



To: Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5)

Date: 19th June 2013

Subject:

Health Resilience and Health Protection in Coventry: an overview

1 Purpose of the Note

- To update the Scrutiny Board on local arrangements for protecting the health of the public in Coventry, including working with new NHS organisations
- To provide members of the Board with the context for presentations from the NHS Local Area Team on Measles and from Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Resilience Team on responding to major incidents and emergencies.

2 Recommendations

- To note local arrangements for health resilience and health protection in Coventry

3 Information/Background

What is health protection & health resilience?

- 3.1 Health protection and health resilience are about protecting the public from avoidable threats to their health. These includes preventable threats to health, such as diseases that can be prevented through vaccination or screening programmes or outbreaks of food poisoning, man-made threats such as acts of terrorism, major incidents such as train or plane crashes or environmental threats to health such as extreme weather conditions or environmental pollution.
- 3.2 Recent examples which have had an impact locally include the swine flu pandemic of 2010, the discovery of an unexploded bomb in the city centre and currently a rise in measles cases.
- 3.3 Effective protection of the public from these harms involves a number of important elements including putting in place plans to prevent threat to health (for example, childhood immunisation programmes), developing plans to minimise the risk of harm (for example, issuing advice to older people to stay inside during heat-waves) and responding effectively to incidents (for example, rolling out additional vaccination programmes during measles outbreak).

4 Who is responsible for health protection and health resilience?

- 4.1 Responsibility for health protection and health resilience lies with a number of different national, regional and local organisations, including different parts of the NHS and local councils.

- 4.2 As a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the new **NHS England** has responsibility for making sure that appropriate plans are in place to respond to health emergencies and major incidents and for leading the response to incidents. Locally, this is carried out by the Area Team for Arden (Coventry & Warwickshire), Herefordshire and Worcestershire which is based in Worcestershire.
- 4.3 Public Health England is responsible for providing specialist public health expert advice to preparing for, and responding to incidents. Responsibility for Coventry sits with the local Public Health England Centre for the West Midlands, based in Birmingham.
- 4.4 Within local councils, the Director of Public Health has responsibility for:
- providing leadership for the public health system within their local area
 - ensuring that plans are in place to protect the health of their local populations
 - providing initial leadership for incidents in their local area, with Public Health England
- 4.5 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, councils have responsibilities to assess the risk of emergencies, put in place robust plans to respond to emergencies, working with the emergency services and other local organisations such as the NHS. Within Coventry, this role is carried out by a joint Resilience team which covers Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire.

5 Arrangements for immunisation and screening programmes

- 5.1 Immunisation and national screening programmes are a key way to protect the public from avoidable harms to health. These programmes include the childhood immunisation programme, delivered by GPs. They also include the national cancer screening programmes (breast, bowel & cervical cancer) diabetic retinopathy screening (an eye condition affecting people with diabetes) and screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm adults as well as screening programmes in pregnancy/newborns which are carried out by the NHS.
- 5.2 Formerly the responsibility of public health teams based in Primary Care Trusts, these programmes are now commissioned by the NHS England Area Team for Arden (Coventry & Warwickshire), Herefordshire and Worcestershire, with specialist advice provided by Public Health England. They are responsible for the overall delivery of immunisation and screening. This currently includes developing and overseeing the implementation of local plans to increase levels of MMR immunisation in responsible to outbreaks of measles in parts of the U.K and mainland Europe.

6 How does this all fit together?

- 6.1 Responsibility for protecting the population from harms to their health sits with a large number of organisations. To make sure that all the parts of the system that have a responsibility work well together, Coventry and Warwickshire have established a Health Protection Committee. This is a non-statutory committee, which reports to the Health and Well-being Boards in for both Coventry and Warwickshire which provides oversight of all elements of health protection. This is chaired on a rotating basis by the Directors of Public Health for both Coventry and Warwickshire and includes membership from all relevant local and regional organisations and elected members.

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