

**Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel,
Tuesday, 9th November 2021, 10.00 am**

Lead Member PDS Report

Free School Meals

I am pleased to announce that B&NES will continue to ensure that free school meals vouchers continue to be provided over the holiday periods. These were distributed during the October Half Term and arrangements are in place to ensure this happens over Christmas and the February half-term holiday in 2022.

Culverhay

Plans for ongoing education delivery on the Culverhay site are progressing. A feasibility study on the building/relocating of our Alternative Provision is underway. This will help inform our capital decisions on how best to deliver a new AP school on the site. We have also set up a working group to progress our desire to see Vocational provision on the site for 14-18-year-olds. This work sits alongside Bath college and critical stakeholders from the Economy and Skill sectors.

Early Years and Schools

An update on schools and Covid 19 is available later in this paper. Undoubtedly this continues to impact children's education and the capacity of our schools. Despite this, our primary and secondary school attendance has remained good, and our vulnerable children continue to attend well.

You will have seen announcements regarding increased school funding and additional support for our Early Years staff in the latest government budget. Whilst this is welcome, I will wait to see the full details before providing further information or comment.

I am really pleased that our colleagues have attended today to overview their work with schools and multi-academy trusts. Key to ensuring education standards in B&NES are good partnerships between officers in the LA and the RSC, working with our school leaders.

Early this month, I held an online forum to continue highlighting race equality issues and young people in B&NES. The link to this video is below. I am really pleased to say that shortly in B&NES, we will be launching a Race Equality Charter Mark that we hope all schools will sign up to.

<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>

BCSSP

You will have also had the opportunity to comment on the BCSSP Annual report today. I can also confirm for members of the panel that the latest BCSSP Escalation policy is complete and is awaiting uploading to the BCSSP website.

The National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

I am pleased to announce that B&NES is committed to reaching our target of 0.07% of the child population, which equates to approximately 27 children and young people in total, as part of The National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). The Local Authority have more recently successfully placed UASC within the Local Authority, due to a focus on recruiting foster carers specific to this cohort of children and young people.

B&NES Practice Week.

This is an idea whereby senior managers (Heads of Service, PSW, Director, Lead Member etc) spend some time out and about with practitioners and young people/families/children to try and (re)connect with what's happening across the service in practice. We hope that a 'practice week' will happen a few times a year, focusing on different 'themes', i.e. certain types of work or service user groups.

The Lead Member role

The Lead member is a key part of the observation team. In January Kevin Guy took part and was able to spend time observing a Personal Advisor offering crucial support to a Care Leaver. He was able to have a direct conversation with both the PA and the young person to hear directly from them about how they are doing and how the PA is able to help and support the Care Leaver.

Dine Romero is planning on taking part in the next Practice Week, planned for Nov 22nd 2021 and will be spending direct time with a social worker visiting a family in need of support out in the community.

Independent Review of Children's Social Care

The independent review of children's social care was set up by the Government on 1st March 2021. The review is looking at the whole children's social care system including partner agencies and third sector organisations. They are visiting ten local authorities one of which is B&NES. The purpose of the work is to meet with Social Care staff and partner agencies in order to understand how the system is currently working.

The design team will be on-site in Keynsham for 3 days from 09/11/2021-11/11/2021, there will be a mix of 1-1 meetings, roundtables and visits to explore some themes already identified in the Case for Change such as: extrafamilial harm, multi-agency working and the balance between help and investigation and assessment in the system.

This is an exciting opportunity to influence the final recommendations within the care review.

Children's Transformation Programme

The Children's Transformation Programme includes a project focusing on fostering recruitment and retention. The project seeks to recruit additional fostering households to enable us to place more children within the Local Authority, and avoid costly Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) and residential placement. The project also seeks to focus recruitment on specific cohorts of children with the most need, i.e. adolescents, parent and baby, UASC and Family Link (short breaks for disabled children). Although early in the project we are seeing some results with new households expressing an interest in fostering for B&NES and coming through for approval.

Reducing unintentional injury

Reducing unintentional injury in Bath and North East Somerset has been a priority of the Injury Prevention Partnership during 2021/22 as B&NES has higher rates of A&E admissions for under 5's than our statistical neighbours. Actions to be taken to address this include:

- Raising awareness of the key principals and approaches to preventing childhood unintentional injuries through:
 - Refresher training, to be offered to all Early Years frontline workers between now and February 2022
 - Relaunch of the 'Safe Home – Keeping Children and Young People Safe in B&NES' newsletter
- Promotion of the home safety equipment service which provides fully subsidised safety equipment for eligible families.

