



Telford & Wrekin
C O U N C I L

Addenbrooke House Ironmasters Way Telford TF3 4NT

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

Date **Thursday, 25 March 2021**

Time **2.00 pm**

Venue **Remote Meeting**

Enquiries Regarding this Agenda

Democratic Services	Josef Galkowski	01952 388356
Media Enquiries	Corporate Communications	01952 382406
Lead Officer	Partnership Manager	01952 382186

Committee Membership:

J Baker	Community Safety Partnership
J Britton	Executive Director: Childrens Safeguarding & Family Support
Cllr A J Burford	Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care, TWC
S Dillon	Director: Adult Social Care
D Evans	Telford & Wrekin CCG
Cllr I T W Fletcher	Conservative Group, TWC
Cllr K Middleton	Labour Group, TWC
(Chair)	
L Noakes	Director: Health, Wellbeing & Commissioning
Nicky O'Connor	Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Sustainability and Transformation Partnership
A Olver	Voluntary Sector Representative
B Parnaby	Healthwatch, Telford & Wrekin
J Povey (Co-Chair)	Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups
Cllr S A W Reynolds	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education & Lifelong Learning, TWC
J Rowe	Executive Director: Adults Social Care, Health Integration and Wellbeing.
Cllr K T Tomlinson	Liberal Democrat / Independent Group, TWC
Cllr P Watling	Cabinet Member for Co-Operative Communities, Engagement and Partnerships

AGENDA

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|--|-------------|
| 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting. | 3 - 10 |
| 5. Outbreak Control Plan
To receive a report on the Outbreak Control Plan from Liz Noakes,
Director for Public Health, Telford & Wrekin Council and Nicky Minshall,
Service Delivery Manager: Health Protection, Health, Wellbeing and
Commissioning, Telford & Wrekin Council. | 11 - 62 |
| 7. Housing Allocation Policy
To receive a report on the Housing Allocation Policy from Toni Guest,
Housing, Nuplace, Service Delivery Manager, Telford & Wrekin Council
and Stacey Norwood, Senior Public Health Commissioner, Telford &
Wrekin Council. | 63 - 96 |

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Board held on Thursday, 3 December 2020 at 2.00 pm in Remote Meeting

Present:

Cllr A J Burford - Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care, TWC
J Britton – Executive Director: Children’s Safeguarding & Family Support
S Dillion –Director: Adult Social Care, TWC
D Evans –Accountable Officer, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin CCGs
Cllr I T W Fletcher - Conservative Group TWC
Cllr K Middleton – Labour Group, TWC (Chair)
L Noakes – Director of Public Health, TWC
A Olver – Voluntary Sector Representative
B Parnaby – Acting Chair, Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin.
Dr J Povey – Joint Chair of Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin CCGs
Cllr S Reynolds - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Lifelong Learning, TWC
J Robinson - Finance Director – STW STP
J Rowe – Executive Director: Adults Social Care, Health Integration & Wellbeing, TWC
Cllr K T Tomlinson – Liberal Democrat / Independent Group, TWC
Cllr P Watling, Cabinet Member for Cooperative Communities, Engagement and Partnerships

In Attendance:

G Ashford, Strategic Planning Team Leader. TWC
F Bottrill, Partnership Manager, TWC
S Downes, Integrated Place Partnership Manager, TWC
J Galkowski, Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer, TWC
A Grewal, Principal Social Worker, TWC
A Morris - Public Health Specialty Registrar, TWC
S Worthington, Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
P Shirley, General Manager and Engagement Manager, Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin

Apologies: Councillors J Baker

HWB27 Declarations of Interest

None.

HWB28 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held 10 September 2020 be approved subject to the following changes:

- 1. Councillor S Reynolds attendance at the meeting was confirmed.**
- 2. That there was an error in Dr. J Povey’s title within the Declarations of Interest and should read “Dr. J Povey”.**

HWB29 Public Speaking

None.

HWB30 COVID-19 Update

The Board received a presentation on COVID-19 in Telford and Wrekin by the Director for Public Health. The presentation covered the latest infection, testing and hospital admission rates, the opening of new testing facilities, communication and engagement and the Health Protection Hub. The Board heard that for the week ending the 29 November 2020, there were 308 cases of COVID-19 detected, giving the population an infection rate of 171 per 100,000. This was a 30% reduction compared to the previous week and that the rate of infection had halved since the peak of the second wave on 11 November 2020.

The Board were informed that testing rates were currently higher than the West Midlands average, which had been made possible through the new walk-through testing centres that had opened in October and November, targeted communication to areas with low testing and the introduction of PCR and rapid testing to Domiciliary Care workers and teachers. The next section focused on communications and engagement such as “Get Tested” for main and precautionary symptoms and the “For the Love of Christmas” campaign along with the promotion of Tier 2 restrictions. Finally, the Board heard an update on the Health Protection Hub, and their work in supporting a range of settings which included schools, workplaces and care providers to manage outbreaks.

Members asked if hospitals in the borough were accepting patients with COVID-19 and whether this also applied to overflow patients from outside the area. The Director of Public Health confirmed that Hospitals in Telford and Wrekin were accepting COVID-19 patients. The Accountable Officer for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups explained that at the start of the second wave, there were out-of-area patients in the intensive treatment centres at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) sites as there was capacity, which formed part of a mutual aid agreement with neighbouring systems. However, this had concluded some weeks ago and at present, there were no out-of-area COVID-19 patients in SaTH.

Members were concerned that the most vulnerable individuals in care homes would not be able to access the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine given the low temperatures needed to store it. The Accountable Officer for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups said it appeared there were a number of other vaccines that would be licensed for use along with the Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine, which would be logistically easier to distribute to vulnerable individuals.

Members asked the Director for Public Health if there were concerns surrounding the temporary lifting of restrictions over Christmas and whether these were fluid and likely to change. The Director for Public Health responded by saying she thought the guidance wouldn't change and that everyone should be careful and sensible in their approach to the Christmas period (such as those exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms not partaking in household mixing) and that everyone should still follow national guidance on "Hands, Space and Face" and keeping rooms as ventilated as possible.

Members asked what percentage of testing was being utilised for pre-cautionary testing and if there was enough testing capacity in the borough as a whole. The Director for Public Health did not have the exact percentage and confirmed there was enough capacity within the testing centres to safely do this. The Director for Public Health also informed the Board that in the first few days of the launch, just over one third of positive cases had come from pre-cautionary testing.

Members referenced hospital discharge policy on how patients need to self-isolate for 14 days regardless of if they have tested positive for COVID-19 and asked whether this would be reviewed. The Accountable Officer for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups responded by saying hospital discharge policy was nationally determined, and not as a result of local decision making. The guidance was introduced to protect the population against COVID-19, as there was no guarantee a patient discharged from hospital did not have COVID-19.

Members asked if any consideration had been given to individuals living in homeless supported living schemes and other homeless provisions across the borough in terms of testing. The Director for Public Health responded by saying nationally the first round of provision for individuals in supported living and extra care accommodation had been rolled out but recognised the question referred to a wider group. The Director for Public Health offered to meet with members outside of the meeting to work on this provision.

Care Act Easements

Along with the COVID-19 update, the Board also received a presentation an update on the four Care Act easements, which were created under the Coronavirus Act 2020 and how they were applied in Telford and Wrekin by The Principle Social Worker. The Board heard how Council was assessed at stage two in regards to the use of the easements, meaning that there had not

been a significant change to the care and support provided by the council, but there were some variations in the way it is was delivered.

The first easement meant that detailed assessments of individual care and support could be suspended, and instead Local Authorities only needed to respond in a timely manner to identify what the care and support needs were. The Board heard how Council have not had to do this, instead have undertaken detailed assessments using the telephone or remote conferencing software. Likewise, essential visits were suspended during restrictions, but as these were lifted, essential visits returned with staff being provided with the appropriate personal protective equipment and undertook pre-visit questionnaires.

The second easement permitted for the suspension of financial assessments which were in compliance with the pre-amendment Care Act and for care and support provided to be charged retrospectively, subject to reasonable information provided in advance and followed by a financial assessment at a later date. The Board were informed that financial assessments continued as business as usual and the decision was made to suspend client contribution for three months for care and support delivered in this time.

The third easement allowed Local Authorities to not prepare or review care and support plans in line with the pre-amendment Care Act provisions. However, Telford & Wrekin Council continued to deliver the scheduled reviews and these were completed remotely where possible.

The final easement for Local Authorities related to the duty to meet eligible care and support needs, which was replaced with the power to meet needs, or prioritise the most pressing needs. However Telford & Wrekin Council did not need to implement this easement as they had not experienced significant impact on frontline staff or a surge in the demand in the care market.

Members asked for clarification on which services provided by Telford & Wrekin Council had been cancelled. The Principal Social Worker responded by saying the services mostly impacted were the day centres due to the social distancing measures. Those impacted by these closures were identified and alternative support was established, such as the launch of MyOptions online weekly activity for individuals with learning difficulties, and smaller social bubbles for individuals with staff to access the community.

Members asked for clarification on what DFG applications were and how they were used. The Principal Social Worker advised these were Disability Funded Grants, which were a means-tested grant to provide monetary value towards changes required in an individual's house, which related to their disability. This grant was administered by the housing team in conjunction with assessments made by the occupational health team within the Council.

HWB31 Winter Planning Update

Members received a report on Winter Planning from The Director of Planning, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups. The Director of Planning summarised that:

- The Winter Plan continued to be developed.
- A process of refinement had been undertaken to identify high impact winter schemes which managed winter capacity, some of these schemes had been implemented in November and December 2020.
- Four schemes had not progressed as much as wanted, due to recruitment issues. However most other schemes were at a point of implementation.
- Winter Planning more complicated this year due including COVID-19, however there were some pleasing signs that hospital admission had reduced for COVID-19 patients.
- The manifestation of the second wave of COVID-19 was different, not so many patients in critical care but greater number of patients were on oxygen and for longer.
- Social distancing arrangements, infection prevention control arrangements as well as slightly higher staff sickness levels had created a challenging situation.

In conjunction with this report, the Board also received a presentation on the Adult Social Care contribution to the system winter planning by The Director: Adult Social Care, Telford & Wrekin Council which outlined some of the schemes referenced in the report from the Director of Planning, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups. The presentation focused on four areas:

- Adult social care winter plan requirements from the Department for Health and Social Care, which include:
 - Distribute Infection Control Fund funding being made available
 - Treat and investigate cases of COVID-19
 - Ensure care providers carry out COVID-19 testing
 - Work to re-open day services and respite
 - Continued work to prevent avoidable admission and support safe and timely discharge.
- Telford & Wrekin Council Winter Planning and actions that had been taken such as:
 - Regular demand and capacity modelling and monitoring of flow through enablement.
 - Regular contact with West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) around 111 and 999 to ensure maximisation of admission avoidance pathways.
 - Continued integrated working across rapid response and TICAT (7 day services).
 - Additional bed and domiciliary care purchased.
- Telford & Wrekin Council Winter Planning Schemes for 2020 and 2021 such as:

- Live in carers – 24h care at home to avoid admission to hospital
 - Two carers in a care
 - Strengthen Voluntary Sector Support to enhance Pathway 0 discharges
 - Health and Social Care Rapid Response winter scheme such as communication campaigns, ambulance diversions, additional Advanced Care Practitioners and additional physio support.
- Telford & Wrekin Council Winter Planning and actions to support the market such as:
 - Weekly welfare calls to care providers
 - Quality monitoring visits done remotely or in person
 - Dedicated joint communications to care providers.
 - Regular testing continuing for all care homes and domiciliary care.

Members requested that the Severe Weather Emergency Programme for the homeless is included in future updates relating to winter planning.

HWB32 Healthwatch Telford Annual Report

Members received the Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin Annual report for 2019-2020 from The Acting Chair of the Board, Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin and was presented by The General Manager & Engagement Manager, Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin. The report included topics such as the highlights of the year, the difference Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin had made, the Long Term Plan, helping residents find answers, volunteers, finances and plans for the next year. The Board heard about how 2118 people had engaged with Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin regarding improvements they would like to see in Health and Social Care Services in 2019-2020, which had consequently informed their six priorities:

1. How specialised and acute services will be provided.
2. How mental health services will offer support to people.
3. How adult social care is providing support to people and their carers.
4. How primary care will support people through different ways of working.
5. Learning disability and Autism, long-term conditions.
6. Explore prevention and Placed Based approaches and how it will work for people.

Members thanked the Acting Chair of the Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin, the General Manager and Engagement Manager, and the wider team for the report and for the service they had provided. Members noted that there were some concerning issues that had arisen in Telford and Wrekin such as homeless individuals not feeling welcomed by their Doctors which led them to not wanting to attend. However Members were pleased to see key topics highlighted such as cancer services, acute services and mental health services as items that would be continued to be explored by Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin. The Acting Chair of Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin confirmed that children mental health services would be an area of work they explored and would be liaising with all the relevant agencies moving forward.

HWB33 Local Plan: Issues and Options

The Board received a presentation on the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan – Review on the Issues & Options stage by Gavin Ashford, Strategic Planning Team Leader, Telford & Wrekin Council. Members were provided with some context in regards to the origins of the Local Plan, what the Issues & Options stage covered and the objectives that underpinned the review. Following on from this, members heard the health and wellbeing influence on the local plan, which highlighted:

1. Climate change, air pollution and encouraging physical activity.
2. Green spaces to create a bio-diversity net gain, protect Local Nature Reserves and protecting interconnected green spaces.
3. Better homes for working from home, spaces standards and amenity spaces as well as supported and specialist accommodation.
4. Creating healthy food environments and controlling uses in town centres while encouraging footfall in those areas.
5. Employment and new land for inward investment and job creation.
6. Infrastructure – working with Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups, education and transport for planning.

Members welcomed the presentation from the Strategic Planning Team Leader and asked if there was anything being done to address issues that arose from houses with multiple occupancies as they did not foster good health and wellbeing. The Strategic Planning Team Leader acknowledged this as an issue, however believed it would be difficult to respond to through the Local Plan due to the national policy on Permitted Development rights.

Members concluded by emphasising the importance on the way land was used to influence physical and mental wellbeing, which was based on the physical and social “place”. Likewise, Members also noted that it was important for the Local Plan to link in at an early stage with the planning of healthcare with the soon to be established Integrated Care Systems, not just for primary care but also with secondary care.

The meeting ended at 15:33pm.

Chairman:

Date: Thursday, 25 March 2021

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TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

SMT – 16th MARCH 2021

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD – 25th MARCH 2021

TELFORD & WREKIN LOCAL OUTBREAK PREVENTION & CONTROL PLAN

REPORT OF LIZ NOAKES, DIRECTOR HEALTH, WELLBEING &
COMMISSIONING (STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH)

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR ANDY BURFORD
HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD CHAIR – CLLR KELLY MIDDLETON

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1 Introduction

Local Authority-led outbreak plans have played a key part in the [Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#). As part of a new system working approach, from June 2020, the plans were established to tackle the coronavirus pandemic as part of the [COVID-19 contain framework](#). With local authorities working alongside the newly established [NHS Test and Trace programme](#) and [Joint Biosecurity Centre](#) and Public Health England (PHE).

During the past 9 months [The Telford & Wrekin Local Outbreak Plan](#) implementation has demonstrated that a strong locally-led system has been best placed to prevent and reduce transmission of the coronavirus. The local COVID-19 Health Protection Board and Outbreak Engagement Board have provided governance, professional and political oversight and assurance, and public-facing engagement and communication.

Local Authority Directors of Public Health were asked to coordinate a refresh of their Local Outbreak Management Plans (LOMPs) during March 2021, to incorporate the learning during the pandemic so far. This refresh of the Telford & Wrekin LOMP describes the local journey and approach we have taken and our key achievements. It sets out the arrangements for the next phase of the response, accounting for the associated funding, reflecting local roles, responsibilities and resources. It also presents an opportunity to share good practice and to reflect on developments since the original plan was produced.

1.2 Achievements



2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Health & Wellbeing Board is asked to approve the refreshed Telford & Wrekin Local Outbreak Management Plan March 2021.

SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council priorities?	
	Yes	<p>Coronavirus has impacted our communities and partners organisations in an unprecedented way. Therefore this plan is a key part of our recovery following the pandemic, and as such it contributes to all the priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • securing the best start in life for children and young people • protect and create jobs as a 'business supporting, business winning council' • improve local people's prospects through education and skills training • keep neighbourhoods safe, clean and well connected • support communities and those most in need and work to give residents access to suitable housing • improving health and wellbeing across Telford and Wrekin • protect and champion our environment, culture and heritage
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	COVID-19 particularly impacts on people in Black and Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME), older people and those who are clinically vulnerable.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	The DHSC expects Local Authorities to publish their refreshed Local Outbreak Management Plans by 31 st June 2020.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The Government have allocated £300m to local authorities in England to develop and action their plans to reduce the spread of the virus in their area, in the form of a Local Authority Test and Trace Service Support Grant. Telford & Wrekin have received an allocation of £1.162m to support the implementation of this plan. TAS 3/2/2020

LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, both Public Health England and the Director of Public Health have responsibility for responding to incidents that present a threat to public health and protecting the community from the spread of infectious diseases. Additionally, the Environmental Health team has duties and responsibilities under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 with regards to handling an outbreak of a disease. Consequently, Public Health England, the Director of Public Health and the Council's Environmental Health team are required to work together to control local outbreaks, As part of its response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the government required all local authorities (led by their Directors of Public Health) to publish a Local Outbreak Plan by 30 June 2020. There is also a need to keep the Local Outbreak Plan under review to ensure that it still enables the authority, and its partners, to appropriately respond to, and manage, outbreaks. This report is in response to a request from the Department for Health & Social Care for feedback on the LOP process. The contents of this report demonstrate the areas of good practice and the potential risks identified by this authority to be fed back to DHSC. AL 15/03/2021</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<p>Our COVID surveillance and ward profiling intelligence indicates that enduring transmission rates are found in those wards with the highest proportion of people from BAME backgrounds and these wards are often the among those with the highest levels of deprivation in the borough.</p>

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3. LOCAL OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The DHSC have asked for feedback as part of our LOMP refresh, see below for the Telford & Wrekin response on our good practice and risks and issues.

3.1 Good Practice

- Strong Council-led partnership approach has been crucial in working across teams, and with partners and our communities
- Health Protection Hub leadership and expertise combines public health and public protection functions to directly inform Covid secure, compliance and enforcement activity
- Bespoke case management system with online reporting process means rapid action is taken on situations and outbreaks
- Local enhanced contact tracing and Local Contact Tracing Partnership with NHS Test & Trace / PHE means early identification of cases and situations curbs transmission
- Named Hub officers for high risk places, i.e. care and education settings and workplaces means sound relationships underpin our prevention and control work
- Better than average access to symptomatic and asymptomatic testing has evoked a testing culture in the borough with consistently high testing rates, including advice to seek precautionary testing
- Significant social media reach and engagement through locally branded campaigns, with weekly releases and video case studies
- Strong community support offer since the March 2020, with community support line, hardship payments, community champions model with interfaith council support
- Top performing vaccination programme in the country, Council support to mass vaccination centre at Telford International Centre, system-wide inequalities action plan to reduce vaccine hesitancy and improve uptake
- Telford & Wrekin Health Protection Hub:
 - The Hub has dedicated capacity and expertise, in addition 50 local authority staff have been trained to cope with surge phases. This was operationalised, for example, in Jan/Feb 21 during the period of peak of infection rates i.e. 596 per 100,000 - 1,072 cases in a week.
 - Prioritisation framework for periods of high infection rates: the hub prioritises cases for contact tracing according to vulnerability e.g. age and setting e.g. care and education setting. During previous surge periods the Hub has continued to deliver fully on

the Follow Up Fails from NSH Test & Trace as part of the Local Contact Tracing Partnership with PHE/NHS T&T

- Locally-led IMTs: the SDM for Health Protection and Consultant in Public Health regularly chair IMTs to manage situations and outbreaks, e.g. for care and education settings and work places. Support is only requested from PHE if there is a healthcare setting involved or specialist CCDC support is required for complex situations. See above re Hub expertise and surge capacity

3.2 Risks

- **Funding** – there is a need to consolidate the various sources of temporary funding (Test & Trace Outbreak fund, COMF & Community Testing funding) to enable local authorities to plan with more certainty and flexibility over the medium to long term
- **Variants of Concern (VOCs)** – dealing with multiple virulent variants will be a challenge but the authority has a Council-wide operational plan to undertake surge testing. There is a need however to ensure this is deployed using a Public Health Risk assessed approach and with sufficient laboratory capacity to undertaking timely sequencing of samples.

3.3 Issues

- **Covid Secure Legislation:** Moving out of the pandemic there needs to be legislation that will allow local authorities to deal effectively and promptly with issues such as social distancing. All guidance on Covid secure should, at the very least, be made statutory and the guidance should reflect what is in the legislation to avoid confusion and allow for consistency across the whole country.
- **National testing strategy:** There needs to be a coherent national testing strategy with a clear direction on purpose, scope and levels of testing in different settings, with roles and responsibilities defined
- **LA payment for testing:** payment for delivery i.e. staffing Community Collect is challenging, if testing appetite in the community declines the service will still need to be maintained whereas funding for Community ATS is based on price per test delivered.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Telford & Wrekin Local Outbreak Prevention & Control Plan – July 2020
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy Refresh proposals - Feb 2020

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Report prepared by Helen Onions, Consultant in Public Health, Email:
Helen.Onions@telford.gov.uk

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TELFORD & WREKIN LOCAL OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLAN

March 2021 Refresh

25st March 2021 DRAFT for HWB



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1. Surge volunteer resource plan
2. Variants of concern time line and plan
3. Legal Powers
4. Road Map for Enforcement Work
5. MOU Standard operating procedure
6. PHE Roles and Responsibilities

Foreword

Telford & Wrekin Council have demonstrated that a strong locally-led system is best placed to prevent and reduce transmission of the coronavirus. We have made use of our internal expertise and the sound relationships with key local partners in: the NHS, Public Health England, Shropshire Council, the community and voluntary sector and most crucially with our communities.

Through our local pandemic journey we have endeavoured to reduce the number of new cases of COVID-19 and minimise the impact the virus is having on the most vulnerable communities – especially those in Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, older people and those who are clinically vulnerable. A key part of our response has been to recognise the wider effects on our local residents linked to the impact of the lockdown restrictions on emotional health and wellbeing.

Communication with our residents to give advice and support us all to stay safe has been key to prevention.

Our local relationships and collaborations, which have further developed through the initial phase of the pandemic, mean we can draw on the strengths of local partner's resources and expertise and further evolve to effectively deliver this plan's aims and objectives together.

This plan sets out how we are going to tackle the challenges of coronavirus going forward to in the next phase, to protect the health of the people in Telford & Wrekin as much as possible. We need to ensure our approach is intelligence-led, evidence-based and community-focused. It needs to be sustainable for the longer term given the living with COVID agenda - we must hope for the best and plan for the worst.

Context

Local Outbreak Management Plans (LOMPs), initially developed in June 2020, have played a key part in the [Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#). A new system working approach was established to tackle the coronavirus pandemic as part of the [COVID-19 contain framework](#). This expected the newly established [NHS Test and Trace programme](#) and [Joint Biosecurity Centre](#) at a national level, to work with Public Health England (PHE) and local authorities at a local level. Local COVID-19 Health Protection Boards were put in place to ensure local oversight and assurance and local political ownership and public-facing engagement and communication developed through Local Outbreak Engagement Boards.

Local authority Directors of Public Health were asked to coordinate a refresh of their LOMPs during March 2021, to incorporate the learnings of in the previous nine months of the pandemic. This refresh of the Telford & Wrekin LOMP describes the local journey and approach and the key achievements. It sets out the arrangements for the next phase of the response, accounting for the associated funding, reflecting local roles, responsibilities and resources. It also presents an opportunity to share good practice and to reflect developments since the original plan was produced.

Introduction

The [Telford & Wrekin Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2023](#) was reset to reflect the pandemic context and recovery, including setting a new priority to ensure people's health is protected as much as possible from infectious diseases and other threats.

This refreshed Local Outbreak Management Plan¹ for Telford & Wrekin describes how the Council works with our communities and key partners, the NHS Test and Trace programme, PHE West Midlands in the next phase of the pandemic. There is alignment with the Shropshire Council and the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin NHS system footprint.

The COVID Health Protection Board, Outbreak Engagement Board and Multi Agency Response Group (MARG) provide the governance and oversight for the plan. Key partners include: Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service, Telford Police, the CCG, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust, Shrewsbury & Telford Hospitals NHS Trust and our two universities. The engagement with Elected Members and the public remains key, and effective communication with our communities on public health advice and compliance with messages is crucial.

The plan focuses on describing our approach to preventing the spread of infection and controlling outbreaks. As we move of the pandemic response and into the next Living with Covid phase - there is a requirement for a series of Covid defences which are locally-led, as part of the national system. It is recognised that a range of scenarios are possible, depending on virus evolution and success of control measures.

Best case	Optimistic	Pessimistic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population immunity achieved and sustained• Vaccine can be reformulated in response to emergence of new strains• Covid defences reduce circulation of virus to background levels with occasional outbreak• Societal restrictions can be lifted without pressure on NHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partial population immunity achieved but uptake and effectiveness of vaccine suboptimal• New strains partially compromise immunity• Covid defences insufficient to keep virus at background levels – likely resurgences during winter• Low level societal restrictions imposed seasonally• Ongoing impact on well-being and economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited population immunity achieved with uptake and/or effectiveness of vaccine poor• New strains significantly compromise immunity• Covid defences insufficient to control the virus with ongoing circulation• Ongoing societal restrictions imposed• Significant health and economic impact

¹ NB. Please note that all stats contained in this plan were correct as of 12th March 2021

Our Approach

Aim - To protect the health of the people in Telford & Wrekin and assure the public and partners that this is being done effectively

Rationale

➤ **Prevention first**

to reduce the spread of infection and also ensure there are enough resources to manage outbreaks- to work collaboratively with settings and communities to ensure Covid secure measures are in place and understood

➤ **Contain outbreaks**

Intervene early to prevent & control outbreaks, by contact tracing, use of effective and appropriate testing, support and prevention advice

➤ **Suppress the spread of infection**

with effective use of data, population wide measures which are well communicated to the public and businesses

Living with Covid

Surge capacity to test large numbers of people in response to identification of new variants of concern

Maintenance of contact tracing and ability to respond to surge or outbreak

Maintenance of the capability to manage outbreaks across a range of settings

Objectives

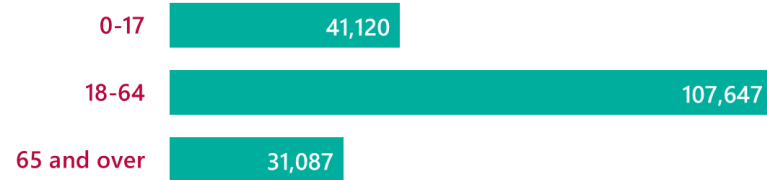
1. To prevent viral transmission and ensure early identification and management to suppress outbreaks.
2. To reduce case incidence and prevalence to manageable levels
3. To tackle enduring transmission through an evidence-based and intelligence-led approach
4. To protect the most vulnerable and reduce demand on health and care and other services
5. To coordinate timely, evidence-based action and expert advice across partner organisations to minimise this risk
6. To ensure robust local data and intelligence identifies actual/ and potential hotspots, to support prevention and control action
7. To offer proactive support for settings with high levels of risk or need
8. To provide a systematic and consistent approach and appropriate setting guidance
9. To disseminate effective communication with all partners
10. To actively promote key public health messages to our communities to foster engagement and participation, offering support where people need it most
11. To ensure Elected Member leadership and engagement supports the development and implementation of the plan

Principles

Principles	Key elements
Public health systems and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local authority DPH leadership • Public Health and Public Protection teams skills and expertise • evidence-based action to prevent infection and contain and suppress outbreaks • PHE specialist health protection advice • NHS infection control capability and capacity • COVID-19 testing capacity- including expansion of rapid asymptomatic testing • integrated data and intelligence - contact tracing, mapping & surveillance and epidemiological analyses • ensuring effective vaccination roll out and understanding barriers to uptake
Whole system approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • system working in line with statutory duties, roles & responsibilities and interdependencies across Council and with partners • active engagement with local communities through Members • link to Local Resilience Forum (LRF) - SCG and TCG and LHRP • harnessing capabilities from partners - NHS clinical advice, police e.g. use of legal powers and voluntary sector e.g. to support those self-isolating • targeted communications, self-isolation payments, business grants • rapid testing centres and assistance with vaccine co-ordination
Efficient, effective and responsive system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local decision making and command and control arrangements • rapid and proactive management of individual cases and outbreaks • agreed data flows, pathways and information sharing protocols • sufficient information to allow management of outbreaks and appropriate actions.
Sufficient resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills & expertise from partners - people, capabilities, funds, assets • funding, including specific Outbreak Management funds from Government • swift and robust commissioning processes to deliver the required actions

Our population

Population



Latest ONS estimates put the total population of Telford and Wrekin at 179,854 people. 17% of the population (31,100) are estimated to be aged 65 and over.

Ethnicity



The 2011 census showed 10.5% of Telford and Wrekin's population to be BAME. More recent data shows the proportion to be increasing with 16.8% of the borough's school age population from a BAME background in January 2019.

Long term health & disability 65 and over



Of the population aged 65 and over 55% (17,500 people) are estimated to have a **long term health problem or disability**.



Live in areas ranked in the 20% most deprived in England

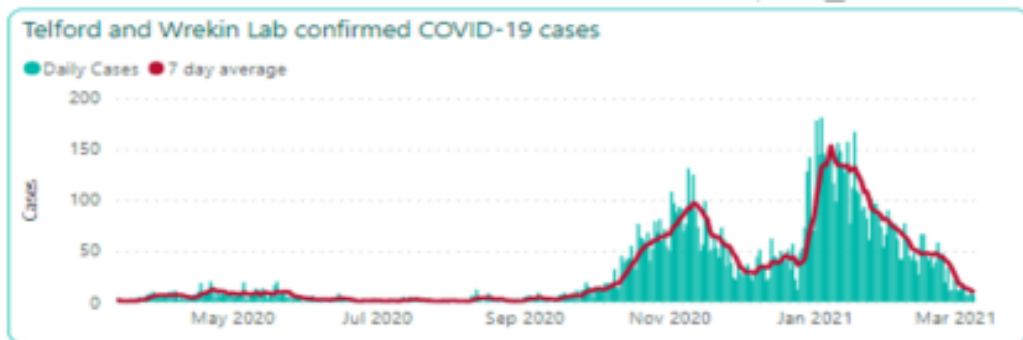


Live in income deprived households



Live in income deprived households

Our Telford & Wrekin COVID-19 Journey



Telford & Wrekin Response

(all stats correct as of 12.3.2021)



Achievements

Contact Tracing & Outbreak Management

- ✓ Bespoke case management system, with online reporting
- ✓ Hub resourced, staffed and trained with surge capacity
- ✓ Local Contact Tracing Partnership – tracing NHS T&T Follow Up Fails
- ✓ Backward contact tracing to understand enduring ward transmission
- ✓ Enhanced contact tracing to identify and manage clusters & outbreaks as part of OIRR
- ✓ Named Hub support to care and education settings
- ✓ Regular Hub-led IMTs to investigate outbreaks
- ✓ Strong relationships with businesses offering advice for Covid secure and testing
- ✓ Regular welfare calls to care homes and early decision to protect care homes through pre-discharge testing

Compliance and Enforcement

- ✓ Covid Spot check pilot with HSE
- ✓ Intelligence sharing with Telford Police - Multi Agency Team Exercises (MATES)
- ✓ Daily sharing of Hub intel with Public Protection Team

Data, Intelligence & Surveillance

- ✓ Interactive Power BI dashboards
- ✓ Strategic 'Gold' Dashboard
- ✓ Deep Dive analysis
- ✓ Enabling intelligence-led communications

Communications and Engagement

- ✓ Locally branded campaigns
- ✓ Weekly Covid releases
- ✓ Video case studies
- ✓ Significant social media reach & engagement

Testing

- ✓ Good access and a solid testing culture in community
- ✓ Promotion of precautionary testing for wider symptoms
- ✓ Consistently high symptomatic testing rates
- ✓ Rapid community testing at scale in Council-run sites and pharmacies

Community Resilience & Support

- ✓ Community Support line
- ✓ Self-isolation payments
- ✓ Community Covid champions
- ✓ Interfaith Council relationship
- ✓ Business support grants

Vaccinations

- ✓ Council support to mass vaccination centre at Telford International Centre
- ✓ Top performing vaccination programme
- ✓ System-wide inequalities action plan to reduce vaccine hesitancy and improve uptake

Delivering the plan

DHSC expectations

Core Aspects / Areas of Focus

- Outbreak management**
- Contact tracing
- Surveillance**
- Community testing
- Support for self-isolation**
- COVID safe**
- Enduring transmission**
- Vaccination

Themes

- High risk settings, communities and locations**
- Vulnerable and underserved communities
- Data integration and information sharing**
- Communications and community engagement and resilience
- Enforcement and compliance**
- Resourcing**
- Governance**

Governance & Reporting

The governance and oversight for this plan remains through the Member-led Local **Outbreak Engagement Board** and the Director of Public Health-led **COVID Health Protection Board**, which reports to the Health & Wellbeing Board (see governance overview on page 12).

