



Warrington Borough Council

COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan

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Version Control

The table below contains a summary of changes contained per version.

Version	Authors	Summary of Additions/ Amendments	Reviewed By	Date
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original Version of Document Created 		
2	Tracy Flute Martyn Waterson Frances Mann Michael Abbott Aylish MacKenzie	General Changes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of information on Omicron Variant Addition of updates to national guidance in response to the Omicron Variant including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to guidance for close contacts of positive cases of Covid-19. Changes from PHE to UKHSA. Changes to sections on Lateral Flow Device Testing and vaccination. Addition of updates to face covering guidance. Changes to specific sections. Changes to Section 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition of extra detail on preventative measures. Addition of risk assessment. Addition of events and seasonal considerations. Addition of Omicron Variant information. Addition of information on vaccination and testing. Changes to Section 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Testing FAQs updates</i> Changes to Section 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Glossary</i> – Definitions amended. UKHSA added. Changes to Section 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Key National Guidance:</i> Guidance has been updated to reflect changes in national guidance. 	Tracy Flute Martyn Waterson Michael Abbott Aylish MacKenzie	17/12/2021

Section 1: COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan

Overview

COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation for which guidance is being developed at a fast pace and is subject to change with little notice. This plan will be kept under review, particularly section 8 that provides links to national guidance and other relevant information to support outbreak control.

There have been some key changes in guidance and legislation. **With the emergence of the Omicron variant it is even more important to regularly visit www.gov.uk for updates. Please also stay up to date with your setting-specific guidance and legislation.**

This guidance is designed as an overarching resource which is relevant for outbreak management and control for a variety of settings and cohorts. This guidance aims to be comprehensive in its scope and provide constructive guidance to all service providers, it may be of particular relevance to the following settings and cohorts.

- **Care and residential settings**
 - Care homes, hospice services, domiciliary care services, community based settings for people with mental health needs, disability support, supported living settings,
- **Schools and educational settings**
 - Early years, primary, secondary and special schools, residential settings in education, further education and higher education.
- **Complex residential settings**
 - Homeless support and accommodation services, prisons, residential children's homes, sheltered accommodation, houses of multiple occupation (HMOs), women's refuges, hostels and other guest accommodation
- **Complex cohorts**
 - People experiencing homelessness, individuals living with addiction/substance use disorders, migrants and refugees, members of travelling communities, religious and ethnic minority groups,
- **Youth, community and social services**
 - Youth support services, adult community support and community services for people living with a disability.

The purpose of this plan is to outline the Local Authority and multi-agency response to a COVID-19 outbreak in a range of settings in Warrington. The steps outlined in this guidance are also designed to support and guide decision making processes for service providers across a wide variety of settings. This document should be read in conjunction with any setting-specific guidance and resources.

Aims and Objectives

Aim

The plan aims to ensure an effective and coordinated approach to the management of COVID-19 outbreaks within a specific setting.

The Outbreak Control Plan is an important resource in the management of outbreaks. It provides advice and reassurance in order to help prevent transmission and protect our health and care system. Through supporting the prevention and control of Covid-19 outbreaks, this plan aims to assist the creation of conditions whereby government restrictions can be safely relaxed.

Objectives

- Facilitate the early identification and management of Covid-19 outbreaks.
- Support the pro-active management of Covid-19 risk in a variety of settings.
- Ensure clarity in relation to the operational roles and responsibilities for each responding organisation in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak
- Provide the guidance/direction to assist responders to activate an effective and coordinated multi-agency approach to any outbreaks.
- Support the primary objectives of the NHS Test and Trace service. These aim to control and reduce the spread of infection, save lives, and in doing so help to return life to as normal as possible, for as many people as possible, in a way that is safe and protects the health of our local community.
- Actions undertaken as part of the outbreak control response aim to prevent a return to lockdown in a geographical area or setting. However, in some exceptional circumstances local lockdowns could be put in place where this is deemed appropriate.

Definition of a COVID-19 Outbreak

- Two or more test-confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) arising within the same 14-day period in people who work at or attend the setting and with a common exposure or link i.e. the cases have had contact with each other or with another common source of infection, indicating transmission within the setting.
- This includes both symptomatic cases, which will primarily be identified by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, as well as asymptomatic cases, which will primarily be identified by Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests.

Background

Overview of Covid-19 Symptoms

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- New continuous cough

- A high temperature (over 37.8 degrees)
- A loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell

Alongside these three main symptoms of COVID-19, many people experience other symptoms as a result of their COVID-19 infection. The list of other symptoms you could experience include: aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, a rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes. Some people also experience very mild, cold-like symptoms, which could also be COVID-19. National guidance remains that if you experience any of the three main symptoms you should self-isolate and arrange to have a PCR test.

Regular rapid testing will help to detect those cases that are asymptomatic, or do not experience the classic three COVID-19 symptoms. In addition to regular, twice-weekly, lateral flow testing, and testing prior to any higher risk situation, we recommend taking a lateral flow test if you are feeling generally unwell but are not experiencing one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms.

Mode of transmission

Evidence suggests COVID-19 is spread in the following ways: airborne transmission, close contact via droplets, and via surfaces. The behaviours and actions recommended by national Government in guidance aim to mitigate all methods of transmission.

