# Living with Covid-19

Alison Bell – Consultant In Public Health
Joe McGregor-Harper – Health Protection Practitioner

Somerset County Council Health and Wellbeing Board 2022

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# Background and Context

- Pandemic declared on the 11th March 2020, Somerset County Council and partners involved in major incident response.

- A Covid-19 health protection board and engagement board have met regularly throughout pandemic.

- 21$^{st}$ February 2022- Living with Covid-19 plan published by UK Government.

- 14th March– Last meeting of Somerset Covid-19 Engagement Board agreed to stand down and to transfer oversight of next phase to be provided by Health & Well-Being board.

- <u>ADPH response to 'Living with Covid19' Plan:</u>

- 'Covid-19 is not over and achieving elimination is unviable in the short term'
  - 'There remains a degree of unpredictability about the course ahead… we can expect further waves of transmission'
  - 'Disadvantaged areas are likely to be more at risk from outbreaks and prolonged disruption.'

- <u>Current guidance</u>
  - Wearing a face covering in crowded areas, such as on public transport.
  - Good hand and respiratory hygiene.
  - Effective ventilation of indoor spaces.
  - Taking part in the vaccination program.

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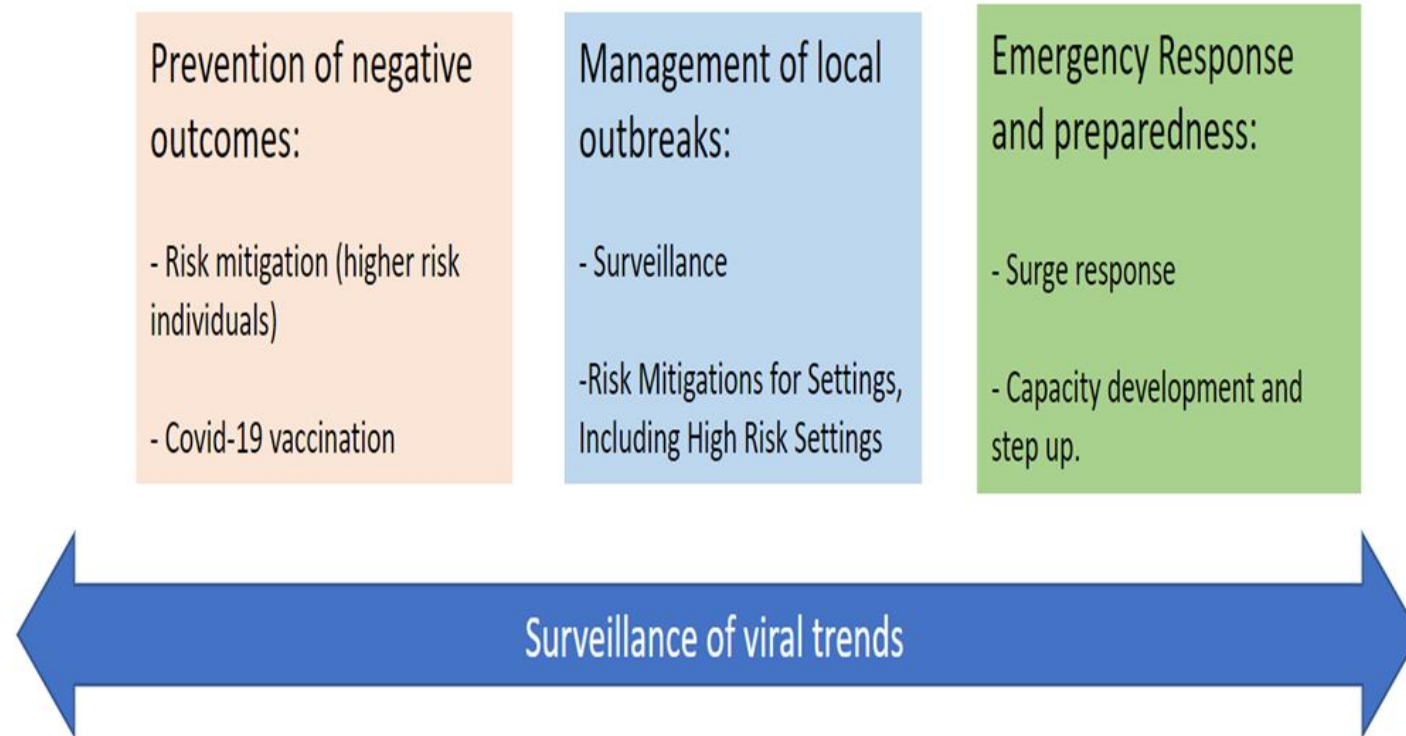
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# Somerset and Living with Covid-19 Aims

1. Ensure we all 'live well' with Covid-19 and to respond to any new challenges that covid-19 might pose.

2. Focus on protecting vulnerable people and supporting high-risk settings to reduce the impact of Covid-19 on the individuals and communities at highest risk of poor outcomes.