The **Telford & Wrekin Multi Agency Response Group (MARG)**, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive, provides multi agency response arrangements and oversight. If further multi agency escalation is required, this will be through the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (LRF) routes. There is reporting between the local NHS system, through the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin NHS Gold group and the Shadow Integrated Care System (ICS) Board.

Operational Response

The Telford & Wrekin Health Protection Hub now provides a well-embedded operational response through local and enhanced contact tracing, coordination and management of local outbreaks, situations and complex cases and relationships with high risk settings. (see overview page?)

[The Telford & Wrekin Community Testing Programme](#) offers access to asymptomatic rapid testing across the borough, through Council run testing sites, home test collection points and community pharmacies.

Resources and Staffing

Funding

[The Government has made funding streams available to LAs in England to develop and deliver their LOMPs](#). The amount awarded to Telford & Wrekin is £1,162,282 in the LA Test & Trace Service Support Grant to develop and implement the Outbreak and Control Plan. This money has been used to support the council and stakeholders across the response model. Additionally £1,438.832 was given in the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

Ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to deliver timely interventions, support and analysis has been a crucial part of the pandemic response. The DPH has oversight of these funding streams and ensures that the funding is utilised to ensure that Outbreak Control Plan can be delivered. This funding will also be used, as far as it lasts, to ensure that health protection work focusing on Living with Covid continues into 2022 and beyond.

Staffing

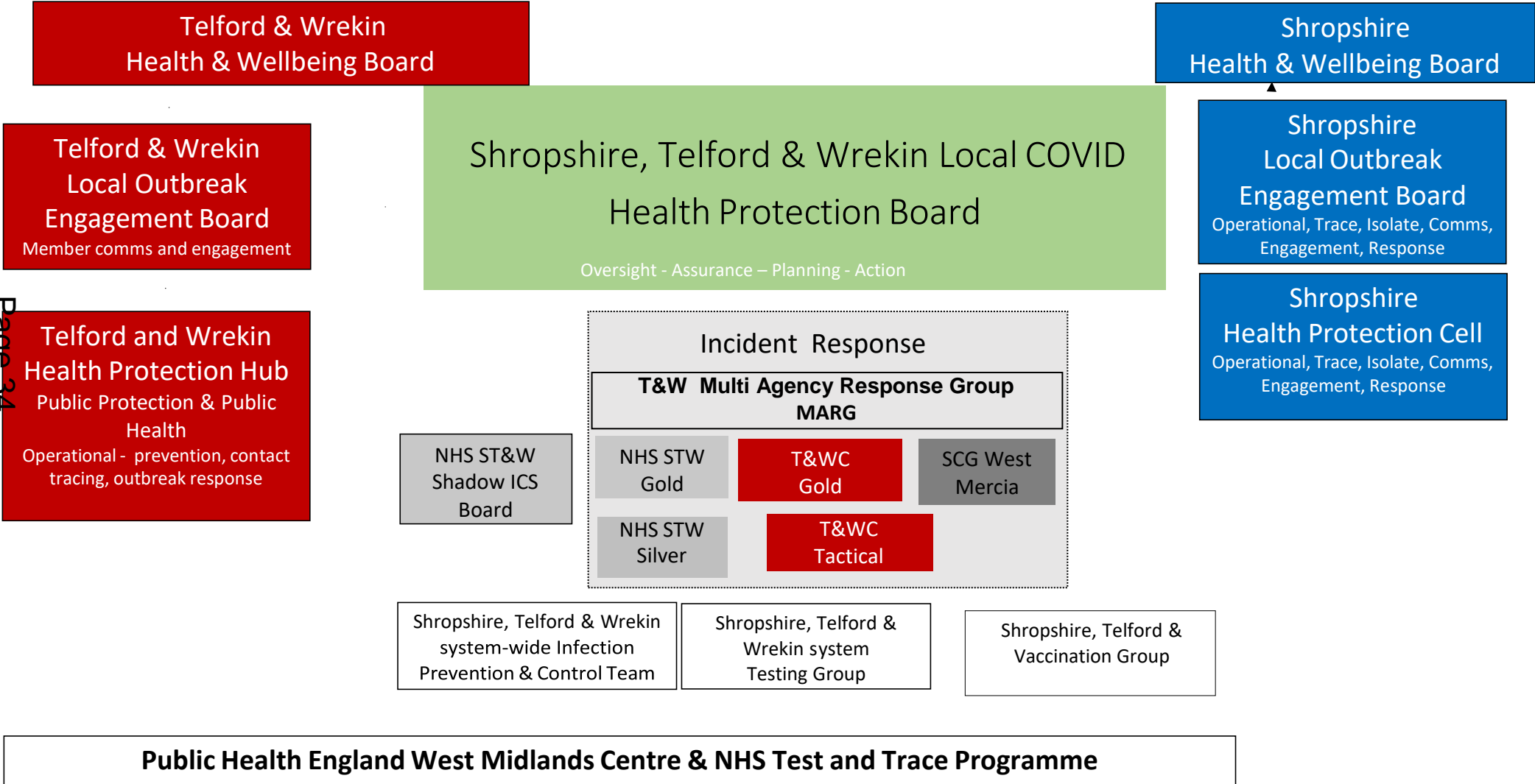
The Hub, established in June 2020 originally consisted of five existing officers with expertise in public health and public protection. The Hub capacity has since been expanded with 4.5 WTE Environmental Health Officers (EHOs). An additional 50 Council staff from other teams who were trained to become surge officers working a weekly rota basis - 4 of these are seconded full time. The SDM Public Protection has been seconded to work full time in the Hub and business support officers have also been seconded to provide additional support. The LGA and CIEH Environmental Health Together register has been used to rapidly recruit temporary staff and this approach will continue if surge capacity is required.

It is recognised that in future phases there may be additional capacity required and therefore there is plan of how trained surge staff will be used moving forward (see appendix 1)

Moving forward it is acknowledged that a core health protection team is needed and funding has been set aside from the Test and Trace grant for 3 additional EHO posts and 1 Business Support Officer until at least March 2022.

The Public Protection Team have engaged contract staff to ensure that Covid secure visits take place in premises. It has also been agreed that an additional, substantive EHO post is needed within the Council's Food Health & Safety Team to work on the Living with Covid agenda.

Governance Overview



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Telford & Wrekin Health Protection Hub

Community focus - care homes & residential settings – schools & educational settings – workplaces

Functions: prevention, management & control

Proactive advice, guidance & support

- Health & Safety, Risk Assessments
- Infection Prevention & Control, PPE
- Regulation, Monitoring & Compliance
- Bespoke advice to care homes
- Support for rapid testing

Local outbreak control & management

- Information gathering
- Testing and Contact Tracing
- Advice on Control Measures
- Incident Management

Support to vulnerable individuals

- Clinically at risk and shielded people
- Homeless and vulnerable people

Local intelligence
and surveillance

Comms and
engagement

Expertise: multidisciplinary

- **Director of Public Health**
- **Consultant in Public Health**
- **Senior Delivery Manager Public Protection**
- **Environmental Health Officers**
- **Public Protection officers**
- **Public Health officers**
- **Senior Intelligence Analyst**
- **Communications Officer**
- **Emergency Planning Officer**

Infection Prevention & Control Team, HR etc co-opted

Single point of contact

HealthProtectionHub@telford.gov.uk (local enquiries)

New and Emerging Priorities

Variants of Concern (VOC)

SARS-CoV-2 variants with concerning epidemiological, immunological or pathogenic properties are designated as Variant Under Investigation (VUI) with a year, month, and number. Following risk assessment with the relevant expert committee, they may be designated Variant of Concern (VOC). Existing and emerging variants of concern are monitored nationally by the VaM Taskforce.

Regionally, the PHE West Midlands Health Protection Team VOC cell are responsible for maintaining the line listing cases and contacts, undertake investigation and enhanced contact tracing, provide daily reports and liaise into local HUB regarding specific localised action.

The Senior Management Team have drafted an operational plan and a response timeline that would be used if we have a VOC – See appendix 2. The response will be led by the CEO with the DPH and involve the MARG. Clear and timely national or regional decision making will be crucial to support swift local responses to VOCs.

The Hub together with other Council teams will be responsible for the localised response to a VOC. This may include mass testing of a ward/ community and then contact tracing those positive cases.

Tackling Enduring Transmission

Intelligence-led Approach

Our local approach to tackling enduring transmission already has traction and will evolve further as infection rates have stabilised following the local peak rates in the second wave of the pandemic.

The granular intelligence in our surveillance dashboards allows for monitoring of infections and testing at a ward level.

Infection rates have been high in the working age population and especially among 20 and 30 year olds. In the last lockdown it was clear from triangulated intelligence that there was a comparatively high level of people in the borough needing to leave home to work. Proactive engagement with businesses has been an important aspect of our approach. This identified areas where public health controls and non-pharmaceutical interventions were either not in place or not understood. This allowed for targeted communications to be sent directly to settings as well as in wider social media.

Continuation and promotion of self-isolation payments will also play an important role.

Intelligence-led communications have been used throughout the winter 2020/21 to encourage people living in the wards with the highest infection rates and low testing uptake rates to seek regular testing. There have been notable increases in the testing rates in these areas in the days following our social media campaigns.

Vulnerable and underserved communities

There is a clear inequalities focus with recognition that the greatest local impact of Covid is seen within our most deprived and vulnerable communities. The wards with the highest infection rates, obvious enduring transmission, low testing and vaccination uptake are amongst the most deprived communities in the borough, and also are where our largest Black and Minority Ethnic communities live.

The vaccination inequalities action plan has multiple work streams with a focus on engagement and improving access. The priority groups at this stage include people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, those with disabilities and sensory impairment and those who are homeless and have mental health issues. Going forward the scope of this action plan will broaden, with the learning used to galvanise a strategic approach to tackling enduring transmission.

Vaccination

Local Implementation of the National COVID Vaccine Delivery Plan

The NHS in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin are leading the roll out of the [UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan](#) in line with the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#) (JCVI) recommendations on priority groups. The Council has heavily supported the roll out of the programme, across multiple work streams.

The programme started the roll out on December 8th 2020 and the local service delivery model now includes: Mass Vaccination Centres, Hospital Hubs, Primary Care Network, Local Vaccination Sites and Community Pharmacies.

Phase 1 of the programme expects the first vaccination dose to be offered by May 2021 to the priority groups 1-9. In line with these recommendations vaccinations have been offered to groups in priority order, including residents in care homes for older people and their carers, frontline health and social care workers, and individuals with clinical risk factors for serious illness alongside population groups in age-ordered cohorts over 50 years.

The local vaccination programme has produced impressive results thus far and is one of the highest performing programmes in the country, with over 70,000 residents immunised.

The JCVI have recommended that [phase 2 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme](#) should adopt an age-based delivery model, giving priority for vaccination by age. The national ambition is to ensure that all adults over 18 are offered a first dose of vaccine by July 2021. Delivery of phase 2 of the programme will run alongside delivery of the second dose of vaccine to those included in phase 1.

Reducing Inequalities in COVID Vaccination

A system-wide strategy and action plan to reduce vaccine hesitancy and improve uptake is being led across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin by the Telford & Wrekin Director of Public Health. The partnership working on this plan is strong and multiple Council teams working closely with NHS colleagues, community and voluntary sector organisations to actively engage communities in conversations regarding vaccination.

Local intelligence is identifying low uptake in Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, deprived communities and care workers which are priority groups. In addition further vulnerable and under served groups are priorities in the plan, including those with disabilities and sensory impairment and those who are homeless and have mental health issues.

Reducing Inequalities in COVID-19 Vaccination

Objective – reduce vaccine hesitancy and improve uptake through engagement, focussing on:

- ❖ confidence - level of trust in vaccine
- ❖ complacency - perceived lack of need or value for vaccine
- ❖ convenience - barriers to access

INEQUALITIES FACTORS

Personal factors

age - gender - ethnicity
language – religion
sexual orientation
marriage & civil partnership

Health Status

learning disabilities
physical disabilities
mental & physical illness
sensory impairment

Social factors

deprivation & poverty
income & employment
educational attainment
digital exclusion
isolation and loneliness
rurality

Under served groups

Gypsies and Travellers
immigrants
homeless
carers
vulnerable families

BARRIERS

Interpersonal

peer views
family views
fake news & misleading views

Community

religious & cultural norms
gender norms
stigma & discrimination

Intrapersonal

language
Literacy
health literacy and beliefs

C19 Vaccine Programme

GP registration
culturally-specific services
programme organisation

ENABLERS

- I. **work in partnership**
 - communities - interfaith councils and forums – GPs - elected members – CVS – LAs – CCG/ICS
- II. **conversations and engagement**
 - COVID champions - communications toolkit - gather insight
- III. **remove barriers to access**
 - temporary registration - homelessness - Gypsies and Travellers - physical barriers – service location - transport, language barriers
- IV. **data and intelligence**
 - inequalities profiling – refine population denominators

PRIORITY GROUPS

- ❖ Black & minority ethnic groups
- ❖ Health and social care staff
- ❖ Deprived communities
- ❖ Impaired health status
- ❖ Under served groups

GOVERNANCE

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Covid Health Protection Board/ STW ICS Board

Communication, Engagement and Community Resilience

Comms and Engagement Plan

PREVENTION FIRST

what to do to stay safe and prevent the spread
supporting the return to the new “living with Covid-19”

MANAGEMENT OF OUTBREAKS

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Key messages

- Sharing public health messages, informing of what people can/can't do (Govt. guidelines)
- Promoting “Get Tested” as a prevention
- Encouraging vaccination take-up

General audience

everyone who lives or works in Telford & Wrekin

Targeted audiences

- **SETTINGS** - businesses, schools, care settings
- **KEY COMMUNITIES** - ethnic minorities
- **VULNERABLE PEOPLE** – clinically vulnerable & at risk

Key messages

- Reassuring residents, employers, businesses and services that the Council is responding to and managing outbreaks
- Proactively supporting affected settings/areas affected by an outbreak
- In key borough settings/ areas with high infection rates

Responding to new variants of concern (contingency plan in place)

Best Practice **Communication and Engagement**

COVID-19 UPDATE FOR TELFORD AND WREKIN

FOR WEEK ENDING 14 February 2021

187 -27%	COVID-19 cases per 100,000 Decrease on last week
100 -22%	Number of patients currently in hospital with COVID-19 Decrease on last week
229	Total deaths due to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic
174	West Midland COVID-19 cases per 100,000
132	England COVID-19 cases per 100,000

Coronavirus Prevent the spread in Telford and Wrekin

Protect Care and Invest to create a better borough

Telford & Wrekin COUNCIL

COVID-19 UPDATE FOR TELFORD AND WREKIN

FOR WEEK ENDING 14 February 2021

COVID-19 UPDATE FOR TELFORD AND WREKIN

FOR WEEK ENDING 14 February 2021

TOTAL WEEKLY LAB CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES

WEEK ENDING	TOTAL WEEKLY LAB CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES
29.11	309
06.12	205
13.12	238
20.12	320
27.12	275
03.01	816
10.01	963
17.01	912
24.01	708
31.01	571
07.02	462
14.02	336

Coronavirus Prevent the spread in Telford and Wrekin

NHS Protect Care and Invest to create a better borough

Telford & Wrekin COUNCIL

COVID-19 UPDATE FOR TELFORD AND WREKIN

FOR WEEK ENDING 14 February 2021

RATE OF INFECTION PER 100,000 REPRESENTED BY AGE GROUP

AGE	RATE OF INFECTION PER 100,000
0-9	82
10-19	95
20-29	267
30-39	284
40-49	238
50-59	203
60-69	127
70-79	89
80+	287

Coronavirus Prevent the spread in Telford and Wrekin

NHS Protect Care and Invest to create a better borough

Telford & Wrekin COUNCIL

Wards with the HIGHEST INFECTION

- 1 Church Aston & Lilleshall
- 2 Hadley & Leegomery
- 3 Oakengates & Ketley Bank
- 4 Donnington
- 5 Horsehay & Lightmoor

Based on rate per 100,000

Coronavirus Prevent the spread in Telford and Wrekin

NHS Protect Care and Invest to create a better borough

Telford & Wrekin COUNCIL

Best Practice Communication and Engagement

Encouraging people from areas with high infection rates to get tested


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We are encouraging people who live the wards of Hadley & Leegomery and Arleston to come forward and get tested.

