

Health and Wellbeing Forum 20 May 2021

Chair: Judith Derbyshire (EDC), Hilary Snell (Penrith Council), Cathryn Beckett (Public Health), Michael Hanley (EDC), Phil Dew (EDC).

1. Current Covid Situation

Cathryn Beckett (CB) gave a report. There has been 5 cases over the last week. There has been just short of 3000 cases during the whole pandemic. The rates are below regional and national averages. The biggest increase has been in the 12-18 year group. There has been no new cases in the 60-80 year old group, but five in the over 80s, following two weeks of none. There have been

no Covid deaths in Cumbria recently. There is still concern about the Indian variant. There have been no admissions to hospital with Covid in the last week.

Vaccination has been shown to reduce household transmission by 50%. Now, all over 34 year olds are eligible. The Auction Mart at Penrith is the new vaccination centre. People can book a vaccination by going on the national vaccination website. 75% of the population of Eden have had at least one vaccination.

Free lateral flow coronavirus tests are available now to those in the hospitality industry.

I discussed the provision of vaccines to patients at Alston Medical Practice. We have vaccinated over 1000 of the population (including second vaccinations), but unfortunately we will not be able to continue, as the PCN (Primary Care Network) has decided to hand over vaccinations to the new vaccination centre in Penrith. The PCN is the Eden group of the ten local GP practices.

2. Mental Health

Mike Conefry from Public Health, South Cumbria gave a presentation on "Population Mental Wellbeing and Mental Health and the Covid Pandemic". The primary focus of this was Mental Health Wellbeing. We are moving from management to the recovery of the pandemic. Many people have experienced loss. Most will move to a position of acceptance. The psychological journey through this is normal and we need to avoid medicalising it. There is community resilience with support for people from those around them. Most people will not choose to seek formal help. Most of these people will have a low level of anxiety. 20% have a more complicated illness and may need support.

Inequalities are exacerbated by disaster. There are different types of communities: geographical, ethnic, sexual identity and those of circumstance. Things should be done with, rather than for communities. If people are brought together, a connected community is a resilient one.

The NHS workforce is at risk of burnout, anxiety, PTSD and compassion fatigue.

There was no increase in suicides during the pandemic, in fact there was a reduction during the lockdowns, but an increase when lockdown was lifted. There is a plan to increase on-line support for young people through webinars. It is also intended that "Places to Talk" will be organised, to enable people to come together to talk about their experience of the pandemic. Key elements will be a short film of local experience of the pandemic, a resource pack for local leaders to run local sessions and a small grant to cover costs of running sessions for local groups.

3. Social Isolation.

Anna Sives from the PCN was due to present this but she could not attend. The PCN will be looking into this by assessing patients and helping those who are socially isolated by getting them involved with the social prescribers, Fit for All and Adult Social Care. Also the Befriending Service will be involved. The local communities will also be encouraged to be involved.

