



Gwent Test Trace & Protect Update Report

10th March 2022

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Purpose

1. To update the GTPPS Regional Board (GPSB) on the Gwent Test, Trace Protect Service (herein referred to as the Service).
2. To ask that the Regional Board note and approve the contents of the report.

Key Messages

- Welsh Government strategy for post June 2022 is an emerging picture.
- Gwent have been represented in the key task and finish groups to inform the future service for Wales.
- The Service has responded to unprecedented demand since December 2021.
- The Service is operating within its financial envelope.
- Planning continues to explore options for the future to secure a sustainable public health protection system for Gwent.

Background

Gwent Public Service Board is the Regional Board for the Service responsible for:

- Ensuring the Service is delivering against its stated purpose, aims, objectives and principles
- Representing the interests of their respective organisations
- Agreeing the financial framework
- Ensuring effective, governance, leadership and management of the Service
- Ensuring the effective planning and delivery of the Service
- Scrutinising the performance of the Service
- Ensuring the Service is operating in alignment and complimenting wider Covid-19 strategies
- Promoting the interests of the Service to national partners

This report provides an update on the Service to date.

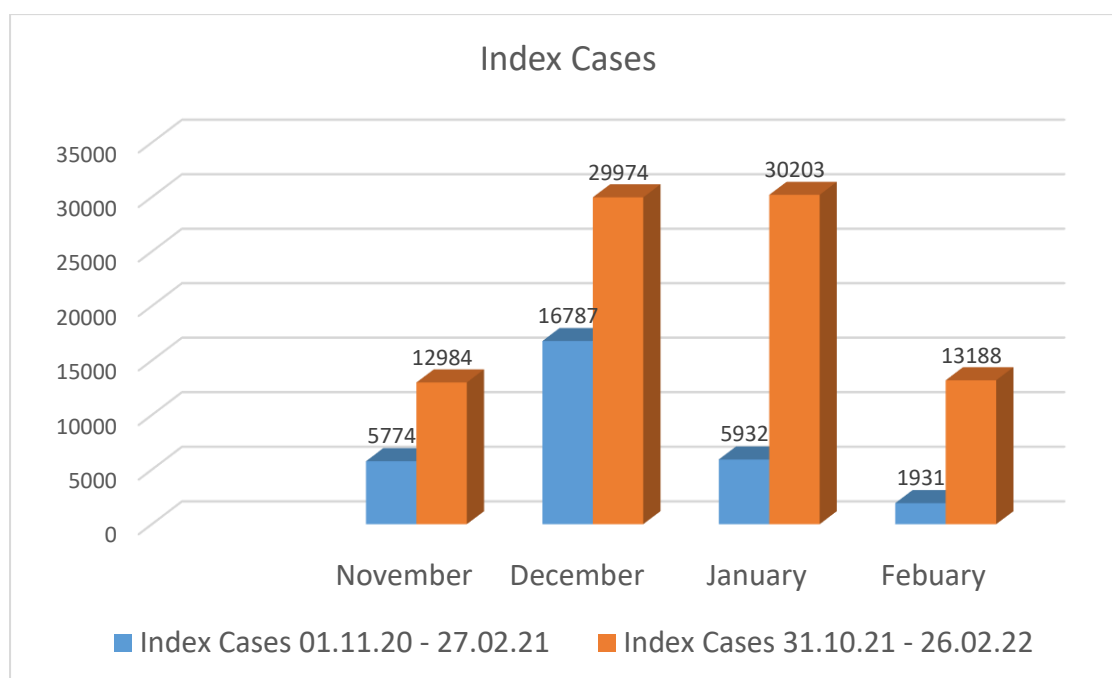
Key areas focussed on in this report are:

- Contact Tracing Performance
- Workforce
- Coordination Unit update
- Regional Oversight Group (ROG) update
- Regional Cell Delivery Programme update
- Risks

Case Numbers

Index Cases

The graph below illustrates the demand on the Service for the period November 2021 to February 2022 compared to the same period the previous year.