Incubation period

The incubation period (i.e. time between exposure to the virus and developing symptoms) is between 1 and 10 days (median 5 days).

When is a person infectious?

A person is thought to be infectious 48 hours before symptoms appear, and up to seven days after they start displaying symptoms. For this reason, contact tracing for positive cases begins 48 hours before the onset of symptoms, or the day a test was received for asymptomatic cases.

When one case occurs in a setting

The response to a single case has many of the same features as the response to an outbreak and is managed using a preventative approach. Where two cases are linked in time to a setting then this suggests transmission and requires a more active approach.

Section 2: Prevention, Notification and Activation of the Outbreak Control Plan

2.1: Prevention: Actions to Consider to Support Staff, Volunteers, Service Users and Community Members to Stay Safe and Protected from Covid-19.

Preventative and control measures can be considered in a proactive manner ensuring ongoing engagement with staff, volunteers, service users and community members. Measures taken proactively will help prevent and reduce transmission. If an outbreak occurs, having existing preventative measures in place will facilitate a rapid response and serve to limit and mitigate the impact of this outbreak. Prior to moving through processes of notification and activation, it is essential you first consider initial infection prevention actions such as those listed below in this section. These will help to support staff, volunteers, service users and community members to remain safe and protected from Covid-19.

Services still have a legal duty to manage risks to those affected by their service, including the risks associated with Covid-19. The way to do this is to carry out a health and safety risk assessment, which includes the risk of COVID-19, and to take reasonable steps to mitigate the risks identified. The measures implemented by services through their risk assessment can go above the minimum legal requirement from national legislation. Find out more about managing risk and risk assessment in the guidance in Section 8.

As part of your risk assessment, you must:

- identify what work activity or situations might result in transmission of COVID-19
- think about who could be at risk; this could include workers, visitors, contractors and delivery drivers
- decide how likely it is that someone could be exposed
- identify the controls needed to reduce the risk

If you have fewer than five employees you don't have to write anything down, but it might help if you do.

You should ensure you consider the risk to groups of workers who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

When you're doing your assessment, you should talk with your workers about the measures you're considering. They can provide valuable information on how you could reduce risks.

You should put monitoring and supervision in place to make sure the controls you have are working as expected. Testing and vaccination should be factored into your risk assessment for example staff who are unvaccinated should not be working in close contact with those that are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. Ensuring regular asymptomatic testing is carried helps infected individuals to be identified as soon as possible which reduces the risk of transmission within a setting.

In addition to ensuring preventative measures are adhered to, having a contingency plan in place for responding to any positive cases is a crucial component of any risk assessment. If a positive case(s) of COVID-19 occurs, the first actions taken in response to this should prioritize the safety and protection of everyone in your setting.

The Warrington Borough Council Public Health Team can support with implementing preventative measures, as well as supporting actions in response to a positive case. This could be in the form of support on risk assessments, developing contingency plans or providing guidance or practical help in COVID-19 prevention and outbreak response – See Section 3 – Key Contacts.

These actions should be in line with the most important principles of public health and outbreak management, including:

- Preventing and controlling outbreaks of infection
- Preventing and limiting severe illness and complications
- Protecting clinically vulnerable and susceptible individuals
- Providing up-to-date, relevant, public health guidance and advice

There are a number of actions you can take to ensure your setting is Covid-secure and prevent further transmission. These recommended actions are proactive, preventative measures but adherence and promotion of these actions can also be heightened in response to a positive case (s).

The Measures described below are by no means exhaustive and are intended to support internal risk assessment, prevention and case management processes. Service providers are best placed, with the needs of the service in mind, to lead on these processes with support and advice from the relevant partners e.g. Local Public Health Teams.

[2.1.1 Early identification and isolation.](#)

Early identification and isolation of any positive cases is crucial for preventing further spread. This includes processes for identifying close contacts and providing appropriate advice. Tools such as community testing and contact tracing are well-established, evidence based tools that have been proven to work effectively limit the number of secondary cases and prevent outbreaks. When adhered to, these measures protect the wider community by ensuring that outbreaks are contained within a smaller population.

Lateral Flow Testing should be promoted as a screening measure, both regularly and prior to staff, volunteers or service users engaging in a potentially high risk situation.

You are at higher risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 when:

- In crowded and enclosed spaces
- Mixing with people you do not normally live or work with
- There is limited fresh air

Promoting adherence to regular (twice-weekly) asymptomatic lateral flow testing and cooperation with contact tracing processes is important for ensuring limiting the spread of Covid-19.

There are several options for accessing asymptomatic testing in Warrington, such as LFD Direct, community collect and asymptomatic testing sites. Please see the testing section for more information (p.22).

In addition to regular routine testing, anyone aged 5 years and over, who has been identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 and who is not legally required to self-isolate, is now strongly advised to take a rapid lateral flow test every day for 7 days or until 10 days since their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if this is earlier. If any of these LFD tests are positive they should self-isolate in order to protect other people, and arrange to take a PCR test.

More information on testing and self-isolation can be found in Section 8 – Key National Guidance.

2.1.2 [Keep a well ventilated space.](#)

The law says employers must make sure there's an adequate supply of fresh air (ventilation) in enclosed areas of the workplace. This has not changed during the pandemic.

