

SUBJECT: Test Trace and Protect

MEETING: Adults Select Committee

DATE: 2nd July 2020

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an overview of the Test Trace and Protect system operating in Gwent.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The committee is invited to use the information to inform its understanding of the role of contact tracing arrangements in preventing the spread of the virus and enabling the easing lockdown restrictions.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Test Trace and Protect (TTP) is the name given to the contact tracing scheme operating in Wales. Contact tracing is a proven method that has been used by public health professionals for many years to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. This is the process of identifying, assessing, and communicating with people who have been exposed to a disease to prevent onward transmission. When applied systematically it will break the chains of transmission of COVID-19 and is an essential public health tool for controlling the virus.
- 3.2 The scheme requires contacting people who have received a positive test and gathering information about those who they may have been in contact with them while they have been in their infectious stage. A *Contact Tracer* makes this call. In Monmouthshire Environmental Health Officers perform this role on a rota basis alongside their existing workload. Once we have details of the people who the infected individual may have been exposed to, the process of tracing and contacting all of these people begins. This is done by a larger team of *Contact Advisors*, made up of 7.5 FTE staff re-deployed from a broader range of professions including from our contact centre, community hubs and the Borough Theatre. Those contacted are assisted to book tests, if symptomatic, and required to self-isolate for up to 14 days. They receive daily follow-up calls to check on symptoms so the virus can be tracked and those who are infected can be prevented to spreading the virus to the wider population.
- 3.3 A contact is defined as someone who has been within 1 metre of an infected person and met other conditions such as had a face-to-face conversation or skin-to-skin contact for 1 minute or longer. It could also be someone who has been within 2 metres of the index case for more than 15 minutes. This would include things like car journeys. People working in professional roles who have correctly used personal

protective equipment (PPE) or work behind an appropriate screen or partition are not regarded as part of a contact for these purposes. The period of recommended self-isolation will be 14 days from the point of most recent contact with the index case.

- 3.4 Monmouthshire County Council has partnered with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Public Health Wales and neighbouring local authorities to collaborate on a Gwent-wide approach. This provides economies of scale maximising the benefits of the professional expertise such as clinical leadership provided by Public Health Wales.
- 3.5 The system began operating fully on the 1st June and is based at Torfaen County Borough Council's premises at New Inn. It operates 7 days a week from 8am – 8pm. The initial modelling was based on an assumption that around 20% of tests would come back positive. However at present the proportion of tests resulting in a positive diagnosis is closer to 1%. This is an incredibly positive position to be in since it suggests that the virus is not spreading as modellers initially forecast. This does mean that some are presently not at full capacity. However, having this system in place is an essential part of easing lockdown. This virus does not move, people move and as lockdown is eased and people once again start to go about their daily lives there are more opportunities for the virus be passed from person-to-person.
- 3.6 All contact tracing systems in Wales use the Microsoft Dynamics system which allocates and presents case management workflows to local contact tracing teams. This is now live and also features integrated telephony. There are challenges for Monmouthshire, as a border county as we have a high number of people who travel between England and Wales as the Dynamics Platform is not used in England necessitating a manual process of information exchange.
- 3.7 Members will be aware of recent outbreaks such as those on Anglesey, Wrexham and in Merthyr Tydfil which illustrate how quickly an outbreak can spread, and the importance of contact tracing to minimise onward transmission. TTP is operating in a dynamic situation. For this reason this report does not attempt to cover every aspect of the system or the current situation on the ground as it is likely that further changes will have occurred between the drafting and presentation of this report. It is anticipated that a fuller update will be provided verbally at the committee meeting.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 National modelling indicates that the virus appears to have a disproportionate effect on BAME groups and older people while younger people are less likely to experience the worst health impact.

5. REASONS:

- 5.1 To ensure that members have an understanding of the arrangements in place to deliver effective contact tracing and are able to evaluate its contribution to easing lockdown restrictions.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 At present the service is being resourced by redeploying staff from other areas. However, as the service continues beyond the initial three month period it is anticipated that a more sustainable staffing model is put in place. ABUHB are the lead organization for TTP and will submit a funding case for the cost of the service to Welsh Government. Welsh Government have confirmed that they will reimburse any ICT costs incurred by local authorities in the initial phase of the work.

7. AUTHOR:

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