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in educational settings

The Public Health in Schools Programme continues to offer support and guidance to schools and the College in the delivery of a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. This includes:

- A refreshed Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing best practice audit
- Delivery of the DfE grant funded Wellbeing for Education Recovery
- Additional support for staff wellbeing
- Delivery of Senior Mental Health Leads training for BSW as an approved DfE provider
- Writing and refreshing guidance for schools including "Coping with Suicide: Guidance" and "Loss and Bereavement"

Making Every Contact Count (MECC)

Working in partnership with Swindon and Wiltshire, B&NES is contributing to a B&NES, Swindon and Wiltshire Strategy that aims to refresh our MECC offer across the area. New materials are being developed to enable a more flexible training offer. The intention is to continue encouraging public facing staff within the Council and B&NES NHS providers to understand and take a behaviour change approach based on MECC principles when talking with patients, customers and residents and to extend this offer to 3rd sector organisations and community groups, commissioned early help providers and small businesses.

Adult health improvement

Adult Weight Management Grant – successful commissioning of 2 new pilot programmes that broaden the offer of free weight management support locally particularly targeting men. Men V Fat Football programme and a 12 week leisure centre based food and physical activity programme being offered via the leisure services provider GLL.

Smoking in pregnancy rates for B&NES continue to show good progress year on year and are now at 6.6% of pregnant women smoking at time of delivery (equivalent to 110 women). B&NES is best performing area in the SW for this indicator.

Sexual health programme

We have good links with both universities in Bath and recently worked with them to ensure sexual health provision for student population returning to university this year, offering C-card registrations for students during Freshers' weeks, and working with the universities to update the sexual health info pages on their websites.

Officers are at final stages of developing an online consultation process for C-card scheme / SAFE scheme. Online survey will be sent out to service users and providers to get their feedback. This will be followed with focus groups and potentially mystery shopping exercises later in the year (depending on Covid risk).

Currently working with safebanes website developer to look into options for creating online registration for C-card scheme for +16s to improve accessibility and uptake of the scheme.

Covid-19

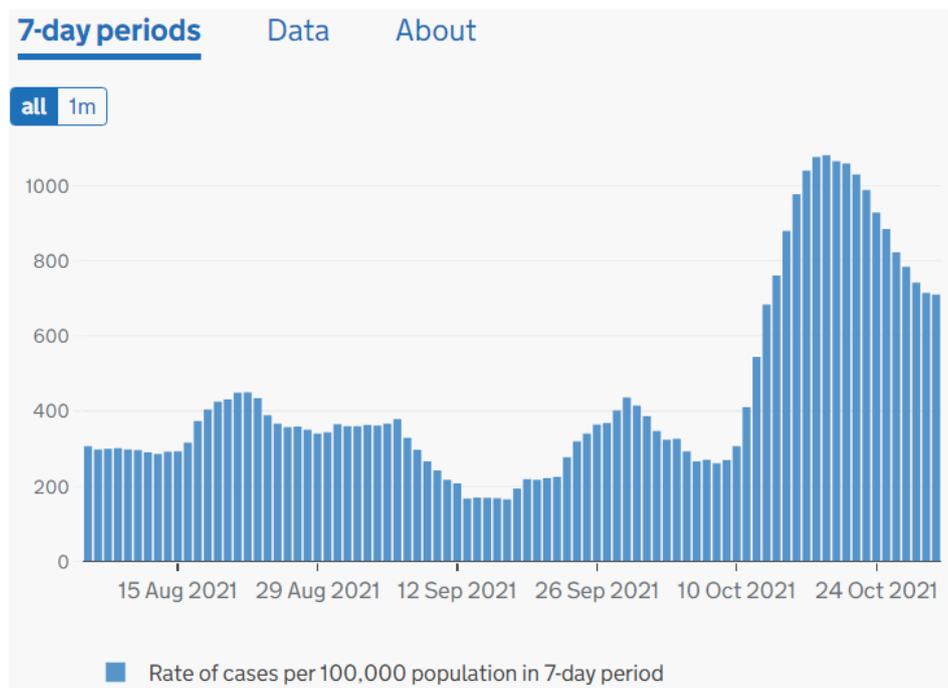
Cases and trends:

In B&NES the number of notified detected cases of Covid-19 has decreased in the most recent week (w/e 30 October) to 1,395 cases, down from 1,941 the previous week (a 28% decrease). Over 45% of these cases were aged under 30.

