



WALTHAM FOREST

LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN

JUNE 2020

Waltham Forest Local Outbreak Control Plan

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1 Foreword by the Leader, London Borough of Waltham Forest

In the last few months, we have had to face many challenges due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the ensuing lockdown. We have made it our priority to support all of our residents through the crisis, and to protect the most vulnerable.

Through the Council's Community Help Network, we delivered over 3,400 parcels of food to vulnerable residents who had to self-isolate, and we raised £39,000 for local organisations providing help to residents. This was made possible thanks to the unprecedented involvement of our local communities, with close to 4,000 people signing up to volunteer and assisting the Council in its response.

We are moving out of the emergency phase of this crisis, but the pandemic is not over. We are now at a stage where we all have to follow the Government guidelines on social distancing to control the virus. As part of this progressive return to normal, the Council has been working to enable the reopening of non-essential retail. We have been helping local businesses to adapt to be ready to trade, for example by providing them with a Toolkit of Support. In addition, we have started re-designing public space for businesses to trade, while encouraging visitors to safely walk and cycle to their local High Streets. We adapted 2325 meters of pavement and suspended footway parking in a number of locations to make social distancing easier in the streets of our Borough, and to facilitate active travel.

Moreover, following the government's announcement that schools should prepare to open for more children from 1st June, we shared the concern of parents and teachers for the safety of children, families and staff around any return to school. We worked with our schools to plan how the opening of schools for more children could be delivered in Waltham Forest. Safety has been the paramount concern all along.

Looking forward, the safety and health of everyone in the Borough remains a priority. Avoiding outbreaks and managing them when they occur is essential for everyone in Waltham Forest. Our Borough is one of the most diverse in London, and we want to recognise that BAME communities are particularly at risk.

The Test and Trace service is a key component of the work we are doing to safely allow further easing of the lockdown. As part of the wider national Test and Trace programme, local authorities have been asked to develop local outbreak plans. The Local Outbreak Control Plan sets out how we will achieve this goal of managing sporadic local COVID-19 surges by testing, tracking and tracing. It outlines the measures we will take to get potential future localised outbreaks under control including in schools, care homes, workplaces and wider communities. It will allow us to maintain and improve the health of our communities and to ensure an effective response to any possible rise in COVID-19 cases in Waltham Forest.

This is not only about responding to outbreaks. This plan will enable us to reduce the risks in the first place, and is a crucial part of the recovery. It will allow us to safely enjoy everyday activities, such as visiting local businesses, seeing friends and family or going back to school.

To prevent and manage outbreaks in the best way possible for our community, we will regularly review and test the plan to implement improvements. The plan will also be based on national and local science and data, and we will be responsive to any changes.

Waltham Forest residents have been key to support the response to the COVID-19 crisis. The dedication and compassion of volunteers were essential to protect the most vulnerable among us. We

are again counting on your cooperation in implementing this Local Outbreak Control Plan. Together, we can protect the health and wellbeing of everyone in Waltham Forest.

2 Introduction

As we move into the next stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the easing of lockdown restrictions, we are working closely with our health and policing partners to tackle COVID-19 through Test and Trace. This includes planning our approach to preventing, identifying and containing a local outbreak of COVID-19 if it occurs.

In order to manage any cases of COVID-19 in the borough, we have developed the Local Outbreak Control Plan for Waltham Forest. This plan will outline how we aim to prevent the spread of the virus whilst also planning for the possibility of a second wave to protect our community's health, lives and freedoms should one occur. The Local Outbreak Control Plan will specifically address the needs of our community, working alongside our residents, businesses, faith groups and organisations to understand how to get tested and how we can trace the infection should it spread.

Waltham Forest Mission Statement:

"In Waltham Forest, preventing COVID-19 will be our top priority. Working with our local partners and diverse communities, we will work to ensure that all of our residents, organisations and businesses have the information they need to take responsible action to protect their health and that of our most vulnerable residents. Through deepening our work with our communities we will allay concerns and provide extra support where needed.

In the event of an outbreak, our preparations mean we will be ready to take urgent action to manage and contain this quickly, knowing how to reach those we need to. We will continually learn from data and our residents' experiences to improve our approach to help save lives and protect freedoms across the borough."

2.1 The role of the local authority working with regional and national structures

At a national level, the role of NHS Test and Trace is critical to preventing local outbreaks. NHS Test and Trace is a central part of the government's COVID-19 recovery strategy to control the COVID-19 rate of reproduction (R), reduce the spread of infection and save lives. NHS Test and Trace will deliver the national testing service and undertake manual contact tracing.

Across London, the London Coronavirus Response Centre (LCRC) manages testing, tracing and initial response to outbreaks in complex settings in London. The LCRC assesses need across London to deploy testing resources swiftly as well as leading on complex outbreaks in London settings.

The role of local authorities is to put in place measures to prevent, identify and contain local outbreaks by developing and delivering a Local Outbreak Control Plan to reduce the spread of the virus in the borough. Local authorities will work with the national and regional service to monitor potential community outbreaks and provide localised support in case of an outbreak. Local authorities will continue to provide support for the most vulnerable and those who need to self-isolate, and use their knowledge of their areas to deliver localised communications and engagement with their residents.

2.2 Waltham Forest principles

Tackling COVID-19 and protecting the health, lives and freedoms of our residents is our top priority. As an urban borough proud of its diversity, the challenges posed by COVID-19 are significant and unprecedented. Waltham Forest has 53 care homes, a higher proportion of residents over 70 than many of our neighbouring boroughs and over 3/5 of residents are from a BAME background - groups we know have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. It is critical that our Local Outbreak Control Plan is tailored to suit the needs of our communities.

The Waltham Forest approach is defined by three guiding principles; community engagement, prevention and review & improve. It is underpinned by the National Principles for outbreak planning, best practice guidance and the 7 National Guidance thematic areas.

Waltham Forest Principles:

- 1) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** The plan is only as good as how we work with the community to deliver it.
- 2) PREVENTION:** The plan will focus on active prevention supporting and enabling communities, residents and organisations with information, guidance and advice.
- 3) REVIEW & IMPROVE:** The plan will remain live by testing it ourselves and evolving it in response to changes in national and local science, data and experience.

