

Our Ref: ID 1716

NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group
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Re: Freedom of Information Request - Wirral's COVID test, track and trace procedures

Thank you for your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which was received into this office on 13th July 2020.

You Asked for:

1. Which organisations undertake testing, tracking and tracing in Wirral?
2. Within these processes, what are the specific responsibilities of local public health bodies and of private companies?
3. If private companies are involved, on what basis and using what criteria have they been awarded contracts?
4. A recent Wirral Globe article says that central government has awarded £2.7m to the Wirral local authority to fund testing and tracing. How will this money be spent and how much of this new (or any previous related) funding has been directed to private organisations, such as Serco or Deloitte?
5. Noting the aims of the 2020 Wirral Local Plan, how have you protected the Wirral Pound by ensuring that the £2.7m has been contained within the local economy and how has it been used to enhance local NHS services?
6. What has been the involvement of the Joint Strategic Commissioning Board, the Health and Wellbeing Board or Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester Joint Health Scrutiny Committee in decisions on the allocation of public funds for testing and tracing?
7. As far as we are aware the NHS still has as a basic principle "*no decision about me, without me*". How does this translate into practice in current circumstances when there are no longer Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) public meetings including of its 'patient voice' and now that Patient Participation Group's (PPG's) appear to be dormant?

Our Response:

1. The Test, Track and Trace process has multiple routes. NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has been involved in commissioning some local services for testing. However, much of the testing is completed through nationally directed processes such as direction to NHS acute providers and national guidance to care homes. NHS Wirral CCG has commissioned Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (WCHC) to support with a Community Sampling Service and also provide clinical support to the local Satellite Testing Centre. The Track and Trace processes are led by Public Health England and local support is through the Director of Public Health.

2. NHS Wirral CCG has not commissioned any private companies to support testing, track and trace.
3. Not applicable. Please see the answer to question 2.
4. The referenced £2.7m is a public health fund. For further information regarding this question, please can I suggest that you contact Wirral Borough Council (WBC) directly? Please see below for their contact information:
WBC – informationmanager@wirral.gov.uk
5. Please see the answer to question number 4.
6. Please see the answer to question number 4.
7. During the early stages of Covid-19, it was in line with government guidance to reduce contact and hence, some 'face-to-face' activities were suspended. Now, however, NHS Wirral CCG and GP practices are starting engagement activities again, but looking at methods of holding meetings and engagement activities 'virtually' in the safest possible way and in line with how, for example, GP practices and the wider NHS are holding 'remote' consultations and appointments. We are looking at a variety of ways of doing this, but safety is our key concern so that does mean large face-to-face activities are likely to be done differently because of social distancing. We always welcome suggestions on improving engagement, so if you have any ideas you wish to share, please contact us by emailing wiccg.intouch@nhs.net.

We hope this information is useful, however if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Corporate Affairs Team (contact details at the top of this letter)

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