

The Director of Public Health's

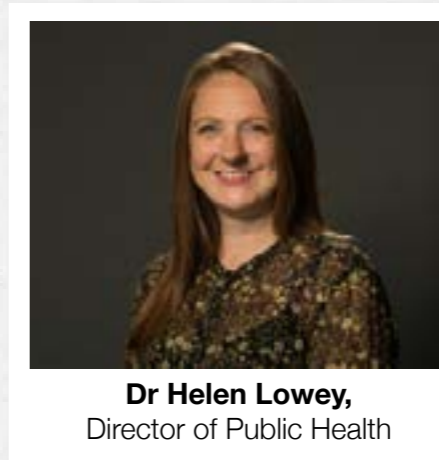
Annual Report

2020/21



The impact of Covid-19 on the health and wellbeing of Bolton residents

Bolton Council



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Director of Public Health

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Foreword



The health of people in Bolton has, on average, been improving in recent decades, however it has been improving more slowly than elsewhere in the country and some people in Bolton still experience poorer health that limits their job opportunities, quality of life and their lifespan. The health of our population is a key factor in achieving Bolton’s Vision of being and Active, Connected and Prosperous, with us all working together to help Bolton thrive.

The annual report of the Director of Public Health is an independent view on the state of wellbeing in Bolton and what needs to be done to improve it. The 2020/21 report has a particular focus on the Covid-19 pandemic and the wide range of factors that have directly and indirectly impacted on health and wellbeing of Bolton people. There are recommendations for where we need to focus action to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities. Bolton Council and its partners are active in many of these areas and others to fulfil our public health responsibilities and to go further by incorporating public health activity into our ambition for a truly co-operative Bolton.

As Council Cabinet Leader for Wellbeing I am pleased to support publication of the annual report of the Director of Public Health 2020/21 and to encourage councillors, partners, businesses and communities in Bolton to do their bit by engaging in discussion and action about health and wellbeing in Bolton.

Councillor Sue Baines,
Bolton Council Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

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Introduction

The year of 2020/21 has been unprecedented for Bolton.

We have faced our biggest ever challenge in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has hit Bolton harder than most. The whole borough has been affected by the pandemic, both directly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with loved ones falling ill, and sadly many people dying with Covid-19, as well as the indirect impacts on our lives and economy at times where Bolton has been under extra levels of restriction compared with other areas of the country due to our high case rates and higher mortality rates. However, the impact has not been felt equally across the country nor our borough.

Covid-19, and the management of Covid-19, follows the lines of existing health inequalities, impacting most on our more deprived communities, where we have seen higher rates of infections, hospitalisations and, unfortunately, deaths. The reasons for this are a complex mixture of factors we refer to as the social determinants of health; the aspects of our lives which affect our health, some of which are influenced by wider societal factors, such as education, work, finances, housing, transport and more.

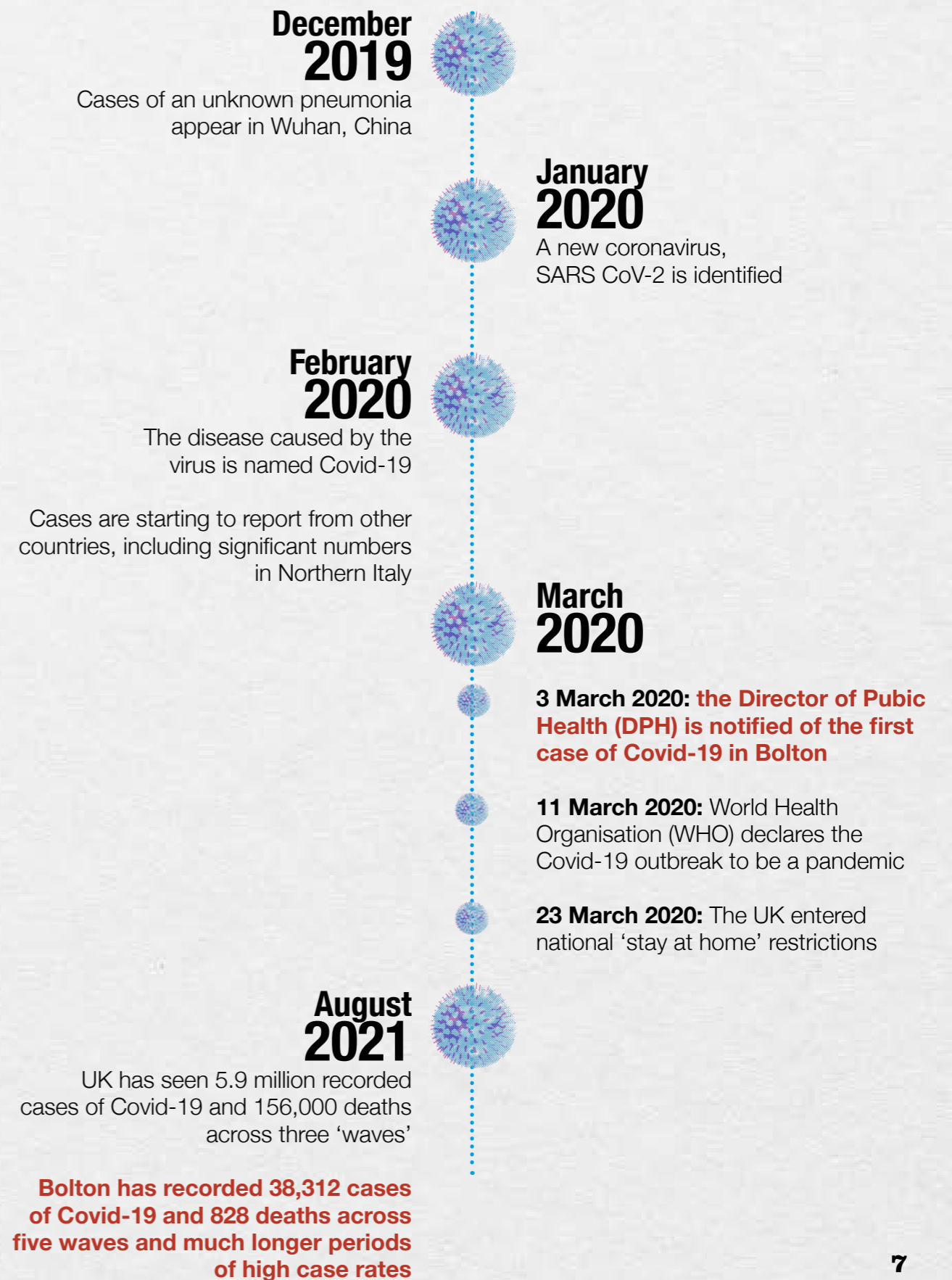
This report serves to look at the data on inequalities in Bolton in relation to Covid-19: including infections, hospitalisations, deaths, vaccine uptake, and the impact of measures taken to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. This report examines inequalities experienced by these groups and social determinants of health which are likely to affect figures.

However, it is important to also celebrate the positives of the response to Covid-19 in Bolton, with a humanitarian support hub that was up and running in a matter of days when the first national restrictions to 'stay at home' were announced, strong partnership working with our local community organisations to help our residents across the borough and to be successful in lobbying on behalf of our community to help more people access self-isolation grants and the social movement created by our communities – to help stop the spread of the virus.

The whole borough pulled together to face this monumental challenge, enabled us all to work together to find solutions and we hope to continue, and build upon, these positive working relationships into the future.

Dr Helen Lowey,
Director of Public Health

Covid-19, the story begins...



National restrictions

Within weeks of the first UK case the government introduces national restrictions, where everyone must 'stay at home'.

This national restriction started on Monday 23rd March 2020. Legislation alongside national guidance was produced and local councils had to interpret and ensured local communications.