Infection rates have been high in these wards the last two weeks. Testing rates are relatively low but there is a high proportion testing positive.

If you live in these areas - please get tested if... See More



CONTENT.GOVDELIVERY.COM

Live in Hadley & Leegomery and Alerson? Please get tested | Coronavirus update 5 February 2021

Best Practice Communication and Engagement

Case studies of residents' struggle with Covid-19, **this Facebook post reached over 488,000 people!**

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Post Details

Telford & Wrekin Council is sharing a COVID-19 update. Published by Orlo · 11 January

!! THIS IS REAL !!

Below is a story from Sharn who is 34 years old, a fit and healthy mother of two children and lives in Telford. We asked if we could share her story to show everyone that Covid is real, it's here in Telford & Wrekin and could put any one of us in hospital.

Cases are still rising rapidly locally and it is now so **IMPORTANT** we all follow guidelines to keep everyone safe. One mistake could cost someone else's life:

- 🏠 **STAY AT HOME** - only leave your house for essential items such as food or medication, work or to help someone vulnerable.
- ❌ **DO NOT MIX HOUSEHOLDS** (unless you are part of a support bubble)
- ❌ **DO NOT TRAVEL FOR EXERCISE** - You should exercise near to home.

Read Sharn's story below 📖

Performance for your post		
488748 People reached		
15337 Likes, comments and shares		
131059 Post clicks		
8489 Photo views	10 Link clicks	122560 Other Clicks
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK		
32 Hide all posts	103 Hide post	
0 Report as spam	0 Unlike Page	
15337 Likes, comments and shares		
BRANDED CONTENT DISTRIBUTION		
View Breakdown		
488748 Total reach	488748 Organic reach	0 Paid reach
521408 Total impressions	521408 Organic impressions	0 Paid impressions

Get well soon Sharn ❤️

488,787 People Reached | 146,396 Engagements

[Boost Post](#)

Best Practice Communication and Engagement

Encouraging vaccination uptake

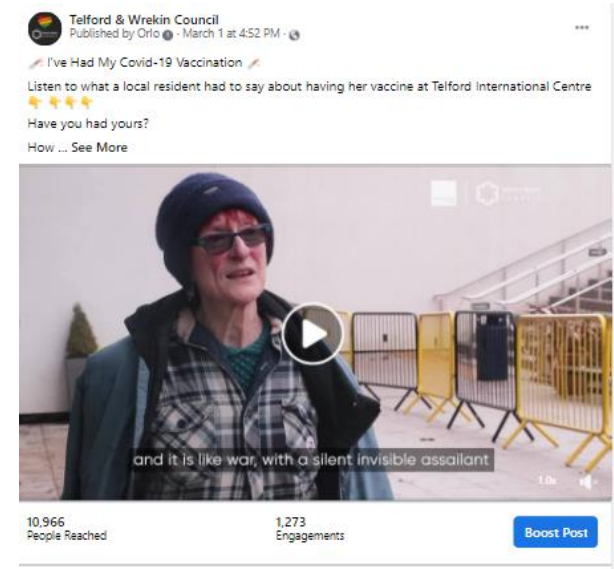
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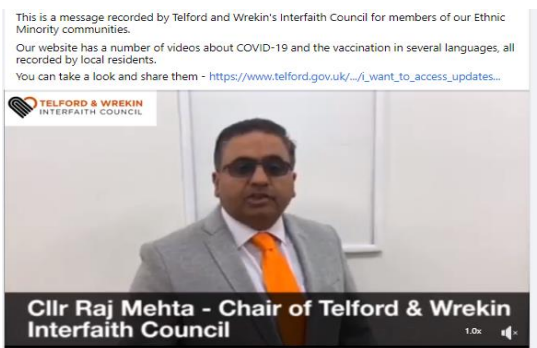
What to expect when having your vaccination



Councillor Raj Mehta, Interfaith Council Chair asking questions to a local GP



"I've had my Covid-19 vaccination" – resident testimonial



Message recorded by the Chair of the Interfaith Council for members of ethnic minorities communities



"A plea from a local doctor" testimonial – to trust the vaccine – speaking as a member of an ethnic minority community

Community Resilience

Support for people self-Isolating

Community Support Line

If residents are unable to rely on family, friends or other support networks Telford and Wrekin had a community support line that residents can call. The Council also has arrangements in place to deliver food and other essential supplies, which include:

- Access to the DEFRA supermarket scheme, for individuals unable to access food as they are shielding or because support services they normally rely on are not available, where there are no friends, family or neighbours available to help
- Individuals unable to access food as they are self-isolating at home due
- Arrangements to deliver food and other essential supplies through voluntary organisations, which will continue to play a crucial role going forward
- Ability to deliver food and other essential supplies directly, where speed is of the essence

Support payments

The Council has supported local people through the [Test and Trace support payment](#) offer of a £500 payment for those on low income who are required to self-isolate and who are in receipt of named qualifying benefits process. There is an online application process and phone support where people have issues applying digitally.

In addition the [local discretionary payment scheme](#), for those who are required to isolate and on a low income but not in receipt of qualifying benefits, but, is aligned with the benefit cap income amounts for consistency on what is classed as a low income.

Targeted social media and communication with partners ensures maximum take up of both schemes. The scheme, launched on 28 September 2020 has paid out £242,500 to 485 residents. The scheme is due to end on 31 March 2021.

From 8th March the scheme extended to parents of children who are required to self-isolate.

All communications sent from Hub to cases and their contacts have links to the self-isolation payments web pages.

TELFORD & WREKIN LOCAL OUTBREAK PREVENTION & CONTROL PLAN

The team processing these application are also responsible for Financial Welfare, which means we can identify if a family needs further support via the Emergency Welfare scheme, or perhaps Council Tax Support Hardship

Test & Trace Isolation Support Payments - scheme started on 28.9.2020	February 2021	March 2021	Year to date
Number of applications received for Test & Trace	565	276	1657
Total Value of T&T awarded	£74,500	£51,000	£238,500 –(Main scheme £126,000 & Discretionary scheme £112,500)
Average time to process a claim	8.07 days	8.85 days	10.45 days

Business Support Grants

The Council has been helping businesses to comply with restrictions since March 2020 we have issued the following grants. Our current discretionary scheme is open to all businesses, including self-employed people, who do not receive support via the Government's scheme and are able to demonstrate a significant loss of income.

Funding stream	Number of Payments	Amount in Total
Small Business Grant Scheme	1941	£19,410,000
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant Scheme	584	£10,745,000
Discretionary Grant Scheme	263	£1,469.139

Since November 2020 – 16th March 2021

Funding Stream	Number of Payments	Amount in Total
Additional restrictions grant (Discretionary Scheme)	2951	£3,778,622.26
Local Restrictions Support Grant - closed Nov Lockdown	1078	£1,697,552
Local Restrictions Grant - sector	8	£360.86
Local Restrictions Support Grant - open businesses	1668	£581,355.41
Local Restrictions Support Grant - closed	545	£203,789.30
Local Restrictions Support Grant – closed Jan lockdown	2190	£5,300,166
Closed Business lockdown payment	1105	£5,221,000
Christmas Support Payment	62	£62,000

Data, Intelligence and Surveillance

Improving our Picture

Access to data and intelligence for local contact tracing and outbreak control was highlighted as one of the most significant risks to the delivery of our original plan. At that stage there was no ability to link the multiple national data sources between tiers of NHS Test and Trace down to a local authority level. In the past nine months this picture has improved markedly. More intelligence is now shared by PHE with DsPH and the Local Enhanced Contact Tracing Partnership means that the Hub have direct access into the NHS Test and Trace system CTAS. The Council now has a sophisticated case management system and a suite of surveillance dashboards. The surveillance dashboard is continuously updated and adapted to incorporate new datasets. This will be the case with any wastewater analysis should it become available. Our surveillance ensures that our communications and engagement activity is meaningfully intelligence-led.

Local intelligence sharing is well established, with weekly surveillance reports and various performance dashboards shared with Execs, Members and key partners for example, the outbreak engagement board and NHS (STP/ICS) groups, such as NHS gold and the system Test & Trace group. The surveillance is shared with the public through the use of infographics, press releases and weekly social media updates.

Our integrated approach to intelligence continues to evolve, for example a joint analyst's group across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin local authorities and NHS organisations are steering the crucial profiling work for the vaccination inequalities action plan.

The Council's Research & Intelligence Team are leading a series of developments to be completed by the June 2021.

Planned Developments

Vaccinations – further develop the intelligence around vaccinations to inform targeted support and identify and mitigate inequalities

Education – develop the monitoring of education attendance and outbreak data to support the opening of schools, monitor the impact and enable speedy interventions

Outbreaks and common exposures – develop and enhance the intelligence available to identify and add intelligence to support targeted responses

Support the recovery - provide detailed and wide ranging health, population, socio-economic and demand analysis about people who live and work in Telford & Wrekin

Best Practice Data, intelligence and surveillance

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- ✓ **Interactive Power BI dashboards**, updated daily, reporting all Covid related data in one place to support evidence based decision making:
 - Detailed case data: trends, rates, percentage changes, regional /national comparisons, by age, by MSOA and ward
 - Outbreaks and common exposures, inc. occupation data
 - Testing data: individuals tested and positivity rates, PCR, LFT and pharmacy rates, positivity rate by type of test, site utilisation, age and ward based rates
 - Hospital data: admissions, occupancy overall and of HDU/ICU beds, patient ages
 - Vaccinations data: rate overall and by age band, comparisons, first and second dose, locality and ethnicity coverage to monitor inequalities
 - Deaths: Covid and non Covid deaths, place of death including care home, excess deaths
 - Deaths management: mortuary and crematorium capacity, current rates
 - Hub support: detailed locality based case and outbreak data layered with LSOA locality intelligence (enabling socioeconomic / demographic profiling alongside case data)

- ✓ **Strategic ‘Gold’ Dashboard** reported to Senior Management Team weekly enabling comprehensive monitoring of the impact of Covid on the community:
 - Covid cases, testing, outbreaks, hospital occupancy, vaccinations, mortality, community support, enforcement activity, PPE, workforce sickness,
 - Children’s Safeguarding referrals, educational attendance, adult social care assessments
 - Furlough, employment support, unemployment, benefits, financial support to residents & businesses
 - housing need and rough sleeping

- ✓ **Deep Dive analysis** to inform the understanding of emerging trends, e.g. – for example
 - workplace outbreak trends, age related case analysis
 - Google analytics and economic activity data used
 - Triangulated data to increase confidence in hypotheses

- ✓ **Intelligence sharing** in the NHS and neighbouring local authorities to share and develop our understanding of Covid and the impact on the community and on services

- ✓ **Enabling intelligence-led communications**, supporting campaigns with evidence, e.g. encouraging testing take up in areas with low take up and high positivity rates

Compliance and Enforcement

Legal Powers

The legal framework for managing outbreaks that present a risk to public health and require urgent investigation and response, is complex as it vests duties and powers with Government and down through the tiers of local government. Throughout the pandemic legislation has been introduced and amended according to the controls that are required at that stage. The Council’s scheme of delegations details the authorisation of enforcing officers. A summary of the powers available for officers to use can be found in Appendix 3

COVID secure approach

Our pandemic response has recognised the importance that compliance and enforcement has in limiting transmission and protecting health. The intelligence-led Covid secure visits to premises that fall within the Local Authority enforcement, uses contact tracing conversations and enhanced surveillance data. Over 1882 Covid secure interventions have taken place – ensuring that businesses and services are compliant with legal requirements.

Intelligence is shared with West Mercia Police at weekly Bronze meetings and numerous joint visits known locally as Multi Agency Team Exercises (MATES) have taken place through the pandemic. Hub officers also undertake public health visits to educational establishments, workplaces (including those enforced by HSE) and care homes.

Engage Explain Encourage Enforce

Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions

Physically distanced environments
 Work from home first approach
 Incentivise active travel
 Stagger start times, break, shared facilities
 Create work/school “bubbles”
 Regular revision of Covid Secure messaging
 Wearing of face coverings
 Review of Covid secure risk assessments

Regulation as Prevention

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 Public Health (Communicable Disease Control) Act 1984.
 and regulations made there under
 Coronavirus Act 2020
 Enforcing other Covid Legislation requirements e.g
 restrictions on opening, the provision of QR code, table
 service and signage to advise face coverings.

Using Enhanced Surveillance Data

Data used to identify sectors or types of premises
 Premises targeted for intervention
 Shared intelligence across regulatory agencies

Infection Prevention & Control measures

Handwashing
 Cleaning
 Appropriate use of PPE
 Support, guidance, and training
 Training and practices in care workforce
 Testing access
 Effective self-isolation

Case Study

Covid Spot check pilot

The Council has taken part in a recent pilot with HSE in which all premises in the Stafford Park, Halesfield and Hollinswood industrial parks underwent Covid spot checks by HSE. Prior to the pilot senior officers from Hub and Public Protection Team met with HSE who had been undertaking Covid spot checks within LA enforced premises since summer 2020. However, Telford & Wrekin asked them to undertake spot checks across industrial estates containing a mix of LA and HSE enforced premises as this is where most outbreaks were occurring. It was agreed that the three large industrial estates would be the target audience. Names and addresses of businesses were obtained from business rates and shared with HSE for cross checking against their records. Businesses that had received a recent covid spot check visit by HSE were removed from the pilot.

Public Health messages regarding regular rapid testing for those employees not working from home and the online notification form used in the Hub were given to the HSE agents. We know that this messaging was passed on as the Hub took calls from businesses which had had Covid spot check calls or visits asking about rapid testing and how to engage with the process.

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Stage 1 - call

- Businesses allocated to outbound calls team
- Team carry out calls to Duty Holders and go through question set
- Data captured and collated centrally
- Any Stage 2 referrals automatically highlighted

Stage 2 - call

- Stage 2 referrals allocated to dedicated follow-up team
- Team makes contact with businesses and discuss Stage 1 fails
- Decision made – passed as compliant or referred to field team for a physical inspection

Stage 3

- Stage 3 referrals collated
- Passed to relevant authority / person
- Inspection carried out
- Decision made
- Relevant action taken
- Decision logged where appropriate

Results

- In total 357/528 premises engaged and had Covid spot checks
- This amounts to 68% of eligible businesses engaging – which is higher than previous HSE Covid spot checks
- 80% of businesses were deemed to have passed the Covid spot at Stage 2
- 40 businesses required stage 3 intervention
- 6 of the 37 LA enforced businesses and have all been now followed up at stage 3

The most common reason for failing were public health guidance/social distancing and cleaning

The findings of the HSE pilot are consistent with the PP team and HUB officer's findings i.e. that understanding of self-isolation requirements, effective cleaning and hand washing and social distancing particularly in common areas are recurrent non-compliant **non pharmaceutical controls**. The study also identified that businesses were failing on their public health knowledge i.e. what to do if an employee was positive – and so we were able to target our communications better.

Best Practice **Compliance and Enforcement**

- ✓ Use of local champions from the interfaith council to ensure Covid secure controls understood in communities where English is not the first language.
- ✓ Translation of key public health messages provided for retail premises whose customers first language is not English
- ✓ Dedicated email set up for businesses and members of the public to ask questions and highlight concerns
- ✓ Public Protection Social media posts used to inform business of changes to legal restrictions a total 86 number of post from June 2020 to March 2021
- ✓ Range of supportive documents produced to help businesses diversify and comply with restrictions
- ✓ Attend Pub Watch meetings to advise licenced trade.
- ✓ Use of intelligence from Hub and partners to direct interventions.
- ✓ Facebook live events- answering questions from members of the public
- ✓ Roadmap of communications for exit of current lock down (see appendix 4)
- ✓ Effective joint working with regulatory partners (e.g. West Mercia Police and HSE)
- ✓ Daily meetings with Hub officers to share intelligence and **enhanced surveillance data** (common exposure reports), **Outbreak Investigation and Rapid Response (OIRR)**
- ✓ Consistent messaging from Public Protection and Hub
- ✓ Public Protection senior officers part of small working group organised by Hub looking at **sustained transmission rates**
- ✓ Over **1,882 Covid Secure interventions undertaken** to ensure that businesses and settings were following guidance
- ✓ Intelligence shared with Telford Police and at weekly Bronze meetings
- ✓ Multi Agency Team Exercises (MATES) taken place throughout the pandemic
- ✓ Full use of enforcement powers used in a proportionate manner

Resourcing

Staff resources from within the Public Protection team have been stretched due the pandemic response with some officers seconded to the Hub. Public Protection have used money from the Contain Fund to engage contractors to support the Covid secure work. Capacity within the team to continue to deliver Covid secure work and return to BAU in such areas such as Food Inspections has been considered and additional EHOs are going to be recruited (by the end of June 2021)

Limitations of powers of current legislation

Current legal powers do not enable enforcement staff to effectively and promptly deal with sustained non-compliance in relation to social distancing, poor ventilation, effective hand washing or effective cleaning. The Government's Covid Secure guidance does not have statutory guidance status and the use of existing Health and Safety legislation to deal with these matters is not swift or in some cases possible. It is recognised that this matter has been raised regionally by PHE and nationally through Chief EHO groups.