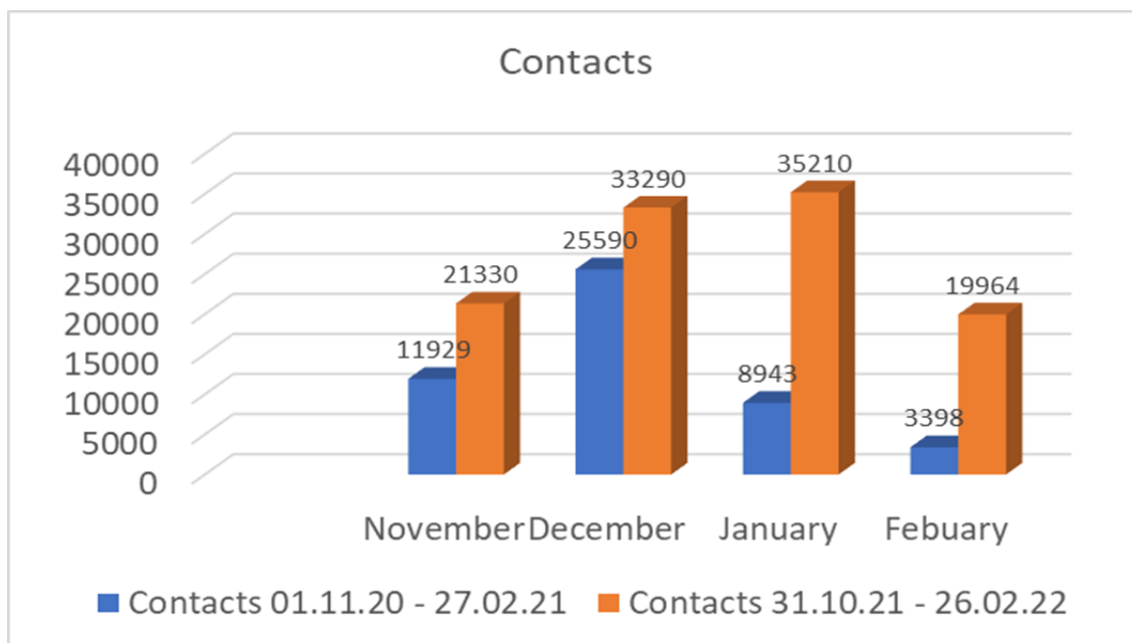


The unprecedented demand on the service since November 2021 illustrates the impact of the omicron variant.

The demand has been managed through prioritising the vulnerable and adopting new ways of working to reach as many cases as capacity allowed.

Contacts

The graph below illustrates the demand on the Service for the period November 2021 to February 2022 compared to the same period the previous year.



Performance

Performance within the Service has been affected due to the volumes of cases as follows:

	Index Cases		Contacts	
	Percentage Followed Up	Percentage Followed Up in 24 Hours	Percentage Followed Up	Percentage Followed Up in 24 Hours
31.10.21 to 26.02.22	100%	55%	78%	72%
01.11.20 to 27.02.21	80%	57%	98%	65%

Workforce

The following table illustrates the employment profile of the workforce across the regional partnerships as of the 10th February 2022.

Regional Total Workforce						
WTE						
	Fixed Term Contract	Secondment	Agency / Contractor	Redeployed	Total	% Total
ABUHB	46.00	18.70	0.18	4.25	69	17%
Blaenau Gwent	65.52	0.00	1.00	0.00	67	17%
Caerphilly	18.87	7.25	64.80	2.00	93	23%
Monmouthshire	28.20	4.00	0.00	0.00	32	8%
Newport	62.01	12.73	0.00	0.00	75	19%
Torfaen	46.38	6.89	0.00	0.00	53	13%
Torfaen CU	7.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	9	2%
Total	274	52	66	6	398	

The Team have coped well with the unprecedented demands on the Service and continue to show resilience and commitment. Everyone has adapted to multiple changes and focused on the protection of Health & Social Care settings and the vulnerable.

Recruitment across the Region has been frozen as we are coming to the end of the funding period and there is still uncertainty for the future.

There is a nervousness across the teams on the situation post June 2022 and we are starting to see employees leave as they secured permanent roles. All teams are aware of the work being complete for the transition phase as we feel it is important to be transparent in our approach.

The coordination unit are working with Partners to identify the support that is open to the TTP team within the employing organisation to look for alternative employment and assist with career advice and job coaching.

