

# Health Protection Training session

A Local Authority Perspective

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# Disclaimer!

- Many of us know more about health protection, the wider consequences of infectious disease and inequality as a result of infectious disease than we ever wanted to know
- We're in a time of change and this is my Local Authority perspective
- I'd welcome your thoughts

# Learning objectives

- Insight/perspectives into health protection issues in a local authority setting
- Reflection on 'covid times' and "normal" times – this might make all of our heads hurt!
- To consider what relationships and resources are available for staff in local authorities to support health protection work
- To learn about roles and responsibilities
- To consider the links between 'reaction' and 'prevention' in the context of communicable disease
- To reflect on covid as well as other health protection issues

# Lets talk about covid...

- Really, do we have to?

## Covid Local Authorities teams

- 'supported and augmented' UKHSA with outbreak management work – we've been through the fire together
- Did more active outbreak management than ever before, added our local relationships and perspectives
- Had funds to provide services like contact tracing and community support and more staff
- Staff all got lots of health protection experience to put on CV
- Will (at different speeds) have to exit from this work as don't have staff/funding to carry on
- Would really be interested to hear about your experiences and difficulties with exit

# Lets talk about pre-covid - questions from Elected Members

- 'Why can't my daughter get Men ACWY?'
- 'Can my constituent have her tree cut down because of pigeons?'
- 'I read in the Guardian that victorian diseases are on the increase'
- 'one of my family members works in a call centre where they have a case of active TB should I be worried?'

# What's the (statutory) role of the DPH

To be **assured** about the safe and efficient running of systems to protect the health of the population including

- Communicable (infectious) disease
- Immunisation and screening programmes
- Emergency planning for both
  - Emergencies that might affect health (flooding)
  - Public Health emergencies (pandemics?!?)
- Infection prevention and control

# What's your role?

To support the DPH in determining whether they are **assured** or not that the health of the population is being protected. What does this mean?

Are organisations

- Contributing, turning up, playing ball, trying?
- Focusing on the right things - inequalities?
- Who needs a 'quiet word' 'firm email' 'report to health protection committee' 'thanking'

How?

- Ask good questions – why are you doing that? why aren't you doing this?
- What cross system issues need tackling? How could the DPH or their team negotiate or influence that – tell the DPH!
- Facilitate, bring people together, support relationships and partnerships

# Relationships, roles and responsibilities

- Environmental Health teams in Local Authorities – statutory powers, experienced, under pressure
- Public Health England Health Protection Team – expert advice but might not know your local area
- Your colleagues in the PHE Screening and Immunisation team
- Your emergency planning colleagues
- Your Public Health Local Authority colleagues – commissioner for sexual health, DACT, childrens services etc
- Your local authority colleagues – schools teams, care homes teams, communications



# Who's who – partnership work

- Public Health England (expertise)
- Environmental Health (legal powers)
- Health and Safety Executive
- Director of Public Health (governance/oversight)
- Immunisation and Screening Services (commissioning)
- Primary and secondary care (delivery)
- Infection Prevention and Control (prevention, reaction to outbreaks)
- Commissioners (care homes, sexual health commissioner)
- Workplaces, schools, voluntary sector (where it happens!)

# Role of Health Protection in Local Authority – reactive

## Incidents and outbreaks

- You're gathering info to 'provide assurance'
- You're assessing how you or your local authority colleagues could be helpful

## Reactive -

- Provide local insight
  - 'that's a local authority building'
  - 'that area has a large number of new migrants'
  - 'our Local Authority colleagues are doing a project in that area'
- Be helpful – can you link to a school? Can your comms team help? What other local insight can you offer?
- Communication IS the incident

# Role of Health Protection in Local Authority - preventative

- ‘Hmm is this a pattern...’
- Could we (as a system) do anything about this
- The science and the art! What needs to be highlighted and how could you build the case for that?
- Be clear that health inequalities are (almost always) at play in health protection incidents



# Some traps to avoid

## **Be clear on your role**

- Often you're not the commissioner
- You're not the 'expert advice'

## **Confidentiality**

- only people who need to know need to know and unlikely you need to know name of index case
- Remember reputational risk for you and other organisations 'I wouldn't eat at that sandwich shop they've just had salmonella'

## **Anxiety....**

You can't 'control' all of it! Its an infectious disease!  
Competent management by 'the system' is what you're aiming for. And learning lessons and improving...

# Risk

- Balancing risk is a key part of health protection...
- Some of it comes with practice....
- What do you, your colleagues, elected members find 'scary'?
- What should you find 'scary'?

