

Slough Borough Council

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| Report To: | Health & Wellbeing Board |
| Date: | 23 rd January 2024 |
| Subject: | East Berkshire Health Protection Forum |
| Chief Officer: | Tessa Lindfield, Director of Public health |
| Contact Officer: | Kelly Evans, Deputy Director of Public Health |
| Ward(s): | All |
| Appendices: | Paper for East Berkshire health & Wellbeing Boards |

1. Summary and Recommendations

1.1 This report sets out the work of the Berkshire East Health Protection Forum and its links to the Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Recommendations:

Council/Committee is recommended to:

Note the refreshed Berkshire East Health Protection Board and the relationship between the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Protection Forum.

Reason: Health Protection is a key element of improving health and wellbeing, the core purpose of the Health & Wellbeing Board.

2. Report

The Background paper is being presented at the 3 Health & Wellbeing Boards in East Berkshire. It describes the refreshed Berkshire East Health Protection Forum. The Slough Health and Wellbeing Board can receive reports on the activity of the Forum and use the Forum to explore health Protection issues of concern.

3. Background Papers

Establishment of the Berkshire East Health Protection Forum. Paper to Health and Wellbeing Boards in Berkshire East.

Establishment of the Berkshire East Health Protection Forum (Bracknell Forest, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Slough)

Paper to Health and Wellbeing Boards in Berkshire East January 2024

Purpose of this paper

1. This document is aimed at the Health and Wellbeing Boards for Bracknell Forest Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council, Slough Borough Council and outlines the following:
 - 1.1 A background to the health protection role in Local Authorities.
 - 1.2 A description of the collaborative forum that provides the governance structure for oversight and assurance of the local health protection function in Berkshire East on behalf of the Strategic Director of Public Health.
 - 1.3 An update on activity from the previous Berkshire East Health Protection Forum meetings
 - 1.4 Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the Berkshire East Health Protection Forum
 - 1.5 Appendix B: Emergency Planning and resilience structure depicting the governance in relation to The Berkshire East Health Protection Forum, the Health and Wellbeing Boards and others.

2 Background

- 2.1 Health protection includes activities that seek to prevent, or reduce the harm caused by, communicable (infectious) diseases and minimise the health impact from environmental hazards such as chemicals and radiation.
- 2.2 Two key pieces of legislation define the health protection work of local authorities:
 - *The Health & Social Care Act (2012)*. This mandates Directors of Public Health and LAs to maintain an oversight function, ensuring plans are in place to mitigate health protection risks for their population and to support the health protection response work of UKHSA.
 - *The Civil Contingencies Act (2004)* classifies Local Authorities as Category 1 responders, with statutory responsibilities for actively planning for, and leading the response to, health protection incidents and emergencies. Category 1 Responders are also responsible for warning, informing, and advising the public.
- 2.3 Several national guidance documents set out local direction and accountability of a good, quality health protection system:
 1. *Directors of Public Health in Local Government: Roles, Responsibilities and Context (2020, updated June 2023)* sets out both the statutory and non-statutory

elements of the DPH role and provides information on their corporate and professional accountabilities.

2. *What Good Looks Like for High Quality Local Health Protection Systems* - describes best practice for a good quality health protection system.
3. *Functions and Standards of a Public Health System*: highlights that public health requires effective action by different players and clarity is required with respect to responsibility and accountable for each function.
4. In addition, the *Policy position by the Association of Directors of Public Health (November 2023)* recommend that sufficient health protection expertise is required at a local level and health protection decisions should reflect local demographics and diversity.

3 Berkshire East Health Protection Forum

3.1A Berkshire East Health Protection Forum was re-established in June 2023 having been replaced by the Health Protection Board during the pandemic, which has now been stood down.

3.2 The focus of the forum is facilitating the Director of Public Health's statutory responsibility for oversight and assurance of health protection across Bracknell Forest Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council, Slough Borough Council and Frimley ICS.

3.3 The aim of the Health Protection Forum is to provide assurance and identify risks concerning systems, plans and processes to protect the health of Berkshire East residents in line with relevant legislation. The forum works to ensure coordination of strategic and operational response to threats to health and wellbeing across Bracknell Forest, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough and to ensure that there is a focus on addressing health inequalities and that health protection issues of underserved groups are addressed.