The Service continues to operate within the funding provided. Underspends are well managed within the regional governance framework.

Regional Oversight Group (ROG)

Key decisions made recently include agreeing to changes in processes in response to rising case numbers in December. This resulted in:

- i. A new contact tracing prioritisation framework process implemented across the region from Monday 20th December.
- ii. Agreement on 22nd December to the introduction of a prioritisation and triage process for ABUHB staff, including the use of text messages and e-forms. On 9th February it was agreed to revert back to all individuals being contact traced by phone call.

Regional Cell Delivery Programme (RCDP)

GTTPS evaluation

The GTTPS Evaluation project looks to understand the development of the service since May 2020, and its continued adaptations to the pandemic stages in South Wales. A draft report has been produced by the research team from the University of Continuing Education Krems. The report will be shared with a focus group of GTTPS staff to ensure it correctly reflects the interviews. Any additional insight will be incorporated into the final report.

Future development of contact tracing and health protection in Gwent

An updated submission into the Health Board's Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP) was made on 26th January. It expanded upon the population health benefits that could be derived from transitioning the GTTPS into a new service post-TTP funding.

Keep Wales Safe – COVID-19 Behaviours Programme

The original plan and timeframe has been adapted to take into account changing policy and guidance, the challenges of delivering the intervention online and also of the recruitment of young people. A number of focus groups are underway to generate insight to inform the intervention.

Communications plan

A communication plan has been developed to promote the GTTPS through targeted communication and engagement work. It includes the creation of a toolkit that can be utilised by stakeholders such as community groups, education settings and the third sector.

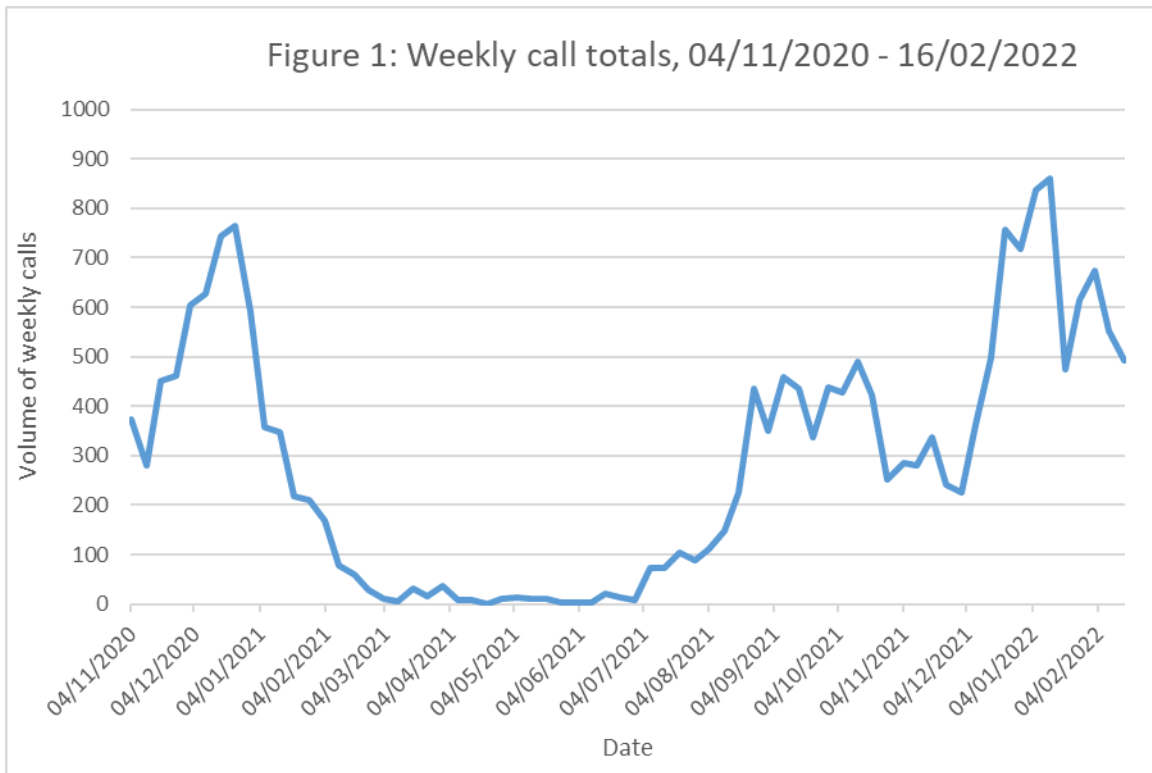
Staff wellbeing sessions

To help maintain wellbeing at work, Dr Adrian Neal, Aneurin Bevan UHB's Head of Employee Wellbeing is leading a programme of facilitated sessions. Two sessions have been held to date, with a further one in March.

