

DUDLEY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

DATE	September 12 th 2024
TITLE OF REPORT	Dudley Health Protection Strategy
Organisation and Author	Dudley Health Protection Board.
Purpose	For information purpose.
Background	<p>The Director of Public Health (DPH), on behalf of the local authority, is responsible for providing oversight for the health protection system, ensuring there are effective arrangements and governance processes in place. The Dudley Health Protection Strategy (Appendix I) has been developed to support the DPH in their role as an independent advocate for the health of the population and system leadership for its improvement and protection.</p> <p>We have a long-standing process of working together within Dudley on Health Protection issues. We were one of the first local authorities to have in place a Co-operation agreement, which has worked to ensure that when health protection outbreaks or incidents arise the system comes together to address those issues. The Health Protection Board and the processes in place have supported not only the management of outbreaks, but were key to how we managed the Covid response, coming together as a system to deal with challenges.</p> <p>This new Health Protection Strategy aims to build on the relationships already established, identify the priorities for partners and work together to achieve the objectives highlighted in each element of the strategy.</p> <p>The Dudley Health Protection Strategy aims to reduce the risk to every resident of Dudley Borough from infectious and non-infectious environmental health hazards and, where hazards do occur limit their impact on the health of those living and working within the borough. This will be achieved by working with partners and stakeholders to prevent exposure to hazards and taking timely actions in response to threats thus ensuring the most appropriate use of resources. In addition, the strategy will enable us to plan and work together in preparation for the next pandemic when it occurs.</p>

All partners on the HP Board (Appendix II) have contributed to the development of the HP Strategy and these are their priorities:

- Threat of infection from Anti-microbial resistance and poor dental hygiene
- Threat from zoonotic diseases and food and water safety
- Threat of vaccine preventable infections due to declining vaccination rates
- Threat of communicable disease
- Threat from major incidents and emergencies
- Threat from poor air quality
- Threat posed by extreme weather to the most vulnerable
- Threat posed by pandemic infections
- Threat of increased inequalities due to poor uptake of national screening programmes

Vaccine hesitancy is one of the World Health Organization's 'Ten threats to global health' and is responsible for declining vaccination rates. Although regularly above regional and national averages, vaccination rates in Dudley show a downward trend and there has been a rise of cases from vaccine preventable diseases. The Health Protection Strategy aims to build on the innovative partnership work, such as roving Covid-19 and flu clinics, pop-up and extended hours MMR clinics and pilot projects that have taken place since the pandemic. The Dudley Vaccine Inequalities group, established in 2022, is a regular multi-agency meeting with the goal of reducing vaccine hesitancy and improving vaccine uptake across the life-course to reduce health inequalities for Dudley residents through co-operation.

Anti-microbial resistance (AMR) is a public health threat identified on the National Risk Register and is responsible for or is a contributing factor towards millions of deaths globally each year. AMR makes it more difficult to treat infections and increases the risk of medical procedures and treatments. Reducing inappropriate use of antibiotics through antimicrobial management in health and adult social care, sexual health and substance misuse services is key to tackling AMR.

Poor oral care is linked to healthcare acquired infections, infections in the lining of the heart (endocarditis), and increased risk of poor nutrition and dehydration, with its associated risks. Preventing infections by improving oral care and continuing work to reduce urinary tract infections UTI's across health and adult social care

are actions included in the Dudley Health Protection Strategy which will contribute to reducing AMR.

Zoonotic infections are where an infectious disease passes from Animals to Humans. They can be spread by direct contact with an infected animal or via contaminated food, water or the environment. Zoonotic infections can pose a major Public Health threat to human and animal health, due to close connections with animals in agriculture, companionship and the natural environment (WHO, 2020). Controlling those risk have been seen in the borough and across the country since the pandemic, with the die of wild birds due to Avian influenza, and counter measures escalated to deal with this threat.