# What have we learnt about risk from covid?

- What we learnt changed in different phases of the pandemic
- At the beginning a lot of heat and anxiety from schools and families of school age children
- Care homes where the risk really was
- We don't always put resources where the highest risk is
- Covid has highlighted pre-existing system issues and exacerbated them
- We have a role to highlight those risks and gaps to different parts of the system (and Covid was pretty persuasive so that might help)



## **What I've learnt – perception of risk**

Add text here..



## **What I've learnt – perceptions of risk**







## **What I've learnt – perceptions of risk**

# What I've learnt - inequality

PHE Health Profile for England (2018):

*'Threats to health are not equally shared.*

- *the impoverished*
- *Incarcerated*
- *Institutionalised*
- *Homeless*

*Are at far higher risk of illness and premature mortality than the general population'*

# Why? – health protection and inequality

- Wider determinants – poverty, need to work, poor housing
- Prevention – uptake of vaccination and screening, trust in leaders and trust in message givers
- Health seeking behaviours - turning up at A&E with infectious +++ TB
- Resilience – how do you recover from an incident – e.g. flooding

# Turning reaction into prevention

- Make friends and influence people
- A crisis is an opportunity
- Use every opportunity to highlight the inequality dimension
- Promote vaccination!
- Help perceptions of risk by being calm and using good evidence

# Prevention? Like what?

- Is vaccination in your 0-19 specification?
- Do the CCG take TB seriously? Do you need to take a paper to their Board about it?
- What about your homeless population? – delivering services, providing support
- Briefing your elected members to try and raise awareness, follow comms protocols etc
- Investigating potential concerns in partnership with others- e.g. whether you have undiagnosed HIV in your drug using population

What have you learnt about health protection during Covid?



# What I have learnt about health protection during Covid

- Risk risk risk
- Inequalities in impact are enormous and affect every aspect of risk from harm
- Poorest communities who already had low life expectancy and those with protected characteristics have been hit hardest
- You can't control an infectious disease, its a living thing
- Washing your hands is a good idea – who knew?
- Teamwork makes the dreamwork (or at least makes the nightmare more bearable)
- Thank you everyone for all your work – we've been through the fire together.

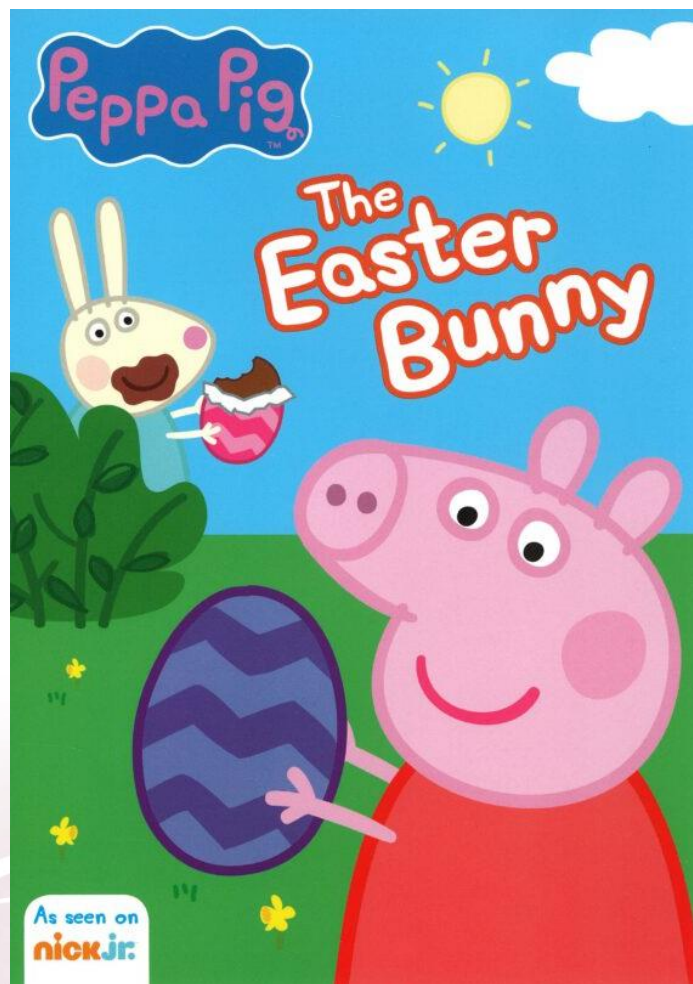
# ~~film recommendations~~

- The Painted Veil – cholera epidemic in China
- Contagion – pandemic - Gwyneth Paltrow has a cough – it doesn't end well...





# New film recommendations



Sheffield City Council