



HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD: 25 SEPTEMBER 2025

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

LEICESTERSHIRE HEALTH PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Purpose of report

1. This report provides an overview of health protection activities in Leicestershire from January to December 2024. It covers the performance as well as the incidents and emerging risks over the year. The assurance report supports the statutory duties of the Director of Public health and aligns with key local health strategies.
2. A comprehensive report is given in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

3. The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:
 - a. Note the annual Health Protection Report 2024;
 - b. In noting the report, recognise the specific health protection issues that have arisen locally, the steps taken to deal with them and the areas of focus for the coming year.

Policy Framework and Previous Decision

4. This report supports the statutory duties of the Director of Public Health and aligns with local and national health protection strategies. It builds on previous annual reports and reflects current public health priorities.

Background

5. The report summarises key health protection domains including infectious disease control, immunisation, screening, sexual health, tuberculosis (TB), healthcare-associated infections (HCAIs), emergency planning (EPRR), and air quality. It highlights successes such as improved flu vaccine uptake and challenges like rising gonorrhoea rates and TB concerns. The report also outlines preparedness for emerging threats and system changes.

Health Protection Overview

Outbreaks and communicable disease

6. **COVID-19:** Continued vaccination efforts with Spring and Autumn booster programmes. Case numbers are detailed in the appendix as well as performance of the vaccination programmes.
7. **Measles:** 15 cases locally; proactive vaccination campaigns in response to regional outbreaks. A local measles elimination plan was used to mitigate the impact.
8. **Mpox:** No local cases; preparedness plans in place with vaccination prioritised for cohorts at greatest risk.
9. **Pertussis (Whooping Cough):** An increase in reported cases led to a local Incident Management Team (IMT) being convened; maternal and child vaccination was prioritised as a response. Case numbers reduced towards the end of the year and IMT was stood down.
10. **Avian Flu:** H5N1 and H5N5 strains detected in wild birds in England; low human risk.

Immunisation

11. Overall, **childhood immunisation** performance is above the national average. However, trends continue to show a decline in vaccine coverage.
12. The **Human papillomavirus (HPV) programme**, now a single dose schedule for the main cohort, continues to be delivered in schools.
13. Performance for the **seasonal flu** campaigns is given in the appendix. Ongoing work continues to improve uptake in 'at risk' groups as well as eligible children and pregnant women.
14. A new vaccination programme commenced in September 2024 to protect pregnant women (and their newborn babies) and those aged 75 from **respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)**. These groups are considered to be at greatest risk.

Screening Programmes

15. Uptake of bowel screening programmes is showing an improvement. Cervical and breast screening uptake are declining but remain higher than the national average. Planning is underway for the delegation of screening responsibilities to local Integrated Care Boards by April 2026.

Sexual Health

16. The diagnostic and detection rates for Key Indicators are given in the appendix. Leicestershire County Council commissions the integrated sexual health

services (ISHS) to detect, prevent and treat sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A new provider is in place for the ISHS from April 2025, covering Leicestershire and Rutland. The main site of delivery will be via the Loughborough hub supported by outlying spoke clinics.

17. Self-managed care remains a priority. An online service commenced in April 2024.
18. Leicestershire's **chlamydia detection** rate has increased since 2021. Whilst better than national performance, Leicestershire's **gonorrhoea** diagnostic rates have increased, mirroring national trends and exceeding pre-pandemic rates and rates since 2012.
19. **HIV** testing and early diagnosis remains a priority.

Tuberculosis

20. National **TB** rates remain low but are showing an increase. A local action plan is in place, included targeted latent TB screening and addressing a local TB strain of concern. Priorities include improving Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccination uptake for eligible cohorts and increasing awareness of TB screening eligibility.

Healthcare associated infections

21. Surveillance and response remain ongoing for infections including MRSA, MSSA, E. coli, and C. difficile. Most infection rates are within acceptable ranges, though some rates are elevated. Work will continue to share educational resources to expand IPC learning access for GP practices and care home staff. An ICS IPC Community of Practice has been convened to identify system issues and coordinate relevant strategies.

Preparedness and response to incidents and emergencies

22. Collaboration continues with the Local Resilience Forum, NHS partners and other responders involved. Exercises are planned for 2025 to test and review emergency response plans.

Air Quality

23. An updated Health Needs Assessment was produced in 2024. A new action plan focuses on urban planning and public awareness. It has been evidenced that air pollution disproportionately affects vulnerable populations. Improving information to the public and other stakeholders on risk and the personal impact on air quality is a priority for 2025.

Priorities for 2025

24. The priorities for 2025 are:
 - Increase MMR, HPV, RSV, and flu vaccine uptake.
 - Prepare for delegation of immunisation and screening commissioning to ICBs.

- Improve STI and HIV testing coverage.
- Strengthen TB prevention and response.
- Enhance emergency preparedness and air quality interventions.

Proposals/ Options

25. Key priorities for 2025 include increasing uptake of MMR, HPV, RSV, and flu vaccines; preparing for the delegation of immunisation and screening commissioning to ICBs; improving STI and HIV testing; strengthening TB prevention; and enhancing emergency preparedness and air quality interventions.

Consultation/Patient and Public Involvement

26. This report is for noting and does not contain new policy proposals; therefore, a formal consultation is not required.

Resource Implications

27. The activities outlined are funded through existing public health budgets. The local authority does not commission the majority of services that are described within the report, but the Director of Public Health should be assured that arrangements are appropriate for the population.

Background papers

- [Leicestershire Health Protection Report – Annual Report 2023](#)

List of Appendices

Appendix 1- Leicestershire Health Protection Annual Assurance Report 2024

Officers to contact

Mike Sandys, Director of Public Health, Leicestershire County and Rutland
Email: mike.sandys@leics.gov.uk

Adrian Allen, Assistant Director of Public Health, Leicestershire County and Rutland
Email: adrian.allen@leics.gov.uk

Anuj Patel, Strategic Lead- Health Protection
Email: Healthprotection@leics.gov.uk

Relevant Impact Assessments

28. The JSNAs give due regard to the equality and human rights of different population groups, with particular focus within the JSNAs. Sources of

inequalities and recommendations are designed to alleviate issues created through identified inequalities.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

29. There are no equality implications arising from this report. The report would seek to have a positive impact overall and would not have an adverse effect on any section of the community.
30. There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

31. Air quality is an important element within the Leicestershire Environment Strategy.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

32. Partnership working across health, local authorities, police, fire, districts etc. is essential to ensure robust health protection and emergency planning arrangements are in place.

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