

COVID-19 Testing in Oldham

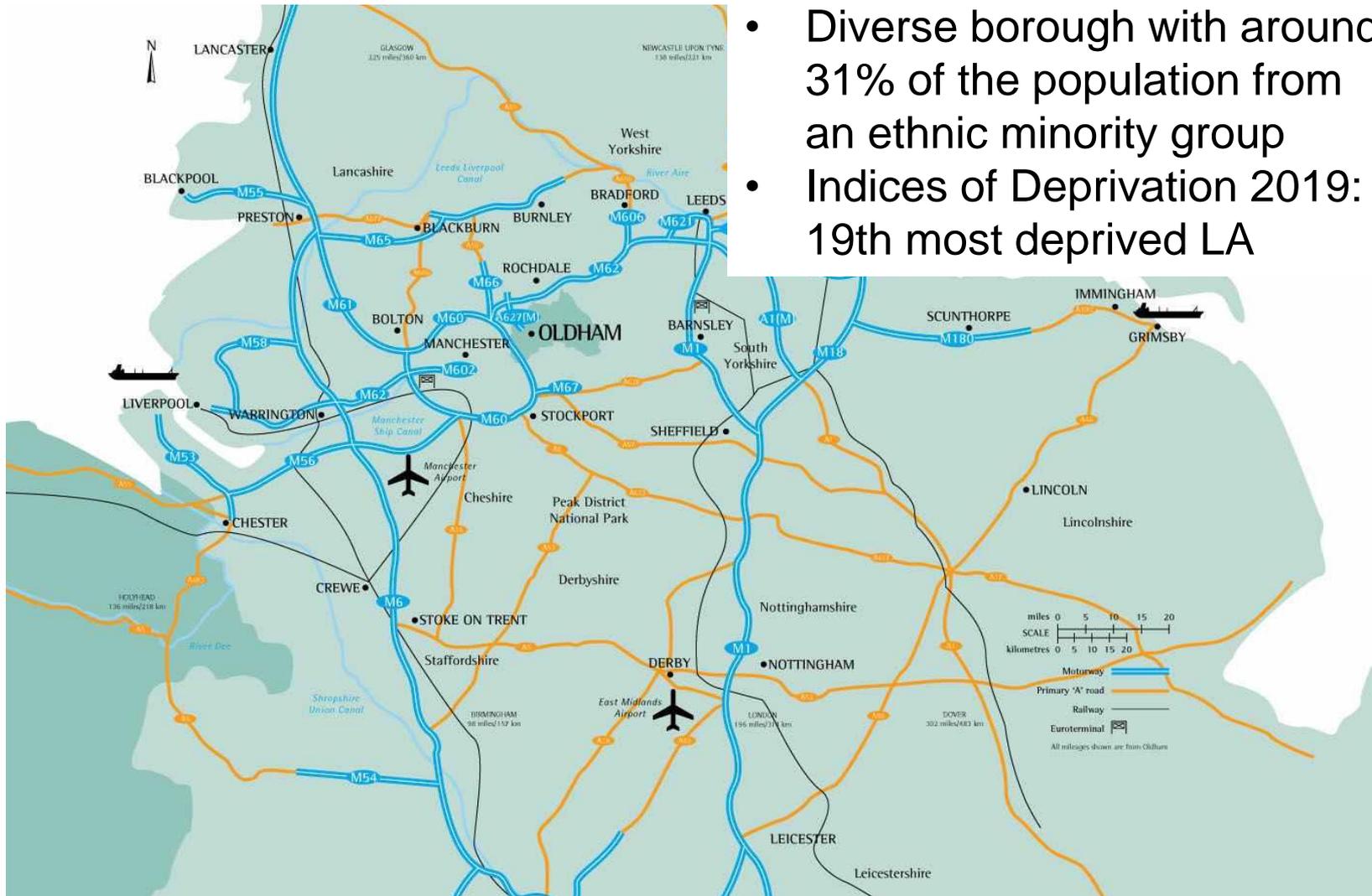
Katrina Stephens, Director of Public Health