However, people working on critical infrastructure on roles that could not be done from home needed to continue to attend work in person. Therefore, not everyone was able to stay at home and essential workers were:

- NHS and social care
- Essential public services
- Public safety and national security
- Transport and border workers
- Education and childcare workers
- Critical personnel in production of distribution of food, drink and essential goods
- Local and national government staff
- Public and environmental health staff
- Funeral industry workers
- Frontline local authority staff and volunteers
- Utilities, communication and financial services staff

A high proportion of Bolton residents work in 'essential services' that kept the country going throughout the pandemic.

As such, a very high proportion of Bolton residents were unable to work from home because of the nature of their work.

**Bolton residents
are at higher risk of
exposure to the virus**



CORONAVIRUS
**ACT LIKE
YOU'VE GOT IT**

**ANYONE CAN SPREAD IT.
STICK TO THE RULES TO
STOP THE SPREAD.**

Find out more at gov.uk/coronavirus

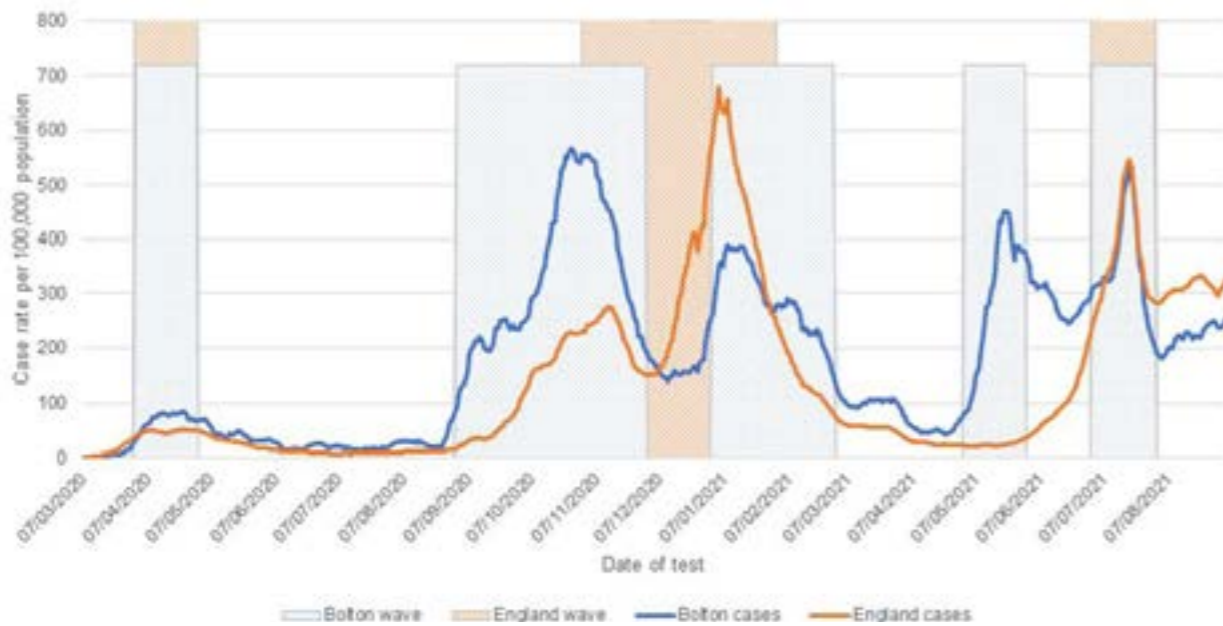


Chapter 1

The unequal health impact
of the pandemic on
Bolton residents

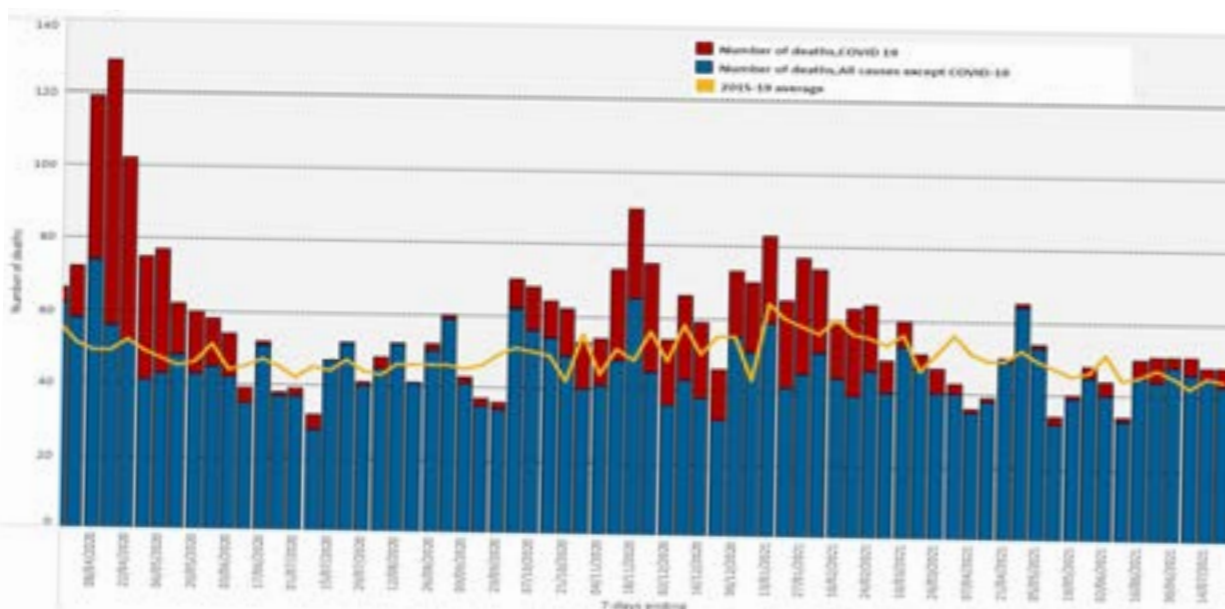
Infection (Cases) and Mortality (Deaths)

Covid-19 case rates over time



Bolton had five waves of Covid-19 (blue shaded box) whereas England had three (orange shaded box)

Deaths by week of occurrence for Bolton



Covid-19; infection, morbidity, mortality and vaccinations

INFECTION

- Almost 40,000 total positive cases reported in Bolton
- Infection rates higher in under 25s more recently
- Minority ethnic groups at higher risk of infection than White population
- Higher levels of infection in more deprived populations

MORBIDITY

- Morbidity is the symptoms or extent to which an individual is unwell with Covid-19
- Higher rates of severe Covid-19 disease in minority ethnic groups
- 'Long covid' (symptoms lasting beyond 12 weeks) more common in:
 - Working ages 35-69
 - Women
 - High deprivation groups

VACCINATIONS

- Coverage highest amongst older population in line with rollout programme
- Slower uptake in younger adults
- Higher vaccine hesitancy in:
 - 16-25 year olds
 - Black ethnicity
 - Muslim religion
 - Higher deprivation

MORTALITY

- Substantially higher risk of dying from Covid-19 with increasing age
- Higher mortality in working age males than females
- Higher mortality in non White ethnic groups
- Higher mortality in those with physical disability, and learning disability
- 25% higher mortality rate across GM compared to rest of country
- Those in top fifth deprivation twice as likely to die from Covid-19