Living with Covid

The requirements for businesses to maintain hygiene and social distancing are likely to become routine alongside other health and safety measures. The initial approach will be supportive, however a staged approach to enforcement would be used for those that did not engage. As mentioned above it is necessary that Health Protection Regulations need to be sustained and enhanced to enable the LA to respond quickly and responsively.

Testing

Access to timely, high quality testing remains critical for controlling the spread of coronavirus. The local testing arrangements need to demonstrate scale, accessibility and convenience for people in the borough. The testing landscape has evolved significantly since June 2020, with further expansion of [national symptomatic PCR testing](#) and the advent of multiple testing channels for [asymptomatic rapid LFT testing](#). A national longer-term testing strategy would be useful to aid coherent longer term planning.

Symptomatic Testing

The [national testing programme](#) offers multiple testing sites in Telford & Wrekin, through the permanent Ironbridge Regional Testing Unit (RTU), the semi-permanent Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) at Harper Adams University, and five the Local Testing Sites (LTS) across the borough. The sites are available for all members of the public with any COVID-19 symptoms and are used when necessary for large scale testing in outbreak situations, such as workplaces. It is understood that local authority Directors of Public Health will retain the ability to influence the siting of MTUs, based on local intelligence of testing need and demand.

Asymptomatic Community Testing

The advent of Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) for testing has undoubtedly improved the rapid detection of hidden infection in people who do not have symptoms. The Council set up its first Telford & Wrekin Rapid Testing site in December 2021, in partnership with the DHSC as part of the DPH-led Testing Programme. This evolved into the **Community Testing Programme** from February 2021, operating from the main Hub site and two further spoke sites, plus 8 community pharmacies (due to increase to 14).

There has been sustained local comms activity to encourage local people who needed to leave home for work during lockdown to access regular rapid testing at our three Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATSs). An intelligence-led approach has been used to [specifically target communities with high infection rates and low testing rates](#), through the Council's various media channels to encourage testing. The Health Protection Hub have proactively worked with businesses to promote and understand barriers to rapid testing.

Community Collect is the Government's new distribution channel for self-test kits to individuals to support the expansion of asymptomatic home testing. The initial rollout aims to support the reopening of schools and colleges at the beginning of March 2021 and this will be upscaled across other priority groups going forward. The Council, in collaboration

TELFORD & WREKIN LOCAL OUTBREAK PREVENTION & CONTROL PLAN

with the DHSC will start to offer Community Collection points at the 3 local authority ATSS from mid-March 2021, with a further three collection points in development in other community locations. This Community Collect offer sits alongside other national home test channels, which at the time of writing includes: afternoon and evening collection of kits from symptomatic test sites (LTS/RTS), the [Online Home Direct](#) service and in pharmacy collect channel starting from the end of March 2021.

Schools and colleges in Telford & Wrekin have been offering regular rapid testing [via the Department of Education channel](#) from January 2021. From early March 2021 when education settings reopen, schools are offering onsite and home testing kits for secondary school pupils and college students and staff of primary and secondary schools and colleges. People in households, childcare and support bubbles of primary, secondary-age pupils and college students are also encouraged to undertake regular rapid testing, and tests can be accessed via Community Collect sites described above. The parental consent rate for secondary pupils will be monitored through the rest of the school year

NHS Testing

The local NHS testing offer covers healthcare staff and patients across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, including PCR and LFT testing through a number of routes and sites available. The local NHS testing Programme is delivered by Shropshire Health Community NHS Trust, which undertakes swabbing and supports with Occupational Health-led reporting of results, and Shrewsbury & Telford Hospitals NHS Trust which provides the laboratory services. The local NHS programme has supported outbreak management when required throughout the pandemic, this has been especially useful for example for controlling outbreaks in schools. The expansion of rapid testing in the NHS offers staff weekly LFT tests and patients LFT test on admission and discharge from hospital and prior to procedures and appointments.

Best Practice

Testing

Telford & Wrekin symptomatic testing rates have been consistently higher than the national and regional average during the pandemic. This demonstrates a solid testing culture within the local community and reflects good access for people, given the spread of sites on offer across the borough.

The Telford & Wrekin Community Testing Programme has delivered circa 25,500 rapid tests since it started, with 1% of people (232) reporting positive test results. The positive cases are reported instantly to the Health Protection Hub, at the same time as they are uploaded into NHS Test & Trace. This means that rapid local contact tracing happens on average 48 hours earlier than the positive case details are shared via the national system.

TELFORD & WREKIN LOCAL OUTBREAK PREVENTION & CONTROL PLAN

Community Testing Programme: Telford & Wrekin

Testing programme	Test type		Overview	Telford & Wrekin Locations
	LFT	PCR		
Community Testing	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority-led Asymptomatic Testing Sites (ATS) Support people who need to leave home to work Parents and carers of school and college students People unable to access testing via other channels Targeting hard-to-reach/disadvantaged communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Place Oakengates Cosy Hall Newport Anstice Hall, Madeley Numerous community pharmacies Booking @ http://rapidtest.telford.gov.uk/
Community Collect	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection of home testing kits Parents and carers of school and college students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telford & Wrekin Council ATS as above, plus additional collection sites in development (March 21) National symptomatic testing sites (LTS/RTU) 1pm - 8pm
NHS staff and patients	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing of patient-facing staff of all NHS trusts Patient testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shrewsbury & Telford NHS Hospital Trust Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust
Social care settings	✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff (PCR weekly and LFT twice weekly) Residents (PCR every 28 days) Visitors, inc. visiting professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care homes – nursing & residential Domiciliary care, extra care & supported living Day services
Schools, colleges and early years	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing of staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On site and home testing for staff in all education settings, secondary school and college students
Universities	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing of staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harper Adams University – LFD testing on site or Telford Wrekin Council ATS as above Priorslee Campus Wolverhampton University using Telford & Wrekin ATS sites
Workplace (private and public sector)	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asymptomatic Testing Site (ATS) onsite at workplace Community testing ATS site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telford & Wrekin Council ATS as above as above 16 workplaces signed up to the national scheme

Management and Control of Cases and Outbreaks

Telford & Wrekin Health Protection Hub

Telford & Wrekin Council's Health Protection Hub (Hub) formed in June 2020, undertakes local contact tracing and works to control and manage outbreaks. It is a multi-disciplinary team which has grown in size and expertise as the pandemic and contact tracing work has become more locally developed. The Service Delivery Manager Health Protection and Consultant in Public Health manage the work of the Hub.

The Hub operates 7 days a week and provides on call cover for bank holidays. Our bespoke case management system allows cases and contacts to be linked by household and setting. All local settings use the online notification form <https://apps.telford.gov.uk/testandtrace/>.

The Hub works as part of [NHS Test and Trace](#) which operates at three levels as part of the contact tracing process to:

- ✓ Identify other positive cases and contacts
- ✓ Find links to other cases
- ✓ Issue guidance on social isolation activities where applicable
- ✓ Establish any need for community service support for anyone self-isolating

The Hub is part of the **Local Contact Tracing Partnership** with NHS Test & Trace/PHE and therefore has access to the national CTAS system and actively contact traces cases classified as "follow up fails" (FUF) on a daily basis. The Hub has trained over 50 other Telford & Wrekin employees to work as surge volunteers who make calls to ensure that cases are not in need of any assistance for example shopping and that self-isolation guidance is understood and being followed.

Working with PHE

A Standardised Operating Procedure/Memorandum of Understanding (SOP/MoU) has been agreed between West Midlands PHE Centre, Telford & Wrekin Council, Shropshire Council and Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin CCGs. This framework provides the details of the arrangements for the joint management of local COVID-19 outbreaks, including the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations, across a variety of specific settings, in line with their statutory duties. (See Appendix 5) The Hub use the common exposure data from within the DPH daily line list as part of its **enhanced contact tracing** activities. The HUB would act on any data provided by PHE from the post code coincidence reports. At the time of writing there were none for Telford. See Appendix 6 for current arrangements with PHE

Hub Risks and Mitigations

Risk/ Issue	Solution / Mitigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce capacity to continue to deliver the amount of support offered in above table once LA in a more business as usual way of working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Long term planning for a Health protection function within LA – that will have EHOs/BSO deployed ✓ These are responsible for health protection and will take a lead on care/ workplace and educational establishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duplication between national and regional system – confusing for settings and also inefficient use of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agreement between regional PHE and LA on who will take lead – removal of duplication of reporting criteria for setting –
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confusion in settings about the various testing options and when employees should self-isolate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Targeted communications aimed at employers on self-isolation. Survey of employers to find out those that had taken up LFD testing and to understand barriers for those that were not planning to undertake

Contact Tracing and Information Gathering

The Hub managers export DPH line listing information from PHE to officers to contact trace. Cases are prioritised when infection rates are high, based on the following criteria:

Occupation	Health & social care workers Employees in essential infrastructure
Education settings	Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Lecturers, Nursery Nurses Pupils and students
Vulnerable people	Over 70s People living in residential settings

The Hub have access to the NHS Test and Trace data management system CTAS and cases known as **Follow up Fails (FUFs)** are assigned from the national system for local follow up and contact tracing. The Hub contact trace cases these contacts to gather information on person place and circumstances, questioning people's movement 5 days prior to test to investigate places where contact or transmission may have occurred. The information is either recorded in the local case management system or within CTAS if the case is designated as a FUF.

Investigation and contact tracing can be complex and involve multiple cases with multiple contacts and will often involve more than one setting. The Hub staff are experienced investigators and use their skills to link cases, contacts settings and other outbreaks.

Identification of outbreaks and situations

The Hub online notification form is integrated into the Dynamics 365 case management system used for contact tracing. This means the Hub often regularly learns of a complex setting case or linked cases before PHE. As such contact tracing and liaison with and advice to the setting e.g. schools, care settings and workplaces can start immediately.

The outbreak tracker record multiple cases within settings and this tracker, along with the risk assessment questionnaire are used to determine actions for the setting and if an Incident Management Team (IMT) meeting is needed.

Outbreaks in the NHS

The various NHS organisations in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin are developing a system-wide Test & Trace process for managing outbreaks in healthcare settings, including the two acute trusts, community hospitals and services and primary care. This process is linked to the [expectations for the NHS on healthcare associated COVID-19 infections](#), and includes patients and staff – linked to the local sickness absence reporting policy and process and local testing programme.

Further discussions are required to ensure that processes are developed to appropriately connect outbreaks and contact tracing in the NHS with community transmission through Telford & Wrekin Health Protection Hub and Shropshire Health Protection Cell (by the end of May 2021).

High Risk Places and Locations

The Hub have developed expertise, building on the local experience and learning of working with care settings, workplaces and educational settings. There are now strong local relationships with key stakeholders in these high risk settings. On-going proactive support is offered through named officers, including Infection Prevention and Control advice, COVID secure arrangements and testing etc. There are clear protocols, based on national guidance to identifying and managing outbreaks in high risk settings.

Care settings

- Care Homes – nursing and residential
- Domiciliary care
- Independent living and home care
- Learning Disability Homes
- Children’s Care homes

Educational Settings

- Early Years providers
- Primary & secondary schools, academies, special schools (maintained and independent)
- FE Colleges and Universities

Communities

- Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)
- Black & Minority Ethnic Groups
- Community & Voluntary sector support
- Homeless people, migrants and asylum Seekers

Workplaces

- Workplaces and businesses – shops/ retail, factories, warehouses, supermarkets, food producers, personal care providers – hairdressers, nail salons, soft play leisure
- Blue light services

Workplaces

- Workplaces and businesses – shops/ retail, factories, warehouses, supermarkets, food producers, personal care providers – hairdressers, nail salons, soft play leisure
- Blue light services

Other high risk premises

- (HMOs) - Homes of Multiple Occupancy
- Places of Worship

Health Protection Hub Support Offer to High Risk Settings

Setting	Interaction and support
Care homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Hub call to care homes • NHS IPC support and Train the Trainer • Daily calls when in an outbreak • IMT's to support through outbreak • Daily meetings with IPC • EHO's supportive visits • Support with PPE provision • Financial support for an additional IPC nurse
Large Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to businesses Hub – contact details and online form • Social media posts • Regular contact with some Manufacturers • Letters re LFD testing take up • Support for LFD testing set up • Public Health visits by EHO's • IMT's to support through outbreak • Targeted communication
SME's and Food Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media post • Customised letters to sectors on reopening • Advice on web site for those wishing to diversify • Business grants to support through lockdown • Covid Secure Visits / EHO supportive visits • IMT's to support through outbreak • Advice on lockdown rules • Advice for taxi and Private hire operators – meeting with trade • Targeted communication
Educational Establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance pre reopening on IPC / cleaning and social distancing • Covid Secure risk assessment template for Primary and Secondary Schools • Face Covering Guidance • Support with PPE provision • Handwashing offer for schools developed • Letter to school re test and trace • Suite of letters in case of positive case • SDM attends Primary and Secondary heads Forum • Dedicated phone line for schools • Named Hub officer for each primary and secondary school • Specific guidance for early years settings • Regular meetings with Universities • Assistance with testing for universities • Assistance with rapid testing requirements • IMT's to support through outbreaks • EHO's supportive visits
Other High risk premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through interfaith Council • Advice on Covid secure measures • Letters to Licensed HMO's
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with interfaith council to ensure messaging reaches communities whose first language is not English – videos and written material • Community Help line • Vulnerable adults receiving keep in touch calls • Direct support to households in need of food medication or crisis payments • Community champions being recruited • Self-Isolation and follow up calls made by surge to positive case • All emails from Hub contain support information • In equalities group set up to look at what further measures needed
NHS settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with GP practices, dental practices • Link with Occupational Health Team leading local contact tracing for NHS staff

Case Study

High Risk Setting

The high-risk setting is an employer in Telford.

Hub were notified of a positive case via LFD, a further 2 positive cases were identified that same day. All the cases were contact traced, and one was found to be in working in a department where they had to walk around the factory checking machines etc. The setting and case were added to the outbreak tracker.

The Manager of the site was contacted, and control measures were gone through to check that staff were adhering to them and if there were any amendments made from the public health HUB visit made earlier in the year. At the time of the conversations nothing was identified, however it was advised that all members of that shift have LFD tests to see if there were any further asymptomatic cases.

A case from the line list was identified as being a cleaner at the site who had attended work with symptoms the week before.

A further case was then identified from the LFT testing carried out. This gave a total of 6 cases had been identified in a two-day period. This met the criteria for an IMT and as such invites were sent out 3 days after first LFD notification for an IMT the next working day with the company. PHE and representatives were also invited to attend.

The IMT identified the recommended actions highlighted from the previous site visit and whether they had been actioned. The company advised that they would look into each of these to ensure that they had been complied with. No Further site visit was deemed necessary.

The company responded a week later with an update on the action points raised at the meeting with comments attached advising on what had been done to comply with the action points from the IMT.