Our key commitments:

- Ask all community partners, including those from faith groups, VCS organisations and local businesses, to sign up to our community statement setting out our joint commitment to get rid of COVID-19 in Waltham Forest and keep residents safe
- Establish a 50-person representative citizen panel to test and improve our approach to enable greater engagement with any tracing and any lockdown requirements
- Recruit legend volunteers to share information and engage with communities including those who are harder to reach
- Train front line staff in Test and Trace procedures, and offer training to VCS groups
- Implement action plans to increase testing in groups disproportionately affected by COVID-19 including BAME and older residents
- Deliver a comprehensive ongoing prevention offer across settings in Waltham Forest, including proactive audits of care homes to check for infection control compliance; targeted work in high risk workplaces such as food processing plants; infection control support from school nurses delivered in Waltham Forest schools; easy-read guidance and action cards for community and voluntary sector organisations and religious institutions; and training provision to settings via webinars
- Hold monthly outbreak scenario simulations with borough coordination partners to test our response and update the Local Outbreak Control Plan
- Produce a public data charter that sets out transparently how local data will be managed
- Link with regional partners to ensure consistency of approach across the region e.g approach to enforcement

2.2.1 Community engagement

Overview of principle: *The plan is only as good as how we work with the community to deliver it*

The community have already played a hugely significant role in supporting each other throughout COVID-19, with people playing their part to follow the lockdown guidance, as well as going above and beyond to protect our most vulnerable residents.

Continuing to engage with our community is critical to the effective implementation of Test and Trace in Waltham Forest. Ensuring everyone in Waltham Forest keeps healthy and safe is our common goal and everyone has a part to play. Waltham Forest is a thriving place because we care about each other, and we want to protect our loved ones and neighbours. If we do not support each other and follow guidelines it is likely there will be a second rise in infections, which will severely affect the health of our most vulnerable, the livelihoods of our businesses and town centres, and the wellbeing of everyone. Our ambition is to work together to protect those among us who are most vulnerable, keep our freedoms and enjoy getting back to normality.

To do this the council and the community will need continue to work together to prevent, identify and control a local outbreak by using our collective expertise, understanding and ability to reach the different communities that make up Waltham Forest. A key part of this will be creating the opportunity to have a two-way dialogue with residents so that we can address areas of concerns, deepen our understanding of barriers and any extra support needed, as well as improve our approach.

We are asking our community to sign up to a borough wide statement of community involvement which sets out the importance of why and how we can work together. The statement can be found in full in appendix 1.

Key Actions: How we will work together to tackle COVID-19

We will ask all partners to sign up to a **community statement** setting out our joint commitment to getting rid of COVID-19 in Waltham Forest and keeping residents safe

Specific **community action plans** to engage and inform hardest to reach groups where we do not already have established links for example Eastern European, South East Asian women

Information provided to VCS organisations and faith groups / trusted community figures to share with diverse communities to encourage test and trace compliance

Monthly community engagement meetings to increase understanding of barriers, concerns, as well as additional support requirements for identified groups to enable greater engagement with any tracing and lockdown requirements

50 representative citizen panel members recruited to test and improve approach

Legend volunteers engaged to help share information and engage with communities

Communications:

For our community engagement principle to work in practice, it is essential that we develop a robust communications strategy to disseminate information to all residents so that everyone who lives here understands their role and what they need to do.

Key Actions: How we will communicate with residents

Ensure London Test and Trace campaign is widely disseminated across borough through core channels and in high footfall areas	Targeted social media advertising campaign to reach harder to reach groups, including use of local groups such as Walthamstow Life and Nextdoor	Core messages translated in top five languages spoken in the borough and shared in community spaces
Targeted preventative information will be shared with harder to reach groups through routes such as trusted community voices, peer to peer communication, (Whats App), points of congregation	We will train all of our frontline staff in our infection control procedures and offer training to community organisations	Insight will be used to adapt group specific messages to address fears, reassure and increase participation. For example - taking part in contact tracing
Using Legend volunteer capacity to share information at a hyper-local level to tackle misinformation and provide reassurance	Scenario plans to enable swift mobilisation of information dissemination relevant to outbreak circumstances	Hold webinars to communicate with schools, places of worship and businesses about the Outbreak Plan

2.2.2 Prevention

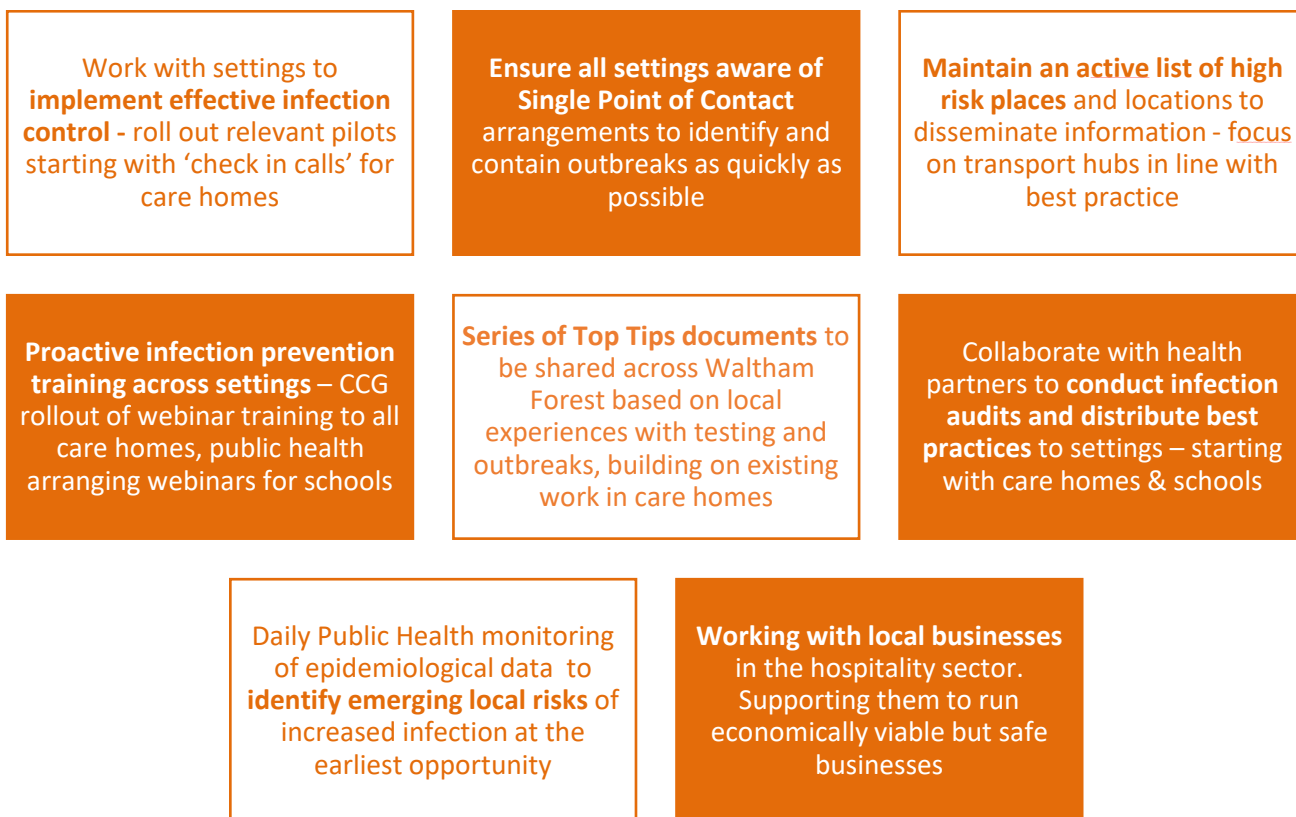
Overview of principle: *A focus on active prevention supporting and enabling communities, residents and organisations with information, guidance and advice*

While the Local Outbreak Control Plan details the necessary steps that will be taken in response to any outbreaks that occur locally, it is far better to prevent them from happening in the first place. This principle focuses on the idea that we want to put as much effort into proactive prevention of disease spread, whether in the broader community or in specific high-risk settings, as we would in reacting to a developing situation.