You can do this by using:

- Natural ventilation - fresh air comes in through open windows, doors or air vents. This is also known as 'passive airflow', or
- Mechanical ventilation - fans and ducts bring in fresh air from outside

Deciding what is adequate ventilation for your setting should be part of a risk assessment. You should also make sure any control measures you identify by your risk assessment take account of the public health regulations and guidance for the nation you are working in.

Good ventilation reduces the concentration of the virus in the air and therefore reduces the risk of airborne transmission. Consider opening a window (or preferably more than one window) to promote clean air flow. This can have health benefits beyond COVID-19 prevention, but should also be considered in balance with keeping people warm. For example, opening two windows or doors for 5-10 minutes every hour is an effective means of promoting clean air flow.

Your ventilation is likely to be adequate to minimise the risk of COVID-19 aerosol transmission if the rooms or spaces in your building(s) are:

- used within the occupancy limits specified in the building design, and
- Have a sufficient fresh air supply to meet the current minimum building standard. You can get advice from a competent ventilation engineer or, as a precautionary approach, operate your system on the maximum air flow rate

Although CO2 levels are not a direct measure of possible exposure to COVID-19, checking levels using a monitor can help you identify poorly ventilated areas.

2.1.3 Reducing contact between staff, volunteers or service users.

Several limits on social contact have been lifted, including the requirement for employers to limit capacity. Despite this, service providers should still consider the risks of close contact and factor this into their risk assessment processes.

If, based on setting-specific risk assessments, you decide to reduce contact in particular circumstances, you may want to consider the following mitigations:

- Stay up to date with guidance and legislation on home working. Recommend home working where possible.
- Measures to limit contact between individuals who do not live or normally work together.
- Supporting those who are clinically vulnerable by considering limits to contact where appropriate.
- Designating seating (for example in offices) for specific teams, or using 'cohorting', 'fixed teams' or 'partnering', so each person works with the same consistent group
- Where space and capacity allow, giving preference to back-to-back or side-to-side working between cohorts or fixed teams who don't normally mix.
- If possible and where appropriate, limit attendee capacity (e.g. for events) to reduce mixing between groups.
- Consider numbers attending group sessions e.g. you could hold group sessions multiple times, if possible, to reduce the total number of people present at any one time
- Consider the use of communal spaces and limiting the numbers of people accessing these.
- Using screens or barriers to separate people who don't normally mix (for example between workers and customers), noting that screens are only likely to be beneficial if placed between people who come into close face-to-face proximity with each other, and may not be practicable between desks in a side-to-side office setting

You should consider the need for these mitigations in the context of other COVID-19 workplace mitigations (such as ventilation, regular cleaning of surfaces and the use of face coverings) you have put in place. They should only be applied where practical. For example, without imposing restrictions on business operations or reducing workplace capacity.

You should take account of those with protected characteristics and discuss with disabled workers what reasonable adjustments can be made to the workplace so they can work safely.

2.1.4 Limitations on mixing in response to a positive case

Service providers can consider heightening limitations on social mixing in response to a positive case. This may include requirements to 'stay away from the workplace', or restrictions on entering or leaving a defined area. Increasing home working arrangements can also be considered as an outbreak measure.

In settings where staff move from one area to another or access different workspaces, this should be limited as much as possible.

2.1.5 Limit access to shared/communal spaces.

Consider measures for limiting the use of communal spaces. You may wish to consider a rota system for safely managing the use of essential communal areas. Communal spaces could be closed in response to a positive case. Face coverings are mandatory in some shared spaces. Keep up to date with current legislation on face coverings.

2.1.6 Hand Hygiene.

Handwashing is a proven preventative measure which removes the virus from our hands and thus prevents further transmission. Actions to consider include providing access to handwashing or hand sanitation facilities and promoting regular and effective hand hygiene practices.

2.1.7 Face Coverings.

Ensuring everyone (who is not exempt) is supported in the use of face coverings where appropriate (e.g. in communal areas or poorly ventilated spaces). Face coverings are now mandatory in most indoor spaces, as per the government guidance. In settings which aren't specifically referred to in the mandatory legislation, face coverings are expected and recommended where appropriate. Keep up to date with current legislation and guidance on face coverings here: [Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-exemptions-and-how-to-make-your-own)

Service providers should be aware of the guidance on face coverings for their service area. For instance, [Infection Prevention Control \(IPC\) guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/infection-prevention-control-ipc-guidance) advises that patients and visitors across all healthcare settings should wear a face covering, providing it is

tolerated and is not detrimental to their medical or care needs. They should also be worn in care homes to protect residents from the risk of infection.

In a response to a positive case (s), you may wish to consider interventions to increase face covering requirements, such as mandated face coverings in all areas of your building.

Please see section 8 for key national guidance.

2.1.8 Availability of and adherence to the use of PPE.

PPE is intended to protect from dangerous substances such as infectious agents. PPE can support staff, volunteers and service users in staying protected, so service providers should consider whether setting appropriate PPE should readily available and that everyone is supported in adhering to the organisations PPE policy. There may be a situation where someone may need to access PPE quickly to respond to a situation rapidly, so consider measures to ensure PPE is reachable and accessible for all staff as required. Keep up to date with current legislation and guidance on face coverings here: [Face coverings: when to wear one, exemptions, and how to make your own - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-exemptions-and-how-to-make-your-own). Furthermore, keep up to date with your setting specific legislation and guidance on face coverings.

