

Reading COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan

June 2020



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Why do we need an Outbreak Control Plan for Reading?

- We want to keep our residents as safe as we can from COVID-19 until better treatments and/or a vaccine is available.
- The initial phase of COVID-19 was countrywide. As national restrictions are lifted, sporadic cases are likely which will need local action to prevent spread.
- Building on local knowledge and trusted partnerships our local plan adds to national programmes.



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Key features of Reading

- Reading is the principal regional and commercial centre of the Thames Valley. The Borough of Reading is home to 167,700 residents with the wider urban area of Reading reaching into the neighbouring Wokingham and West Berks Local Authority areas. The age of the Reading population is younger than UK average
- The town is a major transport interchange, benefitting from its strategic location on the M4 corridor and proximity to Heathrow Airport and London as well as home to the second busiest train station in the South East
- The largest employers in the Reading area include business such as Microsoft and Oracle, the University of Reading and public sector organisations such as the NHS and Local Authorities. A large percentage of the local working population are highly skilled
- Reading houses the regional Royal Berkshire Hospital, the University of Reading, the region's leading professional football team, 73 schools and is home to the international music festival- Reading Festival



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Reading and COVID-19

- Like all parts of the UK, Reading has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- The community spirit in Reading is strong and came together in a range of ways as the pandemic hit and lockdown occurred. The One Reading Community Hub has been an example of this in action, available at <https://www.reading.gov.uk/coronavirussupport>.
- The Hub has supported over 1,000 people in Reading who were required to shield, as well as having linked up over 1,500 people for further support with our local voluntary sector groups
- The urban nature of Reading and the close proximity of testing facilities may have caused the higher than average confirmed number of cases that we saw early in the pandemic- with numbers in May and June reducing in keeping with other areas that are similar to Reading
- A particular focus in Reading has been on providing support to those most vulnerable to the infection, especially our local care homes.



Our Outbreak Control Plan has the following themes:

1. Care homes and schools

Prevent and manage outbreaks in specific individual settings (e.g. schools, care homes)

2. High risk places, locations and communities

Prevent and manage outbreaks in other high-risk locations, workplaces and communities

3. Local testing capacity

Deploy local testing capacity optimally

4. Contact tracing in complex settings

Deliver contact tracing for complex settings and cohorts

5. Data integration

Access to the right local data to enable the other 7 themes and prevent outbreaks

6. Vulnerable people

Support vulnerable people and ensure services meet the needs of diverse communities

7. Local Boards including Communication & Engagement

Take local actions to contain outbreaks and communicate with the general public

8. Workforce

Keeping our workforce safe



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Managing risks locally

- COVID-19 does not travel on its own. It is transmitted largely in droplets, coughed out by people who are infected.
- Keeping a social distance, using tissues to catch coughs and sneezes and disposing of them safely, washing hands often and isolating infectious people are key protection measures to prevent spread.
- Some people seem more likely to catch COVID-19 or to become more sick as a result. These people need extra protection.
- Some settings are more risky, for example where infectious people are being cared for, where social distancing and isolation are more challenging or where there are people at particular risk of harm from COVID-19.
- It is likely that COVID-19 will be harder to spot and control in the winter and we need to be prepared.



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Managing risks locally

In Reading we are working with Public Health England and developing focussed outbreak plans for the following settings and population groups as we know outbreaks may be more likely in these areas or people may be more impacted by them or they maybe more complex to control if they occur



- Care homes
- Social care services
- Schools
- Hospitals
- Primary care facilities
- Returning travellers from abroad
- Traveller and homeless population
- Social housing
- Leisure facilities
- Libraries and cultural facilities
- Retail and the town centre
- Transport hubs
- Offices/ workplaces
- Food outlets/ licenced premises
- Council run buildings
- Places of worship
- BAME community
- University of Reading