ABUHB Staff Wellbeing Cell

The Staff Wellbeing Cell continues to forward trace all positive staff cases. The Cell no longer contacts staff who are awaiting test results, as this ceased in December due to pressure on the service when the number of cases in the workforce rose sharply. A prioritisation and triage process was also implemented, however, all cases are again being contact traced by phone to help improve the quality of information and user experience, and e-forms used only for uncontactable cases.

The Staff Wellbeing Cell also trace inpatients, when instructed to by Clinical Leads.

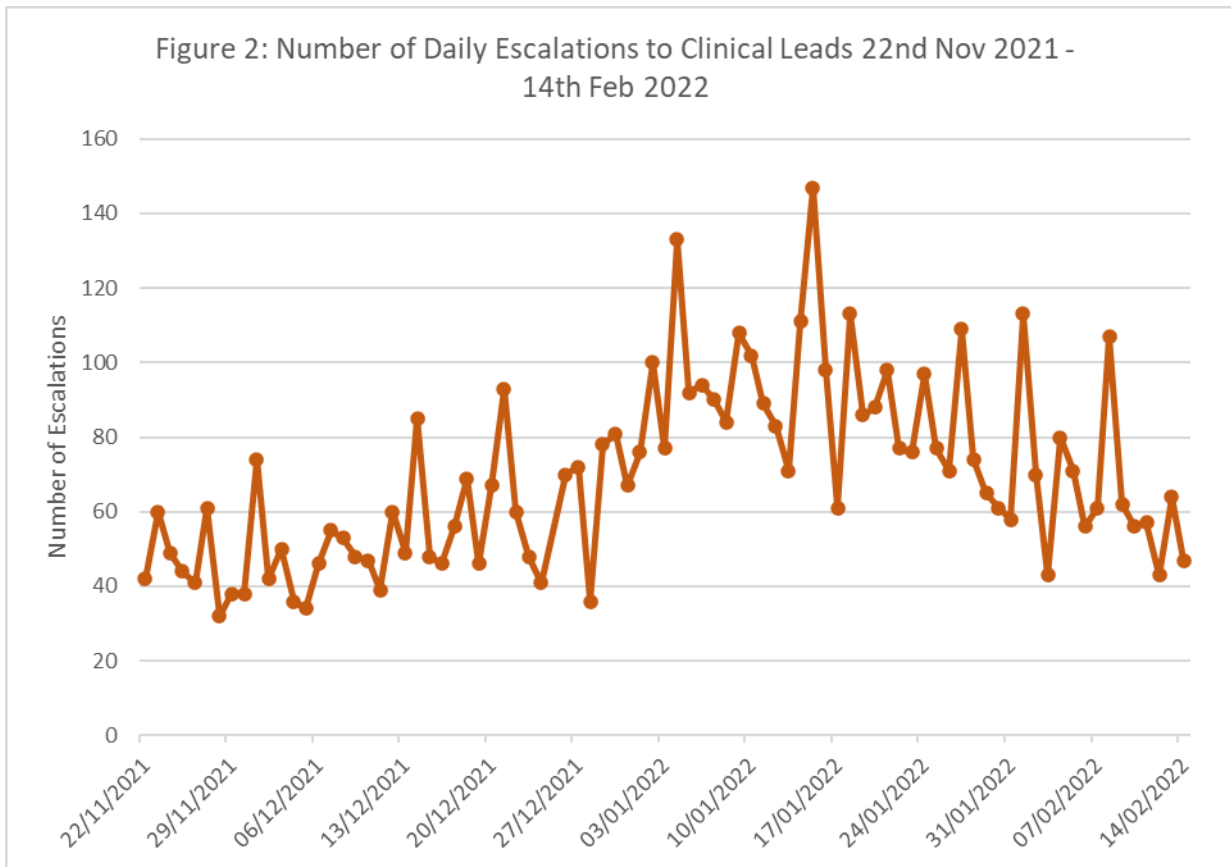


Clinical Leads

From 22nd November 2021 to 14th February 2022, there were 4,644 queries escalated to Clinical Leads (figure 2). This is higher than the 3,308 in the previous reporting period. The vast majority were resolved in under 2 hours.

