

Classification: Official	Item No.
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Meeting:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Meeting date:	20 October 2022
Title of report:	Update from Health Protection Board
Report by:	Steven Senior
Decision Type:	No decision
Ward(s) to which report relates	All

Executive Summary:

- This paper provides a brief update from Health Protection Board covering key issues and activities. These include:
 - Updates on key health protection hazards;
 - Vaccination programmes;
 - Infection prevention and control activity;
 - Screening programmes; and
 - Winter / cold weather planning.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- 1. Health and Wellbeing Board notes the contents of this update.**

Detail

Updates on key hazards

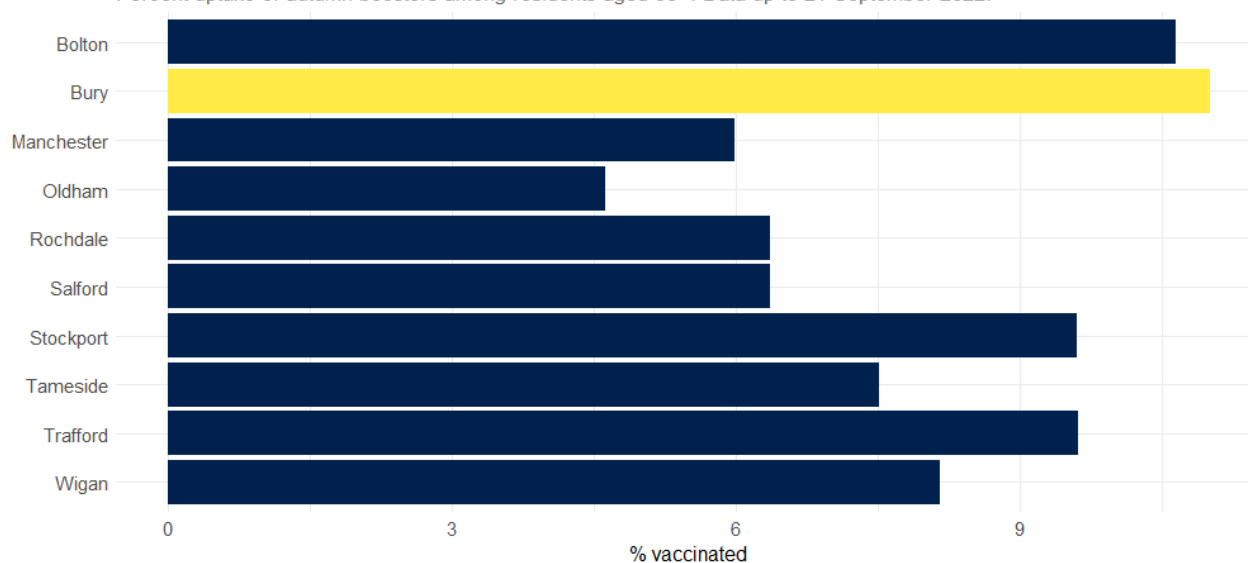
2. There is evidence that COVID-19 infections are increasing again and that this may be feeding through into hospital admissions. This is likely caused by a combination of waning population immunity, changes in behaviour such as more indoor mixing because of colder weather and reopening of schools, and the emergence of new variants that can evade existing immunity. The impact on health and social care services is beginning to be felt, with a small increase in the number of care home outbreaks, and reports of hospital staff off sick with COVID-19.
3. There are signs that flu is circulating as well with reports of outbreaks in care homes and hospitals in Greater Manchester (no care home flu outbreaks have been detected in Bury to date). There is a risk that this year's flu season may be worse than normal because relatively few people have been exposed to flu in the last two years, reducing population immunity.
4. Numbers of cases of monkey pox continue to fall nationally. A total of 8 cases have been identified in Bury. Some caution is needed as there may be significant delays in diagnosis and reporting, but signs suggest that the epidemic in the UK is waning. A change in sexual behaviour among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men appears to be contributing to the fall in transmission, with reports that other sexually transmitted infections have also fallen.
5. Surveillance of sewage for poliovirus is being expanded and Bury is included in the newly included areas. We are still waiting for the initial results. Despite repeated detection of poliovirus in sewage in London, no symptomatic cases of poliomyelitis have been detected in the UK.
6. Childhood infections, particularly scarlet fever and chickenpox have been higher than usual this year. Both have returned to within normal levels, but we are continuing to monitor and have shared advice with schools.