3.4 The group aims to take collective responsibility for applying learning from the Covid-19 pandemic and other health protection incidents and outbreaks to inform delivery of health protection resilience and functions.

3.2 The Health Protection Forum are listed in the Terms of Reference (Appendix A).

4 Governance structure and reporting

4.1 The Health Protection Forum is chaired by the Strategic Director of Public Health for Berkshire East and meets quarterly.

4.2 The Chair of the Health Protection Forum or via a Deputy Director colleague will update the three Health & Wellbeing Boards (Bracknell Forest, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough). The group also feeds into the Berkshire Resilience Forum.

4.3 An annual Health Protection report will be presented to the three Health & Wellbeing Boards (Bracknell Forest, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough).

4.4 Appendix B outlines the Emergency Planning and Resilience structure within Thames Valley and Berkshire and where the Health and Wellbeing Boards fit in.

5 Areas covered in previous Health Protection Forum meetings

5.1 The group has met twice since it was reestablished; in June 2023 and October 2023.

5.2 These are the agenda items covered:

- Screening and Childhood Immunisation reports and update on programme
- Winter Immunisation programme: Covid and Flu - updates
- Communicable Disease update
- Infection control / Asylum settings – review of issues and escalating any concerns
- Berkshire East measles action plan (Local Authority preparedness and response)
- Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response updates
- Promoting the NHS and Preventex offer of a new remote testing service for Hepatitis C to reduce undiagnosed Hepatitis C and reduce transmission

end

Appendix A: Berkshire East Health Protection Forum (Bracknell Forest, Royal Brough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough)

Terms of Reference

Background

Health protection includes activities that seek to prevent, or reduce the harm caused by, communicable (infectious) diseases and minimise the health impact from environmental hazards such as chemicals and radiation.

Local Authorities were given an additional health protection duty under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013, made under section 6C of the National Health Service Act 2006. This was in addition to the existing health protection functions and three statutory powers delegated to local authorities under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act (1984), the Health and Social Care Act (2008), the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Food Safety Act (1990). Local Authorities are also a category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and responsible for coordinating and agreeing plans and strategies in Emergency Planning Resilience and Response.

The additional mandatory duty given to local authorities is to ensure that there are plans in place to protect the health of the population. Directors of Public Health, acting on behalf of their Local Authorities, and working in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, have a critical role in protecting the health of their population, both in terms of helping to prevent threats arising and in ensuring appropriate responses when things do go wrong. It is expected that Local Authorities and partners across Berkshire East work to ensure that threats to health are understood, prepared for, and (when necessary) responded to.

Purpose

The Berkshire East Health Protection Forum has been reinstated following the set-up of the Berkshire East Health Protection Board during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 – 2022 to deliver on Covid-19 national guidance and public health control measures.

The Health Protection (HP) Forum will focus on facilitating the Director of Public Health's statutory responsibility for oversight and assurance role of Health Protection across Bracknell Forest Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Slough Borough Council and Frimley ICS.

The Forum will be a multi-agency board, bringing together stakeholders and relevant partners across the Health Protection system, including NHS England, ICS

colleagues, UKHSA, public health and emergency planning Local Authority colleagues from Berkshire East to achieve the objectives set out in this document.

Aim and Objectives

Aim:

The aim of the HP Forum is to provide assurance and identify risks concerning systems, plans and processes to protect the health of Berkshire East residents in line with relevant legislation.

Objectives:

The objectives of the HP Forum are:

1. Assurance and Escalation

- To fulfill the local authority duty to assure arrangements for Health Protection across Berkshire East
- Provide pertinent information, horizon scan for emerging risks and escalate risks and issues for mitigation to partner organisations and relevant bodies.
- Ensure effective health protection surveillance information is obtained, assessed and used appropriately so that appropriate action can be taken where necessary
- Across partnerships to gain assurance of standards in the commissioning of national immunisation programmes, infection prevention and control and national screening programmes. These standards will be based on national standards, whenever feasible, and be applied to the Berkshire East context
- Review preparedness and performance of Health Protection system activity in respect of:
 - Emergency preparedness, resilience and response