2.1.9 Identifying and Protecting Clinically (Extremely) Vulnerable Individuals

It is the duty of the employers to consider protective measures for individuals who are Clinically (Extremely) Vulnerable as part of their risk assessment. If there are any service users, staff, volunteers who are Clinically (Extremely) Vulnerable, additional measures may be required to ensure their safety and protection. This could involve moving them to another area where they are less likely to come into contact with an infected individual and settings should always ensure they follow any advice relating to shielding requirements for these individuals. In some circumstances, it is the responsibility of the service provider to determine if a service user is Clinically (Extremely) Vulnerable. This is also an essential component of any contingency plans for responding to a positive case. Service providers may wish to consider measures to facilitate home working for anyone who is clinically vulnerable in response to a positive case.

2.1.10 Remove sources of cross-contamination.

Consider removing any unnecessary items from shared spaces to avoid potential cross-contamination.

2.1.11 Warn and inform.

You may wish to use a 'warn and inform' approach in response to any positive cases. This means that staff, service users and volunteers are warned of positive cases and informed of some extra measures to ensure their safety and protection. This can be carried out over the phone, via email or through developing and distributing written materials such as letters or leaflets.

2.1.12 Cleaning.

Routine and regular cleaning should be carried out in line with government guidance. You may need to increase how often and how thoroughly you normally clean your workplace, as well as cleaning surfaces that you do not normally clean, and increasing the frequency that common touch points and shared spaces are cleaned.

Furthermore, additional cleaning may be required in response to a positive case (s) (See Section 5 – Cleaning). This will be particularly important if the case has accessed the setting during their infectious period with particular attention paid to any potentially contaminated spaces. Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as disposable or washing-up gloves and aprons for cleaning should be used.

You should determine what cleaning regime is suitable for your setting based on your [risk assessment](#).

Your risk assessment will help you to identify what your cleaning regime will look like, but you should consider these examples:

- keep surfaces clear so that cleaning can be carried out more effectively
- clean areas regularly in line with your cleaning regime
- set clear guidance for the use and cleaning of toilets, showers and changing facilities to make sure they are kept clean
- clean work areas and equipment between uses
- frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly
- if equipment like tools or vehicles are shared, then clean them after each use

2.1.13 Supporting people to self-isolate.

Self-isolation can be very challenging and any measures implemented to support people to self-isolate will also help limit the spread of infection. Individuals with complex needs may experience particular challenges in adhering to self-isolation guidance for a variety of reasons. For service providers, maintaining an informed, empathetic and flexible approach is important for ensuring their needs are supported.

Have a plan in place for practically supporting service users during their isolation period. This could be through making arrangements for collecting and delivering food, water and medication. See 'Additional Resources' for information on Warrington Borough Council's 'Safe and Well' Service.

Individuals who are required to self-isolate may be eligible for financial support via a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment. For further information please see: [Self-isolation rules and support payments | warrington.gov.uk](#)

You may wish to remind the individual that self-isolation is a legal requirement for positive cases, and for those close contacts that have been told to isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

More information on self-isolation can be found in Section 8 – Key National Guidance.

2.1.14 Event considerations.

Many settings and businesses will host cultural and social/leisure events throughout the year. These occasions will need additional risk assessments and measures put in place above the setting's 'business as usual' risk assessment. If your setting is customer facing or allows visitors then you must ensure they know how to visit your venue or event safely. Settings must have a clear communication strategy that is shared with those engaging with your setting.

- Stay up to date with the current guidance for events and seasonal considerations, which includes the use of NHS Covid passes and face covering requirements. Regularly visit www.gov.uk for updates.
- Take steps to remind visitors of special measures if they are complex, varied or likely to be forgotten. For example, you could reinforce messages on signs through spoken communication from a greeter, or other staff such as ushers or curators.
- If a customer, guest or visitor arrives at your facility or event with symptoms of COVID-19, they should not be admitted.
- Minimise unnecessary contact. You could do this by using online booking and pre-payment, and encouraging contactless payments wherever possible.
- Consider how you can reduce risk to staff who work with large numbers of guests for example by installing screens between staff and customer.

2.1.15 Emergence of the Omicron Variant.

On 26 November 2021, World Health Organisation designated Omicron a Variant of Concern. This decision was based on the evidence that Omicron has several mutations that may have an impact on how it behaves, for example, on how easily it spreads or the severity of illness it causes. At this point evidence is still emerging on the impact of Omicron on transmission, severe disease and vaccine-induced immunity. However, there should be no complacency around the potential for this variant to amplify current levels of risk, in particular in the existing context of high case rates and high levels of transmission.

