

# Merton Health and Wellbeing Board Community Subgroup – 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## Situational Awareness Report: COVID-19 in Merton

Dr Dagmar Zeuner, Director of Public Health

Merton Public Health Intelligence

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Enquiries: [ben.bezuidenhout@merton.gov.uk](mailto:ben.bezuidenhout@merton.gov.uk)



# Overview

Page 2

## London overview

- Estimated cases rate positivity in London is **2,540 per 100,000** (ONS)
- The current estimated London R value is between **1.1 and 1.4**

## Cases (31<sup>st</sup> December – 6<sup>th</sup> January):

- 7 day case rate (all ages) **1,020.5 cases per 100,000** (up from 860.6 previous week).
- 7 day case rate (among 60+) **816.7 cases per 100,000** (up from 483.3 previous week).
- There were **2,177** new COVID cases in Merton.
- New COVID variant: estimated to be responsible for 63% of cases in London between 29<sup>th</sup> November and 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

## Deaths:

- There **13** new registered Merton COVID death (in hospital) for the week ending 25<sup>th</sup> December. In total Merton has seen 250 deaths due to COVID.

## Testing (29<sup>th</sup> December – 4<sup>th</sup> January / pillar 2 PCR tests only – this excludes Lateral Flow tests):

- 7 day testing rate **587.4 daily tests per 100,000**.
- 7 day test positivity increased to **22.2%**.

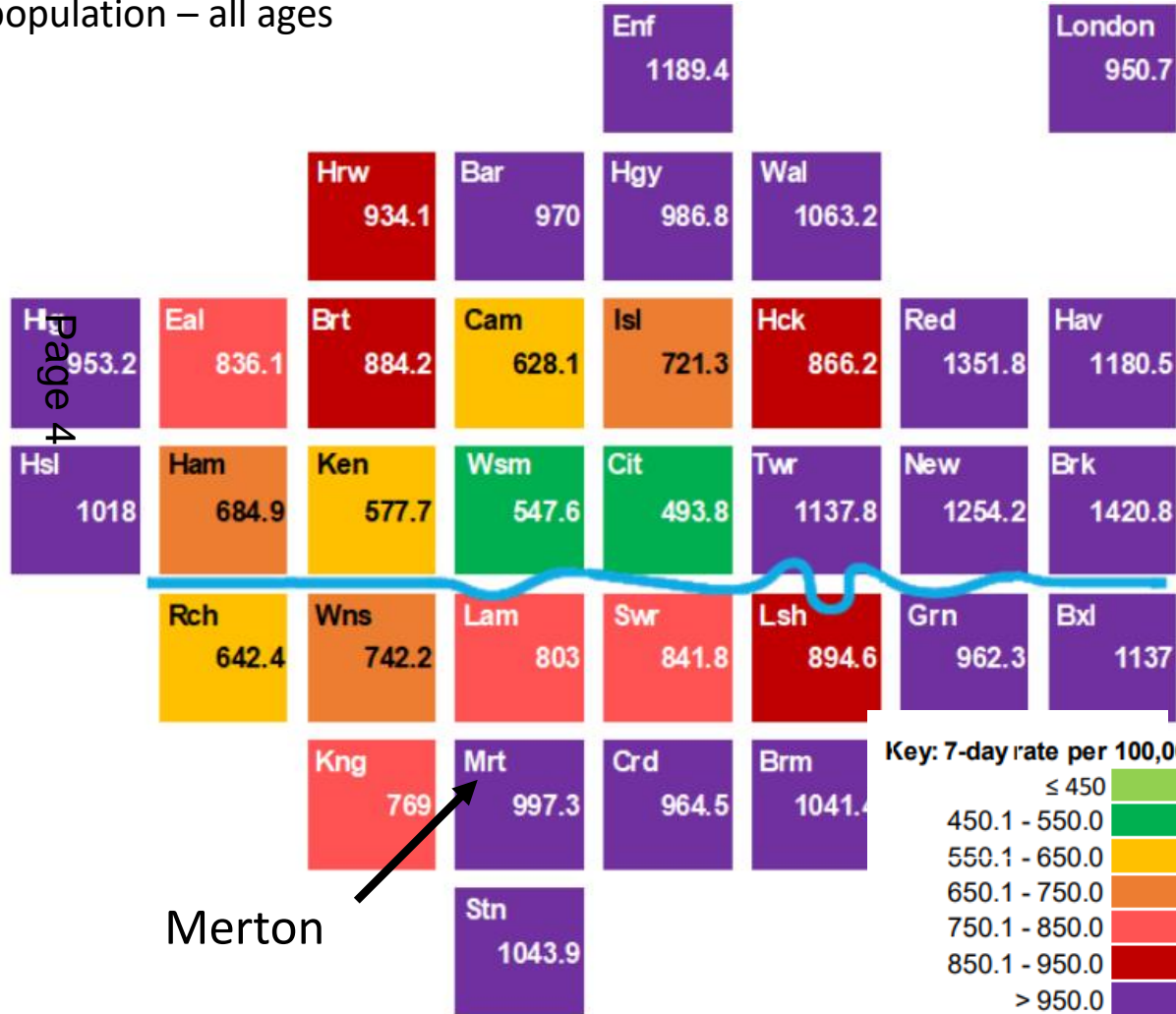
# Positive cases per 100,000 across London boroughs