Effective prevention in the general population will involve using the community engagement and communications already detailed, to keep a focus on the general preventative messages around:

- Practising social distancing
- Hand washing and cleaning
- Correct PPE or facial covering use
- Sticking to national guidance around issues like working from home and use of public transport
- Engaging with NHS Test and Trace by testing when you have symptoms, and isolating when required to do so

We also aim to support higher risk settings, including care homes, schools, workplaces, religious settings, with appropriate tailored support for their particular needs and risks.

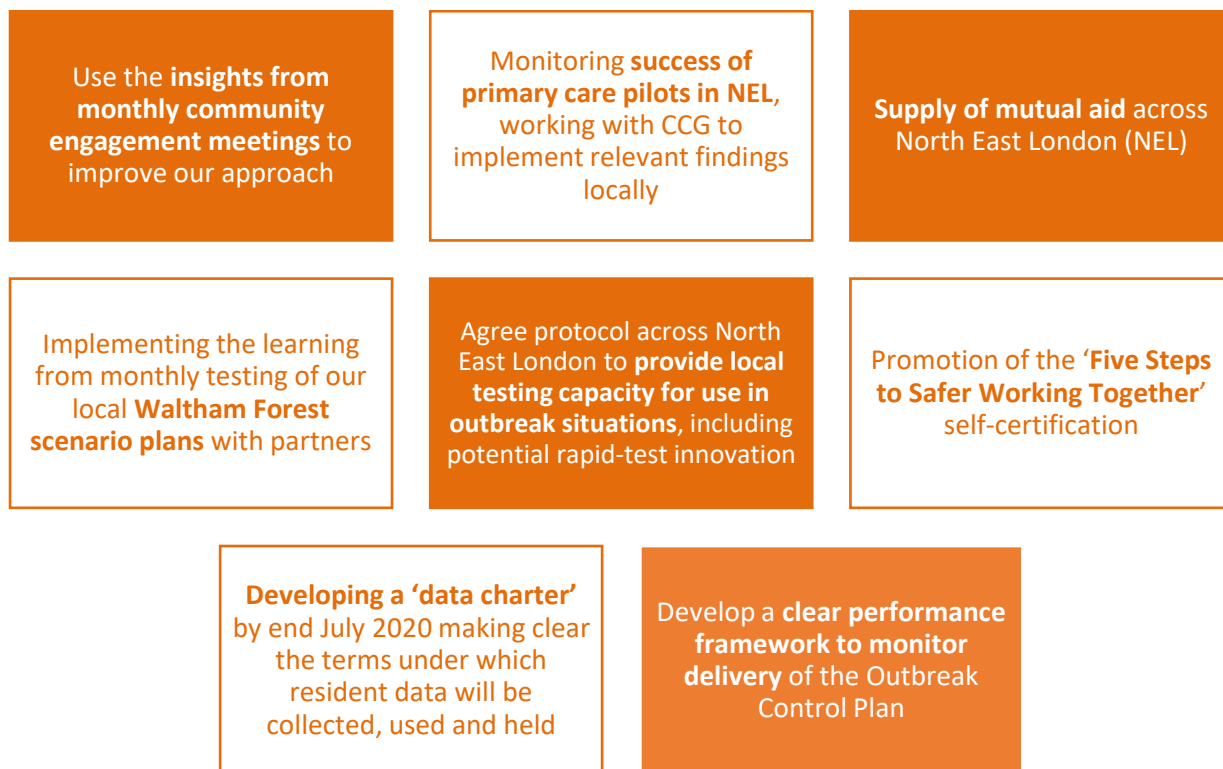
Key Actions: How we will prevent the spread of COVID-19**2.2.3 Review & Improve**

Overview of the principle: *The plan will remain live by testing it ourselves and evolving it in response to changes in national and local science, data and experience*

We are all aware of how rapidly the ongoing COVID-19 situation can change. Whether due to changes in the national or local patterns of disease, amendments to national guidance, emerging evidence or new best practice examples of effective disease management, or through feedback from our communities there will always be a need to be updating and adjusting our local response to ensure it's the best it can be.

We are building this in explicitly to our Local Outbreak Control Plan, acknowledging that it must constantly adapt and evolve with new knowledge in order to remain suitable for our residents' protection. This principle means that we will be engaging in ongoing regular review, including testing our plan against outbreak scenarios and incorporating learning from experience, to keep the plan up to date and fit for purpose.

Key Actions: How we will review & improve our response



3 Planning for local outbreaks in care homes, schools and other high-risk settings

3.1 Objectives of the chapter

It is important that we are prepared to successfully manage outbreaks when they occur to minimise onward transmission of the virus. In line with the national ask, we have given particular consideration to schools and care homes, as two of the highest risk settings we are working with.

In addition, we are also asked to consider other high-risk places, locations and communities. We have therefore also considered actions and strategies required in a number of other outbreak scenarios occurring in relation to high-risk settings as follows:

- Workplaces
- Home from home environments including HMOs and student accommodation
- Homeless hostels
- Sheltered housing
- Libraries
- Leisure centres
- Community cluster (including religious communities)

Most of these settings in the borough are workplaces as well as providing important facilities and services to residents, including some of the most vulnerable in society. Some of these settings are under direct control from the local authority, while others are the responsibility of commissioned providers and many are independent of the local authority altogether. This will determine the exact set of actions that are possible or appropriate in each situation. In each situation, actions will be taken by the local authority, the London COVID-19 Response Centre (LCRC) and management staff within the setting itself. When required, an Incident Management Team (IMT) will be convened either by the LCRC or the local authority, bringing the key partners together to work to manage the outbreak and reduce onward transmission. Appendix 2 sets out the data flow during outbreak management.