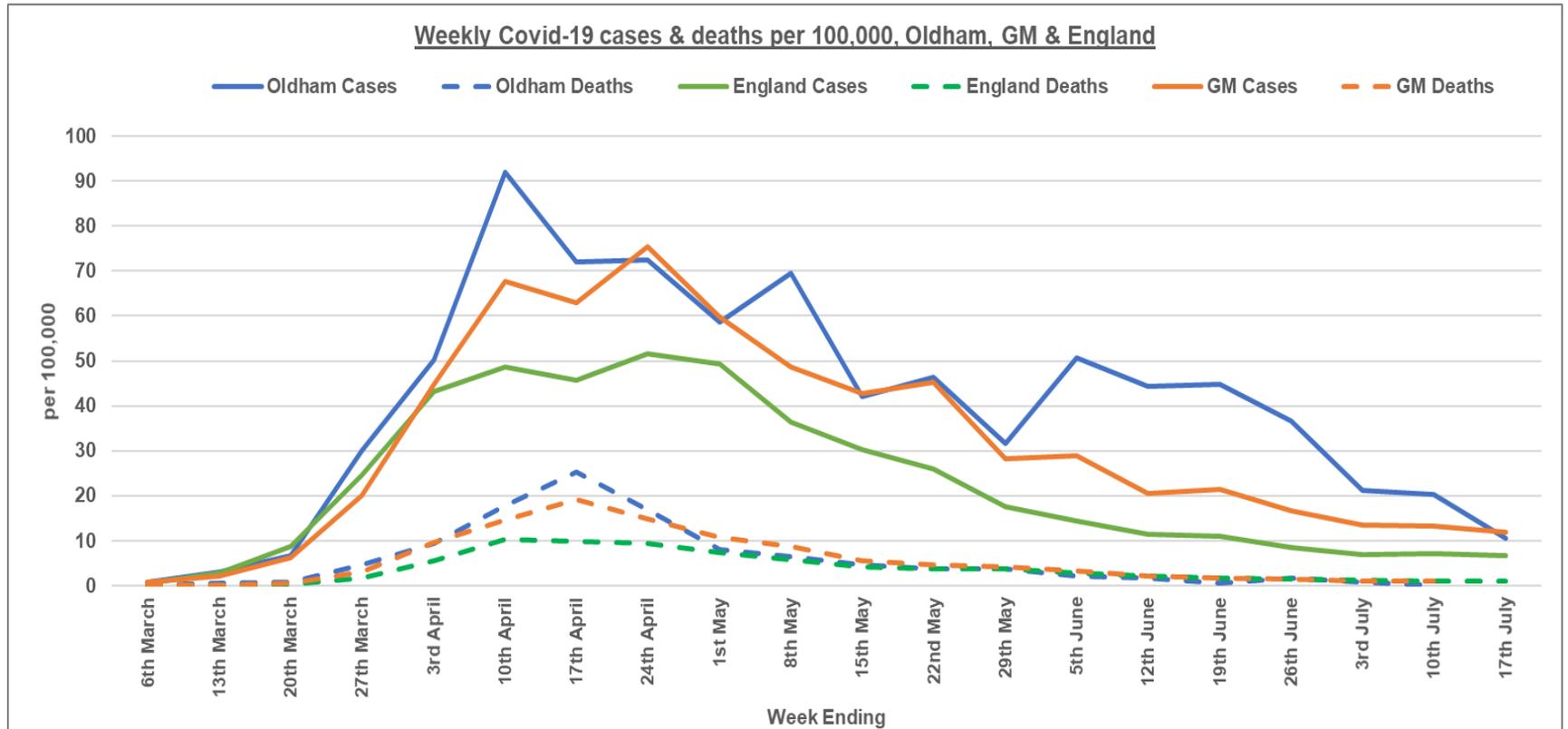
Oldham
Council

Oldham in context

- Population 2020: 245,000
- Diverse borough with around 31% of the population from an ethnic minority group
- Indices of Deprivation 2019: 19th most deprived LA