11th January 2021

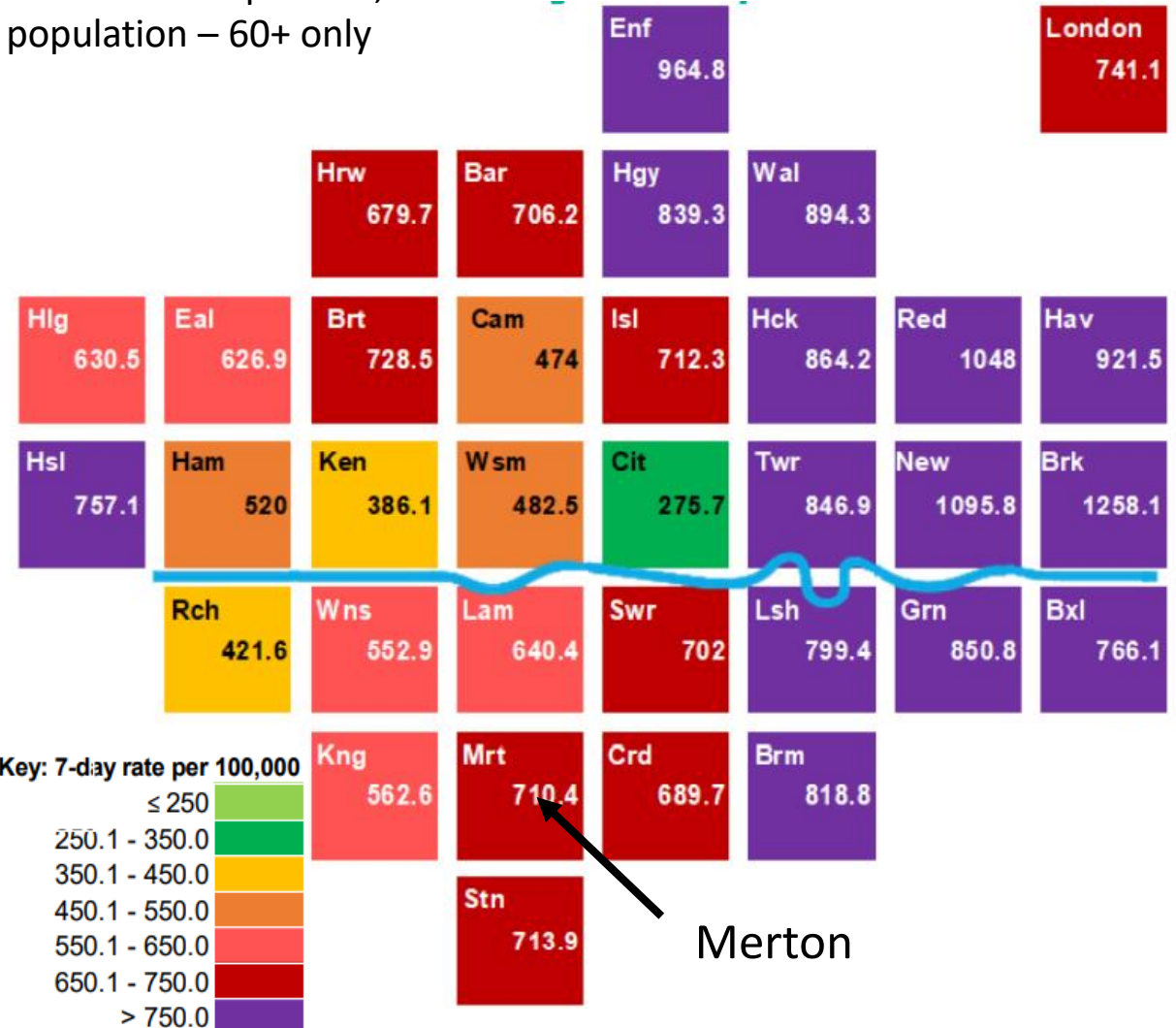
For reporting period 24.12.2020 – 30.12.2020