3. Reduce the risk from and impacts of new variants.

4. To address both the direct and wider impacts of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of Somerset population and on health inequalities.

5. Develop a Somerset health protection system which is sustainable, robust, and able to prevent, and respond to future health hazards and threats.

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# ADPH Framework for Living With Covid-19

ADPH Guidance: Living Safely with Covid: Moving toward a Strategy for Sustainable Exit from the Pandemic - ADPH



**Prevention of negative outcomes:**

- Risk mitigation (higher risk individuals)

- Covid-19 vaccination

**Management of local outbreaks:**

- Surveillance

-Risk Mitigations for Settings, Including High Risk Settings

**Emergency Response and preparedness:**

- Surge response

- Capacity development and step up.

Surveillance of viral trends

# Prevention of Negative Outcomes

**Vaccination**

SCC will continue to support all national vaccination strategies and innovate to ensure the hardest to reach are provided with the opportunity to be vaccinated and the information to make informed choices efficiently.

**Vaccination by Ethnicity**

- Multiple studies have shown how the pandemic has impacted certain ethnicities more than others.*

- Work has already been completed in Somerset to increase vaccination uptake specifically for people who identify as 'white other'.

- This work should be re-visited as the vaccination program progresses to ensure that uptake in any booster programs is encouraged.

**Vaccination by Indices of Multiple Deprivation**

- Studies have also shown how economic and educational levels are clear indicators for poorer outcomes in relation to Covid-19.**

- It is important that we focus our attention on those who are highest risk of both infection and serious illness.

- Somerset will continue to encourage uptake in line with the evergreen offer which allows access to vaccination for those who have not yet received either of their doses.

**Recommendations**

- Continue with engagement and communications.

- Utilise behavioural science insights.

- Continue to work with partners to share data effectively.

- Continue to support populations who are at higher risk of serious disease (ethnicity and IMD decile).

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# Risk Mitigation By and For Individuals

## Behavioural Insights- Focus Groups

Psychological impacts

- Increased anxiety.
- Loss of confidence.
- Memory deterioration.
- Labelled as 'vulnerable' but did not consider themselves as vulnerable.

Physical Impacts

- Mobility and physical activity decreased (but some increases in physical activity).
- Smoking increased.
- Alcohol consumption increased.
- Not accessing medical care.

Social Impacts

- Mixed feelings about wanting to return to social activities (some fearful, some happy to).
- Reduced access or availability of social activities.
- Reduced number of carers and volunteers for support services.
- Confusion by public health messages led to isolation.
- Increased dependence on others – reliance on services and others.

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# Management of Local Outbreaks

<u>Surveillance</u>

- Infectious disease surveillance is an important tool which helps public health professionals monitor the health of a population.

- The main aims of surveillance tools are to describe the current situation (e.g., prevalence), to monitor trends, and to identify any new threats to public health.

- SCC Public Health will continue to monitor a range of information sources relevant to Covid-19. Currently we have the below systems and data pathways available.

- Data will continue to be presented in an internally available dashboard updated weekly and a selection of shareable metrics updated weekly for a public dashboard.

- A particular focus of surveillance is on new variants or the virus behaving in a new way.

<u>Recommendations</u>

- Ensure ongoing surveillance to enable timely response to new threats to the health of the population of Somerset.