Living with Covid

Requirements/Needs:

- Surge capacity to test large numbers of people in response to identification of new variants of concern
- Maintain contact tracing and ability to respond to surge or outbreak scenarios.
- Maintain the capability to manage outbreaks across a range of settings

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD – 25th March 2021

REVIEW OF TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL'S HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY MANAGER HOUSING SOLUTIONS

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 A decent home is the foundation on which people build their lives and is fundamental to achieving positive health and wellbeing. Without a roof over your head, people are often prohibited from accessing wider services, employment, education and opportunities to improve their lives. This report introduces a draft version of the Council's revised Housing Allocation Policy which seeks to influence the allocation of social housing in the Borough.
- 1.2 The Policy is a legal requirement, which enables the Council to work with local housing associations (Registered Providers) and to influence how they allocate their properties in Telford & Wrekin. It also sets the context for when the Council nominates a household in need to a housing association. The Council's wider Housing Allocation Scheme also includes its Tenancy Strategy. It is important to note that while Housing Associations must 'have regard to' the Policy and Tenancy Strategy they will also have their own Allocation Policies.
- 1.3 The draft Policy supports the Council's commitment to ensure that every child, young person and adult lives well in their community and meet the objectives set out in the newly adopted Housing Strategy:
 - To create sustainable, accessible, affordable and integrated communities
 - To make the BEST use of our existing homes
 - To provide homes to support and empower our most vulnerable people
- 1.4 The Policy, in line with national guidance, gives 'reasonable preference' for social housing to specific groups of residents and the Council can add 'additional preference' groups which are detailed in the document.
- 1.5 An eight week consultation on the Allocations Policy is now underway providing an opportunity for local partners and key stakeholders to make comment.
- 1.6 While the Council does not hold a stock of social housing and does not operate a Housing Register or Waiting List, it supports local residents and households who are in housing need to find a home within the borough by:
 - Advising and signposting them to apply direct to a local housing association
 - Being nominated to a housing association property by the Council
 - Receiving advice and support from the Council's Housing Solutions Service.
 - Publishing a Housing Allocation Policy
- 1.7 Currently there are two routes to access the majority of social housing in the Borough – via Wrekin Housing Group and Homes Direct (operated by Midland Heart). The latter advertises properties for 6 of the other main housing associations with stock in the Borough including

Sanctuary, Bromford and BVT. However from 31st March 2021 Midland Heart will be ceasing their choice based lettings system Telford & Wrekin Council have been working with the 6 associations on their revised arrangements for letting properties in Telford and full information will be included on the Council's website.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the review of the Allocations Policy and the consultation period that is open for partners and stakeholders.**
- 2.2 Note the Nomination and Tenancy Strategy as described in the report**
- 2.2 Note the changes to how local residents will access social housing in the Borough from end March 2021.**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	All members of the community that are seeking or living in social housing.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Consultation Period began on the 18 th March for eight weeks. Following the analysis of consultation responses, the document will be finalised as soon as possible.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The revised Housing Allocation Policy and Tenancy Strategy does not place additional financial pressures on the Council. Any costs arising from the consultation process with key stakeholders and partners will be met from within current resources.</p> <p>The recommendations arising from the consultation process will be reviewed. Any financial implications arising from that process will be identified within a further report to Cabinet.</p> <p>(AEM 11/02/21)</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The Council has legal obligations under the Localism Act 2011 and the Housing Act 1996 to prepare a tenancy strategy and housing allocations policy respectively. The proposals contained in this report comply with those obligations. Legal advice can be given on any matters arising from the consultation or on the application of either the policy or strategy as required.</p> <p>(AL 11/02/2021)</p>

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The updated policy and related arrangements aim to enable the Council to work with housing providers to meet local housing needs and to make the best use of the borough's housing stock.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough-wide impact

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 The 1996 Housing Act requires all local housing authorities to:

- have a Housing Allocation Policy which sets out the priorities for the allocation of social¹ housing and states how affordable homes in their area will be let
- make all nominations by the Council in accordance with the Policy

4.2 Local housing authorities that do not own social housing stock must still have an Allocation Policy as the Council makes a housing allocation when it nominates a person to be a tenant of accommodation held by a housing association.

4.3 An Allocation Policy must give reasonable preference to applicants with certain housing needs.

4.4 Housing authorities may also give additional preference within their scheme to households who have urgent housing needs but this should reflect local circumstances.

4.5 Housing Associations must co-operate with local authorities in meeting local housing needs. This includes assisting with their homelessness duties and working with them on nominations agreements. Housing associations will have their own Allocations Policies but must 'have regard to' those of the Local Authority when making allocations.

4.6 Supported and specialist housing accommodation is subject to separate arrangements which take account an individual's care and support needs.

Tenancy Strategy

4.7 A local authority's Tenancy Strategy should recommend to housing associations;

- the type and term of tenancy they should grant and under what circumstances
- when another tenancy should be granted at the end of a fixed term tenancy
- what it expects of housing providers in relation to housing advice and assistance where the tenancy will end after the fixed term.

4.8 This should also be developed in consultation with local stakeholders and forms part of the Housing Allocation Scheme.

Local Context

4.9 Social housing, provided by local housing associations, is an essential part of Telford & Wrekin's overall housing provision. Within the borough:

¹ Social housing is provided by housing associations (or 'Registered Providers') at relatively more affordable rents and usually on a secure, long-term tenancy.

- There are around 13,700 social housing properties for rent in the borough – around 18% of all homes.
- The largest provider is The Wrekin Housing Group (WHG) with c.9,700 homes.
- Sanctuary, Bromford and BVT each have c.1,000 homes.
- Over the last five years other housing providers have started to develop in the borough including Housing Plus, whg, Connexus and Trident and there are a number of other smaller and specialist providers
- There is a continuing shortfall of more than 660 affordable homes each year in the borough. Despite the delivery of around 300 new affordable homes each year, continuing losses to the sector has meant that total provision remains largely static.
- During 2020 over 1,500 households approached the Council who were homeless or threatened with homeless within 56 days.

4.10 Aside from properties owned by WHG, the majority of social housing in the borough is currently advertised and allocated through Homes Direct. This system is operated by Midlands Heart who have decided to close the system from 31 March 2021. As a result, the main housing associations will introduce their own arrangements for advertising and allocating their homes. This will mean there will be a greater number of ways of finding a home and the journey for customers will be different.

4.11 The Council and the larger housing associations are currently working together to prepare for this change from April 2021. This includes

- Using the Council’s website to provide easy access information, advice and links to ensure the changes are understood by customers and as easy to use as possible
- Providing support and advice to local residents who are currently registered on Homes Direct
- Creating a new joint approach to nominations (see below) which aims to increase the number of nominations the Council is able to make to providers to support those in housing need
- Offering Telford Homefinder as the basis for a number of local housing associations to advertise properties which are not subject to nomination

Housing Allocation Policy

4.12 The updated draft Allocation Policy (Appendix 1) sets out

- The local context and The Council’s priorities
- Who qualifies, and who is eligible for, social housing in the borough.
- Priorities for housing associations to take account of when making allocations of social housing, in conjunction with their own respective Allocation policies
- The basis for the Council making nominations to housing associations
- The Council’s Tenancy Strategy

4.13 As required by the Housing Act (1996) the Policy gives priority to the ‘reasonable preference’ groups set out in para 4.3.

4.14 Priority is also proposed to be given to a number of ‘additional preference’ groups (see Table 1 below), including

- Those who would otherwise become homeless, which a planned move could prevent

- Those supported by Council homelessness prevention initiatives
- Those whose health will significantly deteriorate without a move
- Those moving on from supported or specialist accommodation
- Care leavers
- Those in adapted properties where the adaptations are no longer required
- Those needing to move to take up employment
- Households living in overcrowded accommodation
- Those who are under occupying a home which could be used to provide a home for a larger family
- Members of the armed forces and their families

4.15 The Allocation Policy is based on **four** categories:

- Emergency and high priority
- Urgent need to move
- Identified housing need
- Low housing need

Full details of the specific needs in these categories are set out below:

Table 1. Allocation Policy - Priority Groups

Criteria	Examples of need
Emergency and high priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statutory Homeless applicants who are owed a full housing duty ▪ Medical & Care Emergency ▪ Move to allow major repairs, modernisation or redevelopment ▪ Overcrowding and short of 3 or more bedrooms ▪ Ongoing domestic abuse or harassment that can only be resolved by moving home ▪ Applicants leaving the armed forces ▪ Under occupying by 1 or more bedrooms.
Urgent need to move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other homeless applicants and those who are under threat of being homeless ▪ Applicants moving on from supported or specialist accommodation (with the agreement of the provider) ▪ Care leavers ▪ Overcrowding and short of 2 bedrooms ▪ Lacking basic facilities ▪ Families with children under 10 years old living in upper floor flats with no lifts ▪ Loss of tied accommodation ▪ Applicants needing to move to take up employment or to make it easier to get to work.
Identified housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applicants who have been approved as foster or adoptive parents and require an additional bedroom to facilitate a placement ▪ Applicants who need to be closer to family and friends ▪ Applicants with any other reasonable housing needs ▪ Overcrowding and short of 1 bedroom ▪ Sharing facilities with another household ▪ Property in minor disrepair

Low housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applicants who have no identified housing need ▪ Applicants who have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances ▪ Applicants who are in debt to a current or previous landlord for rent, service charges and other property related recharges and don't have an agreement in place.
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Nominations by the Council

4.16 While the Council does not operate a housing waiting list or register it maintains a 'pool' of households who sought advice and support and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. In 2020 it received over 1,500 formal enquiries from households in this position. The Council currently makes a number of nominations to providers on an informal basis.

4.17 As part of developing the new Allocation Policy the Council has been working with local providers to establish a formal joint nominations agreement and to increase the number of successful nominations that are made directly to housing associations.

4.18 Where the Council is given the opportunity to make a nomination to a suitable property it will make up to three nominations for consideration. They will include one *primary* nomination and up to two *secondary* nominations which are defined as:

- **Primary** - Households in **Relief Duty** under the Homelessness Reduction Act
- **Secondary** - Households in **Prevention Duty** under the Homelessness Reduction Act

In both cases this will include households:

- who are homeless.
- who are owed a specific legal duty by another housing authority.
- occupying **unsanitary or overcrowded housing** (based on 'the bedroom standard) or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- who need to move on **medical or welfare grounds**, including grounds relating to disability.
- who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause **hardship** (to themselves or others).
- in the Council's **additional preference** categories.

4.19 It has been agreed with the housing associations to trial these arrangements from April 2021 for twelve months. This will allow for monitoring of outcomes, further discussion with larger providers who were not part of Midland Heart's letting system and the possible extension to other, smaller and specialist providers.

Consultation

4.20 An eight week consultation is now underway on the draft Housing Allocation Policy with local housing associations, other providers and stakeholders. Depending on the outcome of the consultation, these documents may need to be reconsidered by Cabinet prior to finalisation.

Report prepared by Toni Guest, Service Delivery Manager. Telford & Wrekin Council

FINDING THE RIGHT HOME IN TELFORD & WREKIN

Draft Telford & Wrekin Housing Allocation Policy 2021

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FINDING THE RIGHT HOME IN TELFORD & WREKIN
TELFORD & WREKIN'S HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY, 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out Telford & Wrekin Council's Draft Updated **Housing Allocation Policy, 2021**. It provides the basis for the allocation of social housing for rent by local housing associations (registered providers) in the borough and describes how these properties will be let. It also helps to inform how the Council and housing associations will work together to meet local housing need. This is an update of the Council's current Housing Allocation Scheme, published in June 2015.
- 1.2 The Council's Community Plan – 'To [Protect, care and invest to create a better borough: 2020 onwards](#) describes what the Council will deliver over the medium term and how it will do this. It sets out a number of key priorities for housing including:
- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
 - All neighbourhoods are a great place to live
 - Our most vulnerable residents will be empowered through housing choices for all to support independence, health and well-being.
 - Homelessness and rough sleeping will be tackled, through prevention, support and facilitating housing solutions
- 1.3 This Allocation Policy sets out Telford & Wrekin Council's key objectives and priorities to be considered by housing providers in the allocation of the social housing in the borough. It also includes the process for applying for social housing in the borough, who is eligible for social housing and the Council's priorities for housing allocation. The Policy also describes how the Council will work with housing associations to nominate applicants to them who are in housing need.
- 1.4 The document describes:
- The background to this document and its purpose
 - The strategic and operational context in Telford & Wrekin
 - The current options available for meeting housing need and the arrangements for accessing them.
 - How housing need is assessed and prioritised
 - The legal and statutory framework
 - The Council's priorities for the allocation of social and other forms of affordable housing (including nominations from the Council).
 - The key principles that the Council would like providers to have regard to in the development or review of their Tenancy Policies.
 - Future monitoring and review arrangements.

2. Social Housing and Allocations

- 2.1 Social housing is one of a number of options to meet local people's housing needs. The Council works in partnership with housing associations – or registered providers (RPs) - and local housing developers to increase the supply of new social housing in the Telford & Wrekin and to protect existing homes. It is also working closely with local private landlords to develop the private rented sector in the borough
- 2.2 All local housing authorities are required to have a local Housing Allocation Policy and Allocation Scheme which sets out priorities between applicants for housing. This must also describe the procedure to be followed when allocating housing accommodation. Local providers are expected to have regard to this in making their housing allocations, which includes when they receive a nomination for housing from the local housing authority – Telford & Wrekin Council.
- 2.3 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regulates the providers of social housing to ensure that they are able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs, The Regulator's Tenancy Standard sets out how housing associations should:

'... Let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants'

and

'...demonstrate how their lettings: (a) make the best use of available housing (b) are compatible with the purpose of the housing (c) contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities'

The Tenancy Standard also states that:

'Registered providers shall co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing function, and their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements'

- 2.4 The recent [Charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper \(2020\)](#) highlights four key improvements needed for housing allocation:
- To improve joint working between local authorities and housing associations to ensure that social housing is being allocated efficiently
 - To remove barriers to accessing social housing for homeless households
 - To ensure that vulnerable households are able to navigate allocations systems
 - Improve access to suitable homes for people with disabilities
- 2.5 While a Council is able to nominate to housing association properties, the association is still entitled to check whether the nomination is acceptable to them under their own policy, and can refuse any nominee that would be disqualified. Many associations also have local lettings policies which are agreed with the local authority which relate to specific housing developments or geographic locations.

- 2.6 Local authorities must also prepare and publish a **Tenancy Strategy**. This is included at **Appendix 1** and sets out the matters to which registered providers are to have regard in formulating their policies on tenancies.
- 2.7 The overall aim of the Council's Housing Allocation Policy is to ensure that social housing provided by local housing associations in Telford & Wrekin is allocated fairly and objectively to those in greatest need. It has regard to the legislative requirements and codes of guidance & regulations set by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). It is also intended to meet the following specific objectives:
- Enable everyone to make **informed choices** about their housing options, including potential providers
 - **Prevent homelessness and help people resolve their housing problems** by giving advice and assistance to everyone
 - Explain the **council's priorities** for those in housing need and to housing providers and other organisations
 - To make sure that the housing needs of **vulnerable** applicants and those in **priority need** are given reasonable preference
 - Enable the **best use to be made of all available housing** in the social sector, and all other affordable housing types within the borough
 - Help to promote **sustainable communities**
- 2.8 The Council's policy will also enable those who do not have a housing need (as defined within this policy) to secure their own accommodation by providing them with advice on the housing options available
- 2.9 The Council must comply, and demonstrate its compliance, with the Equality Act 2010 by assessing the impact of its Housing Allocation Policy on the protected groups. This is particularly significant when exercising its freedom under the Localism Act 2011 (see below) to disqualify applicants.
- 2.10 This document will be of interest to a number of groups including local housing providers, organisations working with people who need housing and people in housing need. The Council will consult with these organisations and groups as part of the process of preparing this document. It will also produce a short summary of its Housing Allocation Policy which will be made placed on its webpages and made available widely.

3. The Local Context

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council's Housing Allocation Policy and Tenancy Strategy responds to the local strategic and operational context, as both are key to meeting local housing needs.

The Council Plan and Supporting Strategies

- 3.2 Telford & Wrekin Council's vision and priorities are set out in the Council Plan, its programme to [Protect, care and invest to create a better borough: 2020 onwards](#). This describes what the Council will deliver over the medium term and how it will do this. It identifies five priorities to achieve this vision:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live
- The natural environment is protected and the Council is taking a leading role in tackling the climate emergency
- (Telford & Wrekin) is a community-focussed, innovative Council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

- 3.3 At the heart of the Council's vision is the need to address the significant inequalities that still exist in the borough. It will try to ensure that everyone, no matter what their background and circumstances, benefits from a strong economy, can fulfil their potential and live well, in a good, safe home. As a Co-operative Council, this approach will be informed by the views and voices of our residents, communities and partners. These must shape and influence what we do and how we do it if we are to continue to create a better borough.

- 3.4 The Council's new, overarching **Housing Strategy, 2020 - 2025** also provides an important framework for the Housing Allocations Policy (and Tenancy Strategy). Their respective priorities are:

- To create sustainable, accessible, affordable and integrated communities.
- To make the best use of our existing homes.
- To provide homes to support and empower our most vulnerable residents.