Colour of box illustrates weekly cases per 100,000 for that week

Positive cases per 100,000 population – all ages



Positive cases per 100,000 population – 60+ only



Page 4

Merton

Merton

# Positive cases per 100,000 across London boroughs – change since last week

11th January 2021

For reporting period 24.12.2020 – 30.12.2020

Colour of box illustrates weekly cases per 100,000 for that week

Change in positive cases per 100,000 population – all ages



Merton

Change in positive cases per 100,000 population – 60+ only



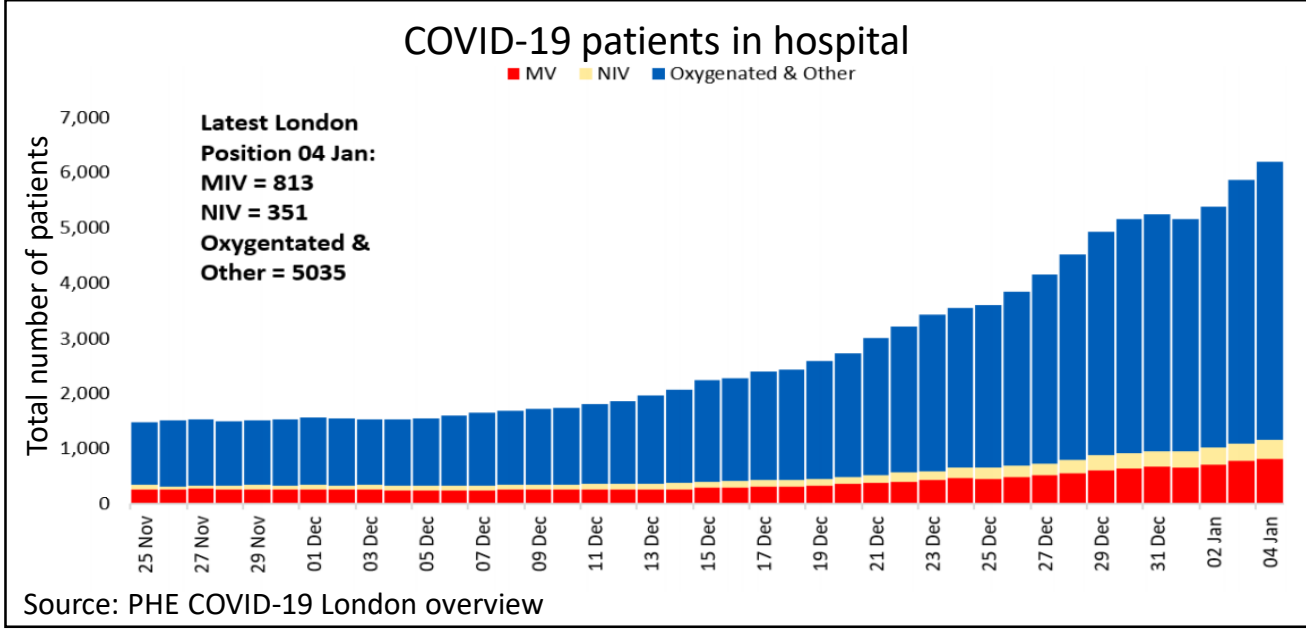
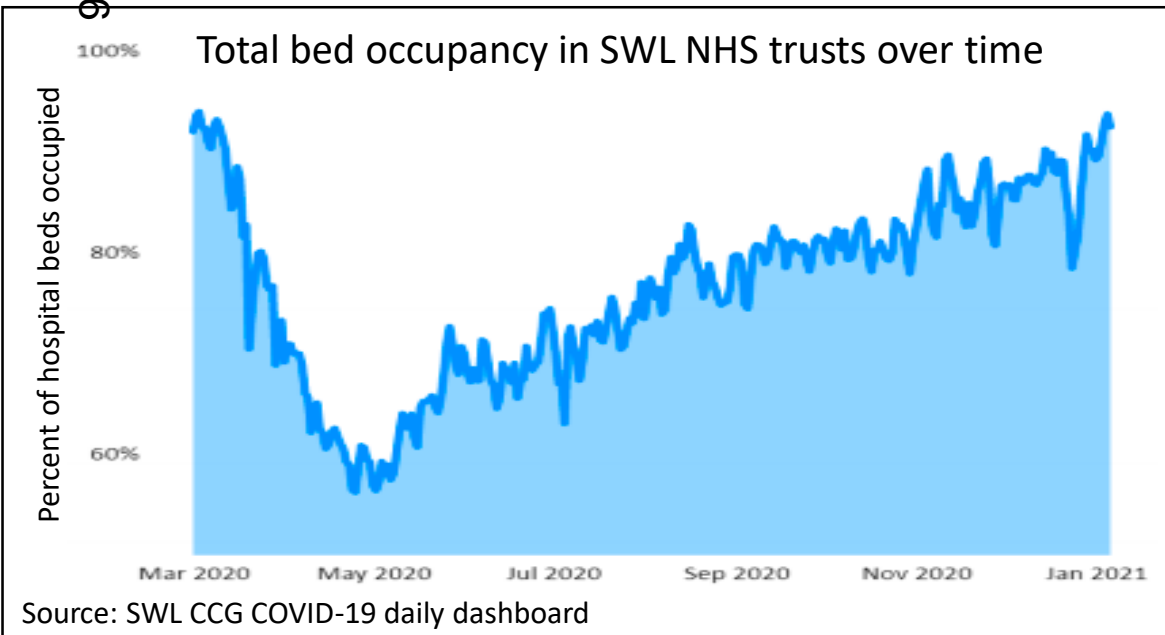
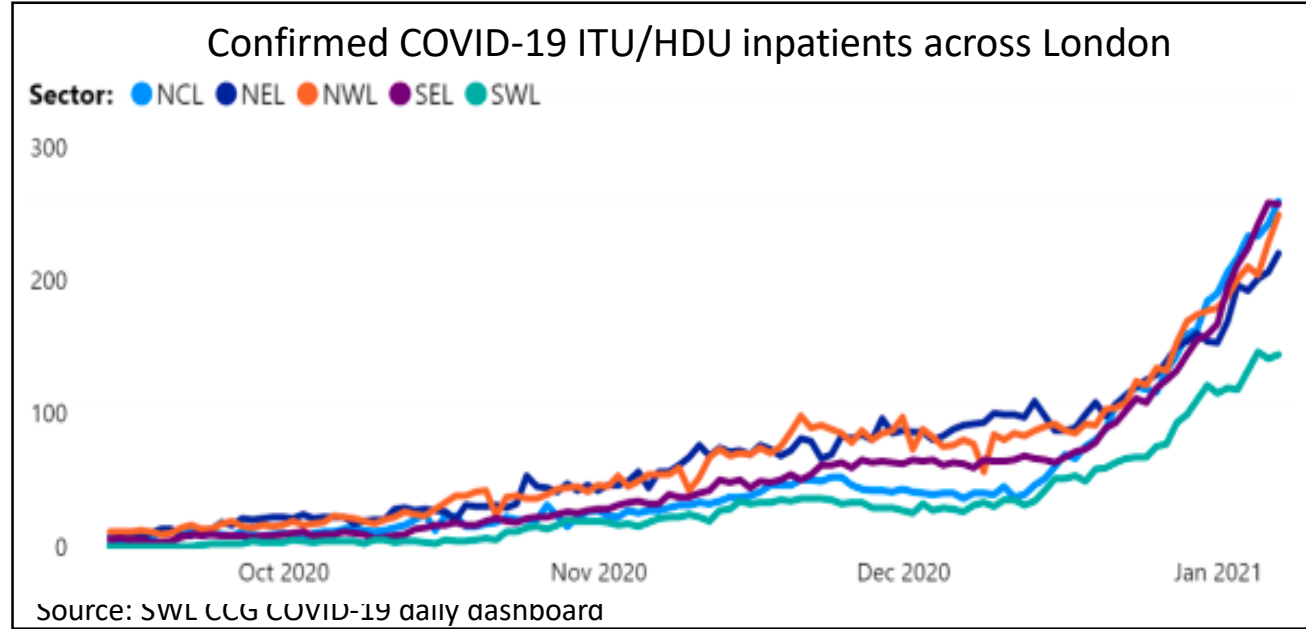
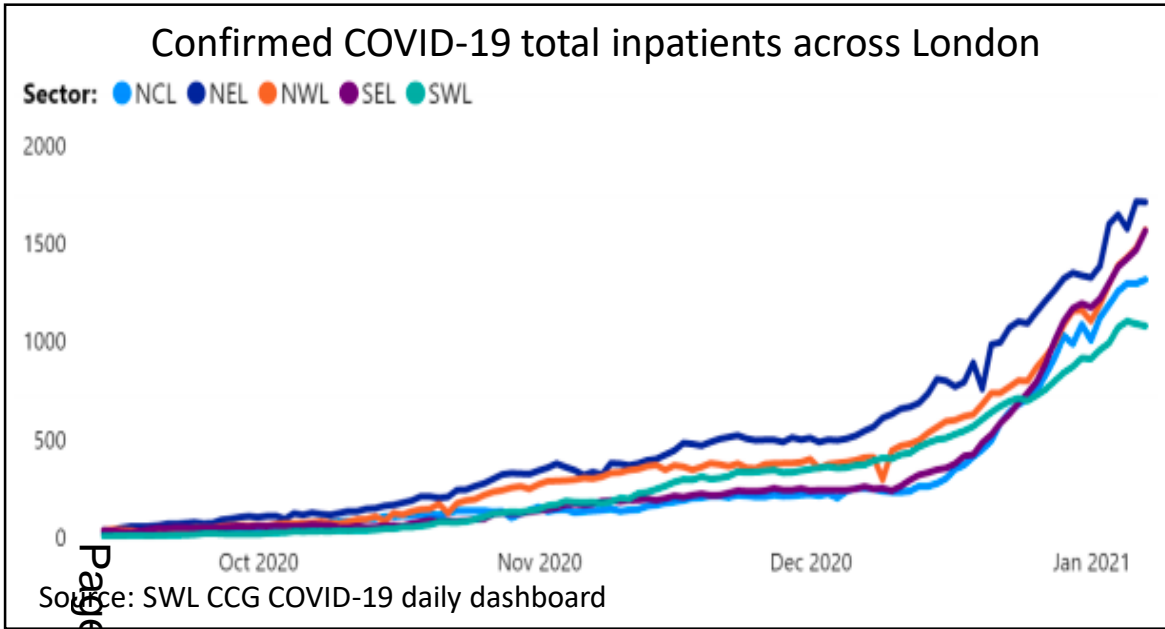
Merton

Key: 7-day change in weekly case rate

- > 100.0% increase
- 50.1 - 100.0% increase
- 0.1 - 50.0% increase
- No change
- 0.1 - 50.0% decrease
- 50.1 - 100.0% decrease