Greater Manchester residents suffered **25%** higher mortality from Covid-19

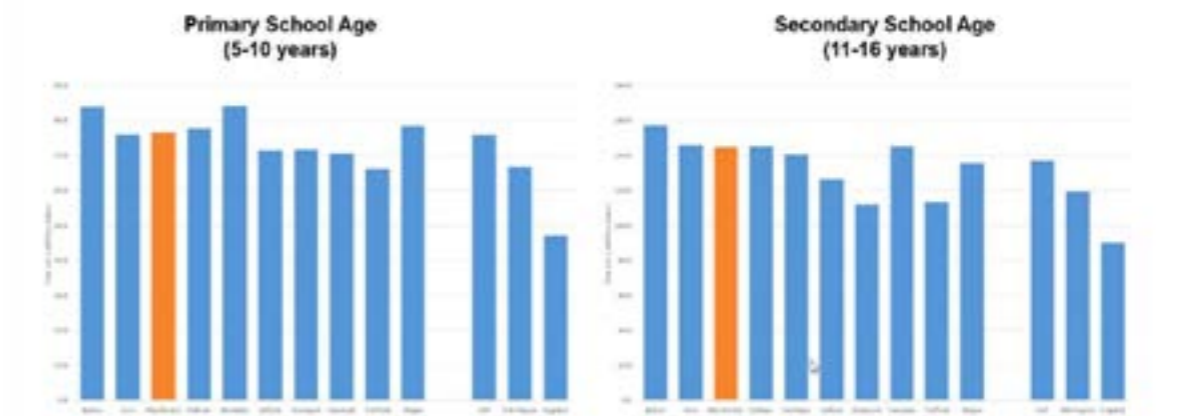


Bolton has seen some of the highest rates of Covid-19 amongst school age children

Unequal impact – Children and young people and education

How does the rate of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in school age children living in Manchester over the course of the 2020/21 academic year compare with other parts of Gtr. Manchester?

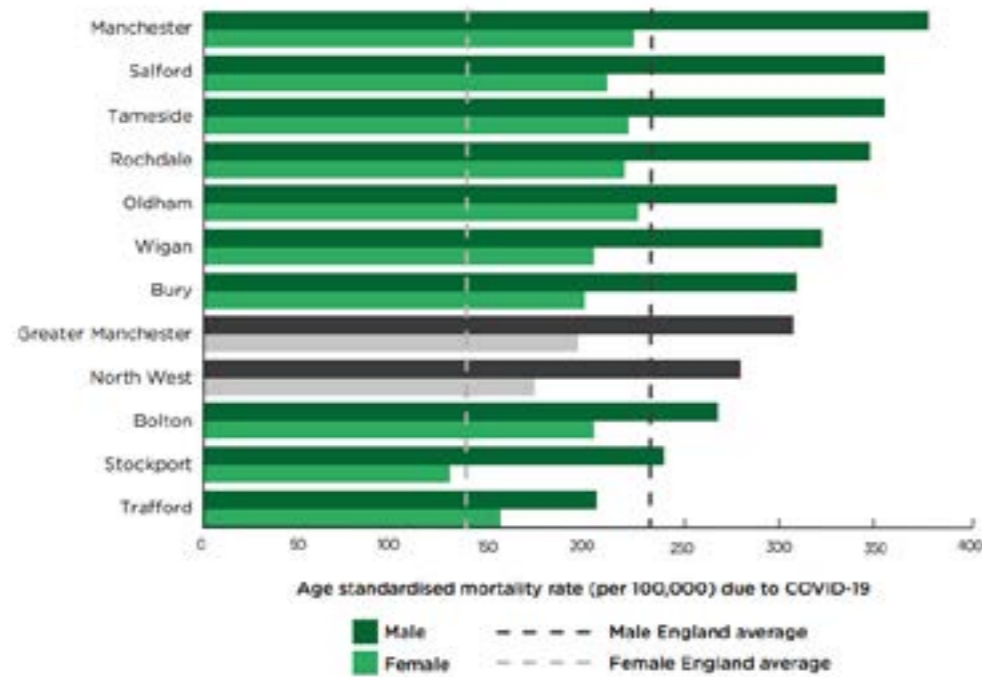
Rate per 100,000 population based on ONS Mid-2000 Population Estimate



www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-progress-in-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year-interim-report

Credit: Public Health Knowledge and Intelligence Team, Manchester City Council
Source: UKHSA Situational Awareness Explorer

Age-standardised mortality per 100,000 for England, the North West, Greater Manchester and its local authorities, 13 months (March 2020 to March 2021)



Note: Deaths 'due to COVID-19' only include deaths where COVID-19 was the underlying (main) cause.
Source: ONS. Age-standardised rates from COVID-19: People, Local Authorities and Regions in England and Wales, deaths registered between March 2020 and March 2021 (28).

**16,000 people of all ages
were identified as extremely
clinically vulnerable**



Chapter 2

Understanding the
determinants of Covid-19
health inequalities in Bolton

It is becoming evident that some people are more at risk of suffering serious illness and dying if they are infected by Covid-19 than others:

AGE

Risk of severe illness and also death increases steeply with age, particular over 50 years

CERTAIN HEALTH CONDITIONS

Risk of severe illness and also death increases steeply with age, particular over 50 years

ETHNICITY

Black, South Asian heritage and other ethnic minority groups are 1.5-3.3 times more likely to die from Covid-19 compared with White British people

INCOME DEPRIVATION

Mortality (death) rate is twice as high in the most deprived communities compared with most affluent areas

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

In health and social care workers, and other essential public-facing roles, i.e. transport drivers, cleaners, security guards, construction workers, sales and retail assistants

CARE HOME RESIDENCE

Care home residents aged 85 and over are 6.5 times more likely to die from Covid-19

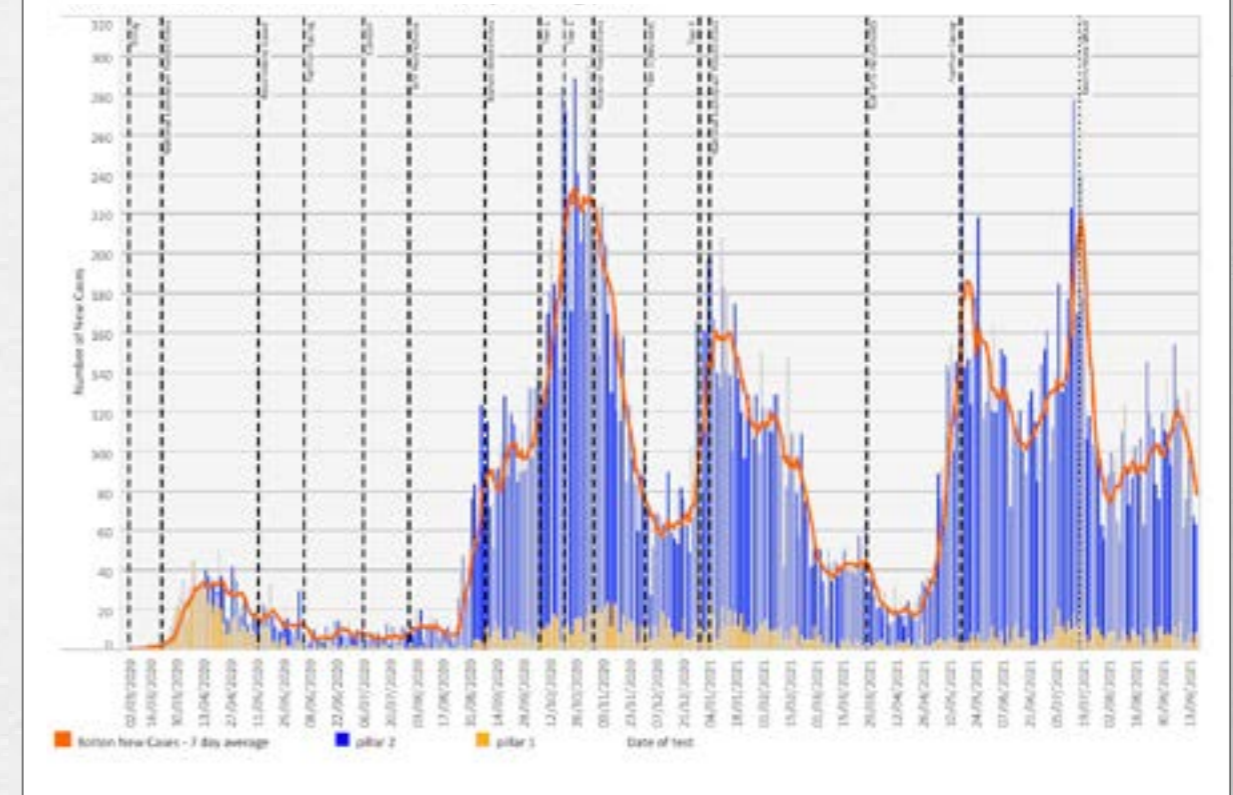
HOUSING CONDITIONS

Care home residents aged 85 and over are 6.5 times more likely to die from Covid-19

Given our demographics and housing situation, vulnerability to Covid-19 illness and death is higher in Bolton, and also in the North West, with high levels of vulnerability clustered in some communities and geographical areas.

