

**Meeting:** [Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board](#) **Date:** [10/10/2024](#)

**Wards affected:** [All](#)

**Report Title:** [Public Health update on infection prevention, antimicrobial resistance, and Winter vaccination programmes](#)

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** [n/a](#)

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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1.1 This report gives an overview of the work of the public health team and partners in the following areas, with specific reference to planning for Winter:

- Preventing and managing outbreaks through good infection control
- Tackling the threat presented by anti-microbial resistance
- Promoting health through uptake of the Winter vaccine programmes.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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2.1 The programmes of work described in this report will help us to deliver our vision of a healthy, happy and prosperous Torbay by helping to prevent and manage the spread of infections.

2.2 There are significant risks associated with the spread of infection, and the development of antimicrobial resistance. This paper outlines plans and activities designed to tackle these risks at national and local level.

## 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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3.1.1 Members are asked to note the report and to support efforts to tackle the spread of infection and antimicrobial resistance.

## 1. Introduction

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### Background

#### Infection prevention & management

- 1.1 Good infection prevention and control is the cornerstone of the prevention of infectious disease and the spread of infections. NHS and Social Care settings in England are required to follow national guidance in relation to infection prevention and control. This is updated regularly and is used by the Council and our NHS and Care colleagues to promote best practice and monitor compliance.
- 1.2 Guidance is available here: [NHS England » National infection prevention and control manual \(NIPCM\) for England](#); [Infection prevention and control in adult social care settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

#### Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

- 1.3 Antimicrobial resistance is one of the top global public health and development threats. The size of the problem is well described by the World Health Organisation (WHO), who are the leading agency calling for global action.
- 1.4 Antimicrobials include antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals, and antiparasitics. They are medicines used to prevent and treat infectious diseases in humans, animals and plants.
- 1.5 Antimicrobial resistance occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to medicines. With this drug resistance, infections become very difficult to treat. AMR is a natural process happening over time through genetic changes in these organisms. But the process is sped up through human activity, for example the misuse or overuse of medicines across human, plant and animal health sectors.
- 1.6 The WHO estimates that bacterial antimicrobial resistance is directly responsible for well over a million deaths worldwide each year, and contributes to almost five million deaths.
- 1.7 As medicines become less effective, there will be greater risks not just from infection but from all surgical procedures and treatments such as chemotherapy. As well as the cost to life and health, the economic burden is substantial.

#### [\[Antimicrobial resistance \(who.int\)\]](#)

- 1.8 The WHO published a global AMR action plan in 2015. This has five objectives: awareness and education; surveillance and research; infection measures to reduce infections; optimising the use of medicines in human and animal health; and sustainable investment in new medicines and vaccines.
- 1.9 The UK government published a 20 year vision for AMR in 2019. This looked for action across human and animal health and the environment to tackle AMR through policy, regulation, treatment of infections, 'good stewardship' of medicines, and research and development, by 2040.

- 1.10 As part of the vision, the government committed to delivering on a series of five year action plans. The second of these was published this year: [Confronting antimicrobial resistance 2024 to 2029 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/confronting-antimicrobial-resistance-2024-to-2029). This figure summarises the objectives of the action plan under five themes:



## Winter vaccine programme

- 1.11 The annual Autumn/Winter vaccination programme provides vital protection to keep people from developing serious illnesses and ending up in hospital during the busy Winter months.
- 1.12 Each year, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommends which groups should receive which virus, based on the latest scientific evidence. Flu and Covid vaccines are now established in the annual programme, and this year there is a further vaccine – RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) – being introduced for certain groups.
- 1.13 This year, free flu vaccines are being offered, from September/ October, to people 65 or over, pregnant women, children from 2-16, and those in a clinical risk group. Residents of care homes, unpaid carers, contacts of people who are immunosuppressed, and frontline health and care workers, are also eligible. Flu season usually peaks in December and January, so starting adult vaccinations from October will ensure those most at risk are protected during the colder months when people gather indoors and viruses spread.
- 1.14 Free Covid vaccines are being offered, in the same timescales, to adults 65 and over, care home residents (older age), those in a clinical risk group, including pregnancy and frontline health and care workers.

