

# **Report to Conwy & Denbighshire Public Service Board Test, Trace, Protect in North Wales**

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to give a brief overview of the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) Service in North Wales. TTP is a significant new service in response to managing Covid-19 and is expected to be a requirement for a minimum of 12-18 months.

## Background

The *Test, Trace and Protect* (TTP) programme is critical to preventing a second surge in Covid-19. It is a fundamental part of Government policy and planning to fully exit the emergency response phase.

At the request of the Chief Medical Officer, in early May Public Health Wales prepared the *Public Health Protection Response Plan*<sup>1</sup> to provide advice to Welsh Government for the recovery phase.

## What is Test, Trace, Protect

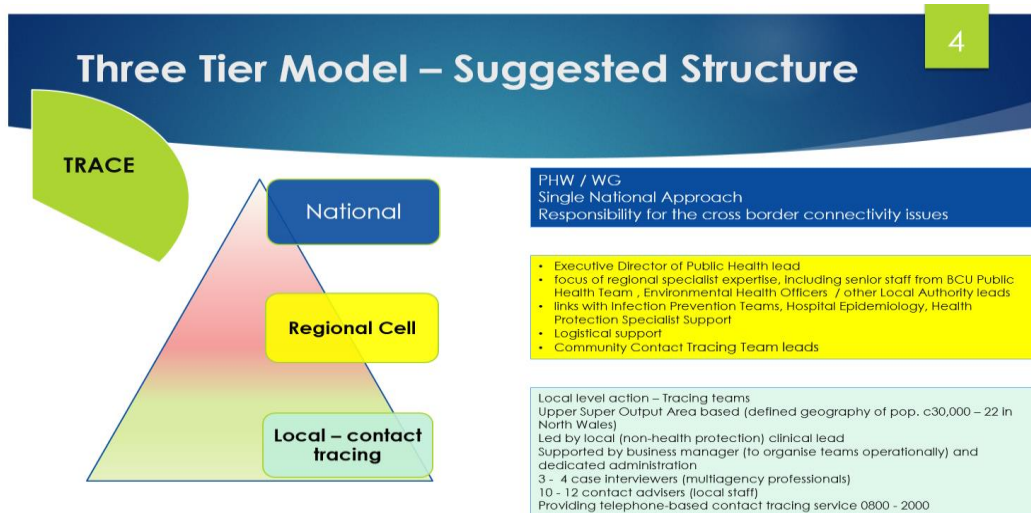
TTP is to enhance health surveillance in the community, undertake effective and extensive contact tracing, and support people to self-isolate where required to do so. This ~~will mean~~<sup>s</sup> asking people to report symptoms, testing anyone in the community who is showing symptoms of COVID-19, and tracing those they have come into close contact with. Contacts ~~will be~~<sup>are</sup> advised to self-isolate in order to stop further spread among family, friends and the community. Contact tracing is a long established public health approach to containing the spread of many infections and has proven effective in controlling coronavirus in other countries.

There is a three-tiered approach to tracing across Wales; a **National, Regional and Local** (see diagram) level is supported by a digital infrastructure to enable real-time information sharing. Contact tracing teams are managed **locally** by local authorities and coordinated

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health Protection Response Plan was published on 21 May <https://phw.nhs.wales/news/covid-19-public-health-wales-health-protection-response-plan-published/>  
Test Trace Protect (14 May) <https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-html>

**regionally** on a Local Health Board footprint and will use a single standard national framework to support a consistent, high quality, evidence based response across Wales. The model also reflects the spectrum of complexity seen in cases, with routine contact tracing occurring for the **majority of cases** at a local level, with escalation to regional level, and further escalation for specialist support from Environmental Health Officers or Clinical expert as complexity increases.



## Setting up TTP Service in North Wales

The partner organisations across north Wales have worked collaboratively to respond to the requirements of delivering the new service; the six Local Authorities across the region, the Health Board and Public Health to establish the **Regional Planning Group** and deliver the regional and local tier of the tracing plan.

Each Local Authority, the Health Board and Public Health provided a Project Lead to develop the workstreams required to establish the tracing service under the Executive Sponsorship of Teresa Owen, Director of Public Health, North Wales

The workstreams included:

- Communications and Engagement
- Data and Reporting
- Finance
- Structure and Governance
- Technology
- Workforce

- Regional Cell

Each workstream had a defined scope and was lead jointly by a Local Authority and Health Board lead. The workstreams reported to the Regional Planning Group.