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Set out key actions that will be taken in response to outbreaks in each of these settings by each of the three key players involved; the local authority, the LCRC and the setting themselves.
- Set out actions that will improve awareness among all settings of the need to inform the local authority Single Point of Contact (SPoC) if outbreaks are suspected in order to allow control measures to be implemented at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Identify which teams will provide support to settings during and after outbreaks have occurred

3.2 Care Homes

3.2.1 Prevention

As with any public health plans, prevention is integral to our approach. The local authority and partners have worked to advise and support care homes in our borough to implement national guidance, for example on areas such as infection prevention and control (including use of personal protective equipment). This has also included supporting care homes to access COVID-19 testing, both asymptomatic testing (for all residents and staff to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 without showing symptoms) and testing for those with symptoms.

An infection control action plan for care homes has been developed and is overseen by a care homes strategic board (see appendix 3). As part of the plan, care homes have been supported with funding

to implement infection control measures to prevent cases/outbreaks of COVID-19 and given guidance on effective uses of this funding to prevent COVID-19. Other key themes in the action plan include:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Infection control training and guidance
- Testing
- Workforce
- Clinical support

Care homes have also been offered free infection control training for their staff. By supporting care homes to have in place robust infection control arrangements, we aim to prevent or minimise the number of COVID-19 cases in care homes and reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and outbreaks. This will take place alongside regular communication to care homes e.g. fortnightly teleconferences and drop-in infection control webinars, to identify and respond to any support needs they may have. Care homes will also have in place infection control policies for their own homes including business continuity arrangements.

3.2.2 Monitoring arrangements

Crucial to a swift and effective response to any outbreak is ensuring that it is identified, and control measures initiated, at the earliest point possible. Care homes are asked to notify both the local authority and the LCRC when an individual or resident has symptoms of COVID-19. This means that when cases do occur, partners can ensure the care home has access to support to prevent any spread of COVID-19. The LCRC offers 7 day a week support to care homes experiencing an outbreak, and a protocol is in place to follow up with any care homes notifying the local authority of an outbreak.

3.2.3 Management of an outbreak

The initial steps to control an outbreak will usually be taken by the care home itself. These involve arranging for symptomatic individuals and those they have been in close contact with to isolate (e.g. in their own room), cleaning, ensuring adequate arrangements are in place for infection control (e.g. sufficient supplies of required PPE, cleaning, hand hygiene, cohorting staff, etc). The care home is also asked to notify the LCRC and local authority commissioners at this point. The LCRC will support the care home to access testing for symptomatic residents (and others as required), provide initial advice around infection control and provide guidance to follow. The local authority will follow up with the care home and put them in touch with the local CCG infection prevention and control lead who can provide more in-depth infection control advice/support.

Should this become a larger outbreak, the LCRC and local authority would establish an Incident Management Team. The LCRC will then lead on managing the outbreak and advising on the steps to be taken to minimise transmission of the virus within the setting. The local authority role is to contribute other important aspects of the response, by leading on communications with partners and the community, supporting the care home (e.g. with PPE, infection control support etc) and also providing follow-up support to prevent any future outbreaks.

Care home business continuity plans (BCPs) will also form an important element of the response to outbreaks or situations where a number of staff may be required to isolate at the same time. Appropriate PPE and thorough risk assessments will act to substantially reduce the risk of such scenarios occurring, but BCPs must be fit for purpose to ensure prompt and effective actions to minimise disruption to care across the borough.

The mini-plans in appendix 3 set out high level actions to be taken within each of the identified settings by the setting itself, the LCRC the local authority and other relevant partners

3.3 Schools and childcare settings

3.3.1 Prevention

The government has published guidance for [‘implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings’](#) as part of a package of guidance documents to help schools and early years settings prepare for the wider re-opening. This publication includes guidance on effective infection protection and control, use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and direction for settings on class / group sizes. This information has been shared with and communicated to education and childcare settings via virtual meetings, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) summaries and other guidance documents. Schools and childcare settings completed risk assessments to prepare for re-opening. These include all schools in Waltham Forest putting in place measures to follow social distancing where possible. Children in childcare settings are being looked after in small bubbles as per national guidance.

Staff with symptoms are eligible for priority testing as essential workers, and settings have also been provided with a template and guidance on conducting individual staff risk assessments to enable effective control measures to be put in place to ensure their ongoing safety. A flowchart and FAQ for schools and early year settings covering actions to take in event of a suspected or confirmed case, which follows national guidance on isolating cases, PPE and cleaning has been produced. In addition, action cards which highlight the key infection protection and control messages are available. Waltham Forest has provided supplies of PPE to schools and early years settings to be used in the event of a suspected case in the setting and where 2m social distancing cannot be maintained. Advice on PPE is also included in FAQs.

3.3.2 Monitoring arrangements

When a child or staff member in an education or childcare setting develops symptoms of COVID-19 they will be sent home, given isolation advice and advised to book a COVID-19 test as soon as possible. There is guidance for schools and settings to follow whilst children are awaiting collection by their parent / carer. Settings must also be cleaned using the [guidance for cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#). Education and childcare settings are advised to email the Waltham Forest Single Point of Contact (SPOC) email address to notify the council of suspected cases. Basic information on these reports will be collated weekly. Schools and settings are not required to inform or seek advice from the London COVID-19 Response Cell (LCRC) for a suspected case.

In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a child or staff member, there are two routes through which the local authority will be informed; either by the London COVID-19 Response Cell (LCRC) who will inform the Director of Public Health or directly by the school. If a school or childcare setting is made aware by a parent / guardian about a confirmed case of COVID-19, then they are advised to contact the Waltham Forest SPOC and the London COVID-19 Response Cell (LCRC) immediately. LCRC should be notified separately by NHS Track and Trace of any staff member or child in a school / childcare setting who is tested and confirmed to have COVID-19, but schools / childcare settings are asked to notify directly to ensure cases are not missed. In the event of a larger outbreak, schools / childcare settings will be required to provide a daily line listing (a list of all the children / staff attending the setting and whether they are isolating due to symptoms, isolating due to being contacts, or if still in the setting) to the Public Health Single Point of Contact and the Incident Management Team (if established).

Feedback from education and childcare settings on implementation of the guidance, challenges they are facing and feedback from parents is also being captured by local authority schools and childcare services via regular communication and virtual meetings with Headteachers and Ofsted registered childcare business owners and managers.

3.3.3 Management of an outbreak

On notification of a confirmed single case, the LCRC will contact the child's family / staff member to obtain further information and undertake a risk assessment and provide isolation advice. The LCRC will then contact the school / childcare setting to confirm if the child / staff member had been in school/setting in the 48 hours prior to symptoms starting or the 7 days after. LCRC will then work with the school to identify which children and staff were in contact whilst the person was considered to be infectious. These contacts will be advised to self-isolate at home for 14 days.