In Bolton, 16,000 people of all ages were identified as extremely clinically vulnerable and were supported to 'shield', i.e. not to go out of their house whilst national, regional and local restrictions were in place. This is 5.6% of Bolton's resident population, which is much higher when compared to 3.9% across England as a whole.

Bolton new Covid-19 timeline, by testing pillar

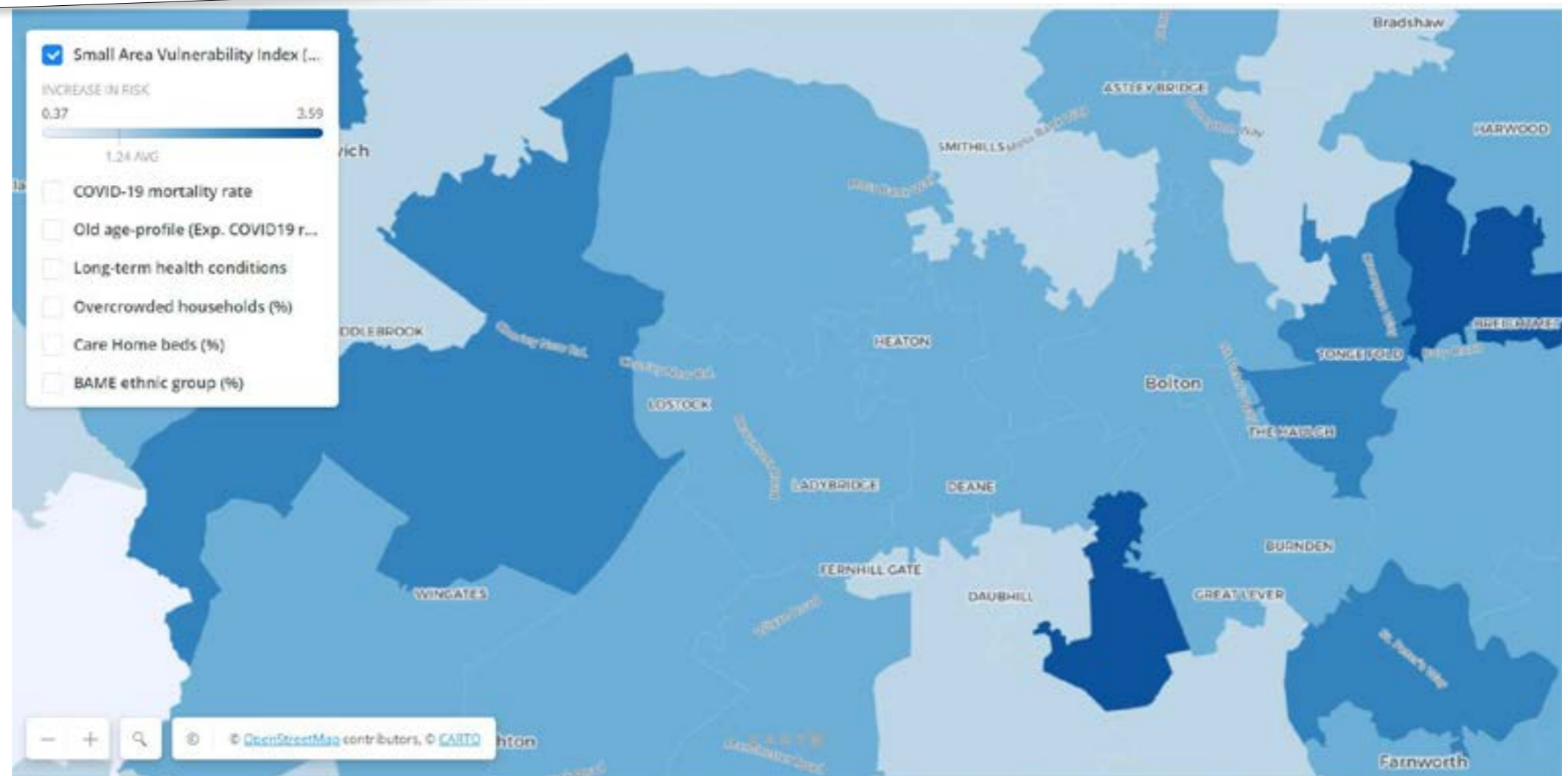
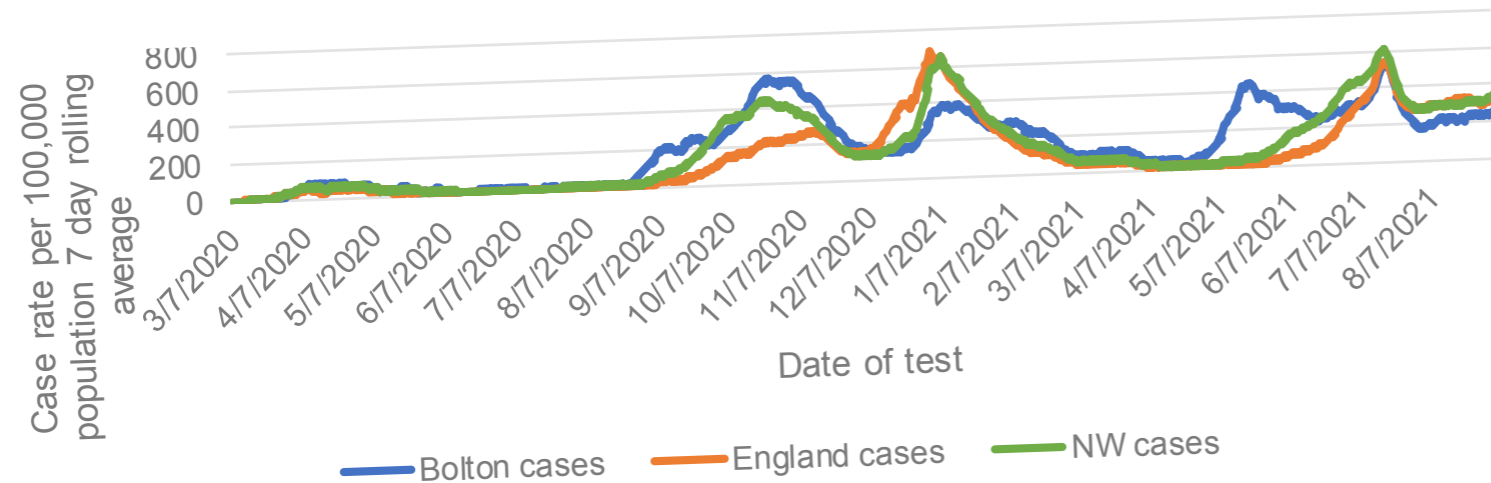


Bolton has a higher proportion of residents who are vulnerable to serious illness if they are infected with Covid-19

How does vulnerability to COVID-19 vary between communities in England? Developing a Small Area Vulnerability Index (SAVI) (bmj. com)

Bolton's population are more vulnerable to serious complications of Covid if they catch the infection

Covid-19 case rates over time



Small Area Vulnerability Index
Small Area Vulnerability Index (SAVI) – Place-based Longitudinal Data Resource (pldr.org)

Who is at greatest risk of the indirect impact of Covid-19?