- 1.15 The new RSV vaccine is being offered to pregnant women (from 28 weeks to protect the infant), and adults 75-80.
- 1.16 For adults eligible for both vaccines, the NHS will make flu and COVID-19 jabs available at the same time, giving the option to get protection from both viruses in one visit. However it is more effective for people to have the RSV vaccination on a different day from flu or COVID-19 vaccinations.

## 2. Local action to tackle infection

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### Infection prevention & management

- 1.17 Our work during the Covid pandemic highlighted the importance of high infection control standards. The public health team, with UKHSA (the national and regional agency responsible for health protection), adult social care, and infection management colleagues, worked closely with local providers to prevent and manage outbreaks using the principles of infection control.
- 1.18 This work continues as Care providers share experience and good practice through their management networks, and the Torbay Adult Social Care Providers Newsletter promotes infection prevention advice and updates on the latest guidance.
- 1.19 A very important role is undertaken by the Devonwide Community Infection and Management Service (CIMS). This was set up in April 2020, at a coincidentally critical time for infection management in the community. The CIMS service operates on a 'hub and spoke' basis, coordinated from NHS Devon with a small team in each of the hospital trusts in the county. CIMS colleagues at the Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust were invaluable through the pandemic and continue to provide advice, support and guidance to community health and social care settings in Torbay. They are crucial when there is an outbreak, and even more important in working to get systems in place to prevent outbreaks from occurring.
- 1.20 The Public Health team, with UKHSA, also provide some proactive infection prevention and control support to non health and care settings such as the hostel, asylum hotels (when in place), businesses, schools and early years.

### Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

- 1.21 AMR is effectively part of the infection management strategy. If drugs become ineffective, then infections will be rife; if infections spread, then drug resistance is more likely to develop.
- 1.22 Torbay Public Health is part of a South West health protection network group. As a network, together with NHS partners, we developed an Infection Prevention and Management Strategy 2024-29 to strengthen infection management and tackle AMR. There are five themes: prevention, citizen engagement, health inequalities, workforce development, data and digital, sustainability, and collaboration and partnership.
- 1.23 Across Devon and Cornwall, we have a new Peninsula Antimicrobial Resistance Group where partners are developing local priorities against these target actions, in relation to AMR.

- 1.24 And at local level, Public Health in Torbay convened a local AMR group in 2023, where we are working with partners in the NHS, Environmental Health, Medicines Optimisation (pharmacy), and UKHSA, to try and turn these commitments into practice. Although there is no dedicated resource to support work to tackle AMR, there is substantial enthusiasm, driven by an understanding of the risks if no action is taken. Local activities include promoting good infection control and AMR with schools and early years, building on the good relationships, and key messages, developed through the pandemic. Children are ideal ambassadors and there are tools to support this work, for example the national eBUG training based on the national curriculum [Home \(e-bug.eu\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ebug-training), and the opportunity to promote tackling AMR through the Antibiotic Guardian pledge: [Antibiotic Guardian – Pledge to be an Antibiotic Guardian](#).
- 1.25 A key activity currently is planning for WHO World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 18-24 November 2024: [World AMR Awareness Week 2024 \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-antimicrobial-awareness-week-2024), with a range of promotional activities.

### Winter vaccine programme

- 1.26 Vaccination is also a major defence against AMR, as vaccines prevent infection and therefore the need for medicines.
- 1.27 As in previous years, Torbay Primary Care Networks are offering Covid and Flu vaccinations at the English Riviera Centre. For those only eligible for the Flu Vaccine, this will be given at their GP practice.
- 1.28 In Torbay, our uptake of Flu and Covid vaccines is good for the 65+ age-groups. All areas received a boost to numbers during the Covid pandemic and, although rates have reduced each year since 2021, they have remained above target for Flu (75%). Our uptake for people in clinical risk groups is below the 55% target for the Flu vaccine, again reducing since 2021, in common with Devon, England, and the South West.
- 1.29 Our rates tend to be slightly below those in Devon for most vaccinations, mirroring the high proportion of deprivation which is a key factor in low uptake. Therefore our efforts continue to be to target vaccine uptake in the higher risk, and the lower socio-economic, groups, in particular 'taking the vaccine to where people are' through outreach clinics, and using local trusted voices to get the message across.
- 1.30 The Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust Maternity Service has active plans in place to promote and deliver all three Winter vaccines to pregnant women through the season. This is a group where uptake nationally and locally could be much higher, offering increased protection from infection to both the mother and the child.
- 1.31 This year the Devon vaccine outreach team is committing to running more clinics earlier in the season in Torbay, to help us to reach our target populations in our town centre areas and our homeless community. There are also 23 pharmacies signed up to provide Covid vaccines in Torbay and South Devon (87 across Devon as a whole).
- 1.32 The Winter communications programme is under way, with the '*Get Winter Strong*' campaign launched on 30 September, focusing on getting vaccine rates up: [18,000 flu-related deaths in past 2 winters as jab uptake falls - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

