

Report to Health Scrutiny Committee

Progress report on key health protection issues including plans for the 2022 Flu Programme.

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr. Barbara Brownridge, Portfolio Lead for Health and Social Care

Officer Contact: Katrina Stephens, Director of Public Health

Report Author: Charlotte Stevenson, Consultant in Public Health

October 2022

Purpose of the Report

The Health Scrutiny Committee has requested a progress report on key health protection issues in Oldham, including the 2022 flu programme.

Summary of the issue:

This report provides an overview of the current key health protection priorities in Oldham, progress made, and actions planned.

1. Health Protection Priorities

- 1.1 Health Protection seeks to prevent or reduce the harm caused by communicable diseases and anti-microbial resistance and minimise the health impact from air pollution and environmental hazards such as chemicals and radiation. As well as major programmes such as the national immunisation programmes and the provision of health services to diagnose and treat infectious diseases, health protection involves planning, surveillance and response to incidents and outbreaks.
- 1.2 Health protection priorities in Oldham for 2022/2023 are:
- Manage outbreaks of communicable disease, including respiratory and new and emerging infections.
 - Infection prevention & control (IPC) in high- risk settings.
 - Sexual health including HIV.
 - Increase uptake of flu vaccinations among all priority groups and manage outbreaks effectively.
 - Provide support to prevent and reduce risks associated with Healthcare Acquired Infections (HCAI) & Anti-microbial resistance (AMR).
 - Increase uptake, and reduce inequalities in uptake, in immunisation programmes.

2. Managing outbreaks of communicable disease

- 2.1 The Operational Local Health Economy Outbreak Plan for Oldham ensures clarity on operational roles and responsibilities for each responding organisation in the event of an outbreak. The plan provides assurance that the borough is resilient and can respond appropriately to outbreaks
- 2.2 The health protection team in Oldham continue to work with UK Health Security Agency to analyse surveillance data, monitor risks and respond to outbreaks. COVID continues to be a priority, as is working with high risk settings to reduce the risk of monkeypox transmission.
- 2.3 Care homes, schools and other settings continue to require support in responding effectively to COVID outbreaks. Ongoing support to these settings includes risk assessments, testing, advice on reducing transmission and additional IPC advice. All COVID outbreaks in care homes are closely monitored and actions taken in line with national guidance and best practice.
- 2.4 There have been confirmed cases of monkeypox in Oldham. However, compared to other areas in GM and nationally, our rates are very low. Most cases of monkeypox are safely self-managed in the community. Our prevention strategy includes messaging to at risk groups about symptoms and the importance of testing, provision of testing in sexual health clinics, contact tracing and a vaccination offer to high-risk groups. HCRG (Oldham's provider of integrated sexual health services) also supported Public Health and Environmental Health colleagues in Oldham to undertake a risk assessment on a local sex-on-premises site to ensure that effective IPC measures were in place to reduce the spread of Monkeypox. The Integrated Sexual Health Service has been integral to the delivery of the Monkeypox vaccination programme. HCRG Care Group assessed the anticipated need by identifying the high-

risk patient cohort in accordance with the eligibility criteria. These included men who have sex with men (MSM) with a diagnosis of a sexually transmitted infection in previous 12 months, people taking pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention (PrEP), and people living with HIV. Based on this assessment of need, 597 eligible patients were identified across Oldham, Rochdale, and Bury. HCRG initially vaccinated people on an opportunistic basis whilst vaccine supplies were being rolled out nationally and across GM but then invited eligible people to book appointments and attend clinics through August to receive their vaccine. There was good uptake and all vaccine allocations have been administered. Testing for anyone who is concerned they may have Monkeypox or have come in to contact with anyone who may have Monkeypox is available via the Integrated Sexual Health Service

- 2.5 An Oldham care home currently has an outbreak of invasive Group A streptococcal infection (iGAS). iGAS is a rare but serious illness that can spread rapidly from person to person. Outbreak management support and monitoring of the situation in the home continues. To date, this has involved; identification of cases, testing of suspected cases and contacts, antibiotic treatment, IPC advice and regular visits to the home.

3. IPC in high-risk settings

- 3.1 The health protection team are carrying out an audit programme of high-risk settings. These include GP Practices, Care Homes and Early Years settings.
- 3.2 9 Care Home audits have been undertaken by the IPC team, of which 8 had action plans. 3 Self-audits have been returned to date, with more expected to be returned for review. There are no outstanding face-to-face care home audits for the period April-September 2022.
- 3.3 5 GP practice audits have been undertaken by the IPC team, of which 3 had action plans. 3 Self-audits have been returned to date, with more expected to be returned for review. There are no outstanding face-to-face GP audits at this time.
- 3.4 5 audits in Early Year settings have been undertaken. An IPC audit plan is in place for October 2022 - March 2023. As per the plan, 2 Care Homes will require re-audit in December 2022 (or earlier if action plan completed). No GP practices will require re-audit. 15 Early Years Settings will require an IPC audit to be completed.

