

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/014/21</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>GM THOMAS</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>GM THOMAS</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>PREVENTION TEAM MANAGER JEN TAYLOR PREVENTION TEAM MANAGER JO HENDERSON</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>MFRA VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE SUPPORT TO THE MERSEYSIDE VACCINATION PROGRAMME</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	
--------------------	--

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the support provided by MFRA volunteer workforce to health colleagues to support the delivery of the Covid19 vaccination programme.

### **Recommendation**

2. That Members note the content of this report and the contribution of MFRA staff towards delivery of the vaccination programme with specific reference to deployment at the Merseyside Mass Vaccination site.

### **Introduction and Background**

3. To address the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government tasked the NHS with the delivery of a vaccination programme, so that those who needed protecting most could access vaccinations as soon as they became available.
4. Detailed planning began in September 2020 building on the expertise and strong track record the NHS already had in delivering immunisations such as the annual flu vaccination programme. Plans included assurance that the Covid19 vaccination programme would not impact on other vital health related services.
5. During the pandemic, MFRA staff have provided thousands of hours to support the effort to protect and support our communities. We deliver an emergency service and have a proven track record of delivering response and first aid to the public. We also bring our reputation as people who can be trusted in a crisis.
6. In December 2020, the NHS approached and asked the Fire and Rescue Service to support its vaccination programme through provision of staff to deliver immunisations and assist with patient care. St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust were identified as the workforce lead to deliver the vaccination

programme in Cheshire and Merseyside and they engaged officers of MFRA to explore options.

7. A project team was convened to oversee the MFRS vaccination support, subsequently recruiting a cohort of volunteers from the workforce who wished to undertake one of two roles at the site:
  - 7.1. Vaccinator - Requiring the volunteer to administer the vaccine to people under the direction and supervision of a registered health care professional.
  - 7.2. Vaccine Administrative Support – Requiring the volunteer to greet, receive, assist and direct people in accessing the vaccination site including verifying their booking.
8. All volunteers received comprehensive training, including completion of online courses developed in partnership with and approved by NHS England and face to face clinical training. To complement training, volunteers are also subject to assessments and clinical supervision to ensure their own safety and that of everyone receiving the vaccine.
9. Training was delivered by approved NHS educators, many of whom had been re-engaged following retirement or had been redeployed from other roles within the NHS to support the broader vaccination programme.
10. MFRA staff were deployed at the St Helens Rugby League, Totally Wicked Stadium on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021. This site was, and remains the only Mass Vaccination site in Merseyside, vaccinating up to 1,700 people per day. Figure 1 provides further detail.

Date range: 8 <sup>th</sup> February and 28 <sup>th</sup> March (7 weeks)	
Total MFRS staff hours at site	4,007
Vaccines administered by MFRS staff	14,515
Vaccines drawn up by MFRS staff	6,836
Total vaccinations administered at site	in excess of 56,000

Figure 1 – MFRS staff activity at Mass Vaccination Site 8<sup>th</sup> February – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2020

11. Since the start date, the team have been at the site every day and are now considered an integral part of the vaccination programme. NHS staff and MFRA staff work shoulder to shoulder as one team often with St John Ambulance, British Armed Service personnel and other volunteers to deliver the vaccination programme at pace and at scale to the people of Merseyside.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

12. The opportunity has been made available to all staff to contribute as a volunteer towards the vaccination programme.
13. The vaccination programme is government led and discharged through DHSC following equality impact assessment against protected groups.

---

### **Staff Implications**

14. Up to 200 MFRA staff have been engaged to support the delivery of the vaccination programme in a volunteer capacity.
15. The Service has developed a Covid Vaccination project team who were introduced to each staff member at their initial training session. The team are available for staff who need to make contact whilst the vaccination programme is ongoing. At the site there are also NHS leads who ensure staff are comfortable whilst on deployment. Staff are communicated with frequently and have 'wrap around' welfare available at all times when deployed at the site.
16. The programme is an exciting opportunity for our staff to make a difference and be part of a global army tackling the pandemic. MFRA staff have provided positive feedback in relation to their interactions with NHS staff and also with the interactions they are having with colleagues from other parts of the Service whom they might not normally work alongside.
17. All staff involved have been issued with a 'letter of comfort' by the Authority to ensure that any misinformation regarding pension or employment rights is challenged and they are made fully aware of their rights and the employment protection available to them whilst deployed as a volunteer on behalf of the Authority.

---

### **Legal Implications**

18. MFRA has an appropriate agreement in place in respect of the arrangement with St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospital NHS Trust to enable MFRA staff to assist with the vaccination programme and response to the Covid19 pandemic while ensuring the relevant legal protections are in force.

---

### **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

19. SLT have agreed that staff may be deployed as a volunteer during Authority time on the provision that Fire and Rescue Authority business is not compromised and remains the priority.
20. MFRA Staff may work additional hours (in line with the agreements in place with St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospital NHS Trust). MFRA staff undertaking this work are then paid for these hours at the equivalent rate of NHS Band 2 for admin support or Band 3 for those deployed as a vaccinator. These costs are recoverable from the Trust and as such the use of MFRA staff in such a way is cost neutral to the Authority.

## **Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications**

21. Full training to NHSE standard is provided and to complement this, MFRA staff are subject to close clinical supervision to ensure competency is maintained.
22. The activity has been fully risk assessed. All staff are issued with and familiarised with the risk assessment prior to their deployment through the provision of a comprehensive staff guidance document.
23. PPE is made available to all staff as a risk control measure under NHS risk assessment and NFCC related risk assessment. Lateral Flow Testing is available to all staff undertaking the activity and staff are recommended to undertake a testing regime twice weekly in line with current NHS protocol.

## **Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters***

24. Every country around the globe has been affected in some way by the COVID-19 pandemic – staff, friends, families. Despite us living through some of the most challenging times imaginable, our staff have gone over and above to make sure that we are part of the solution. We make things better and we are looked up to because of this. This is the opportunity of a lifetime. To be part of the solution, to help end a global pandemic and our health colleagues cannot deliver the vaccination programme on their own.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>MFRA</b>	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
<b>MFRS</b>	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>NHSE</b>	National Health Service (England)
<b>SLT</b>	Strategic Leadership Team
<b>DHSC</b>	Department of Health and Social Care
<b>NFCC</b>	National Fire Chief's Council