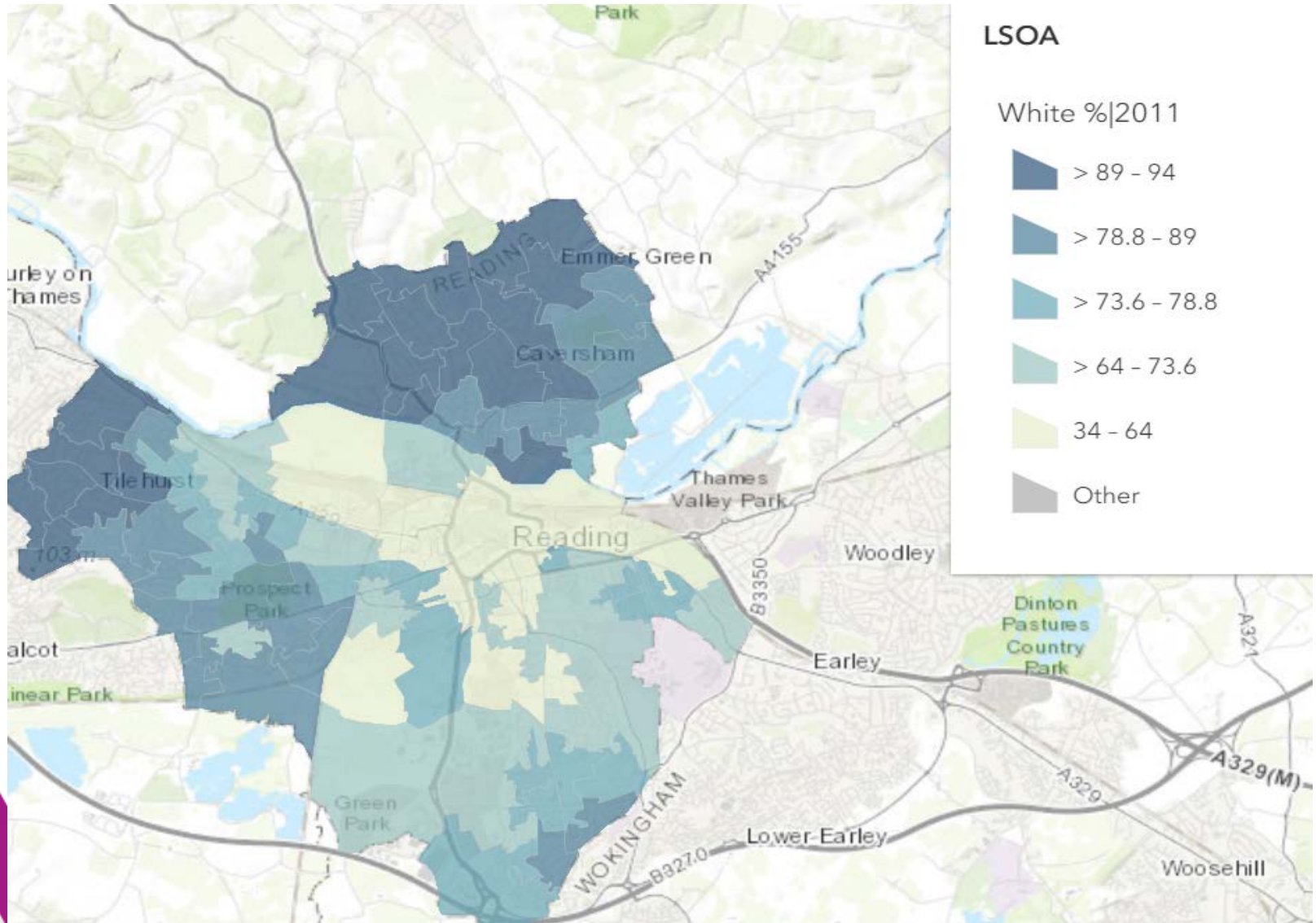


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Ethnicity in Reading

Reading has an ethnically diverse population with BAME groups located in some specific parts of the Borough



What actions might be taken or recommended if an outbreak occurs?

- Alert messaging
- Focussed testing of people with and without symptoms
- Special testing facilities set up
- Additional contact tracing
- Closure of premises
- Restricting visiting
- Cancelling events
- Closing playgrounds or other facilities
- Enhanced monitoring of people isolating
- Specific advice on PPE and infection prevention and control measures