It is evident that some people, population groups and communities are more at risk of suffering from the impact of managing Covid-19:

LIVING ALONE

Social isolation increased during restrictions increasing the risk of impact on mental wellbeing, depression and anxiety

YOUNG PEOPLE

As education was disrupted for them, more children started to experience anxiety, stress and depression

OCCUPATIONAL RISKS

People employed who are unable to receive isolation pay, people working insecure contract employment, people who relied on bonuses to pay bills, people working in hospitality as this was closed due to restrictions for the longest period in the country

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Risk of domestic abuse increased during lockdown

Bolton has a higher proportion of younger people compared with England

Bolton was one of three local authority areas in the country with the greatest and longest restrictions being put in place

Bolton economy has a high dependency on hospitality trade, insecure work, employment where unable to work from home

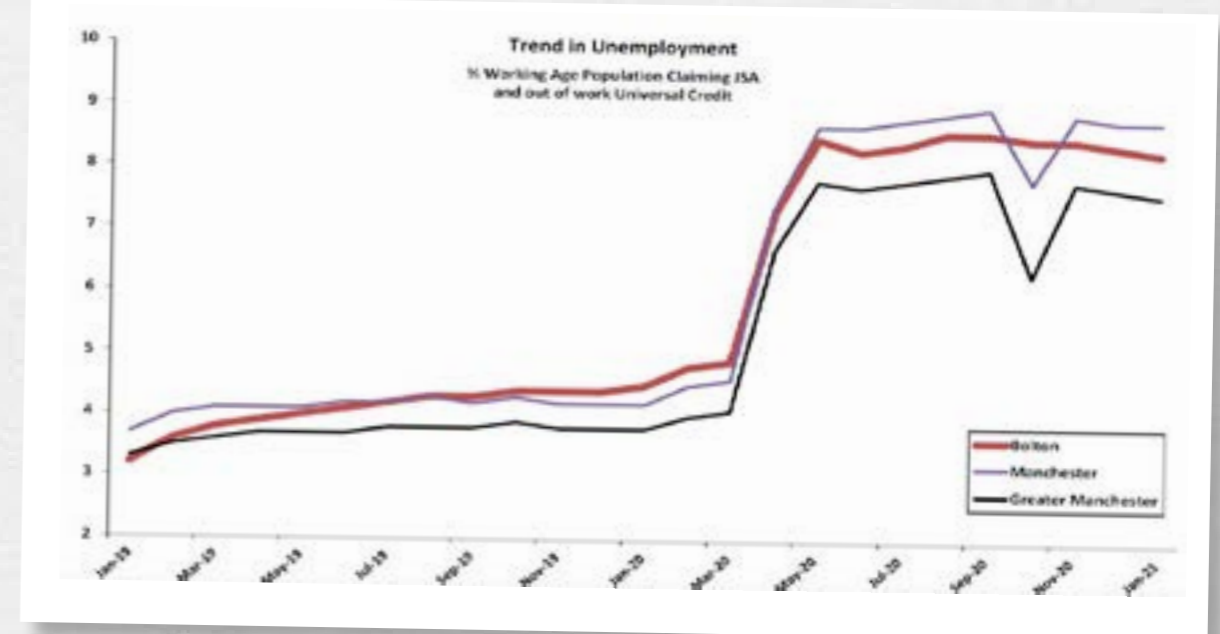
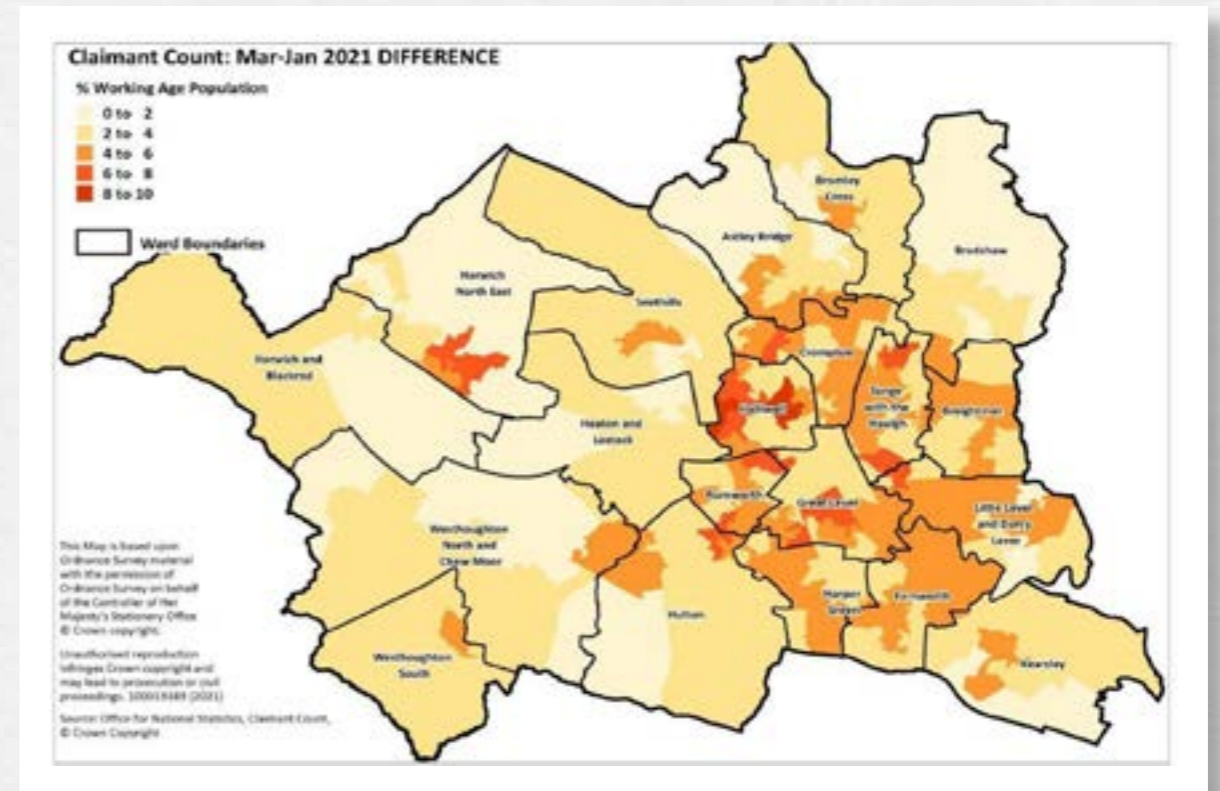
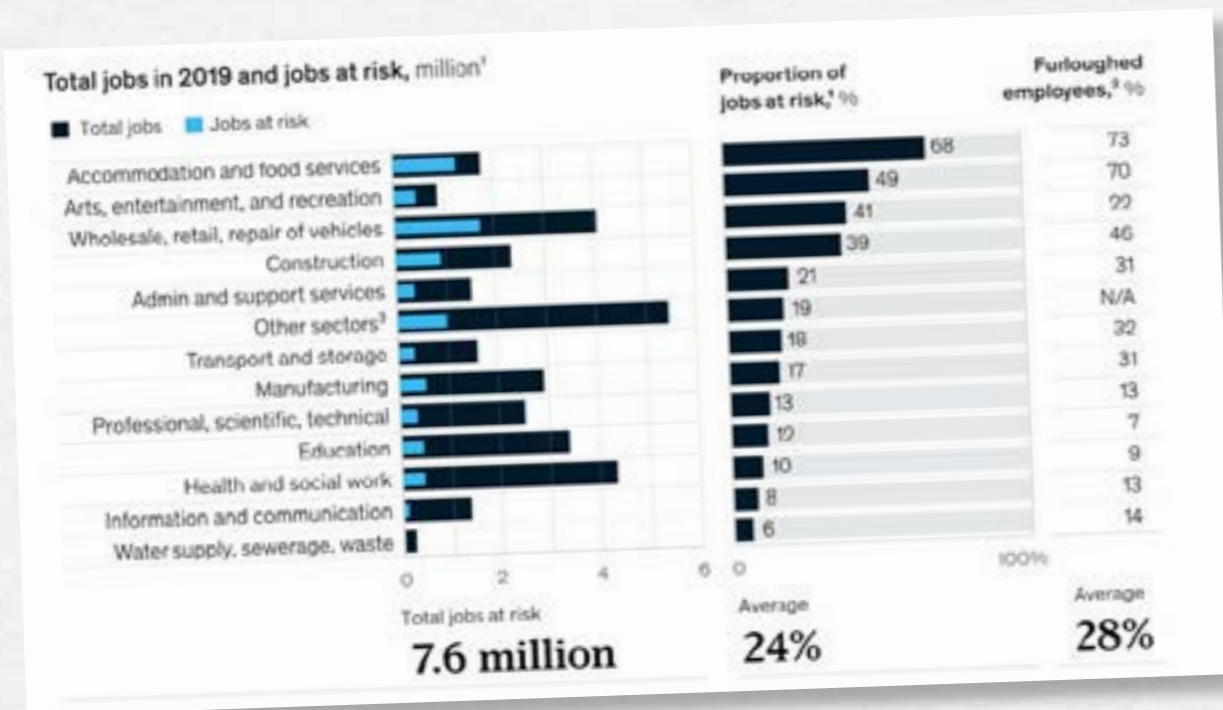
Bolton residents are vulnerable to suffering from managing Covid-19 through restrictions

