

Notes from YHW Meeting with Anna Hartley - Director of Public Health 9/03/2021

Attendees:

Anna Hartley (AH) joined the meeting from the beginning and took part in the Quiz compiled by a YHW member.

AH then gave her Presentation to the group.

Data on slides showed what currently is happening with Covid-19 across the district:

- **Testing, Tiers and Lockdown:** Over aching slide over 7-day period shows drop in numbers. A lot of testing being done. Rates fluctuated in also shows Tier system did not work but Lockdown from January had significant results on cases, down but also still recording cases as the new variant is very infectious.
- **Outcomes for C & YP** are good, we do not see C&YP getting Covid so much and there have been no recorded deaths in C & Y. Figures for 13year to 17year age group show that they are low 91 per 100,000 case. 4 to 12 years, also low figure of 48 in every 100,000.
- 90% of deaths occurred in people over 65 & 95% were clinically extremely vulnerable. One slide shows map of different rates across the district, some hotspots.
- **Vaccine:** Since the introduction of the Covid-19 Vaccine no hotspots anymore. Situation dramatically improved. Correlation between mass vaccination and lower incidences of infection
- **Hospitals and Health Services:** One of the questions was about hospitals and health service – Mid Yorkshire Hospitals were in danger of getting overwhelmed with Covid patients (last November), we were worried about the situation, the impact on other services and all of us.
- Hospitals now have better knowledge of how to treat Covid, do not put patient in ICU straight onto ventilators but treat using C-Pap. It is a real learning curve.
- **NHS and Patient Care,** AH cannot answer those questions. NHS commission Health Services.
- **Public Health** is about Population Health and not about Health Services. However, AH does commission Sexual Health and Drug and Alcohol services that have a preventative element. Public Health looks at what might impact on the people's health. Factors such as age, sex, health status, income and housing have the biggest impact.

AH said she hoped the presentation covered some of the questions the Forum wanted to ask.

Q. Mental Health: YHW member about Mental Health in relation to school stresses about assessments and grades because pupils were not having exams this year. She asked if anything is or can be put in place to help YP cope with the new stresses once back at school or college.

AH Answer:

- We need to look at preventative factors in relation to Mental Health and this is a huge challenge. Covid-19 is making Mental Health worse for some children & young people.
- We have the unhappiest children in Europe – Mental Health Foundation interviewed YP and found that their priorities were:
 - Housing when they leave home - rents are high.
 - Employment
 - Social connections- friendship
- Public Health tried to address resilience by introducing the Risk and Resilience Framework (facilitated by Denise Wheatman) for C & YP. Life is very hard at the present time - how do you thrive through this (Covid)? Things like green space, walking helps with depression. We need to address the wider implications of Mental Health - Healthwatch England pushing this point on a National Level. It is not all about giving more money to CAMHS.

Q. Vaccine & Epi-Pen: YHW member said she was an Epi-Pen user, and asked are you allowed to have the Covid-19 vaccination? Can you be penalised for not having the vaccine?

AH Answer:

- You need to discuss with your GP, as you may have an allergic reaction to the vaccine.
- You may be able to have 1 of the vaccines (there are 3 being used).
- The vaccine card (passport) not really a good idea because it would not cover all Covid, as variants will change.
- You may not have a good vaccine response. Short answer is you should never be penalised from having the vaccine and your GP will advise you about it.

Q. Schools and Masks: YHW member asked if there was something in place so that schools can reinforce wearing masks in schools.

AH Answer:

- Public Health would take this seriously and if needed would visit the school to reinforce the Covid Keeping Safe messages.

Q. Vaccine and Children: Youth Service YP asked when would you think YP will get the vaccine?

AH Answer:

- Researchers cannot do clinical trials on children. In children the infection rate is very low. With Covid, adults are super spreaders. Need to drive down Covid in adults in the community.

Q. What about Covid testing in schools? Asked by YP from the Build our Futures Group (BOF)

AH Answer:

Lateral flow test is very controversial. Been more used for screening in schools – not doing it effectively. Flow Tests are not the answer – picks up only certain cases not all. So, it does not make a lot of sense to use them really and we are still promoting frequent hand washing, use of sanitisers, masks and social distancing.

Q. Schools Opening: YHW member asked if schools in the South were opening including Public Schools?

AH Answer:

- All state schools are opening on the 8th March. The impact of missing school is massive, put priority needs of C & YP first. Life is about balancing risk. Loss of learning in deprived areas up nearly 10%, meaning C & YP are 6 to 12 months behind in their learning. Covid-19 heightened these inequalities. There has been no access to Breakfast Clubs. Need a fairer society where everyone has a chance to achieve.

Anna said she was happy to come to another YHW Forum meeting, we will send dates for May/June.

A YHW Forum member thanked Anna Hartley on behalf of all young people at the meeting for taking time to inform them about the Covid-19 situation locally and for answering their questions.

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