# COVID-19 and NHS-related indicators (all figures are numbers unless stated)

11th January 2021



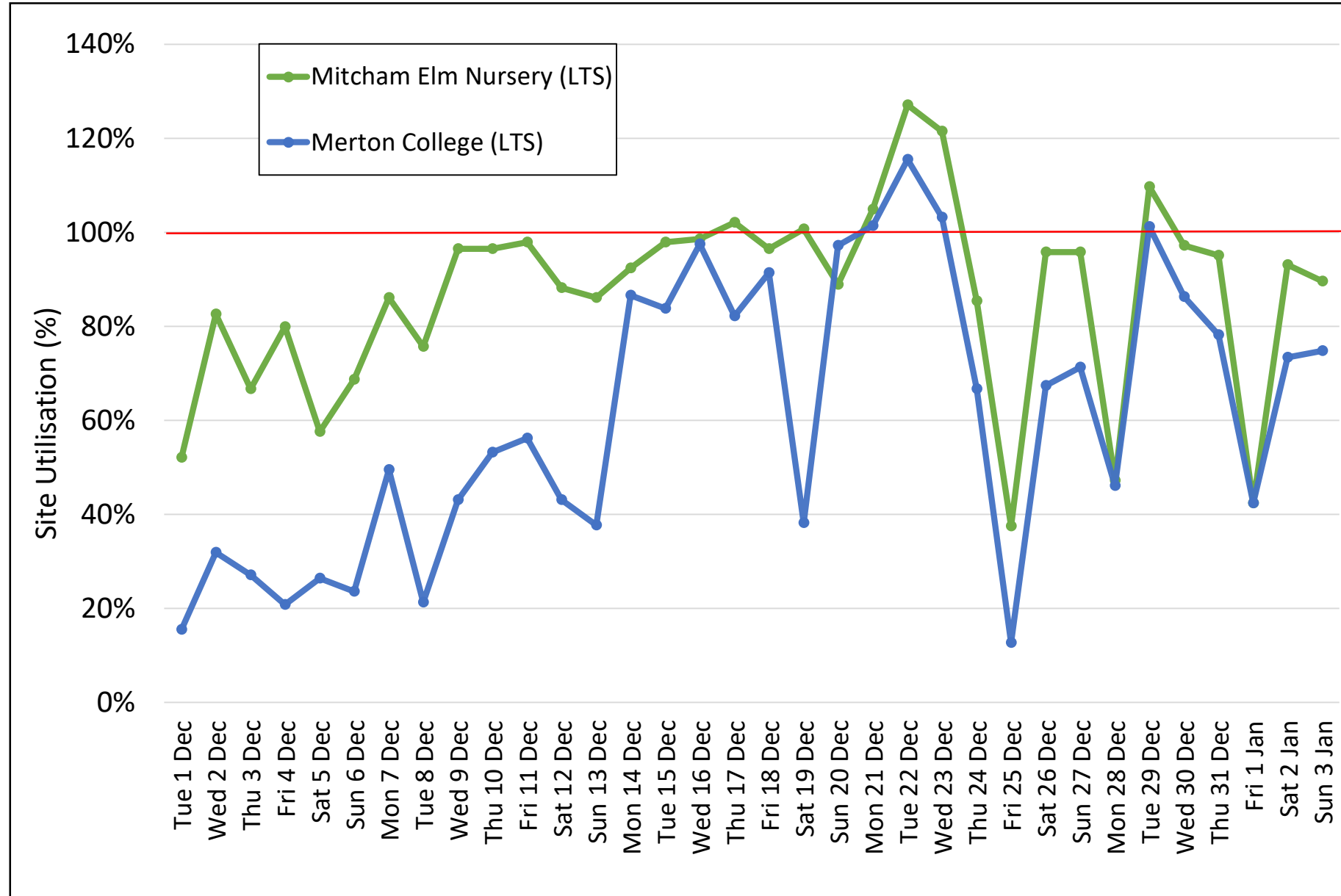
# Local analysis: COVID-19 testing in Merton

Page 7

# Testing sites in Merton – COVID-19 test centre utilisation (1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2020 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2021)

## Key Messages:

- Local site capacity as:  
Mitcham Elm: 144; Merton College: 432; (Source: RSP Merton).
- Both sites exceeded their capacity on Tue 29 Dec:
  - Mitcham Elm (110%)
  - Merton College (101%)
- Since then, both sites operating within capacity (last five-day average):
  - Mitcham Elm (83%)
  - Merton College (71%)





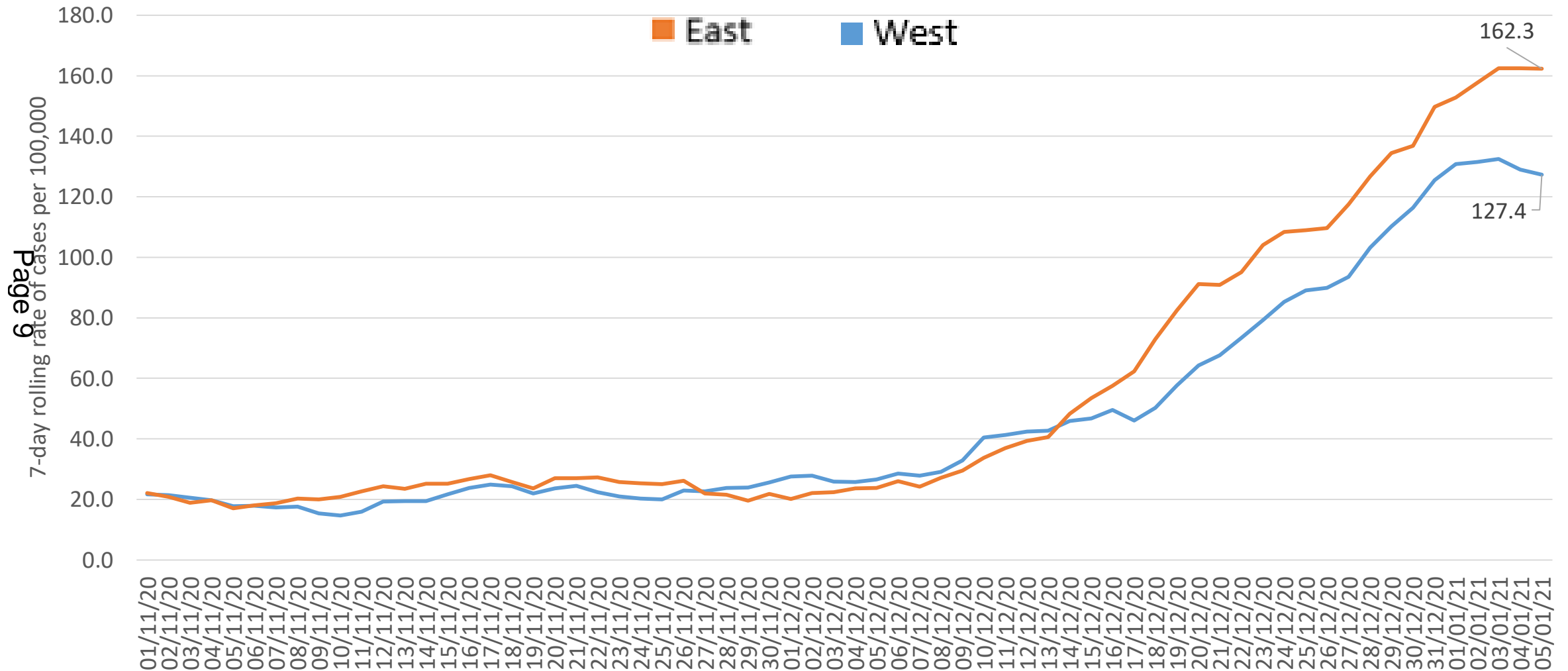
# COVID-19 case rates in East and West Merton

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Source: LSAT daily line list