- Communicable disease control (monitoring and surveillance)
 - Incident and outbreak investigation and management
 - National immunisation and screening programmes
 - Infection prevention and control in health and care settings
 - Health Care Associated Infections
 - Environmental public health and control of chemical, biological and radiological hazards
 - Emerging infections
 - Antimicrobial resistance
 - Sexually transmitted infections
 - Health protection alerts (UKHSA, CMO cascade, MHRA alerts)
- Review appropriate data, risk assess and consider mitigation against Health Protection incidents and infectious disease outbreaks, ensuring that there is joint working with local environmental health colleagues and respective partner organisations such as UKHSA and the NHS.
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 - Ensure a coherent, local approach to inclusion health and social exclusion as an important determinant of health and health inequalities among key partners.
 - Gain assurance that local action for resilience on climate change, in public health and emergency planning is coordinated. This includes preparedness for extreme weather events and implementing recommendations from existing climate change response plans such as the national Adverse Weather and Health Plan.
 - To coordinate and agree plans and strategies in Emergency Planning Resilience and Response for public health responsibilities, within Berkshire East Councils, as a category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
 - Gain assurance that plans and strategies in Emergency Planning Resilience and Response for both NHS and public health responsibilities, are in place and appropriately tested.

- Be assured of compliance and recognise good practice as described in relevant health protection guidance, documents and legislation.
 - [NICE Health Protection guidance on Communicable diseases](#)
 - [Public Health \(Control of Disease\) Act 1984](#)
 - [Health Protection in Local Government](#) (2013)
 - [Public Health in Local Government](#) (2012)
 - [What Good Looks Like for High Quality Local Health Protection Systems](#)
 - [FPH Functions and standards of a Public Health System - Health Protection](#)
 - [Health and Social Care Act 2012](#)

- The Board will escalate risk to the Berkshire Resilience Group, as appropriate and dependent on the risk, for resolution and assurance that appropriate action has been taken

2. Addressing Health Inequalities

- Identify opportunities and partners to reduce health protection inequalities from available data whilst considering shared and individual actions to address arising matters.

3. Strategy Development

- Agree the annual Health Protection Annual Report.
- Contribute where appropriate to the Berkshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and use outputs to inform evidence-based priorities.
- Identify shared priorities for system partners and agree actions for individual organisations.
- Co-develop and share health protection risk communications strategies relevant to the Berkshire East geography.

4. Learning

- Take collective responsibility for protecting the public's health, applying learning from the COVID-19 pandemic to inform delivery of health protection and resilience functions.
- Implement emerging recommendations of the COVID-19 Public Inquiry.
- Review and embed learning from health protection incidents and outbreaks and ensure feedback is given to each participatory organisation.

Governance

The HP Forum will hold a reciprocal relationship with sub-committees/groups of the Forum. Minutes and recommendations of any Sub-Committees/Groups will be formally recorded and submitted to the Forum.

The HP Forum will produce formal minutes of meetings and a copy of those minutes will be available to the Health & Wellbeing Boards upon request.

The board will provide assurance to the South East UKHSA representative in relation to Emergency Planning Resilience and Response.

The HP Forum annual Health Protection Report will be presented to the respective local authority Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Reporting

The Chair, either directly or via a director colleague, will provide verbal updates as appropriate to the Health & Wellbeing Boards.

Membership

Regular attendance:

- Director of Public Health - Chair
- LA Deputy Directors of Public Health & Berkshire East Public Health Hub Consultant
- LA Health Protection lead (where applicable)
- Adults' Health and Care Representative
- Children's Services Representative
- UKHSA Health Protection Team Representative
- Frimley ICB IPC & Vaccination Representation
- Emergency Planning, Preparedness and Resilience
- NHS England South East (Thames Valley) Screening and Immunisation Representative
- Berkshire East Public Health Hub Business Support

Ad-hoc attendance as required:

- Public Health Intelligence
- Communications
- Health care providers

Ways of working

The HP Forum will be chaired by the Strategic Director of Public Health for Berkshire East.

The frequency of meeting will be determined by the Forum. The group will meet quarterly initially.

The secretariat of the HP Forum will be provided by the Berkshire East Public Health Hub.

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually or sooner as required.

End

Appendix B: Emergency Planning and Resilience Structure (Thames Valley and Berkshire) -