- 3.5 The Council's Homelessness Strategy 2017 -2022, produced under the Homelessness Act 2002, sets out how the Council will prevent and address statutory and non-statutory homelessness. This includes its new responsibilities under The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to prevent and relieve homelessness for households threatened with homelessness within 56 days (or homeless now). There are four priorities:

- Ensure that high quality housing advice is accessible and well promoted to all to ensure that households or other support services which are able to identify their own housing solutions are able to do so
- Join up Council and external services to prevent homelessness arising wherever possible
- Ensure that temporary accommodation is well managed and meets the needs of the service, ensuring people move onto sustainable housing as soon as possible – minimizing the use of bed and breakfast accommodation
- Work with partners to support vulnerable groups and prevent rough sleeping

The Local Housing Market

- 3.6 The borough's housing market is shaped by a number of factors:
- our population is continuing to grow, it is also changing including ageing and becoming more diverse
 - There are high levels of new home building and an increasing number and range of housing providers
 - The housing tenure mix is changing. The private rented sector is growing, owner occupation is falling and the social housing sector is fairly stable.
 - There is a continuing unmet need for more affordable homes with an estimated net shortfall of over 660 affordable homes for local people every year – most of these should be for rent.
 - In 2020 the cost of entry level housing to buy was over six times comparable annual earnings. (
 - Housing affordability varies across the borough with higher affordability/income ratios and lack of supply in certain parts including the rural area and Newport.
 - Homelessness and rough sleeping is still a significant issue.
 - There is a growing need for supported and specialist accommodation for older people and people who are vulnerable.
 - Some homes in the borough require urgent renewal as part of wider regeneration programmes.
 - There are concerns about physical and management standards in some parts of the borough's housing stock.
 - Long term empty homes in the borough are comparatively low but still pose issues in areas for the Borough.
 - There are households in the Borough in fuel poverty
- 3.7 While local efforts to prevent homelessness are effective, it continues to be a significant issue in the borough:
- Families with children are still the group most commonly accepted as homeless, the proportion of acceptances has decreased and the heads of the household tend to be younger
 - Acceptances for domestic abuse have increased
 - 16/17 year olds represent a significant proportion of acceptances, although there has been an overall decline.
 - All local agencies are seeing significant numbers of people discharged homeless from institutions
 - Rough sleeping is increasing, as is single, non-statutory homelessness.
 - There is a need for additional appropriate 'move-on accommodation' to make most effective use of supported and other short term housing. .

Approaching the Council

- 3.8 The Council does not operate a local housing register or waiting list and encourages households in housing need to apply directly to appropriate local housing associations.
- 3.9 Households who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, can approach the Council's Housing Solutions Team for advice and support. Over the twelve months from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020, 1,506 households contacted the Team – on average around 125 each month.

- 3.10 Of the approaches, almost three quarters (1,125) were for a **wide range of circumstances** outside the direct control of the applicant, including loss or unsuitability of an existing home, relationship breakdown and financial issues. After this almost 10% (146) needed a home for various **legal** reasons, whilst 8.6% (129) were currently **sleeping rough**. For a further 7% (106) of customers there was insufficient information to determine their current position.
- 3.11 Almost 70% (1,042) needed one bed accommodation, while 28.4% (428) required two or three bedrooms. Where applicants have approached the Council under a range of different circumstances, 64% need one bed (724) and 33% two or three bedrooms (375). For the other categories a very high proportion of the need is for one bedroom homes.
- 3.12 Where applicants approach the Council directly in these circumstances, it will consider nominating them to a housing association when there is a suitable vacancy.
- 3.13 All housing associations also have their own allocation policies and applicants for housing must meet their respective eligibility criteria.

Social Housing in Telford & Wrekin

- 3.14 Telford & Wrekin Council transferred its housing stock to a number of housing associations in 1999. The Council does not now have its own housing stock and social housing in the borough is owned and managed by housing associations. However, the Council still has important housing responsibilities which contribute to providing opportunities to improve the borough and residents' lives.
- 3.15 The social housing sector is a key part of the borough's housing provision. There are around 13,500 housing association homes in Telford & Wrekin (as at March 2019). This has fallen from 14,000 in 2015. While 1,647 new affordable homes were provided in the borough between 2014 and 2019, some 1,465 – the equivalent of 89% have been lost to the sector due to sales and redevelopments.
- 3.16 The Wrekin Housing Group is the largest housing association in the borough with around 9,700 homes (at 31 March 1999). The next three largest associations – Bromford, Bournville Village Trust and Sanctuary – together own 3,200 homes. There are also a number of other housing associations and social housing providers in the borough who together own around 500 homes – some of these are also building new homes. Over the last ten years the number of new associations owning or managing homes in the borough has increased.
- 3.17 National welfare reform (specifically the removal of the spare room subsidy or 'bedroom tax') has had a significant impact on the nature of housing demand. As a result some housing providers in the borough are experiencing:
- increasing demand for smaller properties as under occupiers seek to downsize
 - an increase in 'difficult to let' family size properties
 - Increasing competition for smaller accommodation between downsizing households and those in housing need.
- 3.18 Welfare reform also introduced the shared accommodation rate for private tenants who are under 35 years of age and claiming local housing allowance. Claimants are unlikely to be able to afford self- contained accommodation in the private rented sector, adding to the overall demand for one-bedroom social housing.

3.19 These changes have led some housing providers to review their own housing allocation policies. Providers are also developing more new homes that are smaller, including new one bedroom flats and houses.

3.20 Housing associations are now able to let new and relet homes at *affordable* rents at up to 80% of open market value, rather than at *social* rents set in relation to local house prices and incomes. They are also able to offer 'flexible' or fixed term tenancies.

4. Accessing Social Housing in Telford & Wrekin

Background

- 4.1 While Telford & Wrekin Council is not a social landlord, it is still the strategic housing authority for the borough. It retains important responsibilities for meeting local housing needs including providing housing advice & assistance and preventing & addressing homelessness.
- 4.2 The Council does not operate a local Housing Register or Waiting List for social housing. However it supports households using the different routes to find a home in the borough. These include:
- **Applying direct** to a local housing association(s) - this will be the way most households find a home (see paras 4.3 – 4.6 below)
 - In some cases the Council will **make a nomination** of a household to a housing association from its Nominations Pool (4.7 – 4.9).
 - Seeking advice and information from the Council's **Housing Solutions Service**. This will support households to identify potential options and, if possible, to 'self-serve'. (4.10 – 4.16)

Applying direct to a Housing Association

- 4.3 Most households in need of social housing will apply direct to a local housing association. The larger housing associations in the borough, have over time, moved from their own individual waiting list systems to a common housing register and then to 'Choice Based Lettings' (CBL) arrangements, including *Choose Your Home*. In 2015 this was replaced by a new CBL system – *Homes Direct* – operated by Midlands Heart. At the same time the largest provider, Wrekin Housing Group, created its own separate 'managed waiting list'. Midlands Heart closed '*Homes Direct*', on 31 March 2021 and at present there is no shared arrangement.
- 4.4 There are now a greater number of routes into social housing in Telford & Wrekin. Local housing associations have set up, or are in the process, of setting up their own individual arrangements for allocating their homes in the borough. Some of these are 'choice-based, while other use a traditional housing waiting list or register. Details of the systems in place to access individual associations stock in Telford & Wrekin are provided on the Council's website. This will be updated regularly and provides direct links and information on the advice and support available to all residents seeking housing and/or threatened with homelessness.
- 4.5 Other associations with a smaller number of homes in the borough have their own arrangements for allocating their homes. This may include their own waiting list or register, advertising vacancies as they arise or seeking nominations from The Council. They may also have age-related, area-based or eligibility requirements. These associations include:

- Alpha
- Accord
- Anchor Hannover
- Boughey Roddam
- Connexus
- Habinteg
- Home Group
- Housing 21
- Shropshire Rural
- YMCA

Full contact details and links are provided in **Appendix 2** and via the Council's web site.

Nominations by Telford & Wrekin Council

- 4.6 Local authorities are able to make nominations to local housing associations in order to assist in meeting local needs. Associations will have regard to the Council's housing allocations policy but will let homes in accordance with their own respective allocations policies. Some of the associations (see para 4.5) are currently working to formalise the way in which households in housing need are nominated, or referred, by the Council.
- 4.7 A draft joint Nominations Agreement has been developed and the new arrangements are currently subject to a trial period to April 2022. The draft Agreement is part of Telford & Wrekin's Housing Allocation Policy and includes details of:
- How associations will inform the Council of social housing vacancies
 - How the Council will make its nominations
 - The main stages in the nominations process and timescales
 - How the arrangements will be monitored and evaluated
- 4.8 The nominations trial arrangements will be monitored by the Council working with the local Registered Provider Forum to assess their effectiveness and the experience of customers.

Telford & Wrekin's Housing Solutions Service

- 4.9 Telford & Wrekin Council provides a strong and pro-active housing options approach as part of its overall [Housing Services](#). A single housing hotline is available for anyone facing homelessness or who is in need of housing advice, support or other assistance. As part of this the Service:
- offers households in housing need support to access the best housing solution available for them – this might include, for example, housing association accommodation, private rented housing, low cost home ownership or help to 'stay put' in their existing home.
 - promotes realistic expectations about the availability of social housing
 - Helps to ensure that social housing is focussed on those who need it most.

- 4.10 The Council offers a full information and advice service to people who are looking for a home to rent or are at risk of becoming homeless. Individuals are able to register and set up an account on the [Council's Advice and Support](#) webpage. Once registered, individuals can check on the progress of their case, upload pictures of any documents required or view any letters that have been sent.
- 4.11 For individuals who are looking for a home to rent The Council can provide information on renting a home from:
- Housing associations
 - Nuplace – The Council's wholly owned housing company which provides private rented accommodation including a number of specialist homes
 - Private landlords
- 4.12 Telford & Wrekin Council also operates ['Telford Homefinder'](#) – a web-based Lettings Agency. This advertises:
- private rented accommodation where the landlord and property have been accredited by the Council.
 - selected homes to rent from certain local associations
- 4.13 For individuals who are homeless or concerned about the possibility of losing their home the Council encourages them to seek advice at the earliest opportunity. Individuals may register using the ['Housing Jigsaw'](#) website and arrange to discuss their circumstances with The Council's Housing Solutions Team. Individuals will also be able to follow the status of their case.
- 4.14 The Council will work proactively to prevent homelessness wherever possible. In some cases the Council will provide temporary accommodation including:
- whilst it investigates a case under homelessness legislation.
 - to some households who appear to be homeless and who are prioritised under homelessness legislation.
- 4.15 Temporary accommodation will only be used as a last resort and for a short period of time in cases where there are no other suitable housing options available.

5. The Legal Context

5.1 *1996 Housing Act* (amended) requires all housing authorities to have a Housing Allocation Scheme, regardless of whether they own housing stock. This must take account of the local context, including their current tenancy and homelessness strategies.

5.2 The Secretary of State has determined that the following groups of people are **ineligible** for social housing (and also homelessness assistance) and should not be made an offer of accommodation:

- Those subject to immigration control and not re-included by Regulations
- Those persons from abroad prescribed by Regulations to be ineligible.

Through their Housing Allocation policies local authorities are able to define who is **qualifies** for an allocation of social housing, including those in reasonable preference or additional preference categories. This section focuses on qualifying persons.

5.3 Even though Telford & Wrekin does not have its own housing stock it must still adopt and publish a Housing Allocation Policy as, by law, it allocates homes when it:

- Nominates a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by another housing authority or.
- Nominates a person to be an assured tenant of accommodation held by a housing association

5.4 The Housing Allocation Policy must:

- Comply with relevant legislation and regulations
- State how social housing in the local area will be let (e.g. offering a choice of housing accommodation, or the opportunity to express a preference)
- Set out details of who qualifies for social housing, including who is ineligible....

5.5 Housing authorities must also:

- Make all allocations (and nominations) in accordance with their Allocations Policy
- Publish a copy of the Allocations Scheme and make it available free of charge to any person who asks for a copy.

5.6 Allocation Policies must give **reasonable preference** (but not necessarily equal weight) to applicants with certain housing needs (over those who do not have them):

- a) People who are homeless. This includes applicants where there is a statutory duty to rehouse as well as applicants who are intentionally homeless and those who are not in priority need.
- b) People who are owed a duty by any housing authority
- c) People occupying **unsanitary or overcrowded housing** (based on "the bedroom standard) or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.*
- d) Applicants who need to move on **medical or welfare grounds**, including grounds relating to disability. *
- e) Applicants who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause **hardship** (to themselves or others).

**Possible criteria for c) and d) are provided in the Code of Guidance.*

5.7 However:

- There is no requirement to give greater priority to people who fall within more than one reasonable preference category ('cumulative preference').
- Similarly those in these categories should not necessarily be given absolute priority over everyone else.
- Housing authorities are encouraged to be flexible to meet local needs and priorities.

Eligibility

5.8 Housing authorities may also give **additional preference** within their scheme to people who fall within their statutory reasonable preference criteria and have urgent housing needs. This should be based on local circumstances and may include, for example:

- Those who need to move urgently because of a life threatening illness or sudden disability
- Families in severe overcrowding which poses a serious health threat
- Those who are homeless and require urgent re-housing as a result of violence or threats of violence (including intimidated witnesses), and those escaping from domestic abuse.

Government Guidance

5.9 The latest guidance for local authorities on Housing Allocation schemes is set out in the ['Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England'](#) (December 2020). This was updated to take account of the situation post-Brexit.

5.10 This includes the changes introduced by the Localism Act:

- Local authorities must frame their allocations policy by reference to their homelessness and tenancy strategies.
- The right to a review (appeal) is extended to applicants that are determined not to qualify for the register, including the right to be informed of the decision of the review and the grounds for it.
- Authorities must not disqualify the following applicants on the ground that they do not have a connection with the authority's district:
 - members of the Armed forces and former Service personnel, where the application is made within five years of discharge
 - bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces following the death of their spouse or partner
 - serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service. In addition, injured members of the forces or their bereaved spouses must be given additional preference compared to others with similar housing needs.

5.11 The Localism Act also gave each local authority the freedom to disqualify certain types of applicants. Examples may include:

- People with no local connection – either a term of residence in the area, or a strong connection with it.
- People with no housing need or who do not fall within the reasonable preference groups.
- Owner-occupiers (unless they cannot afford to meet their own housing needs)
- People with a history of severe tenancy breaches (including rent arrears) or antisocial behaviour.
- People who have worsened their own housing circumstances
- People who have refused offers, failed to attend viewings or not actively engaged in the property application process.

5.12 The Localism Act also introduced the requirement for each local housing authority to prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy. This must set out the matters to which Registered Providers are to have regard in formulating their own policies on tenancies. Providers are now no longer required to let general needs homes on the most secure form of tenancy possible but can now offer tenancies on shorter terms. Telford & Wrekin Council's Tenancy Strategy is set out in a separate document.

5.13 In the new guidance the government indicates that it will regulate to require councils to give additional preference to the following reasonable preference categories and who have urgent housing needs:

- Former members of the Armed Forces
- Serving members of the Armed Forces who need to move because of serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partners
- Serving or former members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

6. Priorities for the Allocation of Social Housing in Telford & Wrekin

Overview

- 6.1 This part of the Allocation Policy describes the Council's priorities for the allocation of social housing by housing association in Telford & Wrekin to applicants who qualify for social housing. This may be through a **direct letting** or in response to a **nomination by the Council**. It includes:
- Details of the priorities that the Council would like housing associations to take account of when making their housing allocations.
 - How the Council wishes to use the **flexibilities** provided by the Localism Act
 - The Council's priorities and processes for making nominations of households to housing associations – a component of its Allocations Policy
More detail on specific aspects of housing allocations including Local Lettings Plans, the local connections policy, Low Cost Home Ownership and supported / specialist accommodation.
- 6.2 The Allocation Policy and priorities for housing are based on a number of groups. There are **four groups** under which the housing circumstances of applicants may be considered. The bands take into account applicants who should be given 'reasonable preference', 'additional preference groups' and local lettings priorities. Registered Providers should consider these when allocating their general needs homes. The Council will use these groups to help determine where it is able to offer assistance and support to secure other forms of housing, e.g. private rented housing.
- 6.3 The Council wishes to see '*additional preference*' given to the following households or individuals:
- Those who would otherwise become homeless, which a planned move could prevent
 - Those supported by Council homelessness prevention initiatives
 - Those whose health will significantly deteriorate without a move
 - Those moving on from supported or specialist accommodation
 - Those in adapted properties where the adaptations are no longer required
 - Those needing to move to take up employment or to make it easier to get to work
 - Households living in overcrowded accommodation
 - Those who are under occupying a home which could be used to provide a home for a larger family

6.4 The Allocation Policy is based on **four** priority groups:

- Emergency and high priority
- Urgent need to move
- Identified housing need
- Low housing need

Full details of the specific needs in these categories are set out below:

Table 1. Allocation Policy - Priority Groups

Criteria	Examples of need
Emergency and high priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Statutory Homeless applicants who are owed a full housing duty ▪ Medical & care emergency ▪ Move to allow major repairs, modernisation or redevelopment ▪ Overcrowding and short of 3 or more bedrooms ▪ Ongoing domestic abuse or harassment that can only be resolved by moving home ▪ Applicants leaving the armed forces ▪ Under occupying by 1 or more bedrooms.
Urgent need to move	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other homeless applicants and those who are under threat of being homeless ▪ Applicants moving on from supported or specialist accommodation (with the agreement of the provider) ▪ Care leavers ▪ Overcrowding and short of 2 bedrooms ▪ Lacking basic facilities ▪ Families with children under 10 years old living in upper floor flats with no lifts ▪ Loss of tied accommodation ▪ Applicants needing to move to take up employment or to make it easier to get to work.
Identified housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applicants who have been approved as foster or adoptive parents and require an additional bedroom to facilitate a placement ▪ Applicants who need to be closer to family and friends ▪ Applicants with any other reasonable housing needs ▪ Overcrowding and short of 1 bedroom ▪ Sharing facilities with another household ▪ Property in minor disrepair
Low housing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applicants who have no identified housing need ▪ Applicants who have deliberately worsened their housing circumstances ▪ Applicants who are in debt to a current or previous landlord for rent, service charges and other property related recharges and don't have an agreement in place.