Schools and childcare settings are also asked to notify the LCRC if they have either:

- Two or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 among children / staff within 14 days or;
- An overall increase in sickness absence reporting where parents report illness with suspected COVID-19 (but where tests have not been done / results are not available)

In these scenarios, the LCRC will contact the school to gather further information and conduct a more detailed risk assessment to consider the severity and spread of the outbreak, current control measures and the wider context. The LCRC will liaise directly with the local authority and decide if it is necessary to convene an Incident Management Team (IMT). The IMT may determine that it is necessary to undertake wider swabbing of the children and staff in order to understand the transmission in the setting.

Following the delivery of the risk assessment, isolation advice and communications, the local authority will provide ongoing support to ensure that the school / childcare setting is able to implement infection control measures and to ensure that further transmission and spread can be prevented. This will include regular contact with the setting, infection prevention control support, and advice around communications. The LCRC provide letter templates for schools and childcare settings to use in response to an initial case or outbreak. In the case of an outbreak, the LCRC and local authority will work closely with the school or childcare setting advising on ongoing communications to keep parents updated and informed. The local authority will also liaise with partners in health settings such as at Whipps Cross Hospital and local GP surgeries to ensure that they are prepared for a potential increase in children attending with COVID-19.

3.4 Other settings (high risk locations)

3.4.1 Prevention

We will take action to support all local businesses to conduct thorough risk assessments of their workplaces and public spaces. This will ensure the necessary steps are taken to minimise risk of transmission as far as possible. By involving staff and unions in these risk assessments, and clearly communicating the results and the measures implemented, confidence will improve among employees and members of the public to resume their daily lives.

Many workplaces will need to make significant adaptations to reduce risk to employees, visitors and customers. Small to medium enterprises make up a significant proportion of the businesses in Waltham Forest and may have fewer resources to draw upon to implement prevention measures. As a result they will require additional support to implement risk assessments and COVID-secure working practices. Environmental health officers are visiting businesses across the borough to provide this support and will be auditing compliance with requirements. All national guidance on safe working practices will be clearly communicated to businesses through newsletters, website and social media. It is also important that we, as the local authority, lead by example and ensure that all our own workplaces are fully risk assessed and safe for our staff and visitors.

3.4.2 Monitoring arrangements

Intelligence on outbreaks in other settings will come from a combination of sources including through the LCRC if they identify multiple cases, reporting from the setting themselves or soft intelligence from officers or members of the public. The local authority SPoC email address will act as a central point of contact for managers to report outbreaks and there is a need to improve awareness of this in settings across the borough. A standardised form for reporting outbreaks to the SPoC will be developed.

3.4.3 Management of an outbreak

The initial steps to control an outbreak will usually be taken by the setting itself. These involve arranging for symptomatic individuals to isolate, additional cleaning, hand washing, informing the relevant authorities and others. They will also need to inform their staff using template 'warn and inform' letters that set out steps that have already been taken and the need for any additional actions. There is a need to work to ensure all businesses and other settings in the borough are aware of and confident enough to implement these requirements. The LCRC will then lead on managing the outbreak and advising on the steps to be taken to minimise transmission of the virus within the setting.

The local authority role is to contribute other important aspects of the response, by leading on communications with partners and the community, supporting businesses and services impacted, helping vulnerable individuals who may have experienced difficulties as a result of being required to isolate and also providing follow-up support from Environmental Health Officers to, e.g., review of risk assessments and COVID-secure working practices.

Business continuity plans (BCPs) will also form an important element of the response to outbreaks or situations where a number of staff may be required to isolate at the same time as a result of a case in the workplace. COVID-secure working practices and thorough risk assessments will act to substantially reduce the risk of such situations occurring, but BCPs must be fit for purpose to ensure prompt and effective actions to minimise disruption to businesses and services across the borough.

The mini-plans in appendix 4 set out high level actions to be taken within each of the identified settings by the setting itself, the LCRC and the local authority. Appendix 5 sets out the roles and responsibilities of the LCRC and local authority during an outbreak.

Communities

In addition to outbreaks associated with a specific setting, it is also possible that outbreaks may be identified within a community cluster, with a higher than expected number of cases living close to each other, or with common activities (for instance, attendance at religious institutions).

3.4.4 Prevention

Outbreaks within the general community are best prevented by population level messages, though with a specific community focus to best ensure that the messages are understood and trusted. These messages would focus on the necessary actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 such as social distancing and good hand hygiene, and to make the NHS Test and Trace service as effective as possible by testing, tracing and isolating when appropriate. This will be a key aim of our extensive ambitions around community engagement and communications.

In addition, we will look to support religious institutions, and voluntary and community sector organisations, with the latest advice, support and guidance so that they can best engage with and make adaptations to reduce the risk for their communities.

3.4.5 Monitoring arrangements

The LCRC is in the process of agreeing a protocol around the necessary level of cases within a community to trigger a community cluster outbreak consideration. In addition, the local authority will be monitoring information received around people testing positive, down to a small geographical area, to form its own view around potential risks within communities.

In addition to this, soft intelligence will be sought indicating higher than expected levels of illness or positive tests associated with particular groups or locations, with staff encouraged to use the SPOC in order to collate this information.

3.4.6 Management of an outbreak

In the event of a potential community cluster outbreak having been identified, the LCRC and local authority would seek to gather information for a risk assessment, to determine whether further investigation was warranted. If the information available pointed towards there being a probability of connections or links across the identified cases, then an Incident Management Team could be convened by either the local authority or LCRC.

Response to a community cluster outbreak is likely to focus on community engagement, to provide clear information around an increased level of risk within an area, advice around needed actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and to encourage compliance with NHS Test and Trace. Working with local community organisations or religious institutions would be key. Full details are available in the mini-plan within appendix 6.

3.5 Hospital

Management of outbreaks in hospital is primarily managed between the hospital and the LCRC (see appendix 7 for details). The local authority would be involved in co-ordination of any necessary decisions made across the health and care sector and would expect to have a role around communications messages to the general population.

3.6 Top actions being taken forward (for Care Homes, Schools and other settings)

Action	Lead	Timescale
Arrange preventative and ongoing infection protection and control resource and support for schools	Public Health, CCG, School Nursing	End Jul 2020
Agree the resource arrangements for wider swabbing of children / staff as part of outbreak management	Public Health, CCG, School Nursing	Mid Jul 2020
Investigate whether a supply of COVID-19 test kits can be kept in schools / childcare settings for use with suspected cases / sent home with the child / staff member for immediate use	Public Health, DHSC	Mid Jul 2020
Develop regular public health briefing / updates for schools and childcare settings via the Hub newsletter	Public Health	End Jun 2020
Improve awareness among all settings, particularly businesses, of the need to report outbreaks to the local authority SPOC at the earliest opportunity	Public Health, Communications	Mid Jul 2020
Improve awareness in all settings, of the immediate actions to be taken following identification of a possible case or cases of COVID-19	Public Health, Environmental Health, Employment, Business and Skills	End Jul 2020

Support businesses and services to review their COVID-19 risk assessments and control measures to ensure they are fit for purpose following outbreaks	Environmental Health	Ongoing
Increase Public Health capacity in outbreak management with a dedicated COVID response role and monitor demand on EHOs and increase capacity accordingly	Public Health, Environmental Health	End Jul 2020

4 Local Testing and Contact Tracing

4.1 Objectives of the chapter

Local assurance of the ability to both test people for COVID-19, and to perform contact tracing on those who test positive, are both key asks of Local Outbreak Control Plans. While much of this assurance within London is provided by regional bodies, we set out here our position locally, and the work which we are doing to support this regional work.