Protecting the residents of Dudley from foodborne diseases is an important element of the strategy. To maintain compliance with food safety within the borough inspections of food premises are carried out to ensure they comply with The Food Standards Agency's Food Law Code of Practice.

The prevention of these diseases also involves the inspection and licencing of premises where animals are housed, sold, bred or slaughtered.

Communicable diseases can affect individuals of all ages and have a devastating impact on the most vulnerable in our communities. In addition, they and can also have an impact on the system leading to outbreaks, service delivery disruption, and increased hospital admissions. The Health Protection Strategy aims to builds on the work undertaken in previous years around increasing knowledge and understanding of Infection prevention and control standards across the community, public and providers of Health and social care. The strategy also aims to maintain and strengthen the management of outbreaks through early identification and response, and, as a system learn from and apply lessons learnt from incidents and outbreaks of infection, to enable us to protect the service users and staff from communicable disease across the borough.

Screening provides an opportunity for early diagnosis and treatment of life-threatening diseases, reducing premature mortality and disability rates. Following the pandemic uptake of screening in Dudley has declined and uptake is lower in the more deprived areas of the borough, exacerbating health inequalities. The Health Protection Strategy aims to raise awareness of and remove barriers to improve uptake of screening opportunities

	<p>especially amongst communities with the lowest rates to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of Dudley residents.</p> <p>Air quality has a direct impact on the health of all residents of Dudley regardless of age. Poor air quality has direct links to asthma in children and young people and can exacerbate the effects of respiratory conditions in adults. The Dudley Health Protection Strategy identifies air quality monitoring and effective use of data in planning policies as one intervention to reduce pollution and improve air quality. Education for residents and enhancing the quality of green spaces across the borough will contribute to better air for all.</p> <p>Finally, we need to prepare for the next emergency and pandemic, therefore ensuring our plans are up to date and tested with form part of our strategy.</p>
<p>Key Points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk from infections and other environmental hazards are ever present. • Work is being undertaken to improve screening locally in areas of highest socioeconomic deprivation, particularly around breast and bowel screening. • This is a system wide strategy, has been developed by all members with a vested interest in the health and wellbeing of Dudley residents. Identifying the objectives and priority actions for partners to take to achieve the protection of the population of Dudley. • The Strategy will be monitored at the Health Protection Board, chaired by the Director of Public Health, where partners will feedback on progress, successes, and any risks or challenges.
<p>Emerging issues for discussion</p>	<p>Outbreaks and pandemics are a constant threat, and we must be prepared for when the next occurs.</p> <p>As we have already seen, falling vaccination rates will lead to an increase in outbreaks, with associated risks and costs.</p> <p>Resource/staffing pressures will potentially lead to challenges around the prevention of communicable disease and improvements to screening programmes.</p>

	After, sustained falls nationally healthcare associated infection rates have stalled.
Key asks of the Board/wider system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept the strategy • Monitor progress as part of the overall HWB strategy.
Contribution to H&WBB key goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving school readiness • Reducing circulatory disease deaths • More women screened for breast cancer 	<p>The Health Protection Strategy contributes to the Health and Wellbeing Board key goals by:</p> <p>Improving school readiness by addressing falling vaccination rates through innovative initiatives to counter misinformation and improve access in areas of low uptake and within at-risk communities.</p> <p>Reducing circulatory disease deaths by improving air quality and green spaces encouraging more active lifestyles.</p> <p>Improving screening rates for breast cancer in women by addressing inequalities through improvement of information, access and support where it is needed most.</p>
Contribution to Dudley Vision 2030	A place of healthy, resilient, safe communities.

Contact officer details



Dr Mayada Abuaffan, Director of Public Health.

Appendix I

See Attached

Appendix II

Organisations represented at the Health Protection Board

- Black Country Integrated Care Board: Multiple Members.
- Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.
- United Kingdom Health Security Agency.
- The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust: Multiple Members.
- Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust.
- West Midlands Ambulance Service University NHS Foundation Trust.
- NHS England.
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council: Multiple Members.
- The Care Quality Commission.