COVID-19 in Oldham



Testing approach, prior to prototype

- Community swabbing team established at the beginning of March.
- 2 testing sites operational, providing drive-through testing to health and social care, and other key public/VCSE sector staff
- Care Home Testing through:
 - Local outbreak response pathway
 - STICH (Supporting Treatment in Care Homes) Team providing whole home testing
 - Care homes accessing the national portal for whole home testing
- Domiciliary testing offer providing home testing to those receiving care at home, and health and care staff unable to access drive-through sites.
- Town Centre based Mobile Testing Unit
- Good access to testing kits via Royal Oldham Hospital
- Links developed with local lighthouse laboratory

Focus for prototype

- To provide a 'pop up' testing offer in community settings, in conjunction with VCSE partners, focusing on:
 - BAME communities
 - Faith communities and faith settings
 - Other protected characteristics
 - Areas with high levels of deprivation
 - People who can't work from home, and work in settings with a large number of people on site
- Providing access for those without access to a car
- Providing access for those with limited/no digital access
- Providing access in trusted settings close to home
- Train staff in learning disability, drugs and alcohol, and other services working with higher risk cohorts, to deliver testing to their service users
- Include case finding rather than exclusively testing people who currently have symptoms

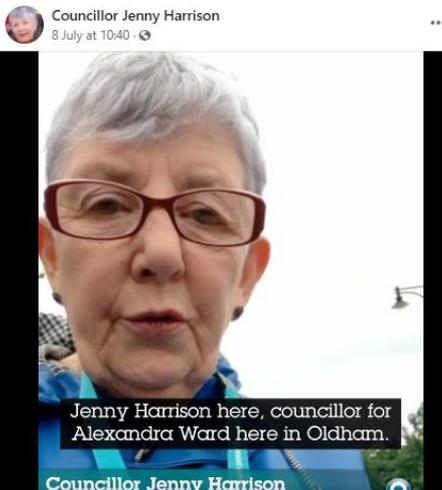
Establishing the 'pop up' testing site

- Working group, including place-based teams and VCSE sector
- Identifying a suitable location
- Promoting the site
- Getting started
- Community engagement

Communications and engagement with target groups

- Early engagement of ward councillors
- Use of Equalities Advisory Group, made up of local organisations representing the nine protected characteristics, to draft and test our messaging so it works for local communities
- Additional meetings with community leaders and residents in target areas with lived experience of COVID
- Shift from 'broadcast' to targeted messaging
- Videos used to communicate via social media and local whats app groups
- Posters and social media posts (in Urdu, Punjabi and Bangla)
- Involvement and connections of Action Together and place-based teams critical

Videos/Social media



Jenny Harrison Retweeted
ruji @surjan03 · Jul 3
 New Walk In Test Centre next to Oldham Gallery. Free to get tested. Book

Brilliant friendly staff and volunteers 🌞



Majid Hussain @MajidHussai · Jul 7
 This Friday will be the first time Mosque's will re-open for Friday prayers, really pleasing to see Mosques and many other institutions going the extra mile to keep people safe. Great to see all of our communities doing their bit to collectively manage the virus spreading.



Asymptomatic testing

- Focus on taxi drivers, food businesses, high risk workplaces
- Direct contact via licensing and environmental health
- Reserved slots for businesses to invite staff to attend
- Data from testing site suggests many who are accessing testing may not have symptoms

Learning/observations to date

- Good uptake from target areas
- High proportion 'walk up' rather than booking
- Site is being used by people who are 'curious' and have had contact with a case, not just those with symptoms
- Informal feedback has been positive
- Site works well as a central testing location e.g. good access for services supporting vulnerable residents
- Need a flexible approach to offering asymptomatic testing
- Importance of engagement and listening to get the starting point for communications right

What next?

- Continuing to co-design and shape approach with VCSE and local residents
- Enabling VCSE to support delivery, including follow up support for cases and contacts
- Support for self-isolation
- Pop up or permanent
- Identification of other locations for a true 'pop up' model
- Substance misuse service pathway