

SUBJECT: Test Trace and Protect – progress report

MEETING: Adults Select Committee

DATE: 29th September 2020

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the committee with a progress report of the Test Trace and Protect system for Monmouthshire.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The committee is invited to comment on the Authority's current role undertaking contact tracing work for both Monmouthshire and the wider Gwent region.

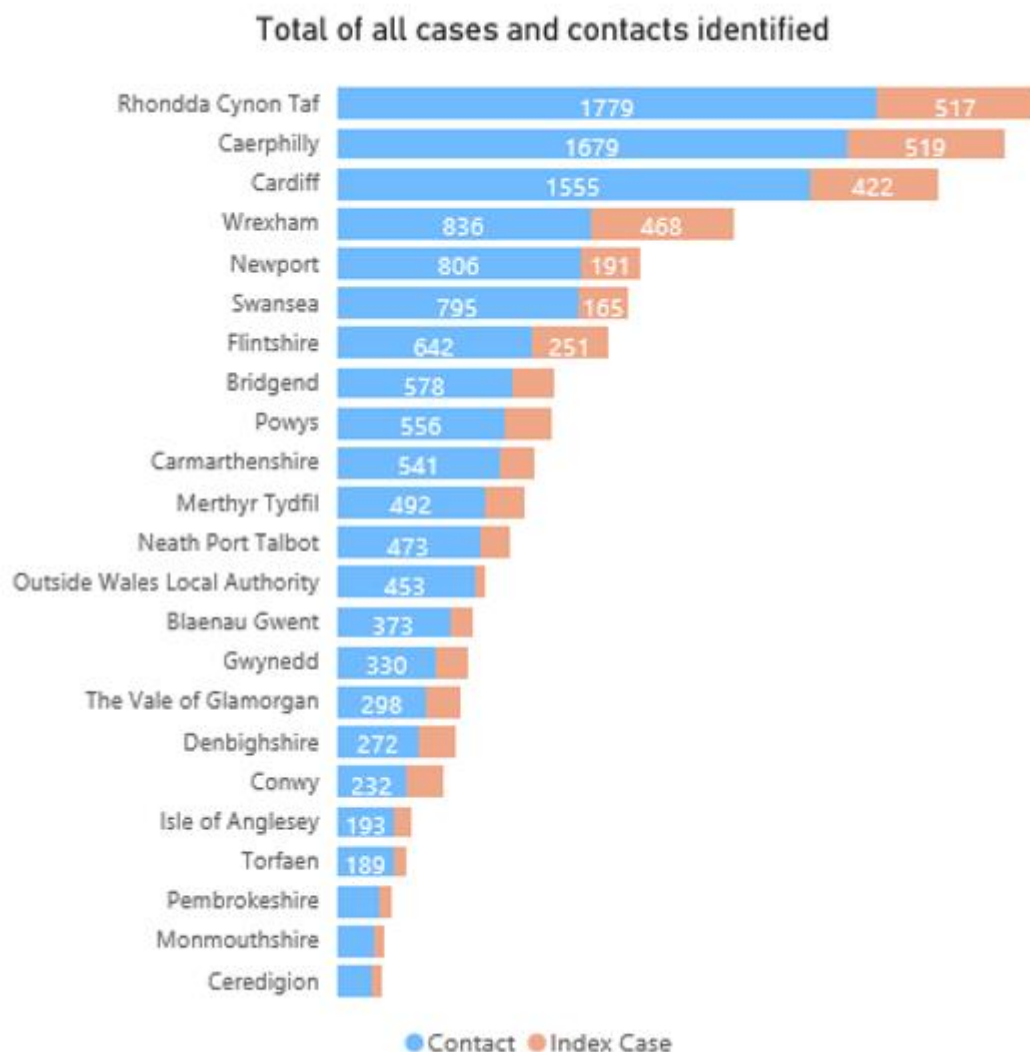
3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) scheme involves contacting people who have received a positive test and gathering information about those who they may have been in contact with while they have been contagious. A *Contact Tracer* makes the initial call to any positive Covid-19 cases. In Monmouthshire Environmental Health staff perform this role 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 staff recruited specifically for the role, and some re-deployed Officers, for example, from the Borough Theatre. Those contacted are assisted to book tests and are required to self-isolate for up to 14 days. All contacts receive daily follow-up calls to check on symptoms so the virus can be tracked and those who are infected can be prevented from spreading the virus to the wider population.
- 3.2 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 'mutual support' model has been key in swiftly dealing with cases anywhere within the Gwent area, with staff deployed from neighbouring areas to assist those in greatest need.
- 3.3 Our TTP service was set up at the end of May 2020, as reported to this Committee on 2nd July 2020. Now the service has been operation for nearly 4 months, this is a good opportunity to reflect on what work has been undertaken and outcomes achieved.
- 3.4 On 2nd July we reported contact tracing 12 cases up to the start of July for MCC and a similar number for outside the area helping colleagues in North Wales, Newport, Merthyr and Blaenau Gwent. Since then, and assisted by moving to remote working, we have increased our numbers of tracers and advisors steadily. There's a regional