*How does vulnerability to COVID-19 vary between communities in England?
Developing a Small Area Vulnerability Index (SAVI) (bmj.com)*



National restrictions: what these mean for Bolton

- Bolton residents are less likely to be in jobs that can be done from home, for example public facing roles in retail, transport or healthcare, so are less able to be able to work from home thus at greater risk of exposure to Covid
- Ability to work from home runs alongside existing inequalities, with people from minority ethnic groups and residents of disadvantaged areas being more likely to be in roles that cannot be done from home
- Unemployment and job insecurity are determinants of physical and mental health
- A higher proportion of Bolton residents work in sectors which are at higher risk of unemployment in pandemic, including hospitality, retail, construction and manufacturing
- More than 7,000 Bolton residents work in sectors considered to be most at risk



7,000
 7,000 residents work in sectors considered most at risk

**Social determinants of inequalities:
Poverty and Housing**

Compliance with test and trace, and self-isolation is lower with higher levels of poverty

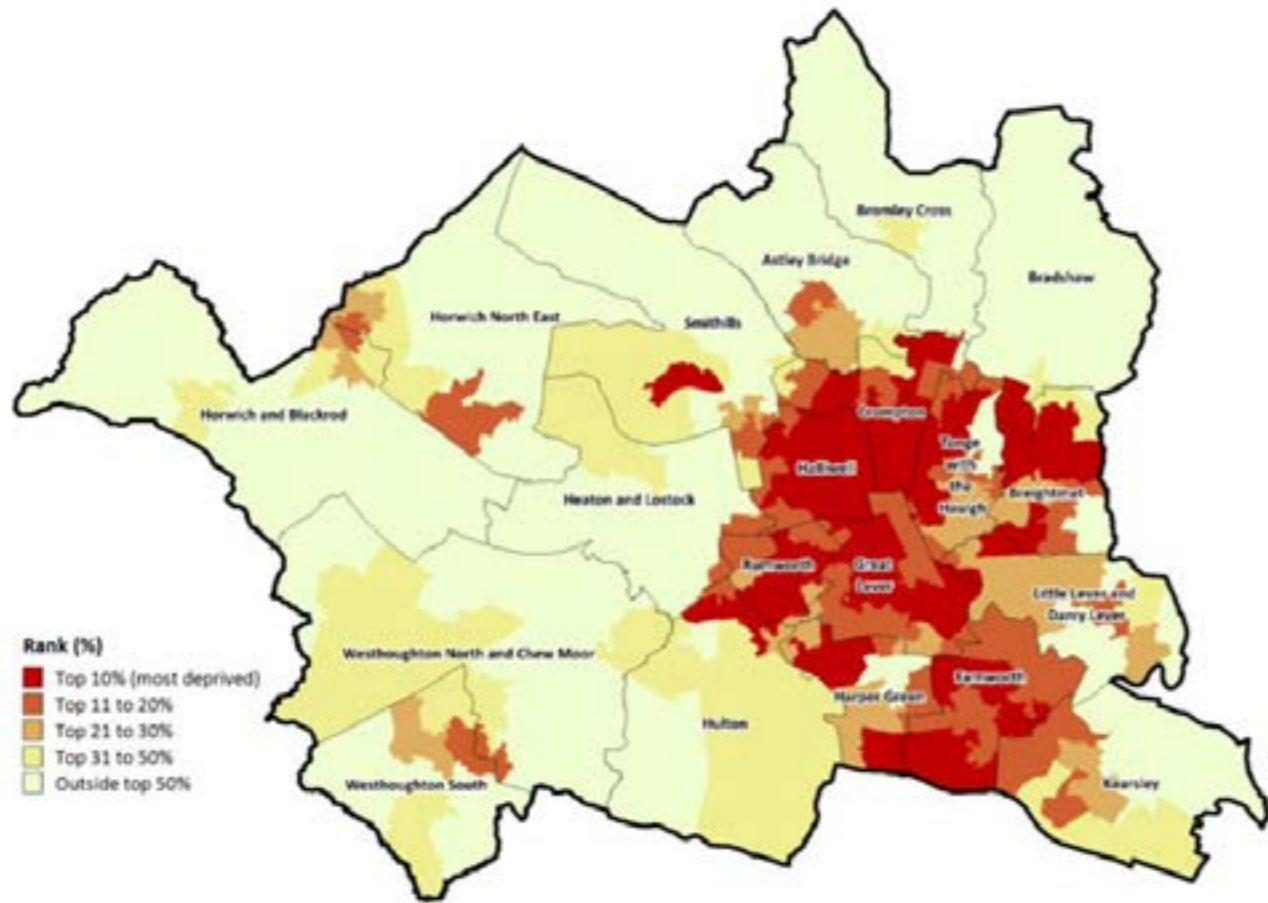
Debt burdens have increased more in more deprived households compared with less deprived

Higher risk of COVID-19 infection in more deprived groups and ethnic minority groups due to more multi-generational housing

Communities came together handing out food parcels to those who could not leave their house

People visited friends and families, sitting outside in coats and blankets, keeping connected and sending support

Creative ways of staying in touch with loved ones, through pods in care homes, through video calls and people baking bread and cakes



Bolton's surges and turbulence begin...

Whilst national restrictions were eased, Bolton very quickly felt the heat and the pressure and very stressful times started.

