vaccinations run smoothly.

## 6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Agenda Item 6)

The CCG Communications and Engagement Manager and one of the Merton Young Inspector, outlined the partnership engagement programme and ongoing work with the community, including that specifically with children and young people.

Following the presentation, the opportunity for intergenerational work was raised, with children and young people (who might be bilingual) having potential to provide a 'bridge' to their parents and grandparents in understanding the key messages on COVID-19. It was agreed that this was an important point and that a discussion on vaccine hesitancy and how to tackle it could be a subject for the next Subgroup meeting.

The Subgroup concluded by thanking everyone for their work on engagement, in particular, the Young Inspectors for their work with young people.