Responses should be careful yet proportionate, using existing Infection Prevention and Control measures and staying up-to-date with any potential changes in guidance and legislation as they emerge. **There have been some key changes in guidance and legislation. With the emergence of the Omicron variant it is even more important to regularly visit www.gov.uk for updates.**

Due to the emergence of the Omicron Variant, there have also been changes to the legislation for international travel. This changes regularly, so please stay up to date

with the guidance at: [Travel to England from another country during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/travel-to-england-from-another-country-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

2.1.16 Autumn and Winter Plan

The government have developed a national plan for the autumn-winter period which aims to “sustain the progress made and prepare the country for future challenges, while ensuring the National Health Service (NHS) does not come under unsustainable pressure”. The Government plans to achieve this by:

- a. Building our defences through pharmaceutical interventions: vaccines, antivirals and disease modifying therapeutics.
- b. Identifying and isolating positive cases to limit transmission: Test, Trace and Isolate.
- c. Supporting the NHS and social care: managing pressures and recovering services.
- d. Advising people on how to protect themselves and others: clear guidance and communications.
- e. Pursuing an international approach: helping to vaccinate the world and managing risks at the border.

We encourage Warrington employers, school leaders, and residents to refer to the Government Autumn and Winter Plan for guidance on what measures are in place and how to mitigate risk over this period.

2.2: Notification and Activation of the Outbreak Control Plan

- If a setting has two or more confirmed cases (or meets a threshold defined for their specific sector), or there is a high reported absence which is suspected to be COVID-19 related, the setting should promptly report to the Local Authority Public Health Covid Team and UKHSA NW team (refer to section 3 for contact details).
- **Note:** it is also probable that some outbreaks will be identified by either the UKHSA NW local health protection team or the local authority public health team. In turn the setting will then be contacted by one of these teams.
- If in doubt and further advice is required please contact the Local Authority Public Health Covid Team
- If a person, resident, client or visitor who attends the setting, or a staff member who works at the setting tests positive for COVID-19, then the setting will be contacted by a contact tracer.
- This contact tracer may be based either in the Local Authority or the local Health Protection Team, or the Cheshire and Merseyside Contact Tracing Hub.
- Most outbreaks in most settings can be successfully managed without the need for a specific meeting.

- Where it is deemed beneficial for a meeting to take place to review outbreak control measures, in most instances the Local Authority will convene a Situation Review Meeting
- In some circumstances and for some higher-risk settings the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) may convene an Incident Management Team (IMT) Meeting.

Note

- The great majority of outbreaks are dealt with as part of normal service and may not require a Situation Review Meeting or Outbreak Control Team meeting (OCT) to be convened.
- Most outbreaks can be managed using existing guidance and standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- If the initial risk assessment or review indicates a complex situation requiring a meeting, relevant stakeholders will be engaged. Additional checklists to support this process are available.
- All outbreaks are reviewed based upon their individual circumstances and there are no pre-determined threshold for a Situation Review Meeting or OCT. Some of the factors which would influence the decision are:
 - The number of cases,
 - Clustering of cases - concentration / patterns of cases
 - Clear evidence that cross-transmission has taken place within the setting
 - Particularly complex situations or cohorts
 - High numbers of vulnerable people as potential contacts within the setting
 - Issues relating to the capacity of the setting to deliver the required standard of service
 - Potential impact on service delivery if staff are not in the workplace for 10 days from exposure
 - Death or severe illness reported in the case or contacts
 - Significant likelihood of media or political interest in situation

2.2.1 Types of outbreak meetings

The Situation Review (SR) Meeting provides opportunity for input into a structured discussion to review the current cases and measures in place. The aim is to evaluate the overall risk and provide further support and make recommendations or provide reassurance as appropriate. Attendees will include:

- Public Health Warrington – Warrington Borough Council

- Other Local Authority representative as appropriate
- Setting representatives
- Other representatives as appropriate (e.g. partner organisations)

The Incident Management Team Meeting (IMT) provides opportunity for further expert input into review of cases and measures in place. The aim is to evaluate the overall risk and make recommendation for further action as appropriate. The IMT will be led by either a consultant in communicable disease or health protection consultant from UKHSA Cheshire and Merseyside, or a senior member of the LA Public Health team or Attendees will include:

- Consultant from UKHSA Cheshire and Merseyside
- Public Health Warrington - Warrington Borough Council
- Other appropriate Local Authority rep.
- Setting representatives.
- Other representatives as appropriate (e.g. partner organisations)

2.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

- Where an IMT is called the responsibility for managing outbreaks is shared by all the organisations who are members of the IMT. Where an IMT is not required the outbreaks will be managed according to the level of support and intervention required.
- Leadership for managing incidents and outbreaks of COVID-19 will be agreed jointly at the first IMT meeting. This may be UKHSA, LA or other appropriate agency depending on the situation.

2.2.3 Response arrangements

- As an employer, you have a duty to take reasonably practical steps to manage risks in the workplace. Employers should have a contingency plan that sets out what measures they will put in place when a positive case has been identified so that other individuals are protected from the outbreak.
- The manager or appropriate member of the leadership team at the setting is no longer required to contact trace as this is left up to NHS Test and Trace. In some circumstances not all close contact details will be passed to NHS Test and Trace e.g. if a visitor is a close contact. In this case employers should call the self-isolation hub on **020 3743 6715** and report these close contacts on behalf of the positive case so that the close contact receives the correct public health advice.
- Preventative measures including social distancing, asymptomatic testing, and wearing face coverings in communal areas should reduce further onward transmission.