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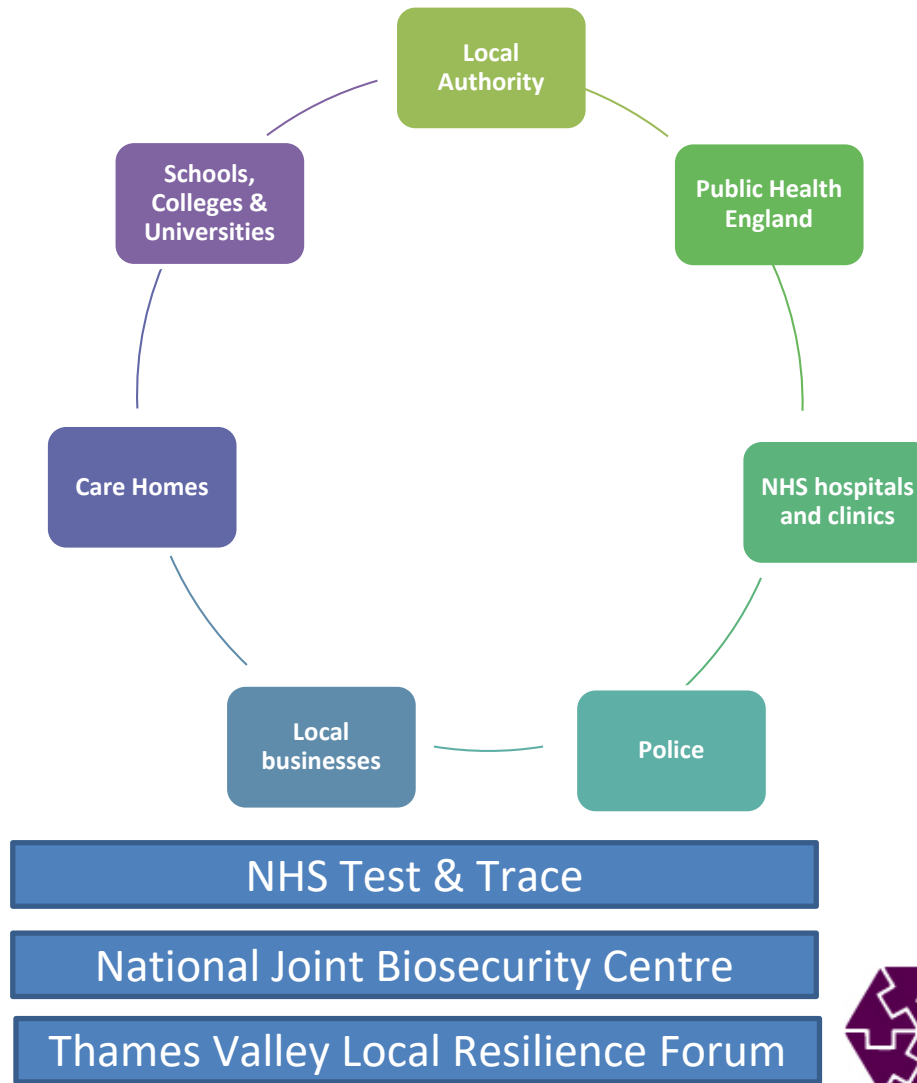
How will we respond to an outbreak in Reading?

- We will watch data on cases and risks closely, so we spot outbreaks early.
- We will support our residents to stay safe, encouraging handwashing, social distancing and isolation and assisting those who need help to comply.
- The actions we take will be those most likely to be effective, based on evidence.
- We will act swiftly to put local actions in place to support Public Health England's recommendations on controlling spread.
- We will communicate with local people and organisations to help them keep safe.



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Managing a local outbreak is a team effort



How are the right people and organisations informed if cases or outbreaks occur?

Emergency Operations Centre

- Receives notification from Public Health England's (HPT)
- Receives local query or questions about possible outbreak

Berkshire West Health Protection Cell

- Public Health Consultant/Head of Public Health
- Public Health Lead Officer
- Lead Council Officer for specific setting provides specialist advice to IMT and LA response

Incident Management Team (IMT) Meeting

- Called by PHE HPT
- Multi agency membership depending on nature of incident
- Assesses situation and agrees of plan of action

RBC Covid-19 Gold Command

- Oversees LA response
- Allocates resources
- Local Comms

Notifications

1. Reading Council Gold Command by Public Health Consultant
2. Assistant Director for respective setting(s)
3. Council Leader by CEO
4. Lead Member/ Ward Members by Assistant Director or Public Health Consultant
5. Report to Berks West Cell/Health Protection Board by Public Health Consultant
6. Report to TVLRF via InfoCell - EP