Reporting frequency: Daily

### 7-day rolling total number of cases in East and West Merton



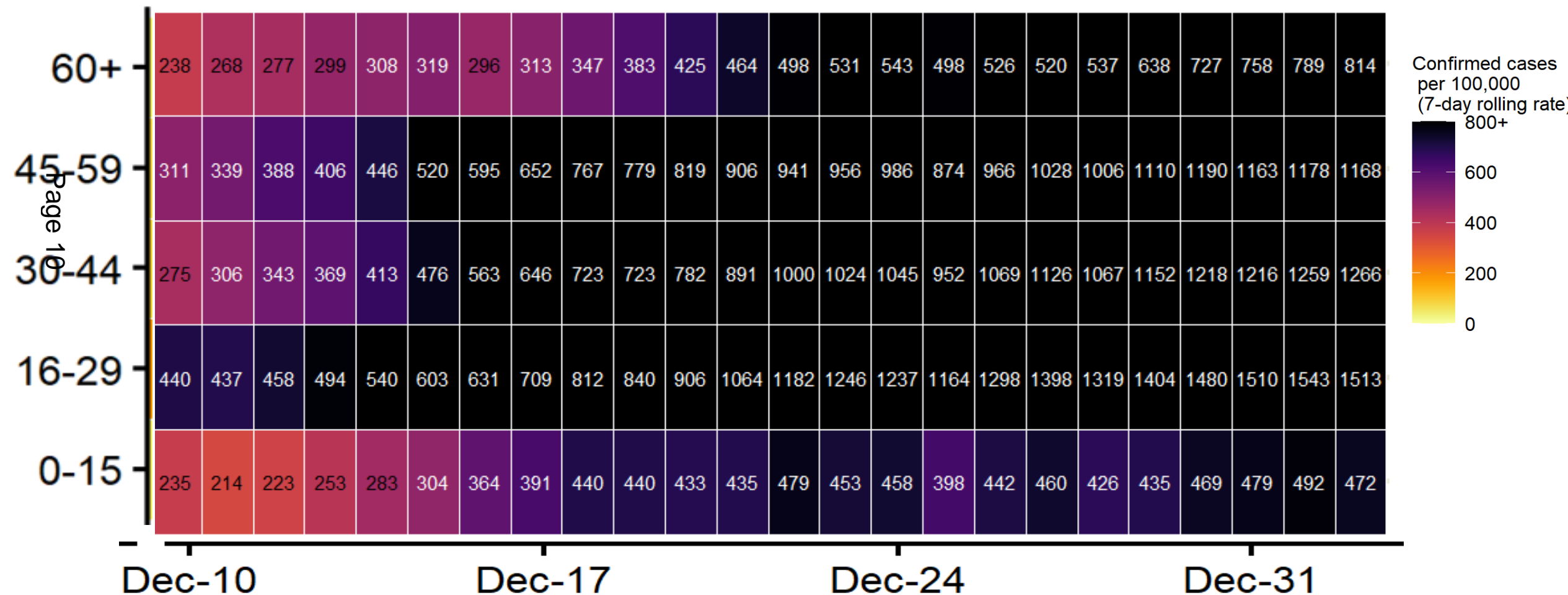
# COVID-19 cases rates in Merton by age group heat map over time

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## 7-day rolling total case rates per 100,000

Source: PHE/PHEC Daily Report

Reporting frequency: Daily

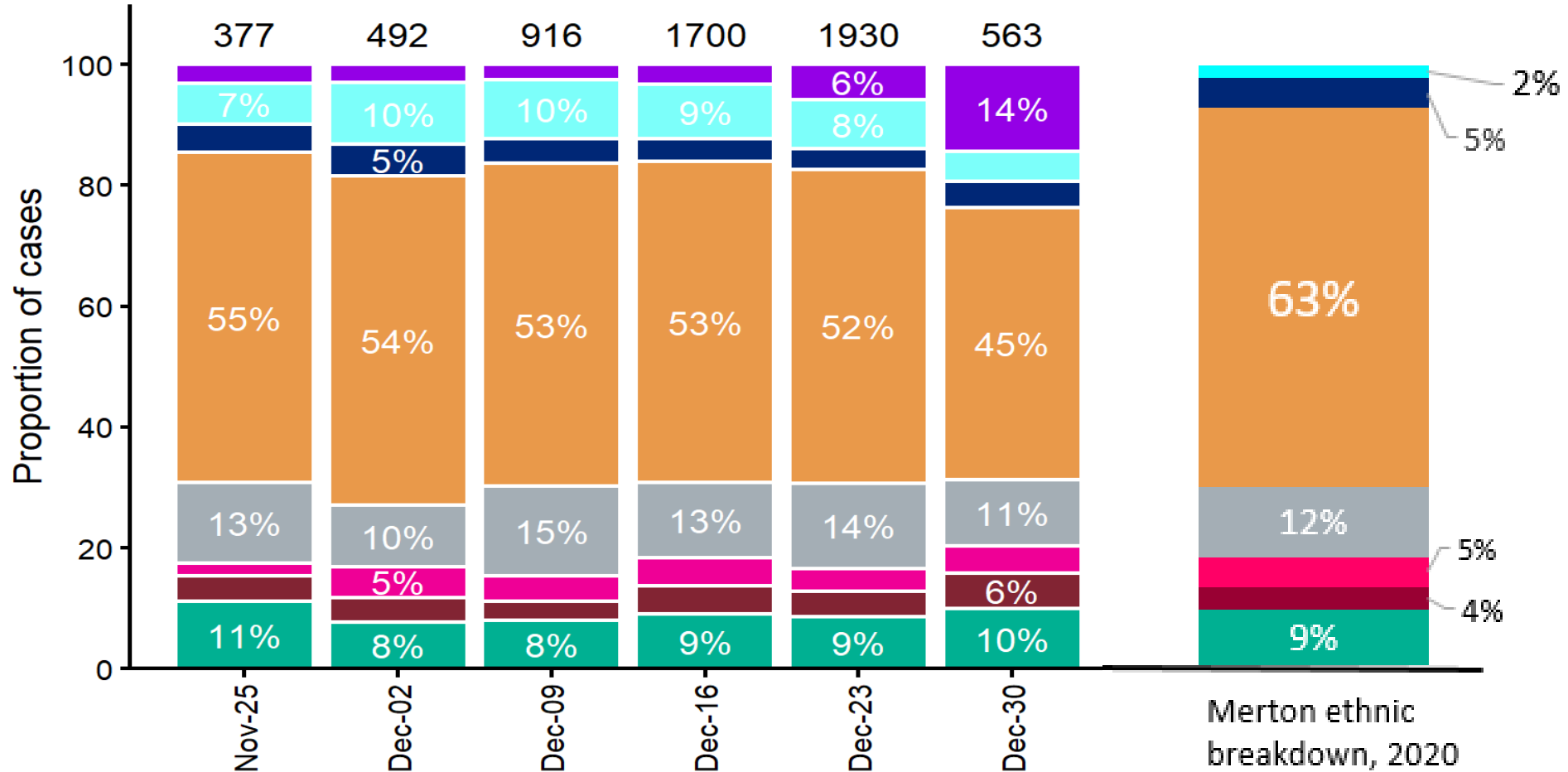


Source: PHE/Merton LA report

# COVID-19 total positive cases in Merton by ethnicity

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Weekly distribution of cases by ethnic group in Merton compared to 2020 overall Merton ethnic breakdown.



