

## **Briefing note for distribution by local Directors of Public Health**

### **Cheshire & Merseyside COVID-19 Emergency Response Test and Trace Hub**

Localised outbreaks are occurring now in Cheshire & Merseyside (C&M) and there is the risk of a second wave if social distancing guidance is not followed. Directors of Public Health (DsPH) are protecting their residents as they develop effective Local Outbreak Management Plans and promote preventative measures.

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that does not respect organisational boundaries. C&M DsPH are collaborating on a Champs Outbreak Management Framework to ensure consistency and share best practice. They have now agreed to upscale their local response and ensure a safe and effective system by creating a COVID-19 Test and Trace Hub with Public Health England (PHE). The Hub will focus on complex settings and work alongside the national Test and Trace system.

The Hub is an emergency response and will scale up existing arrangements at pace with PHE. It will not replace local work but bolster local resilience which will be particularly important during the winter period or should a second wave occur.

A team for Cheshire and one for Merseyside will be formed within the Hub model, enabling greater local insight but also maximising shared functions. Mutual aid will ensure no local authority becomes overwhelmed should multiple outbreaks occur.

The development of the Test and Trace Hub will need to be very iterative and benefit from early establishment in shadow form. This will allow flexibility and adaptability, using a phased approach.

To quickly progress the establishment of the Hub, a C&M Mobilisation Team has been formed, led by Julie Webster, Director of Public Health for Wirral and Dr Sam Ghebrehewet, Head of Health Protection from PHE North West. The membership and commitment of this group is critical in ensuring success and will therefore have representation from each local authority, PHE and the Champs Support Team.

The Mobilisation Team has begun to meet daily and is urgently working on recruitment for the two teams in the Hub including team leaders, contact tracers and administration staff. This is a partnership approach and PHE are contributing staff and local authorities are nominating staff for the shadow Hub.

It is expected that the Hub will launch in shadow form on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and it aims to be operational 9am-5pm, 7 days a week. PHE will cover out of hours.

Directors of Public Health have agreed that Champs Public Health Collaborative (hosted by Wirral Council) will act as the host organisation building on the long-standing collaboration and existing MOU in place. This has been endorsed by Local Authority CEOs.

Further updates will be shared as the Hub develops over the next few weeks.

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