



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18TH MAY 2021

SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY CONTACT TRACING SERVICE

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the establishment, development, operation, and performance of Caerphilly's Contact Tracing Service.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Welsh Government's Test, Trace, Protect strategy forms a central part of their Covid-19 recovery plan. Community contact tracing is a key element of the strategy and Welsh Government asked Local Authorities and Health Boards jointly to put in place contact tracing services in their regions.
- 2.2 The Caerphilly Contact Tracing Team operates as part of the Gwent Contact Tracing Service. This is a project initiated in May 2020 in response to Welsh Government's *Test, Trace, Protect Strategy*, and went live in June 2020. The service has developed considerably since that time and this report provides an overview of the operation of the service and performance for Members' consideration.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee consider the development, operation and performance of the Caerphilly Contact Tracing service and offer any recommendations for the future operation and development of the service.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In order to strengthen oversight of the contact tracing element of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic has been organisation wide. There are some staff and services whose roles have been redefined as a consequence of the pandemic and some entirely new services have been established. One new service has been the Council's Contact Tracing Team and this report provides Members with an update on the development, operation, and performance of that service.
- 5.2 Contact tracing is a tried and tested method of controlling the spread of infectious diseases. The aim is to protect health and support the ongoing work to control the spread of coronavirus. As soon as someone starts to display symptoms, they should arrange to take a test as quickly as possible whilst they, and members of their household, self-isolate. On receiving a positive test result Contact Tracing Team will get in touch to ask where they have been recently and who they have been in close contact with. Anyone who may have caught the virus from them is considered a close contact, and the Contact Tracing Team will also get in touch with them to notify them to self-isolate (and take a test if they are also displaying symptoms), to help stop the spread of the virus.
- 5.3 The Caerphilly Contact Tracing Team operates as part of the Gwent Contact Tracing Service. This is a project initiated in May 2020 in response to Welsh Government's *Test, Trace, Protect Strategy*, and went live in June 2020 thanks to redeployed staff working completely agilely using an interim IT system. With the introduction of an all Wales IT system and a Welsh Government funded recruitment process the service has developed significantly since those early days.
- 5.4 The contact tracing service operates 7 days a week and our local contact tracing team is supported by local authority Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) across the region and by Clinical Leads, Consultants in Health Protection, and Consultants in Communicable Disease from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) and Public Health Wales. The contact tracing teams are supported by Environmental Health Officers (EHOs); EHOs deal with the more sensitive and high risk cases, such as cases associated with closed settings such as care homes, schools and factories, especially where clusters and localised outbreaks have developed. EHOs from each of the five local authorities share the regional out of hours response to support the contact tracing team and to deal with matters that require escalation and further investigation or control measures.
- 5.5 The system operates on the basis that a local authority team will be responsible for tracing and contacting cases associated within their local authority; however, depending on demand the teams will be flexed to support the wider Gwent response as required. A partnership model is in place for the Service which is reflected in the Delivery Framework at Appendix A. ABUHB are the banker for the regional service and receive funding from Welsh Government and reimburse each organisation expenditure incurred and produce regular reports to a Leadership Group and G10 as appropriate. Torfaen county borough council host a Regional Coordination Unit which supports and ensures the effective delivery of the Service.
- 5.6 At its peak the Caerphilly Contact Tracing Team consisted 148 full time equivalent (FTE), head count of 172 employees. This comprised of 63.7 FTE temporary redeployed staff and 74.0 FTE staff directly recruited into the service as detailed in the table below.

100% of Model Workforce			FTE		
Caerphilly TTP	FTE	Head Count	TTP Recruited Staff	CCBC Seconded Staff	CCBC Temporary Redeployed Staff
Team Manager	1	1	-	1.0	-
Business Co-ordinators	8	9	4.8	3	0.2
Contact Tracers	60	63	25.0	7.0	28.0
Contact Advisors	79	99	38.0	5.5	35.5
Total TTP Team	148.0	172.0	67.8	16.5	63.7

5.7 At the time of writing this report redeployed staff have largely returned to their substantive services, but a process of regular “Keep In Touch” Days is in place and they have retained supplied equipment so that they can be called upon to assist should case numbers increase and it be necessary to flex up the service again. There are currently approximately 83.3 FTE staff in the Caerphilly Contact Tracing Team with funding currently confirmed through to the end of September 2021.