Testing for COVID-19 infection is a crucial part of our plans to identify and isolate close contacts of cases and manage outbreaks effectively. Testing needs to be accessible to all who need it, adaptable and agile to be able to respond to outbreaks on a local level. It must also be trusted by the public, both in terms of the process and the test result itself. By ensuring people with symptoms of COVID-19 are tested at the earliest possible point, contact tracing can effectively identify and isolate close contacts in order to reduce onward transmission of the virus. This process will enable lockdown restrictions to be lifted and outbreaks to be controlled.

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Ensure strong public awareness of the importance of early testing and how to access the system
- Ensure a range of convenient, efficient testing options are available to everyone who needs one
- Ensure equity of access to testing across all population groups including by age, ethnicity, geography etc.
- Ensure we have the ability to respond to outbreaks by rapidly increasing testing capacity within that setting or community.
- Assess the regional capacity to deliver contact tracing in complex settings, and local support that might be required for the system

4.2 Ensuring testing is accessible

Making testing accessible is fundamental to the success of Test and Trace. If residents cannot or will not access testing, then contact tracing will not occur, and our overall response will be operating with incomplete or incorrect information about local risks.

Making testing accessible is partly about ensuring there are a range of available testing options, but it is also about ensuring people are informed and encouraged on when and how testing can be accessed. We need to understand the barriers people face to getting testing, whether through lack of digital access, language issues, distrust or more.

There are a range of community testing options available to residents of Waltham Forest. These include through the national testing service which includes the drive-through centres at Lee Valley Sports Centre and the O2 arena in Greenwich, home testing kits that can be ordered online, and the mobile testing unit (MTU) operated by the army has been operating for two days per week in Waltham Forest. Locally, we continue to work to facilitate the arrival of the MTU on an ongoing basis (see appendix 8).

In addition to these national offers, we have worked on a local level with partners across North East London (NEL) to put in place a local system that provides additional home testing for workers who are unable to work at home, using lab capacity available through our local NHS Trusts. We have also worked to ensure both staff and residents of local care homes are able to access in-home testing via both the national system and through the local NEL system.

We are aware that a majority of our population within Waltham Forest do not have access to a car, meaning that accessibility of the drive-in and mobile units is affected. While we follow current PHE guidance to discourage people with symptoms from leaving the house on foot, even to get tested, we will keep monitoring emerging best practice within London around hyper-local testing options potentially involving walk-ins, to see if appropriate to bring to Waltham Forest when available.

Key to ensuring equitable access to testing and compliance with isolation requirements is local communications and engagement, particularly with hard to reach communities. Information on the importance of testing, accuracy of the tests and processes for how to access a test need to be delivered more widely than through mainstream media channels and in languages accessible to our local populations. We will aim to use our Legend volunteers to work to both promote and encourage testing in our varied communities, and to better understand the barriers that our residents face in accessing testing.

A new pillar of testing, for COVID-19 antibodies, has recently become available. NHS Trusts in NEL have begun to roll-out this testing option to their staff and all care staff will now also be offered testing as well. This test provides evidence of past infection with the virus, however there is need for caution because there is currently a lack of evidence about the immunity that this may provide. Effective regional comms messaging around these tests will be required to ensure results are interpreted correctly and there is clear understanding of the difference between antibody testing for past infection and the swab tests for present infection. Unless more evidence becomes available on the immunity provided by past infection, then the main benefit from this testing pillar will be improving understanding of prevalence of COVID-19 in different population groups and parts of the country.

4.3 Ensuring a swift response

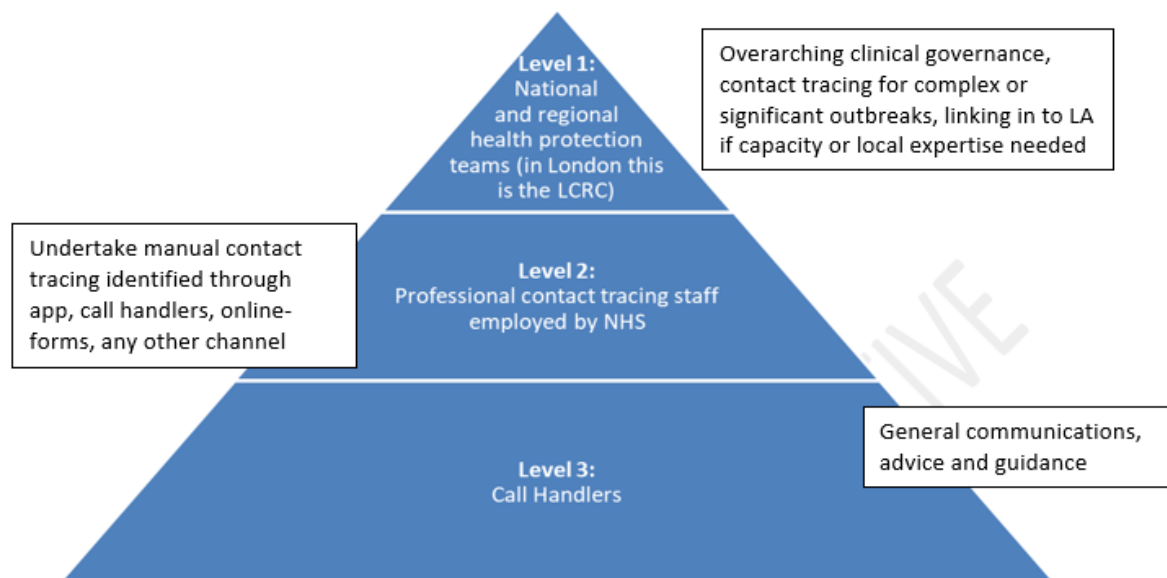
In addition to improving access to testing in the community, we also seek to improve rapid access to testing in emerging outbreak situations, either in settings or in response to potential community clusters.

