

County Councillor report March 2020

Virus update as of writing 14th April

All critical services are running satisfactorily.

Performance against PPE to date has been checked, and inside Cambridgeshire we have never run out of PPE in a hospital setting nor in community services, however in both cases there have been occasions when it has relied on redistribution, or stocks coming in just in time or working hand to mouth. However primary care originally had no stock so the situation was not the same for them at the start. As I understand it all sectors now have appropriate PPE and if the system continues to operate correctly, normal supply, local intervention when necessary and government supply there should not be further issues. If stock is used appropriately following Public Health guidance, which is evidence based. **Additional ventilators** have been received in the last week - which are starting to be used in hospitals countywide with additional hospital staff trained to work in Intensive Care.

Staff testing -prioritisation of staff who will receive testing continues in all areas, with priority given to acute hospital staff, primary care staff and staff in care homes - areas where there are small numbers and capacity could easily become over stretched. This will be opened up wider as soon as there is additional capacity.

1,193 children attended schools yesterday (8th April). In the vulnerable group the numbers were up to 179 children but these are all on social care's radar. The Director of education told me today (8th April) that our reporting systems of all of this are better than the Department for Education, which is a tribute to our schools and their willingness to work with us. There are some national newspaper journalists that are picking up in their personal tweet chains that Cambridgeshire is doing a sterling job. Early year's provision is sufficient to meet the needs of key workers and we are still offering advice to providers where they are having financial difficulties.

There have been no significant outbreaks of COVID-19 in Cambridgeshire Residential Homes to date, 10th April, which indicates good infection control. Public Health have issued their guidance on PPE, an interpretation of this is being finalised and the Director of Public Health for Cambridgeshire has promised an update as to when we will receive it. The basis is to put the guidance into direct relevance to specific roles or job descriptions. We will get an update from the Cell today hopefully to report on progress of all of the work to identify the need for PPE, prioritise its distribution and go back to government where we need more.

Co-ordination hubs. Currently we are aware of approx. 20,000 people in the 'shielded' category across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough - although this number will rise as GPs notify of others on their lists who may fall into this category. 13,000 have registered and the Countywide Co-ordination Hub is concentrating on support to those in this cohort with no reliable network of family or friends to provide food, care or medical assistance.

We currently have 14 incoming call handlers and 38 outgoing call handlers manning the County Hub.

From Tuesday 14th April, we will have an additional 50 call handlers, each responsible for a list of the Shielded residents we are helping, so they receive a weekly phone call to check on their well-being.

From Wednesday, additional call handlers will be phoning all personal carers, to check if they need anything and match them to a local volunteer if they wish.

Many County Council officers have been working long hours every day

The work to convert Marshall's site to a temporary mortuary has started for body storage, and it is anticipated that it will be up and running by the 13th/14th April. Let's hope it isn't needed.

Strategic Co-ordinating Group - Update. April 7 2020

Health: Additional modelling on the epidemic curve in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is showing

- Social distancing measures are beginning to take effect locally
- This is moving the expected peak of the epidemic in our area away from just after the Easter Weekend as expected, and by at least a week or perhaps two.
- The peak is also expected to be lower than anticipated, but only if the social distancing and stay at home measures continue to be observed
- There is still work to be done on how long the 'tail' of the epidemic will be - which may be longer - but with lower numbers of cases.

Currently there is bed availability in all hospitals - including intensive care beds, and staffing levels across all essential services are stabilised.

However SCG stressed again how vitally important it was for all organisations to continue to promote the stay at home, social distancing and hygiene messages, as this is the best defence we have against the virus spreading.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum sub-group for **personal protective equipment (PPE)** has been set up to deliver against what is a key multi-agency priority. It brings together representatives from different organisations to

- Ensure that we have a common interpretation of the national guidance on PPE, which underwent significant updates late last week, and of the guidance for employers which was updated only yesterday with particular reference to when and where it was useful to wear face masks.
- Ensure that we can convey clear information to staff across organisations about PPE needs and proper usage - which will be out later this week.
- Assess current and future needs for PPE in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Have a full understanding of each organisations current stock and sources of PPE, so that we can work effectively together as a multi-agency system to ensure the right equipment gets to the right place in the right time.
- Put practical mechanisms in place to for local distribution PPE, if that is required.

The impact that social distancing and the 'stay at home' message is having on **families at risk of domestic abuse** is being considered at both a local and also national level with discussions taking place between Directors of Children's Services and we are playing our part in making recommendations on how to mitigate this risk. A campaign to help people spot the signs of domestic abuse and where to report it locally has been developed by the Warn and Inform group, and there was a request for all partners to promote it.

A campaign to help mitigate the likely impact on mental health issues created by social isolation and social distancing - which will link into support being provided for citizens, volunteers and staff - is also planned for launch this week.

There has been a great response from schools across the region to offering support in the current emergency. Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 280 schools remain open throughout the Easter Holidays to support key worker and vulnerable children - and this will extend into the two bank holidays (Good Friday/Easter Monday) where schools will be staffed by teachers who are volunteering to do this. There is also good availability across early year's settings.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is working to support for public transport which will keep essential routes running for keyworkers. National government has confirmed a bus service support grant will be available for routes which run 50% of a normal service and will be working with the tactical support group to identify which routes should be prioritised for this support.

In these difficult days, it's really important that you keep in touch with friends and family, a short call regularly can make all the difference if your friends or family are struggling, or just need to chat.

**Peter Hudson
County Councillor**

Oakington, Westwick, Northstowe, Over, and Longstanton