Page 11

# Local COVID-19 outbreaks in Merton

## Key messages

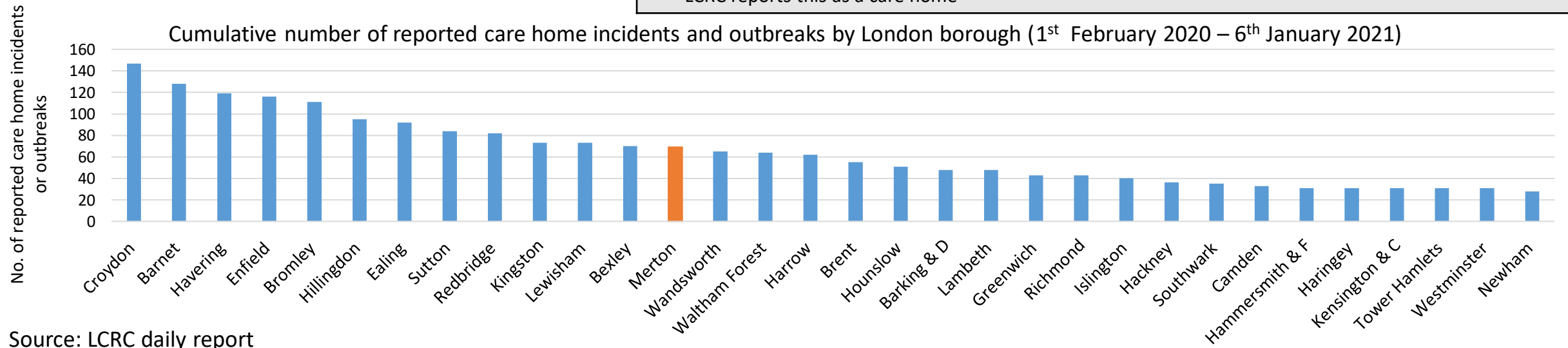
- Outbreaks reported via **LCRC**:
  - 6 new reported this week in Merton – all in care homes
- Outbreaks reported **locally**:
  - Among current care home outbreaks:
    - 72 asymptomatic** cases (32 staff, 40 residents)
    - 37 symptomatic** cases (23 staff, 14 residents)
  - Number of outbreaks in schools down due to Christmas break.
  - Please note that this only refers to new outbreaks, does not include ongoing outbreaks.

Page 12

| Source: LCRC                | New exposures or possible outbreaks via LCRC*        |  | New confirmed outbreaks locally*                     |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
|                             | Current (31 <sup>st</sup> Dec – 6 <sup>th</sup> Jan) | Previous (24 <sup>th</sup> – 30 <sup>th</sup> Dec) | Current (31 <sup>st</sup> Dec - 6 <sup>th</sup> Jan) | Previous (24 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> Dec) |
| Schools and nurseries       | 0  | 1  | 4  | 9  |
| Care homes                  | 6  | 3  | 1  | 4  |
| Care settings**             | 0  | 0  | 2  | 4  |
| Workplace (LBM and non-LBM) | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  |
| Homeless accom.             | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  |
| Other                       | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |

\*Outbreak defined by two or more confirmed cases *or* one case in a care home or care setting.  
 \*\* Supported living, sheltered living, extra care, and domiciliary care  
 \*\*\* LCRC reports this as a care home

Cumulative number of reported care home incidents and outbreaks by London borough (1<sup>st</sup> February 2020 – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021)



Source: LCRC daily report

# COVID-19 deaths registered among Merton residents

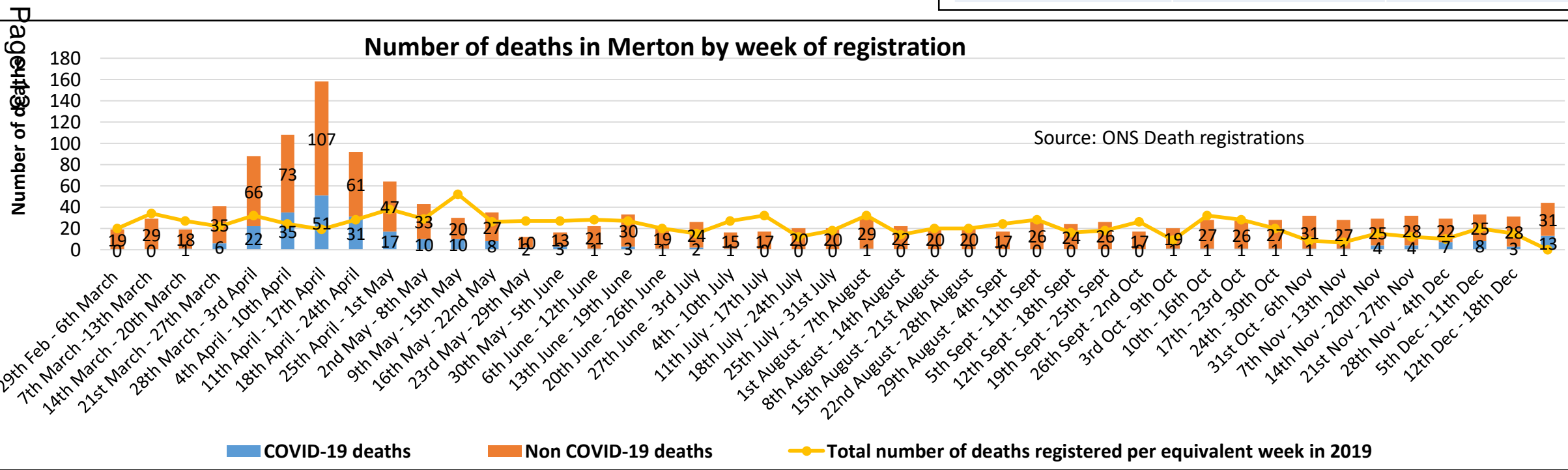
11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## Key messages

- 13 registered deaths in Merton week ending 25<sup>th</sup> December due to COVID-19 – all in a hospital.
- Merton has seen 250 cumulative registered COVID-19 deaths as of 25<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
- 36 of these 250 deaths (14%) have been in care homes. 187 (75%) have been in hospitals. Please note that hospital deaths may include care home residents.