The London system retains a Mobile Testing Unit for rapid deployment in case of an outbreak, and the Director of Public Health is able to make decisions on its deployment in consultation with LCRC. In addition, we are looking to collaborate with other boroughs across North East London to unlock local testing capacity for rapid deployment in outbreak situations, including potential innovative rapid testing capability, currently in trials.

4.4 Assess contact tracing and infection control capability and need for mutual aid

The national system of contact tracing has been in operation since 28th May and works across both national and regional levels. The national element comprises an online web-based tool to be used by both contact tracing professionals and members of the public to input information about cases and contacts, plus a workforce of call handlers and health professionals who will carry out phone-based contact tracing for individuals who are unable or do not want to access digital technologies (known as level 2 and 3 contact tracing). At the time of writing, 25,000 individuals have been recruited to the national programme to undertake contact tracing.

Figure 1: The three-level national model of contact tracing



Regionally, Level 1 contact tracing requires a high level of expertise and experience, making provision for complex situations, such as outbreaks in Care Homes or Schools, or where the people that need to be reached have vulnerabilities that are escalated up from levels 2 and 3. For full details of the pathway within London, see the London pathway document (appendix 9).

Within London, this complex contact tracing is delivered by the London COVID-19 Response Centre (see appendix 10 for the joint agreement). This team has brought together experienced Public Health England professionals from health protection teams, to provide a comprehensive, unified response to those complex situations and vulnerable individuals. They have provided Directors of Public Health across London with substantial reassurance around the capacity of the LCRC to manage need, following a scoping exercise. They have increased the number of staff available and identified substantial surge capacity if required.

Findings from LCRC modelling work estimated that 45 full time equivalent clinical staff would be required to respond to a workload of 80 COVID-19 outbreaks and 80 unrelated COVID-19 enquiries per day. Current clinical staffing levels are 25-30 FTE staff per day, but with surge capacity readily available. As of mid-June 2020, level of demand within London is being easily met by available level 1 capacity, but this will continue to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Within Waltham Forest, we will work closely with the LCRC contact tracers, especially in any complex situation. As seen in the sections dealing with outbreaks, this has involved the development of joint Standard Operating Procedures to manage outbreaks.

We will also support London-wide initiatives around resilience across the London contact-tracing system, as any potential increase in COVID cases challenges the existing and identified surge capacity.

Infection Control

Within Waltham Forest we have access to infection control nursing resource, employed within the WEL (Waltham Forest and East London) Clinical Commissioning Group. These experts in infection control are available to provide support, training and advice, primarily to care homes, as set out in the infection control plan (appendix 3), both proactively to prevent outbreaks, and reactively once a possible or confirmed case is identified.

We are committed to exploring, in partnership with health colleagues, other ways in which to take advantage of infection control expertise across the system in providing advice to, or audit around, the actions being taken by settings to prevent outbreaks occurring.

Mutual Aid

Existing mutual aid protocols across the public health system have been adapted for use in light of the current COVID situation (appendix 11). Within Waltham Forest, initial discussions around potential for mutual aid have focused on our existing health partnerships across North East London.

4.5 Top actions to be taken forward

Action	Lead	Timescale
Explore the barriers to testing among Waltham Forest residents, particularly BAME and digitally excluded groups and implement measures to tackle these	Public Health	End July 2020
Work to ensure continued and increased MTU presence in Waltham Forest and put processes in place for directing units to areas of high need and settings experiencing outbreaks	Capital Delivery and Public Health	Mid July 2020
Explore new models of walk-in testing centres such as those delivered by Deloitte and bring to Waltham Forest if relevant	Capital Delivery and Public Health	End Jul 2020
Build on local best practice approaches to work with primary care and/or the voluntary sector to encourage engagement with NHS Test and Trace	Public Health and CCG	July 2020

5 Supporting vulnerable people

5.1 Objectives of the chapter

The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how we will support vulnerable people to self-isolate when required. This includes local considerations in terms of what services are currently in place to support different vulnerabilities from services within the council, in addition to other services and partners identified to help vulnerable groups understand, engage and comply with the programme within the borough. Furthermore, key actions to mobilise and coordinate support are also considered.

5.2 Supporting Vulnerable People Impact Checklist

The Supporting Vulnerable People Impact Checklist (see Appendix 12) has been compiled to identify vulnerable individuals or groups in Waltham Forest who may be identified as needing additional support when asked to isolate by the national/London team. By classifying different vulnerabilities, the checklist aims to address any specific needs such residents may have. The checklist details the possible actions and/or support that the council can offer. It also highlights where there may be gaps where support is not currently in place and that may be beneficial to enable vulnerable residents to comply with isolation when needed.

Referrals of vulnerable people may be made by LCRC as part of ongoing joint outbreak management with the local authority. However, as there is no direct handover of individuals details from Level 2 and 3 call handlers in the national NHS Test and Trace service to local authorities, vulnerable individuals identified there are advised to contact local authorities directly for support.

Vulnerabilities which have been identified are as follows:

- Residents in touch with our services such as through Adult and Children's Social Care
- People experiencing domestic abuse
- Residents experiencing homelessness, living in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO), temporary accommodation or who have precarious housing situations
- Residents with Substance Misuse issues
- Residents with Mental Health issues
- Residents with learning disabilities
- Residents who are sex workers and/or victims of trafficking

5.3 Community Help Network support for Test and Trace

The Community Help Network (CHN) has been set up to support vulnerable residents, those over 70 years old and shielded individuals who need to self-isolate, during the COVID-19 pandemic in Waltham Forest. The service is a volunteer led telephone check-in service, where volunteers make regular contact with approximately 5000 vulnerable residents in the borough. The service runs between Monday to Friday.

Referrals from LCRC will be received by the telephone check-in team, and vulnerable residents subject to Test and Trace quarantine will be contacted within one working day of the receipt of the referral.

Vulnerable residents subject to Test and Trace will be offered:

- Support to access essential food supplies (subject to need). This would be either signposting to the Morrisons 'doorstep delivery service', an allocation of a DEFRA priority supermarket online slot, or a food bank referral
- Referral to the Age UK Waltham Forest telephone befriending scheme or the Waltham Forest Social Prescribing team to support residents who are lonely and isolated

- Support with emergency home repairs which is a paid for service for homeowners, delivered by Waltham Forest Servicestore

5.4 Top actions to be taken forward

Action	Lead	Timescale
In absence of information from Level 2 and 3, develop new self-referral route for residents who need help while isolating	Community Help Network	End July 2020

6 Data

Having access to, and being able to share, accurate, timely data is essential to supporting the response to identifying and managing clusters or outbreaks of COVID-19 in Waltham Forest. A range of data at local level is shared with local authorities about COVID-19, including from Public Health England, the Office of National Statistics and other sources. This includes information about:

- Confirmed cases of COVID-19
- COVID-19 testing carried out
- Deaths from COVID-19
- Outbreaks in settings such as schools and care homes

This data is already being used to shape the response locally to COVID-19, however further work will take place to ensure we are making the best possible use of this information. A key action will be to develop a full local COVID-19 data dashboard to support and inform the work of the Incident Management Team.