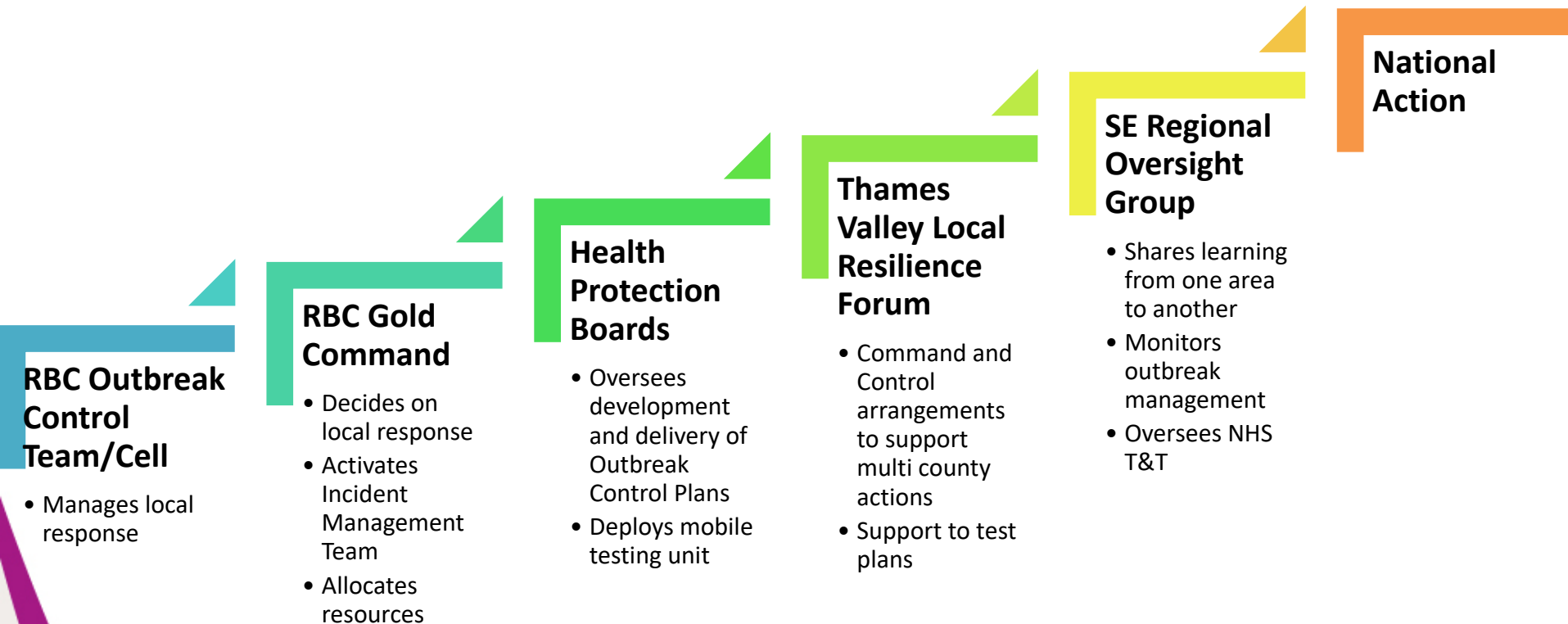
Reading Council Pool of Outbreak Responders

Local officers to support delivery of IMT recommendations

Abbreviations

PHE Public Health England
HPT Health Protection Team
IMT Incident Management Team
LA Local Authority
CEO Chief Executive Officer
TVLRF Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum
EP Emergency Planning

What if more action is needed?



When to get in touch with Reading Borough Council?

Contact the Council via

CV19Notifications@reading.gov.uk or 0118 937 2707

- if you have been contacted about being a COVID-19 case or contact and are not sure what to do
- if you think there are cases in your workplace, school, organisation or other setting

If you have symptoms, stay home and contact NHS Test & Trace to arrange testing at <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test> or call 119



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Communication with residents

- Our new Outbreak Engagement Boards will be held in public regularly as needed, led by local Councillors and accountable to the public.
- We will keep our website up to date with the latest information and guidance.
- We will use social media to spread the word.
- We will work with services, businesses and organisations to make sure information is clear and accurate
- We will make information available in accessible formats and languages other than English.



Governance

- This work will be overseen by our Berkshire West Health Protection Board where key partners will work together to control spread locally.
- The Reading Outbreak Engagement Board will listen to your views and keep the public informed about COVID-19.
- The Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum will put Command and Control arrangements in place to act across a broader geography if needed.
- The South East Regional Oversight Group will help us learn from other areas.



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Next steps for the Reading Outbreak Control Plan

Refine

Refine the plan with partners

Adapt

Adapt the plan as we learn more about Covid and local outbreaks

Review

Review our plans alongside new national programmes such as the Joint Bio-Security Centre