## COVID-19 deaths in Merton – place of death

| Place of death | Current week (19 <sup>th</sup> Dec – 25 <sup>th</sup> Dec) | Cumulative total |
|----------------|--|------------------|
| Care home      | 4  | 36               |
| Hospital       | 8  | 187              |
| Home           | 0  | 22               |
| Hospice        | 1  | 4                |
| Elsewhere      | 0  | 1                |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>13</b>  | <b>250</b>       |



# Asymptomatic Covid testing model in Merton

Page 14

# Principles and overview

## Purpose

- **Test-to-find** – identify asymptomatic positive cases and ensure self-isolation to prevent onwards transmission (30-40% of Covid asymptomatic)
- **Test-to-enable** – confirm negative individuals in order to come out of self-isolation or enable activities that are otherwise restricted; requires daily testing for 7d (serial testing); approval outstanding (apart from secondary schools)

## Tests

- **Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)** - highly accurate but requires laboratory, 24-72 hour result turn-around, currently used nationally for asymptomatic testing in certain settings e.g. care homes
- **Lateral flow test (LFT)** - lower accuracy point-of-care test, results in 20-30 minutes; used for most asymptomatic testing; home testing approved in principle by MHRA; not yet for current model

# Merton model for asymptomatic testing

## Focus

- Mainly targeted at front-line staff (regular testing 1-2x wk)
- Opportunity for resident testing (one-off)

## Service offer from LBM

- 1 Support for national testing service** – ie secondary schools, care homes
- 2 Local community pharmacists**
- 3 Devolved LFT staff testing** to LBM teams and partner organisations
- 4 Morden Assembly Hall – site-based LFT use;** dual purpose for targeted staff testing & resident testing



# Community Pharmacy LFT service

- Targeting VCS staff, volunteers and carers (formal and informal)
- Currently 10 Pharmacies participating and looking to increase coverage
- Two approaches
  - Standard (default option) - individual leaves after swabbing and receives result from NHS T&T
  - Enhanced option – individual waits for result and receives intervention on how to keep safe e.g. Hands, Face, Space and how to prevent severe COVID e.g. stop smoking.
- Potential for 'test to enable' in the future e.g. contacts of + case either isolate for 10 days or take daily LFT for 7 days
- Book via <https://www.merton.gov.uk/coronavirus/lateral-flow-test>

# Devolved LFT staff testing

- Targeting LBM front-line teams (ie ASC) and partner organisations
  - Police, Fire service
  - Primary schools – until national programme starts;
  - Early Years
  - Others
- Teams/organisations manage regular staff testing programme
- LA provides oversight, SOP, training
- DHSC provides tests & supplies

# Morden Assembly Hall

- Site based testing with LFTs
- Dual purpose
  - Targeted at LBM staff not covered otherwise (directly employed/commissioned services)
  - Resident testing (one-off; currently 6 wk programme)
- Launched 4th January; staffed by volunteers across LBM
- Key site for Merton residents to be able to access an LFT
- Building up to c 800 slots per day
- Book via <https://www.merton.gov.uk/coronavirus/lateral-flow-test>

# Current national restrictions

Page 20

# Lockdown 3 Restrictions (from 5th January 2021)

## **Stay at home – *and only leave to:***

- Shop for food and/or medicine
- Provide care or help to a vulnerable person
- Provide voluntary or charitable services not possible from home
- Exercise – with your household or bubble or just one person from another household – once a day and in your local area.
- Seek medical care or avoid risk of harm including domestic abuse.
- Meet a support or childcare bubble.
- Attend education or childcare if eligible.

## **Outdoor socialising and Exercise**

- Socialising outside is allowed only with your household or bubble. Stay 2 metres from those not in your household.
- Sporting venues are closed. Playgrounds remain open.

## **Retail hospitality and Tradespeople**

- Non-essential retail, hospitality & personal care services are closed. Tradespeople can visit people's homes.
- Takeaways and restaurants can offer click-and-collect but not sell alcohol.

# Lockdown 3 Restrictions cont.

## Public Events

- Elite sporting events continue with restrictions. Grassroots sport is on hold.
- Communal worship continues with social distancing.

## Older and vulnerable people

- Close-contact indoor visits in care homes are not allowed. Visits involving screens, pods and through windows can go ahead.
- Those clinically vulnerable should not attend work.

## Education & Childcare

- Schools, colleges and universities will be asked to close, remaining open only to vulnerable children and the children of key workers.
- Nurseries will be able to stay open.
- A-levels and GCSEs will not go ahead 'as originally envisaged'. Higher education will remain online until mid-February.
- Support and childcare bubbles will remain as they are.
- Children of divorced or separated parents can still move between both parents homes.

# London Major Incident

- Called by Mayor on 8/1/2021, on behalf of SCG
- Follows infections rates of  $>1000/100,000$  per 7d and severe/increasing NHS pressure
- Defined as beyond the scope of business as usual, likely to involve serious harm...
- Vital for Londoners to understand gravity and adhere to lockdown restrictions
- Further details to follow.

# **Covid-19 Community engagement – update on on-going programme**

**HWBB Community Subgroup 12 January 2021**



# Engagement programme to date

- **Working with the community** is a key principle of the HWBB and a central part of our work.
- We need to listen to, and work with, our communities to build upon our existing networks and the **capacity and resourcefulness of local organisations, groups and individuals**.
- Working together we are **increasing the reach of our core messages** on infection control, testing, self-isolating and vaccinations.
- Covid is impacting all communities, but **some are being impacted more than others** and we are particularly focussing on BAME groups, carers, older people, children and young people and those with a learning disability.
- Supporting vulnerable people and reducing the impact of COVID-19, by **using the insight we gain** to refine our messaging and the way we communicate and provide health and care services that are **easily and fully accessible** to all.
- **Work to date** includes: Community Champions (125 so far) Young Adult Community Champions; Merton Giving (4 grants so far); Merton Mencap programme started.
- Focus for this meeting on **work with different BAME groups and children and young people** to consider and discuss the findings and insight gathered to date.

# Engagement with BAME communities

## BAME Voice

- Commissioned by LBM to understand ‘lived experience’, build resilience and trust and increase reach of key messages. Engagement with 200 to 250 residents from the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black African, Caribbean and Tamil communities.

## Page 26 Findings/insights from interim report

- 80% negative e.g. psychological impact of being on front-line, living in multi-generational household, less physical activity, children lost motivation to study and breakdown in relationships.
  - 20% positive e.g. opportunities to learn new skills, more time to spend with family and furlough scheme removed uncertainty.
  - What went well? - Financial assistance to employers to keep business going, advice on how to keep safe and support for community groups helping those in need including Merton Giving.
  - What could have been better? – more testing, ‘no recourse to public funds’ affected BAME communities disproportionately and guidance not being clear at the start of the pandemic.
- Areas for action (interim)
    - On street engagement, support groups for front-line BAME health and care workers, awareness and resilience workshops, better access to testing and better access to NHS & health and wellbeing services.
  - Next steps – continue engagement and the final report due end of February 2021.

# Engagement with BAME communities

## Polish and Eastern European Community

- Community are represented at the BAME Forum but feel their community's voice is not as clearly heard as some other BAME groups. Joint Public Health & NHS workshop on 5<sup>th</sup> January, to start the conversation.

