

7<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear whom it may concern,

On the 23rd June 2021 I, as Director of Public Health and the Borough's Chief Medical Officer, in my statutory role for protecting the health of residents, advised that school trips with an overnight residential component were not supported from a Public Health perspective.

At that time, although England sat under Stage 3 of the roadmap for lockdown release, where school residential trips can go ahead, as an Enhanced Response Area, Wigan was identified as an area of the country where the new Delta variant of COVID-19 was spreading, and was therefore under specific additional advice that other areas of the country were not at present. Under this guidance, residents from Wigan were advised by the national Government to minimise travel in and out of the area.

In developing specific local advice for schools on residential trips, as well as ensuring the national guidance was adhered to, I also considered the local COVID-19 prevalence. In the 7 days before 21st June, there were 966 cases in Wigan, at a prevalence of 293.9 per 100,000. There was however, a higher prevalence in our younger age groups, with the rates amongst 0-9 year olds in the borough being 285.3 per 100,000 and amongst 10-19 year olds in the borough being 636.7 per 100,000 at that time. We were also seeing at the time, a significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in local schools.

I also took into account the additional risks that are present during the overnight phase of residential, including greater transmission opportunity and inability of teachers to ensure social distancing was happening during night-time.

I therefore, in line with national advice and local health protection statutory responsibilities, advised Wigan schools not to participate in overnight residential.

Kind regards,



Professor Kate Arden, MBChB MSc FFPH  
Director Public Health  
Wigan Council