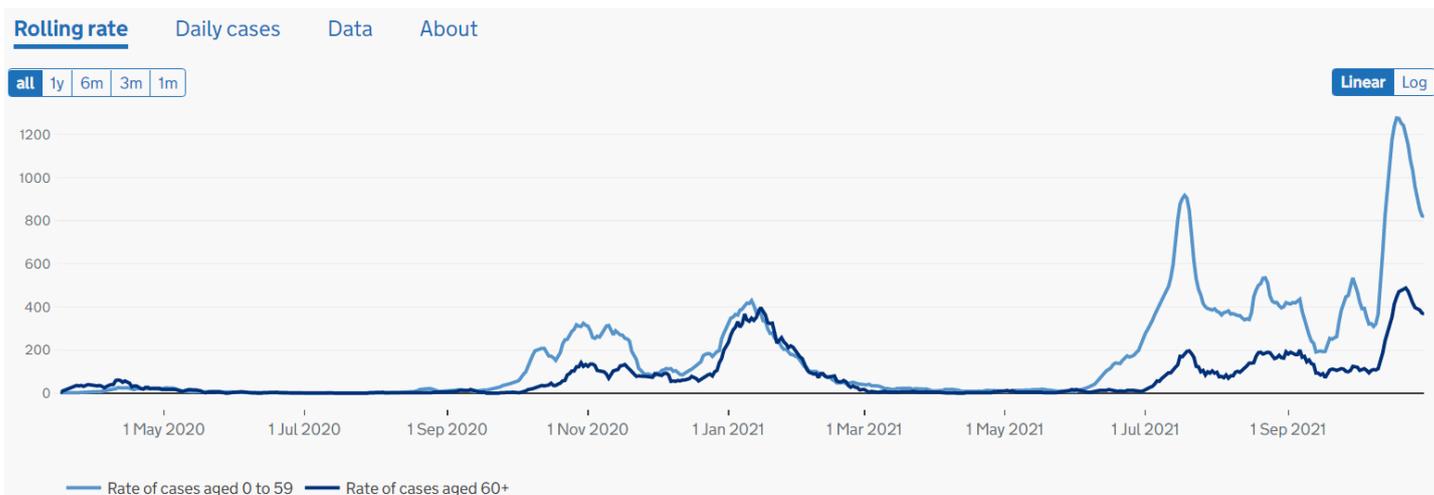
The 7 day case rate for B&NES w/e 30 October is 710 per 100K, and is currently the second highest UTLA in England. The comparable rates for England and the South West are 413 per 100k and 546 per 100k respectively. Rates in B&NES have fallen rapidly since

their highest rates of over 1,000 per 100k on w/e 19th October, although remain high. It is not possible to predict future trend with any certainty.

Recent 7 day case rate, B&NES:



The fall in B&NES has been in both the over and under 60 years age ranges, as seen below.



Vaccinations:

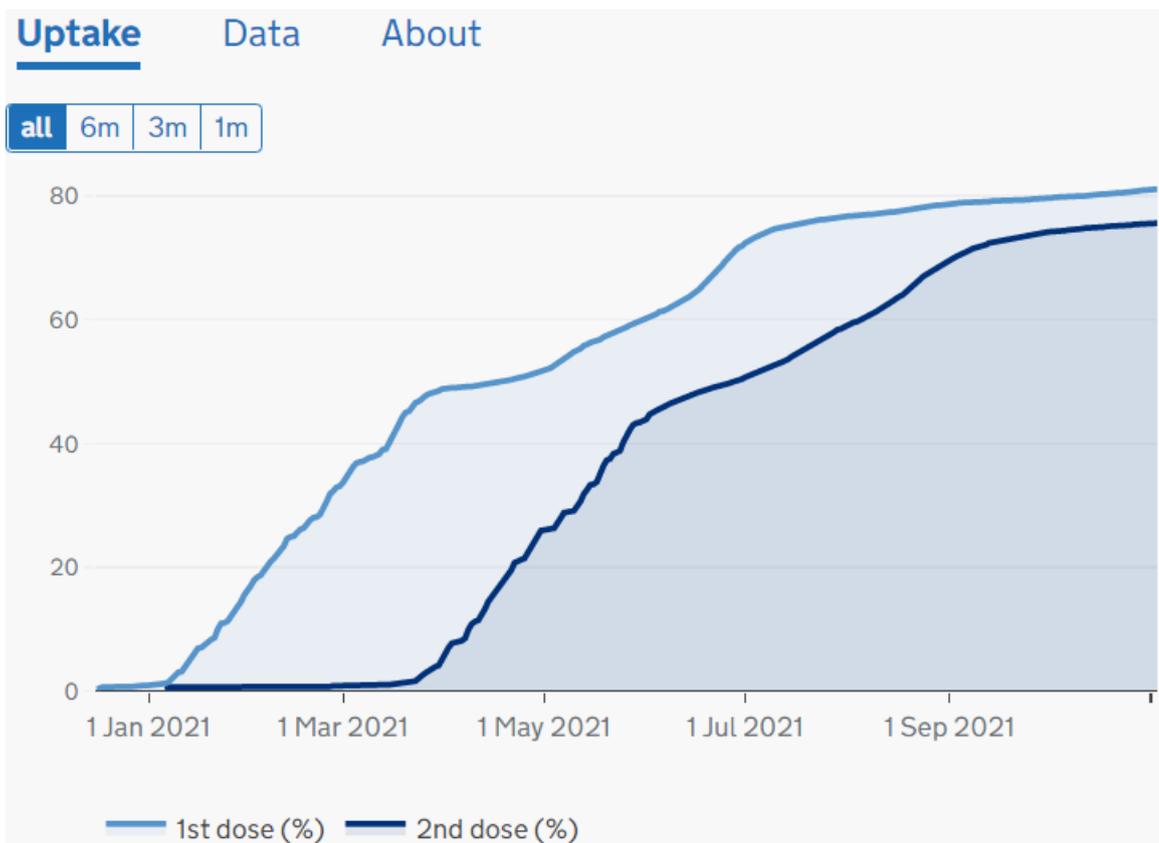
The NHS Covid-19 vaccination programme continues to develop. B&NES uptake figures as reported 5 Nov 2021:

- Of the whole population aged 12 and over, 81.1% have received their first dose, and 75.6% their second.
- 67.8% of 16-17 year olds have had their first vaccination. To date, no decision nationally has been made on the timing of the second dose.
- 20.5% of 12-15 year olds vaccinated. Vaccination for this cohort is offered through schools and through the National Booking Service

RUH:

The number of Covid-19 patients in the RUH as reported on 2nd November is 57 (B&NES and non-B&NES residents). There has been a slow increase in numbers since the summer. The NHS remains under pressure from a mixture of staff absences, increasing numbers of coronavirus cases and an increase in demand for urgent and emergency care.

Vaccination uptake (12+), by vaccination date, (B&NES):



Overview of recent activity:

Schools: The public health team is in daily contact with educational settings to provide preventative and outbreak management advice and guidance as needed. National guidance sets out additional action that schools and early years can take when thresholds in the number of positive cases in the setting is reached. In light of the high rates in schools nationally, all Directors of Public Health in the South West sent an agreed Consensus Statement to schools in their area before half term. This statement requested that schools reviewed their outbreak management plan and risk assessments and considered reintroducing additional control measures, in line with national guidance, for a certain time period in order to reduce transmission. This statement has been welcomed by schools and they have responded as appropriate.

Care homes: The Council’s Infection Prevention and Control officers for care homes continue to help and advise care home staff on a daily basis to prevent and manage covid cases. Numbers remain low.

Events: A checklist for event organisers to use to help ensure their events are covid secure has been updated. This is particularly aimed at those events that don’t come through the Council’s Safety Advisory Group for Events process.

Businesses: In light of the very high Covid-19 cases a Council comms piece prepared collaboratively with business representatives has been cascaded to businesses to seek

their support in continuing to implement key Covid-19 measures which are all within national guidance, for the protection of the public and their staff.

Employers: Given the importance of protecting those most vulnerable to serious illness from Covid-19, a letter has been sent to large employers and organisations working with more vulnerable populations, asking them if they would raise awareness of the availability of the covid-19 booster vaccination amongst eligible staff and volunteers.