Oldham COVID-19 Management Plan: How we control outbreaks

Executive Summary

30th June 2020

Oldham
Council

1. Introduction

1.1. On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The UK has been responding to a COVID-19 outbreak since 31 January 2020 when a Level 4 National Incident was declared for NHS England and NHS Improvement. The UK Government moved from the "Contain" phase to the "Delay" phase on 12 March 2020 with the Department of Health and Social Care launching the NHS Test and Trace service as a key component of "Test, Trace, Contain and Enable" strategy on 28 May 2020.

1.2. Contact tracing and outbreak management are essential tools in limiting the spread of infectious diseases. Effective tracing and isolation of people exposed to COVID-19 can reduce the spread of infection and may allow for greater relaxation of social distancing requirements than would otherwise be possible.

1.3. The Oldham COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan has been developed to meet national requirements for local Outbreak Control Plans. The document provides local direction and guidance to collectively manage and prevent the spread of COVID-19 across our communities. The plan supplements the existing Oldham Health Economy Outbreak Plan (2018) by providing specific management arrangements to effectively respond to the unique threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4. This document will continue to be reviewed and revised in response to changes in national requirements and advice, and to incorporate learning from implementation.

2. Aims and objectives

2.1. **Aim**: Our aim is to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through prevention, containment and suppression of outbreaks, and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and the associated control measures on the local population.

2.2. **Objectives of the Plan**
- To provide an overview of the key control measures, including those relating to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) test, trace, contain and enable approach and the seven associated national themes
- To provide an overview of the GM approach and how the national and GM tiers fit together
- Define governance, roles and responsibilities and command & control arrangements relating to COVID-19 management
- Set out communications and engagement arrangements with partner organisations and residents
- Outline how the impact of outbreaks on residents will be mitigated
- Outline the approach to surveillance using data and other sources of information to monitor the extent and impact of COVID-19 infection across Oldham

3. National and Greater Manchester Context

3.1. The contact tracing system in England is made up of three operational tiers:

– Tier 3 consists of call handlers who speak to contacts of confirmed cases and advise them to isolate;

– Tier 2 consists of case handlers who interview confirmed cases of COVID-19 to identify their contacts; and

– Tier 1b is an integrated regional and local system to deal with contact tracing and outbreak management in complex settings.

– Tier 1a provides strategic oversight of the whole system and sets guidance and policies.

3.2. Oldham forms part of the Greater Manchester (GM) Tier 1b system. Within Tier 1b, most contact tracing is expected to be done by the Greater Manchester Integrated Contact Tracing Hub (GM ICTH). Local authorities and systems will be involved where their support is needed in managing complex cases or outbreaks, and in providing support to individuals and settings that have been affected by COVID-19. This might include supporting people who have been told to isolate, or managing the consequences of closing a particular setting, such as a school or GP practice.

3.3. The GM Combined Authority and GM Health & Social Care Partnership have developed a COVID-19 Management Plan which follows the same principles as the outbreak control plans in each of the 10 GM local authorities. The GM plan supports our local plans with clear approaches across the city region to each of the seven key themes of the outbreak control plans including the overlapping systems of command and control required during outbreak response, which feed into the Local Resilience Forum.

4. Oldham approach to preventing and managing transmission of COVID-19

4.1. The following seven key themes have been identified nationally as key priorities on which to focus our local work to manage and control COVID-19. These are based on the priority areas and actions based on experience of the pandemic to date, and highlighting the key mechanisms through which to deliver on these priorities and associated actions:

Theme	Actions required	Local activity
Care homes and schools	Planning for local outbreaks in care homes and schools (e.g. defining monitoring arrangements, identifying potential scenarios and planning the required response).	• Resource packs developed for care homes and schools, including actions to take and templates to use. • Advice provided on Infection prevention & control and action to take in response to cases. • Scenario planning undertaken to inform development of standard operating procedures.
High risk places, locations and vulnerable communities	Identifying and planning how to manage other high-risk places, locations and communities of interest including sheltered housing, dormitories for migrant workers, transport access points (e.g., ports, airports), detained settings, rough sleepers etc (e.g. defining preventative measures and outbreak management strategies).	• Key settings identified and relevant services involved in scenario planning to inform development of standard operating procedures. • Letters sent to high risk businesses to communicate local arrangements and measures to prevent outbreaks.
Local testing capacity	Identifying methods for local testing to ensure a swift response that is accessible to the entire population. This could include delivering tests to isolated individuals, establishing local pop-up sites or hosting mobile testing units at high-risk locations (e.g. defining how to prioritise and manage deployment)	• Local testing available through satellite site, mobile testing unit and local pop up testing. • Working with Department of Health & Social Care to improve access to local testing for vulnerable groups. • Additional testing capacity available through GM Mass Testing Strategy to respond to outbreaks.
Contact tracing in complex settings	Assessing local and regional contact tracing and infection control capability in complex settings (e.g., Tier 1b) and the need for mutual aid (e.g. identifying specific local complex communities of interest and settings, developing assumptions to estimate demand, developing options to scale capacity if needed).	• Local Single Point of Contact (staffed by public health) in place to receive referrals from the GM Integrated Contact Tracing Hub. • Environmental Health Officers identified to undertake local contact tracing. • Protocols developed with place-based teams to support response to cases and outbreaks. • Additional Infection Prevention & Control Nurse posts established.
Data integration	Integrating national and local data and scenario planning through the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) (e.g., data management planning including data security, data requirements including NHS linkages). The JBC will collect data about the prevalence of the disease, analyse that data to understand infection rates across the country, and provide expert advice on responding to spikes in infection.	• Available data subjected to daily review by public health intelligence leads and DPH. • Dashboard developed to allow Boards to monitor and track local position. • Data sharing agreement with PHE being put in place to provide access to postcode level data on testing and contact tracing.

