

# Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Contact Tracing (ICT) Pilot

## Partner Update

September 2021



**Champs**  
Public Health  
Collaborative

Working together to improve health and  
wellbeing in Cheshire and Merseyside

# Introduction

**From Julie Webster, Director of Public Health for Wirral and Lead Director for Integrated Contact Tracing (ICT)**



Welcome to Cheshire and Merseyside's Integrated Contact Tracing (ICT) Pilot Partner Update for September. This month, we are really starting to see this work come to life, with many workstreams moving slowly and steadily towards the initial stages of their area of work.

The engagement workshops delivered by the communications and engagement workstream, which aimed to hear directly from our contact tracing workforce and wider system about their experiences and what they'd like to see change for the better, were a particular success. We are now looking at how we collate the rich and detailed feedback we received and use this to inform our next steps.

As a consequence of this, we are also thinking carefully about our workforce. We are aware that within our current contact tracing system, we have an incredible amount of talent, enthusiasm, and diversity, and that we need to utilise this knowledge to ensure the pilot is a success. We are looking to establish a network of Change Agents, people within the system who will support, promote and enable with their peers some of the positive changes we would like to see, and we are also thinking about how we ensure our workforce is future-proofed and sustained into 2022. Expect updates to this in future briefings.

Finally, we are also working with Cheshire and Merseyside's Directors of Public Health to look at how we can continue to build on the existing success of the subregion's Contact Tracing Hub, which up until now has dealt exclusively with complex cases and settings, to increase capacity and offer out of hours support during the winter period. We are also exploring potential solutions that could offer the ability to 'surge' capacity, providing mutual aid where it may be required at short notice to prevent overwhelming our contact tracing services.

## What we're working towards

Cheshire and Merseyside's Integrated Contact Tracing (ICT) Pilot seeks to enable the local, regional, and national contact tracing systems and functions to work effectively as 'one team', that will work flexibly across the subregion's nine local authority areas to provide world-class contact tracing for local people. The team will

build upon the already-existing experience and expertise in the system to help manage outbreaks of COVID-19, as well as other transmissible infections.

This pilot is being led by the subregion's Directors of Public Health, working together as the Champs Public Health Collaborative, with funding from the Department of Health and Social Care.

This work is not starting from scratch. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cheshire and Merseyside has benefitted from an Integrated Contact Tracing Hub, that was established and co-managed with Public Health England (now the UK Health Security Agency). Since its inception, the Hub has worked specifically with complex cases and settings, that require more intensive support, and will continue to do so within this new team, as new models are explored.

The overriding ambition is to have a well-resourced, flexible, resilient, and sustainable system, functioning at local and subregional level, enabled by a skilled and motivated workforce, that will keep our communities safe.

## **Progress this month**

### **Design Working Group**

The Design Working Group met for the first time in September to begin to develop the future vision and best operating model for the subregion's integrated team of contact tracers. This open conversation allowed for the consideration and analysis of a number of different models, which were then sense checked with a variety of key stakeholders to formulate an idea of which model would be best to take forward. A final decision will be made and ratified in October.

### **Workforce Development**

In the short term, this workstream has been considering how the role of the already-existing Contact Tracing Hub can be extended to ensure that over the coming winter period, the subregion has the required workforce to combat the rising prevalence of seasonal flu, COVID-19 and other acute respiratory infections that may overwhelm current services. This will mean recruiting some additional people, training into the new responsibilities and deployment during out of hours periods.

### **Information Management and Technology**

By engaging with local authority areas, as well as the Contact Tracing Hub, this workstream is working towards the introduction of one Content Management System (CMS) for contact tracing in the subregion. Eight out of nine local authority teams, as

well as the Hub, have now signed up to licences for the live system. In addition to the Hub, three local authority teams are now actively using the CMS, with a further four teams actively planning to commence implementation.

### **Support for Self-Isolation Pilot**

Public Health leads from the subregion's nine local authorities have been identified, who will together determine a series of interventions to increase adherence to self-isolation and other guidance from Contact Tracers.

### **Communications and Engagement**

Two successful engagement workshops have been held with stakeholders working across the subregion's contact tracing system. These events were well received, and those who attended were honest and open in their feedback, both in terms of what we do well and how we can improve our joint working. As well as this, the workstream has completed an extensive commissioning brief and 'Invitation to Tender' document that will be used to commission an external communications and marketing agency to carry out a range of activities on behalf of the Pilot. Once ratified, the workstream will be following the process set out by Wirral Council (the host organisation of the Champs Public Health Collaborative) to commission this work, review submissions, interview a shortlist and award the work. The workstream expects to have an agency in place by mid-November 2021.

### **Evaluation**

Ipsos Mori has been commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care to lead the evaluation of this Pilot. Following a workshop led by Ipsos Mori, a proposed evaluation plan has now been created. This plan has been shared widely with the Steering Group for comment, and contains the following elements:

- Theory of change – detailing the hypothesis and required activities to achieve overall objectives
- Measurement of key outcomes – looking at the expected and desired outcomes over the next year and how they will be measured
- Detailed scoping and key findings
- Process evaluation – focusing on the processes within the Programme
- Impact evaluation

## **Find out more**

To find out more about this pilot and read previous Partner Updates, please visit [www.champspublichealth.com/integrated-contact-tracing](http://www.champspublichealth.com/integrated-contact-tracing).