4. Sexual Health

- 4.1 The percentage of eligible people in Oldham being tested for HIV has been steadily increasing since 2015 and at 50.1% in 2021, rates in Oldham have overtaken both the England (45.8%) and Northwest (41.8%) rates for the first time. This is a demonstration of the comprehensive HIV testing provision that is available in the borough. A higher testing rate in Oldham means that we can identify cases of HIV earlier and can support those living with HIV more quickly which leads to better health outcomes.
- 4.2 The roll out of routine commissioning of HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) via our Integrated Sexual Health Service is now complete and PrEP is now available to all eligible residents. PrEP is a way for people who do not have HIV to prevent HIV infection by taking a pill every day (daily dosing), or before and after likely exposure (event-based dosing). HIV PrEP forms part of combination HIV prevention alongside health promotion, condom use, regular testing and swift initiation of HIV treatment where indicated. The regular sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing which forms part of the PrEP package of care provides opportunities to test and treat STIs, thereby

supporting the control of STIs. Preventing new diagnosis of HIV is particularly cost effective.

- 4.3 Our sexual health services continue to deliver a comprehensive STI testing and treatment offer, including asymptomatic express, postal or 'click and collect' kits, partner notification and opportunistic screening for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea. The service provides assertive clinical and non-clinical outreach for vulnerable and at-risk communities with delivery in community settings via their 'Clinic in a Bag' offer and they are also currently developing a model to be able to work with partners from across the system, including Primary Care and Education Settings, to deliver more opportunistic screening.

5. Flu programme

- 5.1 In Oldham, we want to increase uptake of flu vaccinations among all priority groups and identify and manage any outbreaks effectively.

- 5.2 Eligible cohorts for this flu season are:

- all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2022
- all primary school aged children (from reception to Year 6)
- those aged 6 months to under 65 years in clinical risk groups
- pregnant women
- those aged 65 years and over
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- frontline health and social care staff

- 5.3 General practices and school immunisation providers are expected to demonstrate a 100% offer this season by ensuring all eligible patients are offered the opportunity to be vaccinated by active call and recall mechanisms, alongside opportunistic offers. The aim is to achieve at least the uptake levels of 2021 to 2022 for each cohort, and ideally exceed them. Vaccines have been purchased for eligible Oldham Council staff and plans for roll out are in place.

- 5.4 Delivery of the flu programme is a multi-organisational approach. The Oldham Flu group began planning in June and the approach is coordinated and centralised.

- 5.5 Review of the 2021-2022 flu programme performance highlights that uptake in pregnant women, immunocompromised patients and under 65 at risk could be improved. Plans are in place to reflect this need, including working collaboratively with primary care and across the wider system and involving community pharmacy.

- 5.6 A strong uptake was seen last season in people with learning difficulties and in long term residential facilities.

- 5.7 Locally, we are raising awareness of the importance of winter vaccinations at provider forums, locally and across the GM Health Protection Network and providing support to Care Home staff with vaccine hesitancy.

6. Provide support to prevent and reduce risks associated with HCAI and AMR

-
- 6.1 Alongside the audit programme detailed above, the health protection team deliver a Certificate of Excellence training programme. The programme is for Care Home, Care at Home Staff and GP Practices and is delivered to reduce infections in our high-risk care environments.
- 6.2 The following sessions have been delivered to care home staff:
- Gastrointestinal illness, including outbreak management.
 - Oral Hygiene and respiratory illness including aspiration pneumonia
 - A session on catheter management is planned for January 2023.
- 6.3 The following sessions have been delivered to GP practices:
- Back to Basics IPC including IPC audit.
 - HCAs, AMR, respiratory illness/vaccines, sepsis
 - Further, relevant session topics are to be identified for the new year.
- 6.4 The health protection team provide monthly facilitation of the HCAI review meetings with the ICS, reviewing clostridium difficile cases or bacteraemia's in line with national guidance. These meetings identify avoidable and unavoidable cases and provide feedback to prescribers.

7. Immunisation programmes

- 7.1 School aged immunisations (other than flu) are delivered by the School Nursing Service in Oldham. The service has set up an immunisation team to work alongside the generic school nursing service. They will plan and deliver the school aged immunisation programme which includes catch up clinics in locality venues. The team will work with our schools in a more targeted way to increase the uptake for the Borough. The service works hard to support individual young people, in particular those with needle phobia. Vaccines for this cohort can take multiple attempts and supportive work with the young person and their family. In addition, the service and the Council's Public Health team have been working with the youth service to develop resources that can be used in schools to dispel myths and raise awareness of the benefits of immunisation. The feedback from our young people was positive and their involvement has made sure that the resources meet the needs of local young people. The Immunisation Team within the School Nursing Service are disseminating the resources to schools.
- 7.2 Our latest data shows that uptake for two doses of MMR (Mumps, Measles and Rubella) for five-year-olds in Oldham is 88.8%. This is better than the England average of 86.6% but still not high enough. We need to achieve 95% coverage to ensure population level protection against measles. We have been working closely with partnerships including the Northern Care Alliance, as the providers of our Child Health Information System (CHIS), our district teams, primary care and school nursing, to increase our uptake of routine childhood immunisations. There are challenges in relation to data cleansing which we are working with our Greater Manchester NHS colleagues on. Later this quarter, we will be providing information and training to Oldham Council engagement workers on childhood immunisations so that they can answer queries in communities.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Health Scrutiny committee are asked to note the progress against health protection priorities and support the ongoing actions described in the report.