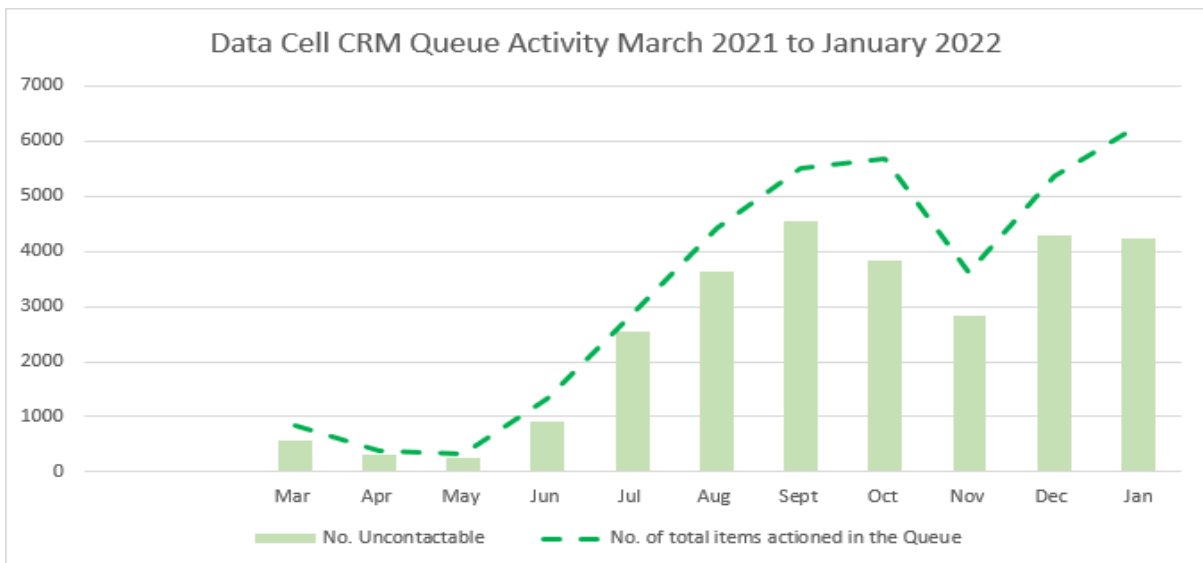
Since 31/12/21, the team have been supporting local contact tracing teams by contacting cases who noted themselves to be ‘extremely vulnerable’ on e-forms. Many of them are on the ‘shielding’ list, often with concerns and not sure who to ask for advice. Clinical Leads have been able to discuss their concerns and signpost appropriately.

Clinical Leads have also seen an increase in cases with anti-viral treatment queries and are starting to capture this data.