expectation we have a TTP service providing an 8am to 8pm, 7 day a week cover, from 1st October. All tracers have an Environmental Health background which has been invaluable for detecting the links to premises and work places, and to act on the information immediately without delay. The close working with advisors ensures a quick, effective tracing service.

3.5 From the 1st July we have contact traced 27 cases for MCC which has created 120 contacts that were eligible for follow up, as they had been in contact with the original index positive case. Certain cases are ineligible for tracing as they were hospitalised, deceased or a resident in a care home, hence the discrepancy between the 41 (figure below) and the 27 cases traced.

3.6 Local Authority Comparison 01/7/2020 to 17/09/2020



Cases identified in Mon county 41 – Contacts identified in Mon – 141

3.7 Since the 3rd September there has been a serious escalation of cases, in particularly Caerphilly and Newport, and more recently Blaenau Gwent. Noting our current low

numbers, we have been mobilising the team to assist other Gwent TTP teams. In a two week period, from 3rd to 17th September, Monmouthshire TTP team traced 134 cases, and provided advisory calls to 322 non-Monmouthshire residents. In addition, we have undertaken 97 'warning and informing' calls to persons who, for example, may have visited an affected public house.

- 3.8 Monmouthshire TTP now has a Programme lead/contact tracer, a Regional Cell EHO seconded from team, (full time specialist advisor for MCC and Gwent cover), and by the 1st October will have a further two contact Tracers. The Commercial team of remaining 7 Officers have been working on a shift rota to assist with the rest of Gwent, and these two further external tracers are required to relieve pressure off the team due to the immense workload still coming in that is Covid related.
- 3.9 Out of the original Advisor team of 22 (mainly 0.5 FTE) all but 12 have returned to substantive posts. The shortfall has been made up with employing 8 new full time starters from the 1st September and, to increase capacity for predicted workload from PHW/ABUHB, we are having 3 advisors from redeployment, 3 new starters from 1st October and an additional 7 posts are currently being advertised. This will bring our staff numbers to the levels modelled by Health sector partners.

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. Care homes have received priority and specific information, testing, etc. to protect older people in such settings.

5. REASONS:

- 5.1 To ensure that Members have an understanding of the arrangements in place to deliver effective contact tracing in our county, and recognise the contribution of various Council Officers in reducing the spread of Covid-19 in various settings.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The Monmouthshire TTP service is largely funded by Welsh Government (WG). All additional work, by both tracers and advisors, including evening and weekend working, will be reimbursed by WG, including all ICT costs. The cost of Environmental Health Officers, and other Council staff, undertaking this work during normal core hours is not reimbursed. The current agreed funding from WG comes to an end on 31st March 2021.

7. AUTHOR:

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