



Report to: Environment Committee, 20th July 2021

Report of: Corporate Director, Homes and Communities

Subject: LYME DISEASE UPDATE REPORT

1. Recommendation

1.1 That Committee note the contents of this report outlining plans of installing educational signage to be displayed at Laugherne Brook Nature Reserve (and any other locations of concern) to raise awareness of potential contraction of Lyme Disease from tick bites.

2. Background

- 2.1 The issue of Lyme Disease was raised via a Member question at the September 2020 Council meeting, and the Chair of Environment Committee, in answering the question, committed to a report being brought back to this committee with further information.
- 2.2 Lyme disease (also known as Lyme borreliosis) is a potentially serious bacterial infection transmitted via tick bites. Only a small number of ticks are infected with the bacteria that cause Lyme disease. A tick bite can only cause Lyme disease in humans if the tick has already bitten an infected animal.
- 2.3 Originally Lyme Disease was thought to be more prevalent in marshy areas however recent studies show that it can be found over any form of green space. Cases however do typically rise with in summer months due to a combination of a more habitable climate for the Tick and more pedestrian footfall of these effected areas.
- 2.4 Contracting Lyme Disease fortunately remains a rare occurrence with overall contraction rates in England during 2019 being 903 in total. Only 20 of these happening in the West Midlands. Unfortunately, with this low infection rate comes a widescale lack of knowledge of the disease.

3. Information

- 3.1 Although infection rates for this illness remain low (**Appendix A**) the symptoms can be severe, it is because of this that The City and County Council will be embarking on a public awareness campaign to help protect frequenters of our green space and overall public health.
- 3.2 This campaign will be delivered using a uniform approach from both participants, through different mediums to maximise the campaigns efficiency and making it more recognisable.

- 3.3 Mediums used will include educational posters provided by the charity Lyme Disease Action (**Appendix B**) featuring on pre-existing site notice boards, social media communications and press articles during peak visitor times such as hot weather and school holidays.
- 3.4 Information featured in these posters and articles will include how to recognise the tick itself, how to remove them, the mark left behind, the symptoms of Lyme Disease, areas to avoid and how to best reduce the risk of contraction.
- 3.5 As the installation of Poster and issuing of articles can be achieved in house with little disturbance to ongoing services, we foresee the overall financial implications of this campaign of this campaign to be negligible.

For Further Information

[Public Health England – Lyme Disease](#)

[NHS Choices – Lyme Disease](#)

[Public Health England - Tick leaflet](#)

Ward(s): All

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Appendix A – Acute Cases in Quarters 1-2 of 2020

Lyme disease (data from the Rare and Imported Pathogens Laboratory, Porton)

The total number of confirmed Lyme disease cases reported in the first half of 2020 (n=360) was lower than the same period in 2019 (n=509). Of these cases, 184 were acute (including 25 with neurological Lyme disease) and 176 were longstanding. A total of 89 (48%) of the acute cases were male (aged 2-85 years, median age 44) and 94 (51%) were female (aged 3-85 years, median age 43). The sex of one case was not reported. Table 3 shows the age group and gender distribution.

Table 3. Laboratory confirmed acute cases of Lyme disease, by age and sex (Q1 and Q2 weeks 1 to 26, 2020)

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0 to 14	16	9	0
15 to 24	8	8	0
25 to 34	9	13	0
35 to 44	14	22	0
45 to 54	11	11	1
55 to 64	14	14	0
65 to 74	11	12	0
75+	5	5	0
Unknown	1	0	0
Total	89	94	1

The regions with the most reported cases in the fourth quarter were the South East (n=48), South West (n=41) and London (n=22), which had the most reported cases in the other 3 quarters as well. Five of the acute cases (3%) reported foreign travel. Four of these cases reported travel to Europe and one case reported travel to North America.

Note. Specimens sent for Lyme disease referral testing should be accompanied by a completed referral form, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/lyme-borrelia-service>

Appendix B – Lyme Disease Action Poster



Lyme Disease Action

www.LymeDiseaseAction.org.uk

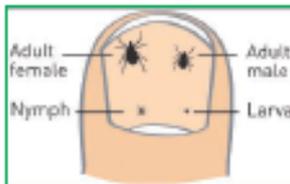
WATCH OUT! TICKS ABOUT!

RISK ZONES

- Long grass
- Undergrowth
- Woods
- Moors and heaths
- Urban parks & gardens

...across the UK

Walkers, campers, gardeners - beware!



Ticks are larger after feeding.
Before that they can be as small as a full stop on this page.

TICK REMOVAL

- Do it as soon as possible
- **DO NOT** squash the tick or apply any creams, oils or heat to the tick (if you put a tick under pressure, you may pump its saliva and stomach contents into you!)
- Use a **tick removal tool** to ensure you remove all the tick
- Dispose of the tick down the sink, avoiding getting any tick fluids on bare skin
- Clean the bite site with soap & water or antiseptic
- If you develop a rash or symptoms, see your doctor and tell them you were bitten



LYME DISEASE

Some ticks carry Lyme disease and they can inject the bacteria into you when they take a meal of blood.

Symptoms may appear between 2 and 30 days after the bite and may include:

- Feeling unwell with 'flu-like symptoms
- Extreme fatigue
- Muscle or joint pain
- Muscle weakness
- Viral-like meningitis
- Headache
- Facial palsy
- Disturbances of sight, hearing, digestive system or sleep
- A slowly spreading rash which may look like a "bull's eye", called an erythema migrans. If you get a rash, photograph it for your record

Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics: the sooner the better.



STAY SAFE

- Try not to brush against vegetation
- Keep your legs and arms covered
- Brush clothing & pets off before going inside
- Check areas not easily seen: back of leg, back, hairline. Don't rely on sight: tick bites are painless and can go unnoticed
- Buy a tick remover from LDA, vet or pet shop

Lyme Disease Action

www.LymeDiseaseAction.org.uk

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The Information Standard



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