

# **Expedited Public Spaces Protection Order Consultation Feedback and Next Steps**

## **Introduction**

This document aims to provide a summary of the feedback from the Expedited Public Spaces Protection Order (E-PSPO) Consultation and outline recommendations for the future of the E-PSPO after the initial 6-month period is completed.

The order was introduced on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022 for the safety of staff and visitors to vaccination centres. The order is currently in place for 6 months, and this consultation allowed members of the public to share their views and experiences of the order and its requirements, to inform the review of this E-PSPO.

The order is due to expire between the local elections in May and the formation of a new executive. Given that we are due to be providing vaccinations (the spring boosters) at this time and that there is an ongoing presence of anti-vaxxers within the borough, there is a significant risk in allowing the order to lapse. It cannot be extended but can be replaced with a 'normal' PSPO.

## **Consultation feedback**

### **Who responded?**

The consultation was open between 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023, with 27 responses to the survey. Of the respondents 52% were staff members of a business or organisation that hosts or delivers COVID-19 vaccinations, 11% worked within the vicinity of a vaccination centre and 37% had attended a centre for a vaccination themselves. 52% of respondents identified as Stockport residents, with 30% working in Stockport and 11% visitors to Stockport.

### **Interference**

When asked about interference to the vaccination centres, all respondents agreed this should be covered by the E-PSPO. Additionally 85% of respondents said the impact interference had been major and 74% stated it led to harassment and intimidation. Respondents said it left them feeling concerned for their own and

others safety, resorting to using alternative exits. They stated people were filmed without permission and were shouted at. Furthermore 63% of respondents said they felt this behaviour effected the delivery of COVID-19 vaccinations due to intimidating and distracting behaviour. Overall when asked about these requirements of the E- PSPO 100% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the requirement to leave the vicinity of a COVID-19 vaccination site if suspected of breaking the E-PSPO.

## **Signage, text, and images**

We also asked about signage, text and images used, with 100% of respondents agreeing it should be a requirement of the E-PSPO to be removed if breaching it. 70% of those surveyed said the signs and images used had a major impact. 59% said it had led to harassment and intimidation and 48% described how the behaviour had interfered with vaccinating. Respondents described how signs were disturbing and were held up to windows in a threatening way. 96% of respondents agreed with the requirement to

remove from display any signage, text or images relating to the disapproval of COVID- 19 vaccinations when suspected of breaching the order.

### **Requirement to provide details**

When asked if they agreed with the requirement to provide details including name, address and DOB if suspected of breaking the E-PSPO 85% strongly agreed, 11% agreed and 1 respondent strongly disagreed.

### **Overall findings**

Overall 96% of respondents completing the survey agreed with the council's decision to introduce a 6-month E- PSPO to help prevent harassment, intimidation, and impediment at COVID- 19 vaccination clinics in Stockport. One respondent who disagreed stated that the order would have been more legitimate earlier in the pandemic when "anti-vaxxers were more prominent outside schools and vaccination centres". However, respondents in agreement

with the order commented it could be longer and that it has been effective in reducing harassment and disruption. One respondent stated, "it has reduced by anxiety when coming to work" and another stated it is "essential to this location due to the nature of intimidation and disruption at the site. Members of staff delivering essential, key services should not be intimidated and/or harassed".

## **Recommendations**

In view of the likely ongoing COVID-19 vaccination programmes advised by the JVCI, and from the overwhelming support from the public for the consultation of the E-PSPO, CLT is recommended agree to the below steps to replacing the e-PSPO with a PSPO to continue to protect COVID-19 vaccination centres.