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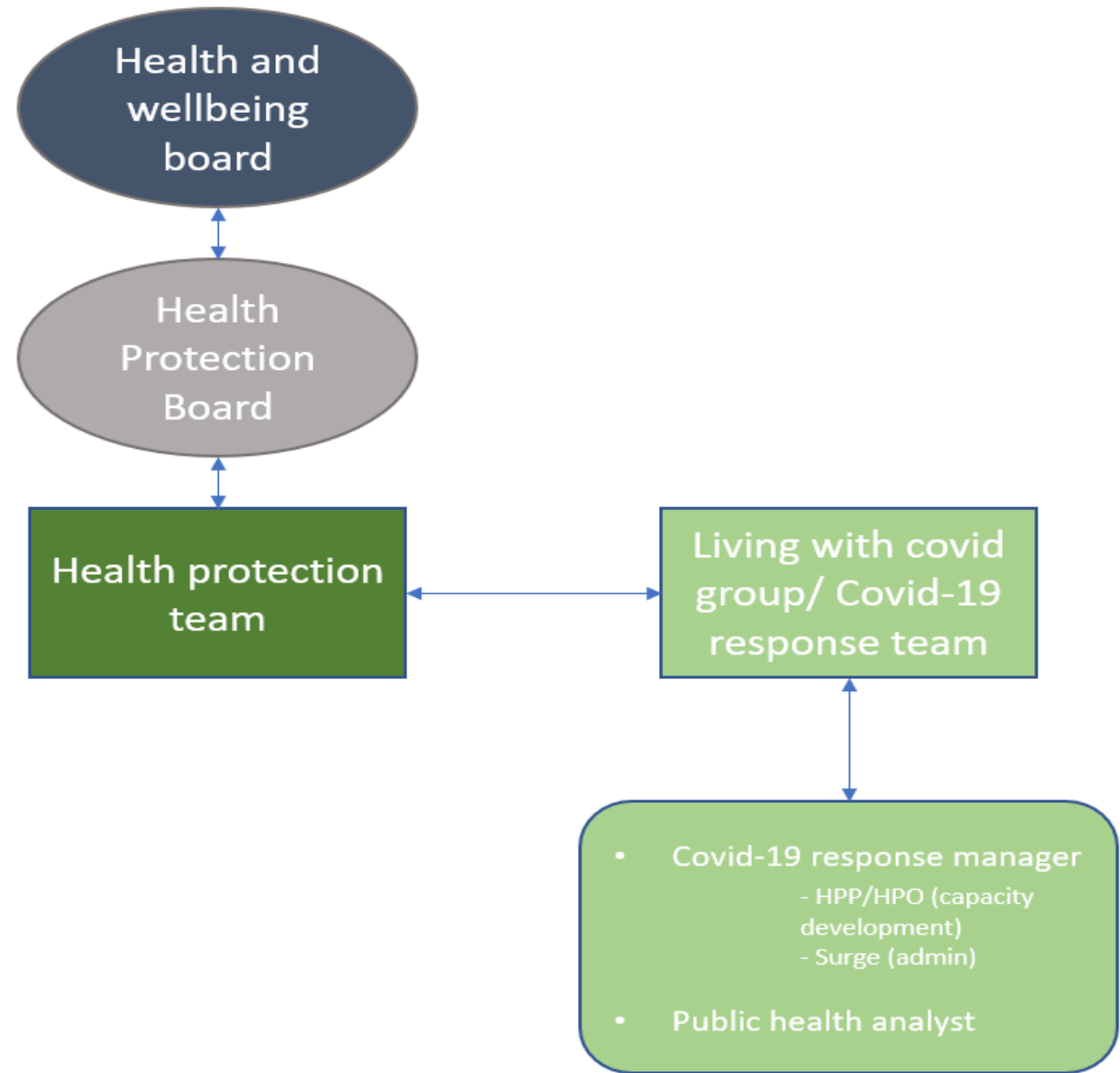CORONAVIRUS

# Risk Mitigations for High-Risk Settings

- High risk settings, which include care and nursing homes and SEND schools, are settings where individuals who are at higher risk of poor health outcomes are in close proximity.

- SCC Public Health will continue to monitor outbreaks and clusters in these settings. UKHSA are responsible for the management of these outbreaks, but local public health teams ensure that partners across the system are aware of outbreaks and clusters and that settings are fully supported and aware of their own responsibilities.

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# Emergency Response

- An emergency response plan to ensure a timely and efficient 'stand up' of resources, to enable protection of the population's health e.g., testing, mass vaccination.

- The most likely threat will come in the form of a new variant which behaves differently to the current Omicron variant, most likely with regards to virulence or vaccine escape.

- Any surge response will need to ensure adequate staff to call upon if needed in the form of practitioners, officers and business support.

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# Governance

- SCC Public Health will continue to chair the health protection board which has strategic oversight of the Covid-19 response in Somerset.

- This board will meet monthly and brings together strategic partners from across the system.

- The Somerset Public Health team will provide a brief written update to Somerset County Councillors in their monthly report and to partners via the Health and Well-being Advisory Network newsletter.

Health and wellbeing board

Health Protection Board

Health protection team

Living with covid group/ Covid-19 response team

- Covid-19 response manager
  - HPP/HPO (capacity development)
  - Surge (admin)

- Public health analyst

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# Recommendation:

- HWBB supports the approach described to 'Living with Covid19'.
- HWBB will receive exception reports on covid19, should the situation change.