2.2.4 Communication

Effective communication is a vital part of the response to an outbreak.

- In most cases the local authority will support or coordinate communications activities. If an IMT is set up, it will be the communications representative of the organisation leading the response who will lead communications.
- While media interest will vary dependent on the scale and nature of the outbreak, in all cases consideration should be given to who the spokesperson will be for the outbreak. A media protocol has been established outlining where responsibility for responding to media enquiries sits.

Various communications resources are available to support the response. These includes setting-specific information leaflets, letters and a media protocol. Any variation from the content provided should be agreed by Local Authority Public Health or UKHSA as appropriate.

2.2.5 Identifying a contact

A contact is defined as:

- as a person who has had contact (see below) at any time from 48 hours before onset of symptoms (or test if asymptomatic) to 7 days after onset of symptoms (or test)
- a person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre) with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19), including:
 - being coughed on, or
 - having a face-to-face conversation, or
 - having skin-to-skin physical contact, or
 - any contact within one metre for one minute or longer without face-to-face contact
- a person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) for more than 15 minutes
- a person who has travelled in a small vehicle *with* someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) or in a large vehicle *near* someone who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- a person who has been notified by the NHS Test and Trace App that they have been in close contact with a positive case and that they should self-isolate.
- people who spend significant time in the same household as a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Discussion with the contact tracer will determine appropriateness as to whether a close contact wearing PPE or classed as a healthcare worker is required to isolate.

The most up to date information can be found on the government website. NHS test and trace will advise close contacts on whether self-isolation is a requirement, as well as how to access PCR testing and receive public health advice. Employers can provide staff details to the NHS Self Isolation Hub when the positive case is unable to provide contact details to NHS Test and Trace.

2.2.6 Issuing advice to contacts

NHS Test and Trace will get in touch with anyone who is a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 by text message, email, phone or the NHS COVID-19 app.

Advice will be given to the individual based on vaccine status and age.

Close contacts of Covid-19 cases will not be legally required to self-isolate and any of the following apply:

- They are fully vaccinated
- They are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- They have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- They are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Fully vaccinated means that they have been vaccinated with an MHRA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the UK, and at least 14 days have passed since they received the recommended doses of that vaccine.

Anyone aged 5 years and over, who has been identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 and who is not legally required to self-isolate, is now strongly advised to take a rapid lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days or until 10 days since their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if this is earlier. If any of these LFD tests are positive they should self-isolate in order to protect other people.

If you or someone believes you are a close contact and have not been contacted by NHS Test and Trace then please see the following link and follow advice on carrying out a PCR test [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person)

2.2.7 Recording information

- Although not mandatory, settings should consider recording details that would assist NHS Test and Trace with contact tracing e.g. keeping a visitors record and seating plan in large offices.
- You would record your normal registers for daily visitors/ absence for your setting as required.

2.2.8 Actions related to complex settings closure

- Most settings do not need to close on public health grounds.
- Settings will generally only need to close if they have staff shortages due to illness or being identified as contacts.

- Some settings may decide to close as an internal measure, due to their own assessment of the risk involved. If you are considering this measure, the risk of keeping your service open should be carefully weighed up against the likely consequences of clients not having access to your services. Contact your local public health team if you require additional public health input.
- Internal procedures for supporting contact tracing should be in place. Any close contacts identified through these procedures, or through the national test and trace system, should be notified.
- If there are a number of confirmed cases across different locations within a complex setting then they may be advised to close by the Health Protection Team in consultation with other partners.

2.2.9 Vaccination

Safe and effective vaccines have been a key part to reducing both the risk of serious illness when being infected with COVID-19, and the transmission of COVID-19. The COVID-19 booster is an additional vaccine dose for those who have completed their primary course of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.

With the emergence of the Omicron variant, eligibility for the COVID-19 booster has been expanded. Find more information on availability and eligibility here: <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/news/boost-your-immunity-winter> COVID-19 boosters can be booked via the NHS website at nhs.uk/covidvaccine.

This winter, influenza vaccinations and COVID-19 booster vaccines will be critical to protecting lives, livelihoods and the NHS. Health experts have shared their concerns that we could see high levels of the influenza virus circulating this year alongside COVID-19. We could also have lower immunity to influenza viruses as there has been less opportunity to boost immunity due to COVID-19 restrictions.

It is vital that staff are encouraged to take up their free influenza vaccine, as well as their COVID-19 booster jab. Maximising coverage for both vaccines is the best way to ensure staff, service users, as well as families, friends, and wider community are protected from COVID-19 and influenza this winter.

2.2.10 Testing

PCR testing through the NHS Test and Trace programme is accessible for a range of reasons, such as for those presenting with COVID-19 symptoms, who have tested positive via LFT, or have been identified as a household or close contact. Home PCR kits can be ordered from the NHS website for those unable to get to a test site.

Lateral flow testing should be considered prior to a situation where staff, volunteers or service users are going to be in a situation of high risk. This includes accessing crowded or enclosed spaces, accessing spaces where there is limited fresh air or before spending time with people who are at higher risk of illness. Furthermore, regular lateral flow testing (e.g. twice weekly) should be promoted.