## TTP Service in North Wales

Since go-live on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, the tracing component of the TTP service has traced more than 1,800 index cases and 2,000 contacts with all information contained within a single all Wales database which support the local and regional team to identify any emerging hotspots of the virus.

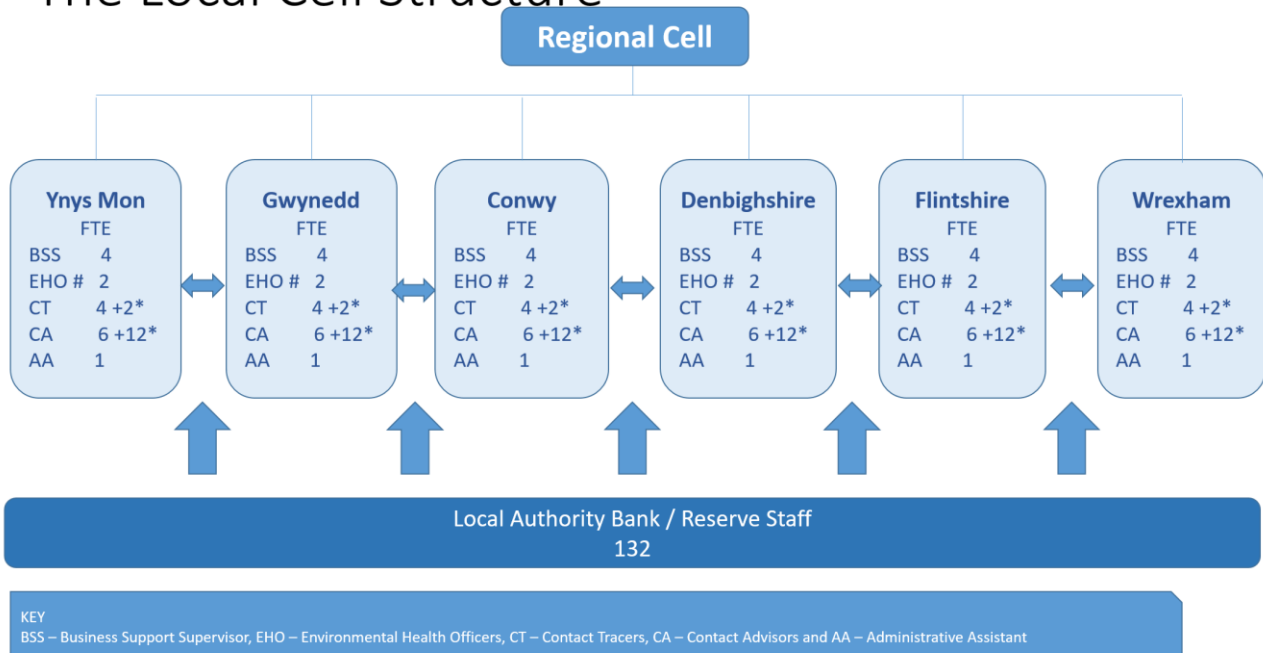
North Wales has experienced a higher volume of positive cases compared to the rest of Wales. In the early stages post go-live, the service has responded to tracing in two food manufacturer outbreaks and are currently dealing with larger volumes of testing in one of our major towns.

A benefit of responding to high volumes of cases in the early stages of the service, has enabled the region to establish what works well. In particular, the region quickly established that a mutual aid approach has been very beneficial both to forge strong working relationships across the local and regional cells as well as supporting an efficient response. The workforce models for North Wales (see below) are therefore based on these early experiences. A significant recruitment campaign was undertaken over the summer to employ staff into the new workforce model, with one lead authority, Flintshire County Council being the employing authority for the local contact tracing teams. This is model is based on a regional approach where resources can be shared via the mutual aid agreement which has worked well during recent outbreaks.

The **local tier** is responsible for interviewing cases and the following up of contacts. This is supported by a case and contact information management system, and organised in local contact tracing teams.

The local tier will escalate to the regional tier any complex cases, contacts or clusters that require additional support or awareness from the Regional Tier of response

## The Local Cell Structure



In recent weeks, lockdown has eased, tourism resumed and therefore greater movement of the population. Early indications are that the number of contacts associated with each index case are significantly increasing, however current positive cases across the region are low except for those localised cluster and outbreaks.

## Future Approach

Now the tracing service is established and operational with new employed local contact tracing teams starting in September, the proposal governance of the service will move to Oversight and Operational Performance groups replacing the current Regional Planning Group. The TTP Oversight group will report to the Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) and Strategy, Partnerships & Population Health (SPPH) Committee.

This provides a solid platform for the service to move into the autumn and winter with the challenges that may lay ahead