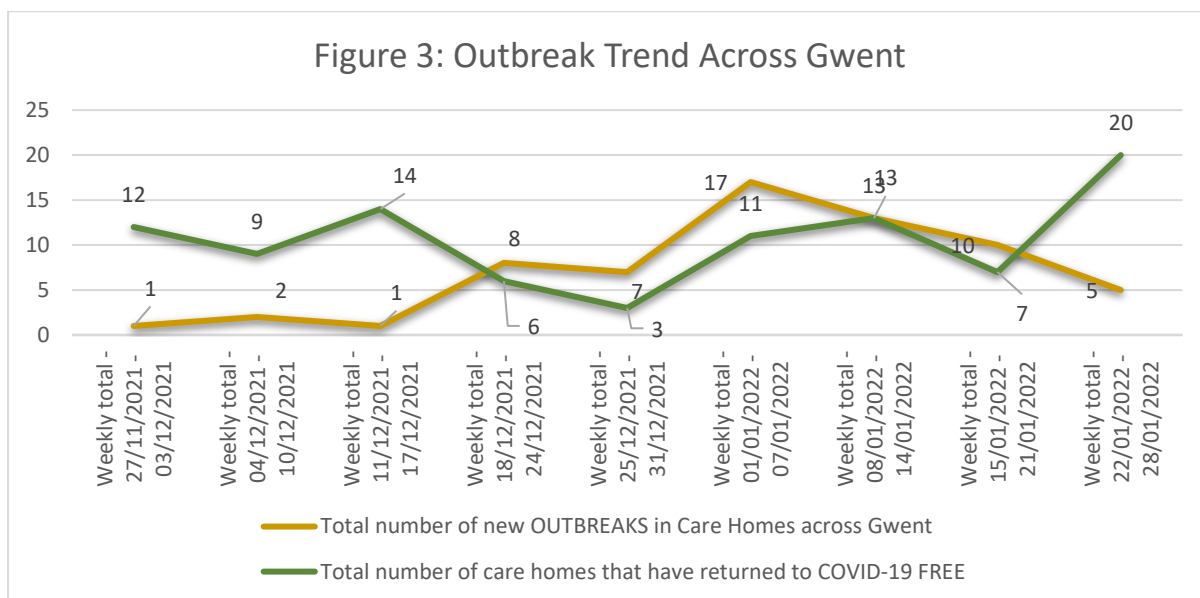
Data and Surveillance Cell

The Data Cell supports the GTTPS by monitoring and responding to 'items' routed to the CRM regional queue. In January, 6,270 items entered the queue (figure 4), an increase of 17% compared with December. The majority are 'uncontactable cases' which require clinical systems searches to verify and obtain additional contact details where possible, to help increase the number of individuals contacted



Enclosed Settings Cell (ESC)

The ESC continues to work with partners to monitor and mitigate the effects of Covid-19 in enclosed settings in Gwent and support the implementation of relevant guidance. Figure 3 shows the care home outbreaks from 27th November 2021 to 28th January 2022.



Coordination Unit Update

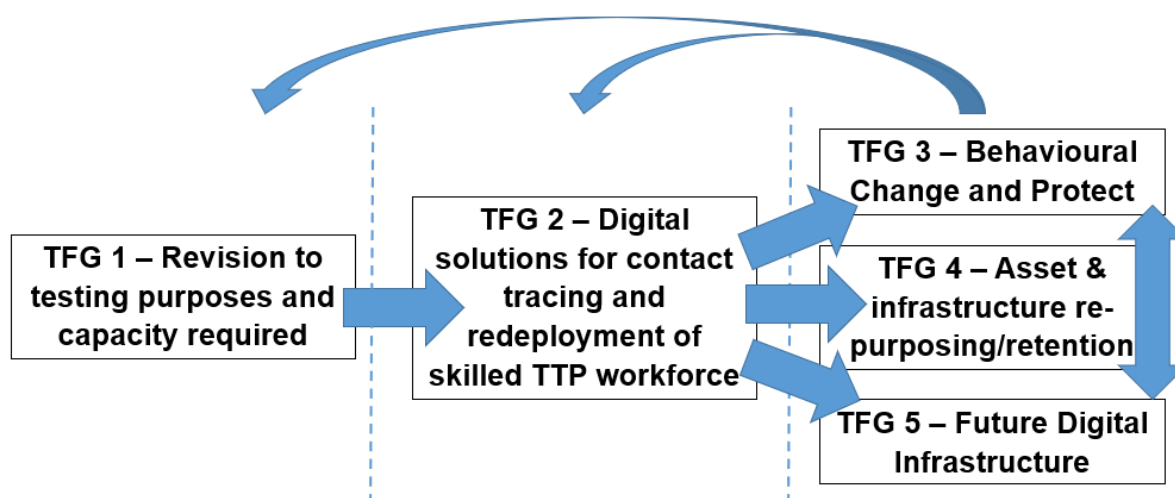
The team have throughout the period worked with Welsh Government colleagues to inform and rapidly deploy the changes required to respond to the Omicron variant and the emerging picture for the future of Contact Tracing, including:

1. Prioritisation of Health & Social Care Settings and the vulnerable
2. Development of Digital resources through using the existing Eform and SMS to effectively contact trace through the period and participate in future specifications to improve the digital offering.
3. Operationalised changes in self-isolation requirements for Index Cases and Contacts.
4. Supported task and finish group two and associated subgroups.
5. Contributed to the National procurement of a replacement Telephony system.