Lateral flow tests should be used by people not experiencing any of the three main COVID-19 symptoms: new or continuous cough, loss or change of sense of taste

and/or smell, and/or a temperature above 37.8°C. The council offers asymptomatic testing at a town centre test site. Details of this site will be kept up to date on the following link [Symptom-free testing | warrington.gov.uk](https://www.warrington.gov.uk) . Test kits can also be obtained from pharmacies or via online ordering. [Order coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rapid lateral flow tests - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

If specific additional outbreak testing is required this will be agreed by the Local Authority Public Health team.

From 14th December 2021, anyone aged 5 years and over, who has been identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 and who is not legally required to self-isolate, is now strongly advised to take a rapid lateral flow device (LFD) test every day for 7 days or until 10 days since their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 if this is earlier. If any of these LFD tests are positive they should self-isolate in order to protect other people.

2.2.11 Advice for non-contacts

- The Local Authority Public Health Team can support with a template 'Warn and inform' letter for the wider non contacts within a setting.
- You should consider issuing this letter as soon as possible.
- The letter aims to reinforce universal prevention measures: hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, frequent cleaning and social distancing.

2.2.12 Stand down / declaring the end of an Outbreak

- The outbreak will usually be declared over when there have been no new linked cases of COVID-19 within a continuous 14-day period.
- It is important that there is continued vigilance for new potential cases as well as adherence to infection prevention and control principles once the outbreak is over to reduce the chance of a further outbreak.
Cases within a setting following an outbreak should continue to be monitored to identify any further measures that need to be considered.
- The decision to declare the outbreak over should be informed by ongoing risk assessment and considered when:
 - there is no longer a risk to the public health
 - the number of cases has decreased.

Section 3

Key contacts

Warrington Borough Council Covid-19 Prevention and Outbreak Team

For queries related to Covid-19 prevention and control, or support and advice if an outbreak or cluster is suspected, email publichealth@warrington.gov.uk

The WBC Outbreak Prevention and Control Team help support the prevention and management of Covid-19 outbreaks. The team currently consists of 6 Covid-19 Prevention and Outbreak Control Practitioners. Individuals within the team are aligned to settings or sectors to provide dedicated support, but all practitioners work across common areas of Covid-19 prevention and control, including issues related to outbreak management, testing and vaccination.

UK Health Security Agency/Cheshire & Merseyside Hub

To notify suspected outbreaks and urgent advice in relation to suspected outbreaks within Care Homes, Specialist Schools / children's residential accommodation or Prisons.

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Cheshire and Merseyside Health Protection Team

- Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm: **0344 225 0562**
- Out of Hours UKHSA Contact: UKHSA on call via the Contact People 0151 434 4819

Complex setting may also be contact directly by UKHSA or the Cheshire and Merseyside Contact Tracing Hub as cases within the setting are identified by NHS Test and Trace. In these situations the Hub will support around contact tracing and offer advice and guidance. If necessary they will make a referral to either the UKHSA Health Protection Team or Warrington Borough Council's Public Health Team.

Infection Prevention and Control

For specialist advice and support on infection prevention and control measures, the Community Infection Control Nursing team for Halton, St Helens and Warrington can be contacted on Monday to Friday: **01744 457 314**

Section 4: Further information

4.1.1 Testing FAQs

How to arrange symptomatic testing?

You can arrange to book a PCR test via [NHS UK](#) or by contacting NHS 119 via telephone if you do not have internet access.

What about asymptomatic testing?

Lateral Flow Testing should be used as a screening measure prior to engaging in a potentially high risk situation.

You are at higher risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 when:

- In crowded and enclosed spaces
- Mixing with people you do not normally live or work with
- There is limited fresh air

In addition, promoting adherence to regular asymptomatic testing (e.g. twice weekly) and cooperation with contact tracing processes is important for ensuring limiting the spread of Covid-19.

There are several options for accessing asymptomatic testing in Warrington, such as LFD Direct, community collect and asymptomatic testing sites.

More information on the options for asymptomatic testing can be found here: [Asymptomatic community testing sites | warrington.gov.uk](#)

How can a staff member get tested?

Lateral flow tests can be ordered online by individuals via the NHS website [Regular rapid lateral flow coronavirus \(COVID-19\) tests - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

You can also pick up test kits from pharmacies. Find out which pharmacies can supply test kits via this website. [Find where to get rapid lateral flow tests - NHS \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](#)

If you attend work at a school, college, or nursery you can get rapid tests through your school. Some universities supply test kits so ask your employer how best to access test kits.

Warrington also has a town centre asymptomatic test site located on Sankey Street where individuals can have an on-site supervised test or pick up home test kits.

If any staff member or contact develops symptoms then they can book a PCR test via [the gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

4.1.2 Stay at home advice

[Stay at home guidance](#) for isolation advice for individual and their households is available at gov.uk. Anyone with symptoms or a positive test result must isolate for 10 days with the first day of symptoms or the day of the test being counted day zero. NHS Track and Trace will help you to work out your correct isolation period. Household and close contacts may be required to stay at home and self-isolate.

You are not required to self-isolate if you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 and any of the following apply:

- you are fully vaccinated
- you are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

There are some settings, such as health and social care, which require staff members to carry out daily lateral flow testing for the 10 day isolation period of their household member.