SUMMER 2020

National restrictions were eased

All workers were encouraged to work from the office again as the 'work from home message' stopped

People were encouraged to 'eat out to help out'

The UK was open to national and international travel without any UK restrictions

Infections across Greater Manchester begin to rise after national measures eased – and the Greater Manchester City region, including Bolton, had restrictions immediately implemented

AUTUMN AND EARLY WINTER 2020

Bolton saw some of the highest infection rates in the country – we were top of England's case rates for several weeks from early September, and experienced a prolonged period of high and escalating case rates which were only brought into sustained decline by the national lockdown November 2020

The context of high likelihood of exposure and high vulnerability to serious disease continued to see Bolton residents experience disproportionate levels of transmission, cases and serious illness

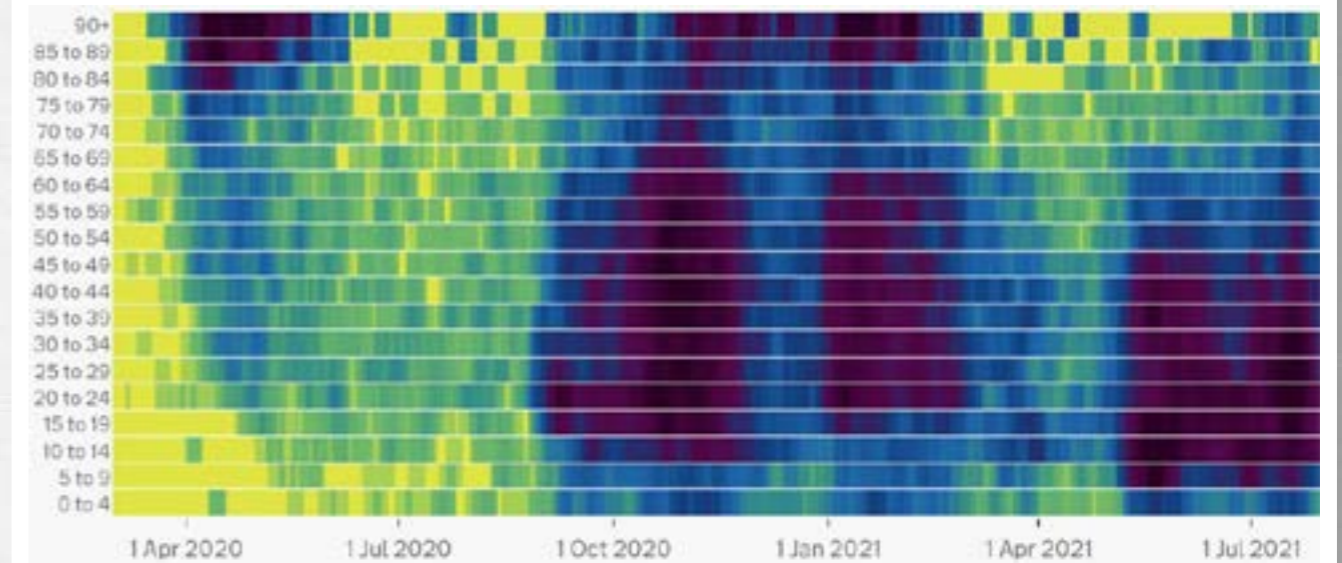
With the increasing social mixing saw higher levels of transmission across all communities including more affluent communities

The Greater Manchester City region restrictions were due to ease early September 2020 but a rapid rise in cases in Bolton at the end of August saw restrictions remain in place and furthermore, even more restrictions were introduced for Bolton for certain businesses and hospitality

Nationally a system of tiered restrictions was announced by the Prime Minister on 12th October 2020, and Bolton was put into the highest restrictive measures. These tiered restrictions failed to curb the rise and further national restrictions came into effect in November 2020

Schools, colleges and universities returned to face to face learning in September 2020, with public health measures in place e.g. bubbles, face coverings, one way systems in buildings

Death rates/case rates and age profile – illustrate the younger age profiles as uni's, and schools



Cases by specimen date age demographics

Rate of cases (people who have had at least one positive Covid-19 test result) per 100,000 people in the rolling 7-day period ending on the dates shown, by age. Source: www.coronavirus.data.gov.uk





Chapter 3

The pandemic response
in Bolton



Coming together in Bolton

Bolton residents, public services, voluntary and community organisations, faith sectors, community leaders and communities all pulled together and activated a wide-ranging response to help all people affected by Covid-19.

- **Public health messaging and advice** was given to all Bolton residents, businesses and public sector
- **National legislation and guidance** was carefully interpreted to share amongst our communities and answer local queries
- **Bolton's Humanitarian Hub**, a seven day a week service, was quickly set up to provide advice, to provide coordination of food, medicines and essential supplies, to provide mental health support, financial support and also support for people who were told to shield or isolate
- **Bolton's Test and Trace response** was quickly set up which included local Covid-19 test centres, local contact tracing service and local public health specialist outbreak management for all settings, i.e. schools, colleges, university, businesses
- **Community testing** at local test centres in Bolton were set up rapidly during April 2020 by the local authority
- **Homelessness was prioritised** too, providing food, shelter and infection control support
- **Care homes were given additional support** including additional personal protective equipment (PPE), infection prevention control to protect residents and staff
- **Education and public health worked together** to provide a range of support, including testing, contact tracing and isolation advice and support, support for remote learning, and classrooms being available for children of essential workers
- **People sought out creative ways to stay connected with loved ones** – virtual catch ups, sitting outside windows, group chats created for families, neighbourhoods and even work colleagues

Mounting a whole borough response Bolton's Variant of Concern response: an ambitious and comprehensive model

SURGE TEST

Mobile Test Units located at key community sites

Settings: Education (early years; primary; secondary; college); Businesses; Community

Door to door

SURGE VACCINATE

Vaccine push to those living in affected areas eligible to be vaccinated

DOOR TO DOOR

Community engagement to take up PCR, kit distribution and walk through vaccination sign posting

Leaflet drops at household and businesses within the areas

COMMUNICATE AND ENGAGE

Voluntary and faith leaders raise awareness/engage with communities

Translated materials/interpretation messages

Community Champions – social media campaign; encourage uptake of PCR and vaccine

Clear messaging across whole population with targeted messaging for affected areas

Later phase – move to messages re. lateral flow testing twice weekly across the population; behaviour change

ISOLATE

Anyone who has symptoms should book a test as normal using www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

Positive? Then isolate along with contacts – stay at home, only leave the house to get your test or use postal test

Isolation fund available to support due to loss of earnings (up to £500 per person)

Community engagement at heart of response model

Intelligence informed response with dynamic feedback from epidemiology and community insight



Disruption heightens for Bolton...

Impact of Covid disruption on children's and young people education:

has been greater for Bolton and in particular for those children and young people living in disadvantage areas and in disadvantage communities; education staff fatigue emerging

Impact on health and social care:

extremely high and stressful workloads from high case rates, morbidity and mortality over extended periods of time, staff fatigue and trauma emerging

Impact on businesses and economy:

e.g. greater closures and greater restrictions on local trading businesses in Bolton compared to other areas, resulting in severe impact on income, loss of trade to neighbouring areas in less restrictions, higher rates of staff isolating, unable to work overtime or for bonuses

Impact on individuals, families and communities:

longer periods for our residents to be living under greater restrictions and large proportion isolating, loss of earnings, loss of social interaction

Disproportionate impact:

including higher levels of anxiety for the most disadvantaged communities and areas, ethnic minority communities, people with learning disabilities, people with long term health conditions

Impact of Covid-19 control measures

WELLBEING

- Women, older people, and disabled people had more negative impacts on wellbeing
- School closures negatively impacted young people's mental health, with more impact seen in families with higher deprivation and from ethnic minority backgrounds

COMMUNITY

- Feelings of neighbourhood cohesion fell nationally during pandemic, more in areas of deprivation or with high proportions of ethnic minority backgrounds
- Individuals identifying with their community are more likely to give pandemic-related support and follow national guidance

NATURE AND GREENSPACE

- Access to greenspace is protective against poor health
- Central Bolton is the area with the lowest access to private greenspace in the borough, highlighting the importance of access to public greenspace for these communities

TRANSPORT

- Use of public transport has declined since the pandemic in GM
- More people are reporting walking or cycling
- Overall physical activity levels in Bolton have fallen sharply over the pandemic period

ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Elderly people, disability and low income are associated with poor access to technology
- Strain in health services was felt in more deprived areas, resulting in reduced ability to access healthcare

EDUCATION

- Educational outcomes have been worse in more deprived areas during the pandemic, with higher levels of learning loss in these areas due to pandemic control measures
- School closures and exam cancellations have caused significant disruption for young people

People who live, work and are educated in Bolton have seen extremely high disruption

Variants of Concern bring new challenges as a new year approaches

The virus starts to change

- New Variants Under Investigation (VUI) and Variants Of Concern (VOC) emerge
- A new 'Variant of Concern' emerges in Kent (later named Alpha) and sweeps across the country during December 2020
- Bolton hasn't recovered from our Autumn surges before the Alpha variant takes hold and pushes our rates even higher without having any gaps in restrictions, any gaps in rates, any gaps for respite
- Bolton enters the New Year with cases on the rise again, impacting once again on more disadvantaged areas and vulnerable groups

January 2021:

- A further period of national restrictions of 'stay at home' begins
- Bolton has now been continuously under a variety of national, local or tiered restrictions since 23rd March 2020, excluding a short period of just over six weeks between 15th June to 31st July 2020
- The careful task to understand and interpret national legislation and guidance continues to enable people to understand the new rules
- People, families, communities and organisations in Bolton all learn to adapt to additional 'stay at home' restrictions again having had no respite, bringing more exhaustion and further trauma for all

Vaccines bring new hope as a new year approaches

- In a feat of scientific achievement, safe and effective vaccines are licenced
- Local planning by NHS, council and volunteers ensures everything in is place ready so that vaccination programme can roll out effectively across Bolton



December 2020:

- People in Bolton at greatest risk begin to receive the first doses of the vaccine alongside health and social care staff, adhering to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) criteria. First people were over 80s, then over 75s, then over 70s...and alongside the age groups, those with specific health conditions
- Communities continue to come together to help each other and to support each other through the January/February restrictions and help people get to health centres for their vaccines
- The government's Roadmap is released in February 2021 with a four step plan setting out a route out of lockdown

Stepping into more Variants of Concern

- Variants of Concern were beginning to emerge across the globe

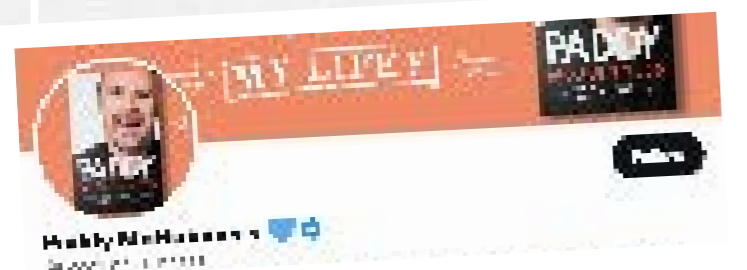
April 2021:

- Alpha variant is now the dominant virus across the country, including Bolton
- Cases of Beta variant are found in part of Bolton and targeted surge responses were put in place
- A rapid rise in cases of the Delta variant was quickly detected in end of April / beginning of May through routine local surveillance
- Bolton responds to the Variants of Concern situation and pulls together again in an unprecedented response





BOLTON'S RESPONSE IN ACTION



“My mate just sent me this vid of the queues in Bolton for a vaccination. I flew the nest almost six years ago but all my friends and family are still there, along with my heart and soul. It’s a strong town and I’ve no doubt they’ll get on top of this. C’mon Bolton!



Covid-19 vaccination bus is coming to Bolton!

Jump on board to get your life-saving vaccination.

NHS Bolton
Clinical Commissioning Group



COVID-19: VARIANT OF CONCERN IN YOUR AREA

TAKE A TEST - ENHANCED TESTING NOW AVAILABLE IN BL3

NHS
Test and Trace

Bolton Council

**‘You said,
we did’
approach**



Reflections

Community Engagement and insight at the heart of our operational response: ‘You said, we did’ approach, continuous cycle of co-production with our communities

Participation not broadcast messaging: door step conversations helped us to define what we needed to do at every stage

Strong governance is needed: incident management approach swiftly enacted and supported by all partners across the Bolton public service system

People who can make decisions well: people who are operationalising the activity given the authority and autonomy to follow things through

Skilled expert staff across the Borough: working together as an integrated public health purpose team – one purpose, one model, clear outcomes

Experience of previous surge rates: allowed us to quickly respond and scale up

Emergency planning approach needed to steer future activity: combined leadership and operational delivery function

Opportunities for prevention based approach to mitigate future waves

Summary

Bolton has faced severe challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The impact of Covid-19 has been felt unequally across the country, across the Borough and between different population groups.

Bolton has been hit hard with increased case rates and deaths compared to the rest of the country.

Health inequalities have been exacerbated, with more deprived communities in Bolton experiencing worse outcomes.

Some impacts have been direct – as a result of greater exposure to Covid-19.

Some indirect as a result of the measures put in place to manage and reduce the severity of the pandemic.

Short term impacts already seen, long term impacts expected.

However

Bolton saw a social movement created enabling people to protect themselves and their loved ones, making people across the country, and in Whitehall feel the passion, feel the movement and feel the response.

Bolton's local response to the May 2021 surge was highly effective in reversing case rate rise.

The people of Bolton have come together, to support each other and help each other throughout all of the challenging times and will come through the recovery as stronger communities together.

Businesses and education settings have all come together too, supporting our health and care, supporting each other and putting the lives of Bolton residents and Bolton workers first – to make sure the response is local, with local passion and local dedication.

Recommendations

1

Covid-19 and the mitigations took its toll on all of mental health and wellbeing; whether this is because of the virus itself or the impact of the mitigations, with many people re-evaluating their work/life balance and priorities. It is important that we support and nurture our fatigued workforce across Bolton, enable agile, encourage more cycling and walking to and from work and whilst in work, and have greater flexibility to respond to caring needs, so that we get the best out of people and have a happy, positive and successful workforce.

2

Bolton's response was incredible. We need to build on our success and continue to have new conversations with our communities; to have a sense of purpose and pride and strengthen our assets and enable power to be given to the people of Bolton.

3

Children and young people have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, particularly by the consequences of managing Covid-19. We need to ensure that the voice of children and young people are at the front of all of our strategy and policies across Bolton.

4

Older people, people with disability and people who have more vulnerabilities have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, particularly from both the virus itself and, the impact of the management of Covid-19. We need to ensure that we have a health and social care integrated system that can respond, including a sustainable workforce, a stronger communities offer and shift in resources to more up-stream prevention thereby enabling people to live for longer within their own homes, with appropriate levels of support.

5

Businesses have recognised the need for a sustainable and productive workforce, more so than ever, which enables a strong economy. It is important that we support businesses across the Borough so that they can address health inequalities and build a sustainable workforce, regardless of business sector.

6

There are key elements of learning from our Covid response that can be applied to our local response to other challenges such as the climate emergency where we also see direct and indirect impacts fall disproportionately on disadvantaged communities. Incorporating action on inequalities across the Marmot objectives and Bolton's Vision objectives with climate change action will together help us build back fairer and greener.

A huge, whole borough effort with a lot of help from our friends brought hope to the country

As Director of Public Health, I would like to thank each and everyone of you for helping us all to get through this pandemic together.



Finding out more:

Further details of the are presented in the supplementary document 'Technical analyses' which is available on Bolton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment website.

The JSNA website includes previous reports of the Director of Public Health plus a wide range of and a range of analyses of health and wellbeing, and the underlying determinants of health and wellbeing www.boltonjsna.org.uk





Bolton has faced severe challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic



The Director of Public Health's
Annual Report 2020/21

**Bolton
Council**