We think it is important to be transparent about this data and what it is used for. We will be developing clear processes for outlining the governance around this data, for example, how it will be stored, shared and used, including making the public aware of this through a data charter and privacy notice. Appendix 13 sets out the sources of COVID-19 outbreak data that have been identified to date.

6.1 Top actions to be taken forward

Action	Lead	Timescale
Identify and assess all sources of outbreak data (including data from Level 1/ Level 2)	Public Health Intelligence	By end June 2020 have sources identified and prioritised. Through July 2020 to build up library of metadata.
Prepare for processing of individual-level data, e.g. to enable teams to promptly contact or assist people required to self-isolate who have requested help	Business Intelligence	By end July 2020
Prepare and publish plans for local management of data including local data charter	Business Intelligence	By end July 2020
Develop a full local COVID-19 data dashboard	Public Health Intelligence / Business Intelligence	Initial priority sections of dashboard – by mid July 2020 Initial draft dashboard – end of July 2020 Full dashboard – by end August 2020

7 Overseeing the plan

Achieving the objectives set out in the Local Outbreak Control Plan requires a co-ordinated effort from local authorities, the NHS, GPs, businesses and employers, voluntary organisations and other community partners, and the general public. A clear governance structure is in place to oversee the implementation and review of the Local Outbreak Control Plan.

The governance of the Waltham Forest Local Outbreak Control Plan is in line with National Guidance to set up a *“public-facing Board led by council members to communicate openly with the public”*. The governance of arrangements locally also draws on best practice by establishing governance structures supported by existing Gold Command forums and existing COVID-19 Health Protection Boards.

Our local governance arrangements also place a key focus on continued engagement with our community. The community have already played a hugely significant role in supporting each other throughout COVID-19, and ongoing community engagement is critical to the effective implementation of Test and Trace in Waltham Forest.

Below is a summary of the key governance forums in place to oversee the Local Outbreak Control Plan. Please see appendices 14 and 15 for further details.

Governance forums

Local Outbreak Control Board

Chair: Leader of the Council, Cllr Coghill or nominated deputy

The purpose of this Board is to oversee the coordinated, transparent response to the prevention and management of local COVID-19 outbreaks and collaboration across the region. The Board will provide and ensure Members, relevant officers, partners and members of the public have oversight of the implementation of the Local Outbreak Control Plan. The Board will provide strategic political leadership, oversee communications and engagement with partners and the community, and provide transparency and community reassurance. The Board will act as a liaison to Ministers as needed.

Meetings will rotate fortnightly between: a first meeting of the month which will provide strategic leadership, steer and oversight of the implementation of the Local Outbreak Control Plan, provide Members with assurance of plans, and provide officers with an opportunity to present and request decisions for any political backing needed; and a second meeting of month which will provide a strategic partnership and public-facing approach to oversight of the implementation of the Local Outbreak Control Plan, engaging with various groups and members of the public to understand concerns and provide community reassurance, share any best practice and learning from local initiatives, and test and shape local communications and key messages.

Council's Management Board

Chair: LBWF CEO

LBWF CEO's Management Board meeting is made up of Gold Command Officers and provides the local authority with assurance of the delivery and improvement of the Local Outbreak Control Plan. It will report to the Member-led Local Outbreak Control Board.

COVID-19 Borough Coordination Group

Chair: Strategic Director, Families

The Borough Co-ordination Group is the Gold partnership meeting leading on overall COVID-19 response, underneath the Borough Resilience Forum. Senior Officers from across the Waltham Forest partnership meet to understand key risks and actions that will be taken to mitigate risks, to rapidly adapt to new ways of working and to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on residents, in line with the implementation of the Local Outbreak Control Plan. It will lead on partnership decision making around deployment of resources.

Test and Protect Steering Group

Chair: LBWF CEO

The Test and Protect Steering Group is a key forum steering the development and continual improvement of the Local Outbreak Control Plan. Members of the Steering Group gain a greater understanding of the Test and Protect programme in Waltham Forest, and have influence and first-hand insight on decisions being made on the implementation of the Local Outbreak Control Plan in the borough in real-time, which will strengthen the timeliness and accuracy of communications about contact tracing and outbreaks to staff across our borough.

COVID-19 Health Protection Board

Chair: LBWF Director Public Health

This group provides infection and outbreak control expertise, to inform decision making by the other bodies, and to advise around potential escalation of issues. It will also oversee and review response to outbreaks that have occurred, to share lessons learned and build findings into future iterations of the plan. After each meeting, an updated Borough Situation Report is issued to all partners.

Community Engagement Meetings

There are two key elements to the Community Engagement Meetings:

- 1) Geographically-focussed community engagement meetings in Leyton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow and Chingford, drawing on the already established community networks which exist as part of the Connecting Communities Programme. These forums will increase understanding of barriers, concerns, as well as additional support requirements for identified groups to enable greater engagement with any tracing and lockdown requirements.

- 2) A 50-member representative Citizen Panel which will test and improve the local approach

Table 1: Escalation criteria

Setting	Criteria for escalation	Escalation to:	
		COVID-19 Health Protection Board	Management Board/Local Outbreak Control Board (LOCB)
Major events (any setting)	• Death of a child	Yes - immediate	Yes - immediate briefing needed
	• Outbreak linked to a major public building or event in the borough	Yes – immediate	Yes – immediate briefing needed
Schools/childcare	• More than one case in a school/EY setting	Yes	Yes – routine reporting only
	• Setting not able to contain outbreak	Yes	Yes
	• School closure	Yes – immediate	Yes – immediate briefing needed
	• Media interest in outbreak/cases	Yes	Yes
Adult social care	• More than 2 cases in ASC setting	Yes	Yes – routine reporting only
	• Setting not able to contain outbreak	Yes	Yes
	• Cases linked to a hospital outbreak	Yes	Yes
Homeless setting	• More than 2 cases in setting	Yes	Yes – routine reporting only
	• Setting not able to contain outbreak	Yes	Yes
Council as workplace	• Any outbreak	Yes	Yes
Local businesses	• More than 2 cases in setting	Yes	Yes – routine reporting only
	• Setting not able to contain outbreak	Yes	Yes
Community Cluster	• More than 3 cases in small geographical area	Yes	Yes – routine reporting only
	• Identified link to specific community/event/place of worship	Yes	Yes
	• General rise in cases across geographical area, including borough as a whole	Yes	Yes – routine reporting only
	• Rise in cases suggestive of exponential increase	Yes	Yes