

SUNDERLAND HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

9 December 2022

COVID-19 AND FLU IN SUNDERLAND – UPDATE

Report of the Executive Director of Health, Housing and Communities

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the Covid-19 and flu situation in Sunderland.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Board will be provided with an update on the Covid-19 situation in Sunderland. This will include a summary of the current position regarding estimated prevalence and actions being taken to combat the pandemic locally.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 The current guidance on Covid-19 is focused on living safely with respiratory infections, including Covid-19. The government has removed all domestic restrictions in England. Testing is paused in NHS establishments and Care Homes. There are still steps that people can take to reduce the risk of catching and spreading Covid-19.
- 3.2 It was agreed by the Board in July that a brief ‘for information’ report with key data would be brought to future meetings. If there are significant changes then a more in-depth paper will be brought to the Board in future.
- 3.3 The vaccination offer continues to be promoted and public health advice on the council website is kept under review. Work is ongoing to promote autumn boosters to eligible groups and data is being reviewed to identify and address areas and cohorts where uptake is low. Public health is co-ordinating a targeted programme of delivery to address vaccine inequality, working with the ICB, Sunderland GP Alliance, the regional vaccination team, community pharmacy and council colleagues.
- 3.4 The number of cases of flu is increasing locally and nationally.
- 3.5 In Sunderland, 76.5% of those aged 65 and over have received a flu vaccination this autumn/winter compared to 77.8% for the North East and North Cumbria. Sunderland has the second lowest uptake of flu vaccination amongst health and social care workers in the region at 39.3% compared to 45.6% for the North East and North Cumbria. South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust data for health care workers only shows the rate of uptake is the second lowest across North East and North Cumbria, and is also below target. This information is taken from Primary Care Network reporting data for the week ending 27th November.

- 3.6 Vaccination is a key priority and take-up of vaccines for Covid-19 and flu by cohort group, including health and social care workers, will continue to be monitored by the winter vaccine board and additional actions taken forward where identified and agreed.
- 3.7 Modelling data from UCL suggests the next Covid-19 peak is anticipated in mid-January 2023 with cases starting to rise from early December 2022.
- 3.8 At the time of writing (29/11/22), the latest available ONS weekly estimated prevalence of Covid-19 is for the week ending 15th November. The prevalence has fallen to 1 in 60 in the North East and the national figure is 1 in 65.
- 3.9 Confirmed specimens show that the Omicron sub-lineages (predominantly BA.5) are the most common variants between 14 October and 10 November 2022.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to receive the update on the Covid-19 pandemic and flu situation in Sunderland.