5.8 As of 10th April 2021 over 12,000 cases required contact tracing in Caerphilly of which 99.8% were successfully contacted with 97.9% of over 21,000 contacts of cases also successfully contacted as detailed in the table below.

Reporting Period: 15th June 20 - 10th April 21	Gwent Total	Caerphilly
No. Positive Cases	41549	13439
No. Positive Cases Eligible for Tracing	37606	12130
No. Positive Cases Successfully Contacted	37532	12102
% Successfully Contacted	99.8	99.8
No. Contacts generated	68864	21985
No. Contacts Eligible for contact	68662	21933
No. Contacts Successfully contacted	66975	21474
% Successfully Contacted	97.5	97.9

5.9 In March 2021 Audit Wales published a report: *Test, Trace, Protect in Wales: An Overview of Progress to Date*. Audit Wales found that Test Trace Protect is a well-established mechanism to control the spread of infectious disease. It involves contacting and providing advice to people who have tested positive, finding out who

their close contacts have been, and reaching those close contacts to advise them on what they need to do. Contact tracers try to build trust to find out who people have been in contact with, especially where they may be reluctant to admit they have broken the rules. Tracers also play a key role in advising people of the importance of self-isolating, and to flag up with wider public and third sector services where additional support may be needed as part of TTP

5.10 In March 2021 Welsh Government's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) published a paper modelling the Welsh TTP (Test, Trace, Protect) system. TAG estimated that during winter high transmission and prevalence (outside of firebreak), TTP reduced R (the growth rate of coronavirus) from approximately 1.7 to 1.3. Using recent R values and improvements to case ascertainment and test and trace times, the effect may be a reduction from approximately 1.3 to 0.8.

5.11 There are a number of ongoing developments to the Contact Tracing service. For example, all positive cases are now Backward Contact Traced; this is enhanced contact tracing looking back over a 2 week period, which plays a vital role in the effort to minimise and prevent the spread of Covid-19. The Caerphilly team are also now tracing Contacts of arriving travellers that become positive cases. From the 1st April 2021 we have introduced a telephone citizen support service. The service has good relationships with schools and is currently working with Primary School head teachers to identify where improvements to process or support can be implemented. We are also looking to pilot different ways of working in engaging with Caerphilly residents that do not answer phone calls to understand how we can evolve the service and support people as we ease lockdown restrictions

5.12 **Conclusion**

The Caerphilly Contact Tracing Service has worked collaboratively across Gwent to manage demand and share best practice to shape the service consistently. It is a service created from scratch and is a strong example of the public sector working effectively in partnership in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 Assumptions have been made regarding the workforce requirements for the service. Workforce modelling has informed the nature, number, and timing of the staffing requirements of the service which has also been the subject of discussions with Welsh Government.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report is for information and has no decision-making requests, so the Council's full Integrated Impact Assessment process has not been applied.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Aneurin Bevan University Health Board receive funding from Welsh Government and organisations are reimbursed thoroughly monthly claims with evidence of expenditure.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report. Whilst staff will return to their substantive roles at the end of the temporary redeployment arrangement, they may be called upon again should another spike in cases occur. The service has provided an opportunity for staff to contribute to the response to the pandemic and some feedback from staff is provided at Appendix B.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984.
The Local Government Act 2000
Welsh Ministers have passed a number of Regulations dealing with coronavirus restrictions and requirements and the latest details can be found here:
[Welsh Government webpage - Coronavirus legislation: related legislation](#)

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Consultees: Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Environment and Neighbourhood Services
Cllr. D.T. Davies – Chair of Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Cllr. A. Hussey - Vice Chair of Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Corporate Management Team
Mark S. Williams –Corporate Director, Economy & Environment
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services & S151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Ceri Edwards Environmental Health Manager
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)
Ruth Betty, Customer Tracing Team Manager
Shaunna Morgan, Principal Human Resources Officer
David Roberts, Principal Group Accountant

Background Papers:

Test Trace Protect Strategy, Welsh Government
Test, Trace, Protect in Wales: An Overview of Progress to Date Audit Wales, March 2021
Modelling the Current Welsh TTP (Test, Trace, Protect) System, Welsh Government Technical Advisory Group, 24th March 2021

Appendices:

Appendix A Gwent Test, Trace, Protect Service – Contact Tracing Governance & Delivery Framework

Appendix B Staff Feedback