Theme	Actions required	Local activity
Vulnerable people	Supporting vulnerable local people to get help to self-isolate (e.g. encouraging neighbours to offer support, identifying relevant community groups, planning how to co-ordinate and deploy) and ensuring services meet the needs of diverse communities.	• Support available via Helpline & Place-based Hubs.
Local Boards	Establishing governance structures led by existing Covid-19 Health Protection Boards and supported by existing Gold command forums and a member-led Board to communicate with the general public.	• Test and trace bronze group will become the COVID-19 Prevention & Control Board responsible for technical health protection function and delivery of the COVID-19 management plan. • Health Protection Sub-Committee of Health and Wellbeing Board will be responsible for oversight of the plan and building public trust and engagement in testing and contact tracing, and other prevention and control measures.

5. Response to cases and management of outbreaks

5.1.   The Oldham COVID-19 Prevention & Control Board, under the leadership of the Director of Public Health, will have the responsibility for declaring and managing local outbreaks in consultation with PHE North West and GM Integrated Contact Tracing Hub (GMICTH).

5.2.   Notifications of cases and/or outbreaks will come either via local reporting direct to the Oldham Single Point of Contact (SPOC), or via the GM ICTH to the Oldham SPOC.

5.3.   The Director of Public Health (or designated deputy) will convene the Outbreak Control Team (OCT) including members of the COVID-19 Prevention & Control Board, plus representatives related to the particular setting and/or community where the outbreak has occurred.

5.4.   Following the declaration of an outbreak, the Director of Public Health (DPH) will lead the local response to an outbreak within Oldham, which will include the following elements:

Contacting an affected setting (e.g. head of school; manager of care home) to get details of the situation, which would include numbers of possible and confirmed cases (and whether any are at high risk of severe COVID-19 disease), dates of onset of symptoms, numbers of people potentially affected (including numbers at high risk of severe COVID-19 disease), any wider risks, and potential impacts that would need support from the system.

Contact tracing: Much of the contact tracing will be done by the NHS Test and Trace service and GM Integrated Contact Tracing Hub. Local contact tracing will be carried out by the Council's Environmental Health Team following referral to the Single Point of Contact, and local settings/services leads appropriate to the outbreak.

Providing initial infection prevention and control advice. This may include signposting to existing guidance and sources of support, advice on isolation and exclusion and other infection prevention and control advice. This will be led by community infection prevention & control nurses/Health Protection Team.

Ensuring that any symptomatic people who have not yet been tested are tested promptly. This will ensure actions are based as much as possible on confirmed cases, as well as helping to rule out situations that are not linked to COVID-19. In care homes all residents and staff will be tested regardless of their symptom status. This will be coordinated by the Test and Trace Manager, in collaboration with the commissioned testing service.

Identifying any urgent support needs. This would include meeting health needs among cases and contacts to prevent detrimental effects on any underlying medical conditions (e.g. access to medication) as well as wider social impacts on individuals and communities and impact on services. The response to meet these needs will be coordinated through the Helpline and Place-Based Hubs.

Notifying the wider system and communication. Early notification to the lead(s) for the wider system for that setting will ensure timely support for consequence management is available as early as possible and impacts on the wider system can be managed. It will also allow wider information and intelligence about the situation to be included in the risk assessment. Early warning to the communications lead can make sure that proactive and reactive communications messages are in place early.

Communications and engagement: At every stage in this process communications will be important both to make sure that all parties are operating on the same information, to ensure transparency of actions taken, and to build trust across the system and with the public. Accurate recording of actions and decisions will also be important, both for management of the situation and to provide an audit trail of situation management.

Enforcement of control measures: Oldham will rely mainly on proactive engagement with communities to facilitate adherence to control measures. Legal enforcement under schedule 21 of Coronavirus Act 2020 will be an act of last resort and would be approved through the local SCG/Gold structure. Schedule 21 confers powers relating to potentially infectious persons and makes related provision.

6. Governance

6.1. Overall accountability and oversight of the Oldham COVID-19 Management Plan, and the response to COVID-19 outbreaks lies with the Oldham Health and Wellbeing Board, via the Health Protection Sub-Committee (chaired by the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care). This is supported by the COVID-19 Prevention and Control Board (chaired by the Director of Public Health) supported by the Oldham Health Protection Sub-Group of the Health & Wellbeing Board. The COVID-19 Prevention and Control Board is jointly accountable to Oldham Health and Wellbeing Board, via the Health Protection Sub-Committee and the Oldham COVID-19 Gold (Strategic Coordinating Group) and Silver committees.

6.2. Alongside the Health Protection Sub-Committee, regular updates on the local COVID-19 management plan and work of the COVID-19 Prevention and Control Board will be provided Oldham's Equalities Advisory Group for COVID-19 in order to help inform and shape our local response.

6.3. The COVID-19 Prevention and Control Board will meet weekly, with more frequent meetings being arranged if needed to respond to emerging local issues or outbreaks. The Health Protection Sub-Committee will meet monthly.