Vaccinations programmes

7. The COVID-19 autumn booster programme has started well. As of 21 September, Bury had the highest proportion of eligible people vaccinated of any Greater Manchester local authority (see chart).

COVID-19 autumn 2022 booster vaccination uptake in Greater Manchester local authorities

Percent uptake of autumn boosters among residents aged 50+. Data up to 21 September 2022.



Source: www.coronavirus.data.gov.uk

8. There are several significant changes to the programme this year. These include:
 - Bury Primary Care Network offering clinics in its practices (alongside the existing vaccine sites which will continue to operate);
 - Flu vaccines offered by general practices will be delivered in practice settings instead of at the COVID-19 vaccine sites;
 - Between four and six extra community pharmacies will be offering COVID-19 vaccines, primarily in areas of lower uptake and higher deprivation;
 - Fairfield General Hospital will no longer offer vaccine clinics for the public, although other Northern Care Alliance hospital sites will; and
 - The mass vaccination centre at the Etihad has been decommissioned.
9. Overall, we expect these changes to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines for Bury residents. However, there is a risk that the decision not to offer flu vaccines at the larger COVID-19 vaccine sites may reduce uptake. We will monitor for any impact on uptake.
10. We expect further monkey pox vaccines to be delivered to Greater Manchester in the coming weeks and months. These will be delivered by sexual health services, targeting those at highest risk of contracting the disease. We expect this will help to make sure the fall in cases continues.
11. Following the news of poliovirus detections in Bury we have shared communications with local general practices. The NHS Greater Manchester Bury primary care team is contacting practice with lower than 85% vaccine coverage to look at how uptake could be improved. We have also included MMR vaccine coverage in this review as there is some overlap in the practices with low polio vaccine uptake and those with low MMR uptake.

Infection prevention activity

12. The Infection Control Team has restarted its programme of audits of care homes in preparation for expected outbreaks of seasonal viruses this winter. Homes are being prioritised based on risk assessment which includes time since previous inspections, any adverse CQC inspections, changes in management, and those with higher numbers of outbreaks. The Infection Control Team is supporting the Adult Social Care team by prioritising those homes at risk of closure. They are also supporting the safe discharge of patients from hospital, where possible easing the patient flow issues in hospital, although overall capacity remains a challenge.
13. The Bury Infection Prevention and Control Integrated Partnership (BIPCIP) has started meeting again having been suspended during COVID-19. The meeting is providing a forum for joint work between infection control and medicines management staff in addressing antimicrobial resistance and reducing antibiotic prescribing. Mandatory surveillance of specified bacterial infections has resumed.

Screening programmes

14. We are setting up a Screening Assurance Group to scrutinise the delivery of screening programmes in Bury. This group will be responsible for getting assurance on behalf of the Director of Public Health from commissioners and providers that screening programmes are delivered efficiently and equitably. It will also provide a source of technical advice on screening and related issues where they come up in other meetings. This group will meet quarterly and report into the Health Protection Board.
15. We are finalising a review of breast screening uptake in Bury. This report was broadly reassuring, showing high overall levels of uptake. However, this high uptake does mask some evidence of inequality in uptake. We will work with commissioners and providers to look at how this can be addressed.

Winter & cold weather planning

16. Winter planning has started with Winter Wellbeing resources produced and shared with stakeholders. This includes advice on staying warm and well, as well as signposting to sources of support, including with heating bills, benefits, and energy efficiency.