4.1.3 Cleaning

What additional cleaning is necessary following a symptomatic or confirmed case?

Regular cleaning of commonly touched surfaces is highly effective as high contact surfaces will present the main risk in terms of indirect transmission. So long as regular cleaning is thorough and maintained at all times there is no need for additional cleaning.

- Cleaning an area with normal household disinfectant after someone with suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
- Wear disposable or washing-up gloves and aprons for cleaning.
- Using a disposable cloth, first clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water. Then disinfect these surfaces with the cleaning products you normally use. Pay particular attention to frequently touched areas and surfaces, such as bathrooms, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells and door handles.
- If an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, use protection for the eyes, mouth and nose, as well as wearing gloves and an apron.

- All the disposable materials should be double-bagged, then stored securely for 72 hours then thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished.

Wash hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and after removing gloves, aprons and other protection used while cleaning

Section 5: Glossary

Key words and abbreviations

Confirmed Case of Covid-19

Any person meeting the laboratory criteria i.e. has tested positive for Covid-19, either via PCR or Lateral Flow Test (Defined below).

Covid-19 Outbreak.

Two or more test-confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) arising within the same 14-day period in people who work at or attend the setting and with a common exposure or link i.e. the cases have had contact with each other or with another common source of infection, indicating transmission within the setting.

This includes both symptomatic cases, which will primarily be identified by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, as well as asymptomatic cases, which will primarily be identified by Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests.

End of Outbreak. No test-confirmed cases with illness onset dates in the last 14 days.

Covid-19 Cluster.

Two or more test-confirmed cases of COVID-19 among individuals associated with a setting with illness onset dates within a 14-day period, with a suspected but yet unconfirmed epidemiological link between cases.

This includes both symptomatic cases, which will primarily be identified by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, as well as asymptomatic cases, which will primarily be identified by Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests.

PCR Test

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests check for the genetic material (RNA) of the virus in the sample. You send the sample for processing at a lab.

These tests are primarily used for testing people with symptoms (symptomatic testing)

LFD Tests

Lateral flow device (LFD) tests detect proteins called 'antigens' produced by the virus. They give rapid results, in 30 minutes after taking the test

These tests are primarily used for testing people without symptoms (asymptomatic testing)

End of Cluster. No test-confirmed cases with illness onset dates in the last 14 days.

LAPH. Local Authority Public Health

UKHSA. UK Health Security Agency

Suspected. A cluster/outbreak, with two or more cases of illness with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection (as per the COVID-19 case definition).

Testing pillars. There are five pillars to testing, 1 is locally managed NHS swabbing, 2 is commercial testing, 3 is antibody testing, 4 is surveillance testing and 5 is diagnostics.

Section 6: Key national guidance

Working Safely During Covid-19.

[Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19)

Risk Assessments During Covid-19

[Risk assessment - Working safely during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/covid19/risk-assessment/)

[Annex A: health and safety risk assessment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/annex-a-health-and-safety-risk-assessment)

Testing and Self-Isolating

- [Testing for coronavirus \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/testing-for-coronavirus)
- [Community testing: a guide for local delivery \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-testing-a-guide-for-local-delivery)
- [Self-isolation rules and support payments | warrington.gov.uk](https://www.warrington.gov.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation-rules-and-support-payments)

Stay at home guidance (all from gov.uk)

- [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

Guidance for contacts (all from gov.uk)

- [Guidance for contacts of people with possible or confirmed COVID19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-covid-19)
- [Guidance for contacts of people with confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person)

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

- [IPC for healthcare settings \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/IPC-for-healthcare-settings)
- [PPE \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/PPE)
- [COVID-19: putting on and removing PPE – a guide for care homes \(video\) \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-putting-on-and-removing-PPE-a-guide-for-care-homes-video)
- [COVID-19: management of exposed healthcare workers and patients in hospital settings: \(gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings)
- [5 moments for hand hygiene: with how to hand rub and how to handwash posters \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/campaigns/5-moments-for-hand-hygiene)
- [Catch it. Bin it. Kill it. Poster \(phe.gov.uk\)](https://www.phe.gov.uk/catch-it-bin-it-kill-it-poster)

Specific guidance for educational settings and other relevant guidance (all from gov.uk)

- [Collection - Guidance for schools and other educational settings](#)
[Guidance - cleaning of non-healthcare settings](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#)
- [Guidance for contacts of people with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection who do not live with the person](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)

Specific Guidance for Complex Settings

- [COVID-19: guidance for commissioners and providers of hostel services for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [COVID-19: provision of night shelters \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [Preventing and controlling outbreaks of COVID-19 in prisons and places of detention \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [COVID-19: guidance for supported living - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\) \(gov.uk\)](#)

Specific Guidance for Care and Residential Settings.

- [Admission and care of residents in a care home during COVID-19 \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [Guidance on care home visiting \(gov.uk\)](#)

Cleaning and waste management

- [Safe management of healthcare waste \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings \(gov.uk\)](#)
- [COVID-19: how to work safely in care homes \(gov.uk\)](#)

Coronavirus Resource Centre posters

- [Coronavirus resource posters \(NHS Resources - Coronavirus Resource centre \(phe.gov.uk\)\)](#)