The Council may vary these bands or priorities from time to time but will consult on any proposals to significantly change these.

Local Flexibilities

6.5 Under the Localism Act (see above) local housing authorities have the freedom to disqualify certain types of applicants or give them a lower priority. The Council wishes to promote the following flexibilities in its Allocation Policy

- *Local connection*

Priority for all forms of social housing should generally be given to local people. This includes established local residents and those who have a strong local connection with the borough including significant previous residence, local employment or family links. The definition of local connection used by the Council is set out in **Appendix 3**.

While there is currently a general shortage of housing supply in relation to need, in some areas the supply of certain property types, such as three/four bed family homes or certain types of specialist housing, may be greater than current demand, leading to long empty property times. Applicants who do not meet the local connection definition are not excluded from applying for social housing. They may however be placed in the lowest priority band.

Housing applicants will be given the opportunity to establish a local connection, for example there they have no connection elsewhere, are fleeing domestic abuse, need to move to take up work or supply an essential service, or need to support or care for close relatives or be supported or cared for by them. Armed forces personnel discharged within the last five years will have a right to local connection.

- *No immediate housing need*

Applicants with no identified housing need will qualify for the lowest priority band. In some areas there may be an imbalance of supply and demand for certain property types and there is a need to avoid long empty property times.

- *Owner-occupiers*

Applicants who have the resources to meet their own housing needs would generally not be supported in the allocation of social housing, except where they have high housing needs and are unable to help themselves.

- *People with a history of tenancy breaches*

Housing Associations' own allocation policies may disqualify an applicant from being offered housing. However the Council cannot apply this to accepted homeless households. Where the Council wishes to nominate an accepted homeless household who has previously breached their tenancy (e.g. left with rent arrears) it will provide details of the individual's circumstances to the housing association.

- *People who have worsened their own housing circumstances*

Where an applicant has deliberately worsened their own housing circumstances they may be placed in the lowest priority band. However the Council will take into account the applicant's circumstances, e.g. the welfare of children.

- *People who have refused offers of properties or failed to attend viewings.*

As the Council does not have its own housing stock this qualification is not relevant. Housing associations may include this in their own allocation policies and the Council will ask to be informed if they are refusing a nomination for this reason or do not co-operate in other ways. This will be taken into account and the Council may no longer the household owe the household a housing duty

- *Equal Opportunities*

Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to equal opportunities in housing. We will ensure that priority for housing is based on housing need and housing policies are fair to all sections of the community regardless of age, disability, gender, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

Nomination by the Council

6.6 While the Council does not operate a housing waiting list or register it maintains a 'pool' of households who sought advice and support and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. In 2020 it received over 1,500 formal enquiries from households in this position. The Council currently makes a number of nominations of households in housing need to providers on an informal basis.

6.7 As part of developing the new Allocation Policy the Council has been working with local providers the aim of establishing a formal joint nominations arrangement and to increase the number of successful nominations that are made directly to housing associations. The interim arrangement includes:

- The type of homes that will be included including general vacancies (relets) and new build homes.
- The proportion of these to be offered for nomination by to the Council by providers
- Processes and timescales for making and considering nominations

6.8 Where the Council is given the opportunity to make a nomination to a suitable property it will make up to three nominations for consideration. These will be based on the priorities and examples of need set out in the table below. They will include one primary nomination and up to two secondary nominations which are defined as:

- **Primary** - Households in Main Duty or **Relief Duty** under the Homelessness Reduction Act
- **Secondary** - Households in **Main Duty, Prevention Duty or in Prevention** under the Homelessness Reduction Act

This will include households:

- who are homeless. This includes applicants where there is a statutory duty to rehouse as well as applicants who are intentionally homeless and those who are not in priority need.
- who are owed a specific legal duty by another housing authority.

- occupying **unsanitary or overcrowded housing** (based on 'the bedroom standard) or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- who need to move on **medical or welfare grounds**, including grounds relating to disability.
- who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the housing authority, where failure to meet that need would cause **hardship** (to themselves or others).
- in the Council's **additional preference** categories.

6.9 As part of its nomination process the Council will assess the housing needs of the customer against the specification and location of the available property. It will then makes its nomination(s) based on the level and urgency of housing need and in the order of the date their enquiry to the Council was validated.

6.10 It has been agreed with the housing associations to trial this arrangement from April 2021 for twelve months. This will allow for monitoring of outcomes, further discussion with larger providers who were not part of Midland Heart's letting system and the possible extension to other, smaller and specialist providers.

Local Lettings Plans

6.11 Local Lettings Plans (LLP) may be used by the Council and providers to allocate homes to specific groups of people whilst still taking account of allocation priorities. LLPs should not discriminate directly or indirectly on any equality grounds.

6.12 The agreement of a LLP will normally be linked to a planning consent for a new housing scheme and included as part of a S106 Agreement for that development. They may also relate to existing homes. LLPs in Telford & Wrekin should cover all affordable tenures including rent and low cost home ownership (shared ownership or similar).

6.13 The Council will work with housing providers in the borough to identify neighbourhoods, areas and schemes which would benefit from a local lettings plan (LLP). LLPs may be used to:

- Enable the allocation of all new schemes to a mix of tenants in order to develop a strong and stable community
- Enable an existing community to become more stronger and more stable
- Allow those living in rural areas, or areas of high demand in relation to supply, to have priority for schemes in their village or locality.
- Enable more sensitive lettings on schemes for a number of reasons

6.14 LLPs will include details of:

- Aims and objectives
- Letting criteria, for example age, household size/composition, personal circumstances, employment, local connection.
- Types of tenancies
- Scope and duration
- Monitoring and review arrangements
- Equalities Impact Assessment

6.15 LLPs may also be agreed in other circumstances where there is evidence that local communities would benefit from such a plan and there is no significant adverse impact on other communities.

6.16 The Council will work with housing providers on the preparation of LLPs to ensure that they are agreed formally before a property is advertised or allocated. In addition:

- The equalities impact of a LLP will be considered before it is agreed.
- LLPs will have clear criteria which are published when a property is advertised.
- All LLPs will include a formal date for a joint review to ensure that they are still appropriate and relevant.

Local Connection Policies

- 6.17 In rural parts of the borough and some other areas, e.g. Newport, the Council will use its planning powers to influence the initial allocation and subsequent relet of all new social properties (for rent or low cost home ownership). These will be restricted in the first instance to established local residents of the parish (or those that that have a strong local connection to it) and who have a housing need. This will be achieved by the use of a legal S106 agreement linked to the planning consent which will set out the local connection criteria and the timescales after which the search for applicants can be widened out. In rural areas and certain other areas the Council will seek to work closely with the respective Parish Council or equivalent. Full details are provided in Appendix 3.
- 6.18 Most of the existing social properties in rural parishes are not subject to a legal agreement restricting their allocation to applicants with a local connection. However the Council will encourage housing providers to relet them in future using LLPs to prioritise applicants with a local connection.

Low Cost Home Ownership

- 6.19 The local connection criteria and allocation processes described above will also apply to other forms of affordable housing, including shared ownership housing in rural parishes and other selected areas. These homes should be advertised through the mechanisms described above. They may also be promoted in other ways, e.g. local newspapers, newsletters or websites. The Council also strongly encourages housing providers to advertise these properties through the local Help to Buy Agent. Applicants should demonstrate that they are unable to afford to buy on the open market in the location where they have a local connection and are also able to afford their full housing costs.

Supported and Specialist Housing (including Extra care housing)

- 6.20 Potential applicants may be referred to this form of housing by a key worker from housing, social care, health or probation. For some schemes applications may be invited. There are schemes available for:
- Younger people
 - Older people
 - Ex-offenders
 - People with mental health needs
 - Drug and alcohol abuse
 - Victims of domestic abuse
 - Homeless people
 - Adults with learning disability
 - Adults with a physical or sensory disability
- 6.21 Some supported or specialist accommodation may be for short period, perhaps between 6 months and 2 years. Some accommodation may be long term or a 'home for life'.

6.22 More information on [supported and specialist housing](#) in Telford & Wrekin is available on the Council's webpages.

1. Arrangements for Monitoring & Review

7.1 The Council will monitor the implementation of its Housing Allocation Policy by working with local housing associations and other providers. It may update this document from time to time but will consult on any significant changes.

REFERENCES

- The Housing Act, 1996
- The Localism Act, 2011
- Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England (2021).
MHCLG

APPENDIX 1

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL TENANCY STRATEGY

Introduction

Under the Localism Act 2011 local housing authorities must prepare and publish a Tenancy Strategy. This must set out the matters to which housing associations (Registered Providers) social housing providers are to have regard in formulating or reviewing their policies on tenancies. Housing associations should consider it every time they review their policies.

Under the Localism Act housing associations no longer have to let general needs homes on the *most secure form of tenure* possible, but can offer a 'flexible' or fixed term tenancy on affordable and social rented homes. All associations must set out their approach to tenure in their own tenancy policy. This should explain:

- The kind of tenancies they will create
- The circumstances in which they will do this
- The length of tenancy terms
- The circumstances in which a further tenancy will be granted

Links are provided below (to follow) to the tenancy policies of the largest housing associations in the borough:

- Bournville Village Trust (BVT)
- Bromford Housing Group
- Housing Plus
- Trident
- Sanctuary
- Whg
- The Wrekin Housing Group

Use of Fixed Term Tenancies

The Council's preference is for use of secure, lifetime tenancies. However it recognises that housing associations have the flexibility to offer fixed term tenancies of various lengths. Where associations do use fixed term tenancies the Council requests that:

- A minimum five year fixed tenancy is used. This provides greater stability and certainty for tenants and families. It will also help to create a sustainable community.
- Longer tenancies (for example, 10 years) are used where the property is specialist or adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person.
- Lifetime tenancies are used for sheltered housing or extra care housing.
- Shorter tenancies (for example, two years) are used where someone is expected to move on to more permanent accommodation or requires short term housing.
- Tenancy type to be maintained when a tenant transfers within an association's stock.
- Fixed term tenancies are not used to address breeches of tenancy, where there are existing legal remedies
- The termination of fixed term tenancies should not be linked to household income.

Where a fixed tenancy is used, providers should give tenants appropriate advice and information about their housing options at the time of letting and when they carry out a tenancy review.

The Council expects providers to renew all fixed term tenancies other than where the tenant's circumstances have changed significantly, e.g. significant under occupation, where specialist housing is no longer required. In these cases tenants should be treated sensitively and offered a more suitable home with the same or other housing association.

The Council supports the use of introductory or probationary tenancies by providers for new tenants.

Reviewing a Fixed Term Tenancy

Providers should set out within their Tenancy Policy how frequently a fixed term tenancy will be reviewed and the factors that will be considered, e.g. size of property/family composition, special features/adaptations and the continued need for them. The review should assess a tenant's circumstances and explore their available housing options.

A tenant should be given at least six months' notice if a provider is planning to end a tenancy. The providers should give reasons for the decision to end a tenancy and information on how to make an appeal.

Providers should formally notify the Council's Housing Solutions Team immediately where they have taken a decision not to renew a tenancy.

A tenant should be allowed to remain in their property at the end of the tenancy until a suitable alternative has been found.

The Council will work with local housing providers to monitor the use of fixed term tenancies, including their review, renewal and termination.

Affordable Rents

The Council recognises that many new fixed term tenancies for social housing are at *affordable* rather than *social* rents. It will monitor the extent to which affordable rents are actually affordable to people in housing need, particularly in the light of national welfare reforms. In some cases or geographic areas the Council will encourage the letting of social homes at social rents. The Council also expects providers to consult with it over proposals to convert social rented relets to affordable rents.

Nominations

Telford & Wrekin Council expects to retain its nomination rights to social housing vacancies. It will seek the assistance of local providers to use these to discharge or meet its statutory duties and strategic housing responsibilities.

APPENDIX 2

CONTACT DETAILS

Telford & Wrekin Council

Service	Telephone	Web site
Housing Solutions Team	01952 381925	https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20668/do_you_need_advice_about_renting_in_telford/351/housing_services
Telford Homefinder	01952 388117	https://thf.telford.gov.uk/Home/ContactUs

Housing Associations

Organisation	Telephone	Web site
Bournville Village Trust (BVT)	0300 333 6540	https://www.bvt.org.uk/
Bromford	0330 1234 034	http://www.bromford.co.uk/
Housing Plus	0300 300 0059	https://www.housingplusgroup.co.uk/contact#
Sanctuary	0800 131 3348 (landline)/ 0300 123 3511 (mobile)	http://www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk/
Trident	0800 111 4944	https://tridentgroup.org.uk/residents#
whg		https://www.whg.uk.com/
The Wrekin Housing Group	01952 217100	https://www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk/

APPENDIX 3

LOCAL CONNECTION POLICIES

Defining a Local Connection

For the purposes of this Allocation Policy a *local connection* to the borough as whole will be considered to be:

- Lived in the borough for three of the last five years *or*
- Employed in the borough or have a firm offer of employment in the borough (employed means anyone working more than 16 hours per week in the borough, but excluding casual work) *or*
- Returning to live in the borough having lived there previously for not less than three years *or*
- Have close family in the borough who have lived there for at least three years (Close family means a close relative such as a parent, grandparent, adult child, grandchild, adult sibling, common-law partner or civil partner) *or*
- Need to live in the borough to care for, or receive care from close relatives (same definition as close family) *or*
- Have special circumstances which the local authority may consider to warrant the applicant living in the borough

Local Connection and Rural Parishes in Telford & Wrekin

The Rural Area of Telford and Wrekin includes the following parishes:

- Chetwynd
- Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote
- Church Aston
- Edgmond
- Ercall Magna
- Eyton upon the Weald Moors
- Kynnersley
- Lilleshall & Donnington (rural part)
- Little Wenlock
- Preston upon the Weald Moors
- Rodington
- Tibberton & Cherrington
- Waters Upton.
- Wrockwardine (rural part)

For the purposes of this Allocation Policy a *local connection* to a rural parish will be considered as:

- Lived in the parish for three of the last five years *or*
- Employed in the parish or have a firm offer of employment in the parish (employed means anyone working more than 16 hours per week in the parish, but excluding casual work) *or*
- Returning to live in the parish having lived there previously for not less than three years *or*
- Have close family in the parish who have lived there for at least three years (Close family means a close relative such as a parent, grandparent, adult child, grandchild, adult sibling, common-law partner or civil partner) *or*
- Need to live in the parish to care for, or receive care from close relatives (same definition as close family) *or*
- Have special circumstances which the local authority may consider to warrant the applicant living in the parish

'*Cascade arrangements*' will operate as follows:

- a) If within one month of the property being advertised no applicants who meet the above local connection criteria can be identified, the property can be allocated to persons who have a local connection to bordering parishes provided that they are within the Borough of Telford and Wrekin.
- b) If within a further month no applicants who have a local connection to bordering parishes can be identified, the property can be allocated to persons who have a local connection to any rural parish in Telford & Wrekin.
- c) If within a further month no applicants who have a local connection to any rural parish in Telford & Wrekin can be identified, the property can be allocated to persons who are housing need and are normally resident in the Borough of Telford and Wrekin.

A Local Lettings Plan will be agreed between Telford & Wrekin Council, the local Parish Council and the Registered Provider. This will ensure that properties are allocated in accordance with the criteria, without individuals' information being shared.