Page 27

### Findings/insights from initial session

- Economically and socially, the community is being impacted by COVID-19; many front-line workers and in low-paid employment and increasingly in low paid jobs with higher level qualifications – impact on self-esteem and mental health.
  - Language barriers and lack of understanding of NHS services and lack of preventative services in Poland mean that community are likely to seek health support only at crisis point.
  - Small community, with support provided from within and some reluctance to seek help, due to privacy concerns.
  - Healthy lifestyles of particular interest e.g. weight management, physical activity and substance misuse services.
  - Polish Family Association provides significant support to the community, well received by the community and is well placed to support community, with support from LBM and NHS.
- Next steps – follow on meeting with Polish Family Association on 14/01 and another community workshop in a few weeks.

# CYP engagement - overview and purpose

The Young Inspectors are working in partnership with Merton Public Health and Merton CCG teams to agree priority messaging, content production and digital media content to inform Merton's COVID-19 Response.

## Two projects, led by young residents for young residents:

**(1) Young Adult COVID-19 Community Champions (YACCC's)** – Launched 16.12.20 and has already run two sessions which had 14 and 16 attendees participated. The meetings happen every two/three weeks.

**(2) U18 COVID-19 Champions** – Not officially launched. Developing the approach subject to the re-opening of secondary schools. However, COVID-19 related messages have been sent to parents to inform their children as appropriate.

The networks will inform and empower young residents to disseminate the latest COVID-19 messages to their family, friends, neighbours and communities.

# Young Adult COVID-19 Community Champions (YACCC)



FOR ANYONE AGED 18-30 WHO LIVES OR WORKS IN MERTON + WANTS TO HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

WE WILL UPDATE YOU WITH THE LATEST INFORMATION YOU CAN SHARE CLEAR AND CONSISTENT MESSAGES AND FEED BACK ON CHALLENGES IN MERTON

Let's help shape the response to COVID-19 in Merton

Page 29



Time to share & get feedback



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU & OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18-30 BECAUSE WE NEED YOUR HELP!



ARE A KEY PART OF OUR APPROACH TO PREVENTING & MANAGING OUTBREAKS IN MERTON



The aim is to understand the **impact of COVID-19** on their lived experience. To use this feedback to **develop adequate support** and tailor messages to **address misinformation**.

Four Young Inspectors lead this network through set up and maintenance of a series of various communication channels:

- Zoom workshops
- Email list
- Eventbrite

## Next steps

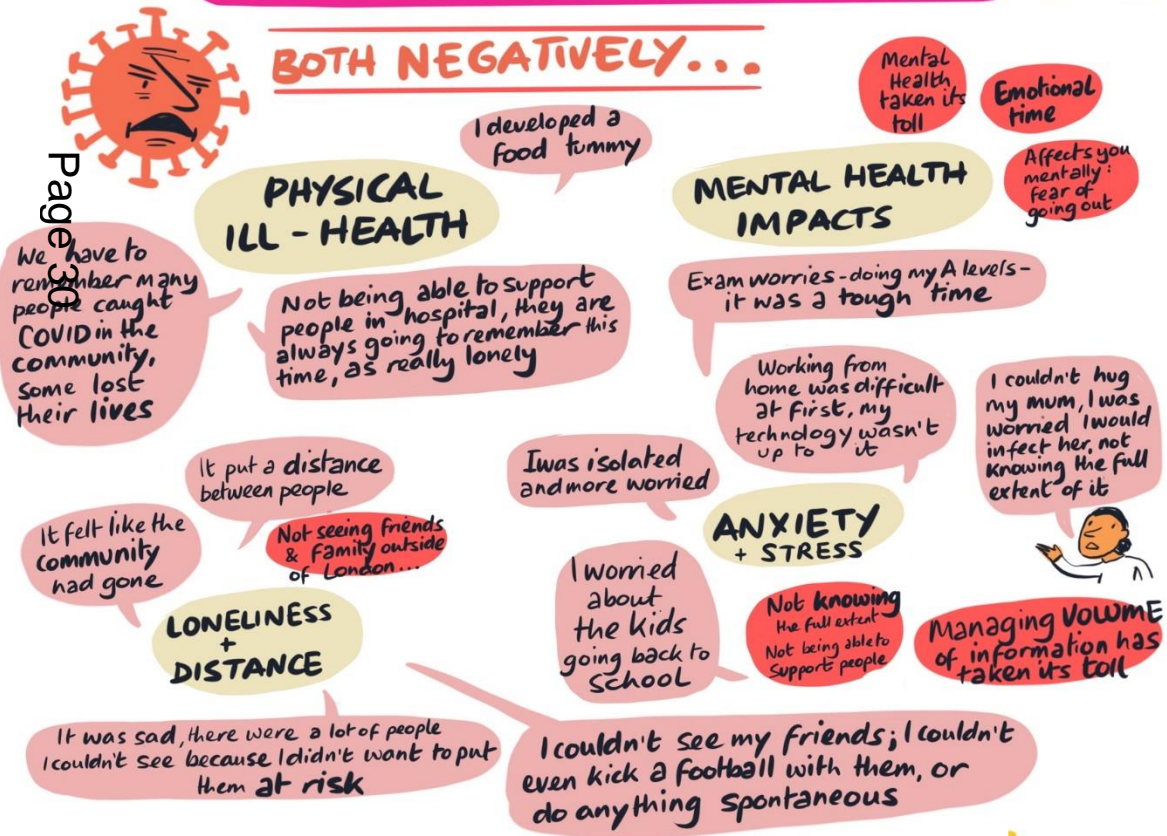
- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Webpage
- Resource bank

# YACCC Launch 16.12.20 – First Session



## HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOU? DEC 2020

### BOTH NEGATIVELY...



### ...AND POSITIVELY



# Next steps CYP Engagement

## YACCC

- Continue to meet every 2/3 weeks
- Develop 3 month Social Media/Marketing Plan – 15/1/21
  - #MertonYACCC
  - You Tube/Facebook Video's – 25/1/21  
Video on Testing
  - Articles for COVID-19 Merton Newsletter
- Social Media Plan – increase membership, inclusive, diverse and accessible
- Establish web page on LB Merton Council site
- Set up COVID-19 resources
- 3rd Zoom session to be held on 27th January, Event Brite

Page 31

## Under 18's, COVID-19 Young Champions

- Develop 3 month Social Media/Marketing plan - 15/1/21
  - You Tube/Snapchat Video's – 25/1/21  
Testing
  - Article for COVID-19 Merton Newsletter
  - Monthly Briefly for Head teachers
  - Articles for COVID-19 Merton Newsletter
  - Badges
- Launch under 18's COVID-19 Young Champions in collaboration with schools (March 2021)

# On-going Engagement Programme

- Increase the reach of **dialogue with the community** to better understand the lived experience and mitigate harm, in partnership with the NHS.
- Develop effective **clear communications** with trusted local leaders and residents to support key messages (keeping safe and mitigate health harm).
- Work to carry on **building networks** including the reach and effectiveness of the Community Champions (U18's, YACC and adults).
- Work with the NHS on a **joint approach to tackling health inequalities**, which are being made worse by COVID-19.