- 1.33 In Torbay we work in partnership with the NHS and partners across Devon to promote the national messages through the season, with a local angle where practical. Key messages for this year are: 'choose well'; get your vaccine; when and how to access your GP; when to use pharmacies and self-care; and support for mental health and wellbeing.. We are also working to include more social support in our communications, covering benefits, pension credit, warm homes, food and transport, all of which are important to helping people to stay warm, active and healthy through the Winter months.

### 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 None identified

### 4. Legal Implications

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- 4.1 None identified

### 5. Engagement and Consultation

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- 5.1 Programmes include communications and engagement plans with local communities and target groups.

### 6. Procurement Implications

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- 6.1 None identified

### 7. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

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- 7.1 Anti-microbial resistance is strongly linked with climate change and tackling one can help to tackle the other. Sustainability is a target area in the South West Infection Prevention and Management Strategy which we are all signed up to deliver.

### 8. Associated Risks

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- 8.1 The risks of poor infection control and of failing to tackle anti-microbial resistance are described in the paper. The aims of these programmes are to put in place measures to address these risks.

## 9. Equality Impact Assessment

| Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability | Data and insight   | Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)   | Mitigation activities  | Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Age  | <p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p> | Age is a risk factor for infection.   | Age guides targeting of infection control measures including vaccine programmes. |   |
| Carers   | <p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>   | Carers are a risk group.  | Vaccine programmes target carers.  |   |
| Disability   | <p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.</p>                       | Those with clinical risk conditions are at higher risk.   | These groups are targeted in the vaccine programmes.                             |   |
| Gender reassignment  | <p>In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar</p>                                  | It is not anticipated that programmes will have a specific positive or negative differential impact based on this characteristic. |  |   |

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|                                | to the Southwest and is lower than England.   |   |  |  |
| Marriage and civil partnership | Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.   | It is not anticipated that programmes will have a specific positive or negative differential impact based on this characteristic. |  |  |
| Pregnancy and maternity        | Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas. | Pregnancy, and infants, are at additional risk.   | These groups are targeted for vaccination. |  |
| Race                           | In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.  | It is not anticipated that programmes will have a specific positive or negative differential impact based on this characteristic. |  |  |
| Religion and belief            | 64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.  | It is not anticipated that programmes will have a specific positive or negative differential impact based on this characteristic. |  |  |
| Sex                            | 51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male  | It is not anticipated that programmes will have a specific positive or negative   |  |  |



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|   |   | differential impact based on this characteristic.  |   |  |
| Sexual orientation  | In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.                | It is not anticipated that programmes will have a specific positive or negative differential impact based on this characteristic.                        |   |  |
| Armed Forces Community  | In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces. | It is not anticipated that programmes will have a specific positive or negative differential impact based on this characteristic.                        |   |  |
| <b>Additional considerations</b>  |   |  |   |  |
| Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)                 |   | People in more challenged socio-economic circumstances are at greater risk of low vaccine uptake.  | These groups are targeted for vaccine outreach.           |  |
| Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay) |   | All programmes are designed to improve population health.  | All programmes are designed to improve population health. |  |
| Human Rights impacts  |   | Services and providers will remain cognisant of human rights, including the right to life, health, privacy, education and prohibition of discrimination. |   |  |
| Child Friendly  | Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate  | Infection prevention, AMR, and vaccine programmes all have activities targeting children.  | Infection prevention, AMR, and vaccine programmes         |  |

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|  | Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people. |  | all have activities targeting children. |  |
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## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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- 10.1 Planning for Winter includes all areas of the Council to a varying degree, and relevant teams are involved in preparation and delivery.

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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- 11.1 All of these programmes involve close partnership working across the Integrated Care System, including voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, and all are intended to promote and improve health across the whole of our population.