Future Planning, Task & Finish Groups

Welsh Government have set up five task and finish groups to assist in transition planning and the future needs of the Service. These groups feed into the TPP Oversight Group and the TTP Programme & Delivery Board.

There are five task and finish groups that are integral to each other as follows:



The Gwent region is represented on task and finish groups one and two with the addition of Caerphilly's Head of Public Protection jointly chairing task and finish group two.

The groups are working in an emerging landscape and outputs are still to be confirmed. Until Welsh Government can provide what the strategic intent of the Service is for the future it is difficult to plan the transition period and beyond.

Aspirations for the Future

The Gwent Test, Trace, Protect Service has worked in partnership at a scale, pace, and to a previously unseen level of public service integration in meeting the regional challenges of the global pandemic.

With a service focussed on delivering locally, we have protected our residents by breaking the chains of Covid-19 transmission in our communities and workplaces. We have built a workforce with valuable expertise and great potential. And we have delivered first of a kind capability including:

- Population Scale Contact Tracing – tracing over 150,000 positive cases, since the service began and reaching out to around 50% of our 600,000 residents making contact and providing support to more than a quarter of a million. All underpinned by expert local knowledge.
- Rapid Sampling and Testing – conducting over 1.6 million tests to date, whilst delivering rapid and effective responses in incident scenarios such as turning around 500 samples and tests in an education setting, during the Delta wave, within 48 hours.
- Digital Innovations – leading innovation including risk-based prioritisation approaches that became the basis of WG national policy. Complimenting such approaches, we have deployed ~37,500 electronic tracing forms with a

62% response rate as the Omicron wave hit. In addition, in June 2020, Gwent developed its own contact tracing IT system ahead of full-scale implementation by WG to ensure its population could be protected.

- Deep Integration of the Specialist Workforce – collaborating across Health Board Infection Prevention & Control, Clinicians, Public Health Specialists, Environmental Health Officers, Health Protection Specialists and Enforcement Officers we have been able to rapidly share intelligence and expertise in support of health protection.
- Exceptional Flexibility and Agility – the structures and processes we have in place have enabled great flexibility and agility including dynamically transitioning from whole population approaches to risk-based prioritisation and digital approaches – continuing to protect the most vulnerable when, operationally, we were most under pressure.

We now have an opportunity before us to maintain capabilities, expertise and unlock potential that could deliver upon the emerging national strategy, but also go beyond it, to the significant benefit of population health outcomes.

GTTPS recognises that any such transition is contingent upon national strategy, and we await the Welsh Government's position on 'post-June 2022 TTP'.

GTTPS partners wish to continue to explore transitioning of the GTTP Service in pursuit of an improved and sustainable public health protection system as we move from pandemic to endemic with a likely concomitant change in strategic intent.

Gwent Leadership Decision Log

The following decisions have been agreed since the last update report. The Gwent Public Service Board are asked to note these for formal approval:

Meeting date	Decision
16 th December 2021	To implement Telephony Contingency for three TTP teams at a cost of £18467 to mitigate the risks associated to reduced availability of the CRM telephony solution.
	To increase Blaenau Gwent's Tracer FTE through promoting two Advisors.
13 th January 2022	All future recruitment to the 30 th June 2022 would need to be in consideration of the GTTP Head of Service.

Conclusion

The service has managed significant changes in the period alongside unprecedented volumes of cases.

The workforce across the partnerships, has gone above and beyond, demonstrating flexibility, resilience, and commitment in challenging times to provide the service to the Gwent population.

The longer-term strategy is still awaited to give greater clarity on the nature of the service required for the future.

The Service aspires to maintain capabilities, expertise and unlock potential that could deliver upon the emerging national strategy, but also go beyond it, to the significant benefit of population health outcomes.

Recommendation

Gwent Public Service Board are asked to:

- Agree to support the continuation of work to explore transitioning of the Service, to provide greater benefits for population health outcomes.
- Notes and agrees the actions taken by the service detailed within the report.