

**From:** Charlie Stewart  
**Sent:** 31 March 2020 22:25  
**Subject:** Covid-19 Update

Dear Councillors

I hope you are staying safe .... Here is the latest update

### **National Position**

It is worth reminding ourselves of the wider picture on the fight against this dreaded virus.

Today's Government brief paints a vivid scene.

143,186 people have now been tested for the virus. Of those, 25,150 have tested positive. Sadly, yesterday saw the highest single increase in the number of deaths as a result of COVID-19. Yesterday, 381 people died and the number who have passed away now totals 1,789.

Every death is the loss of a loved one, and I am sure all our thoughts and prayers are with those who are grieving.

Overall, 10,767 people in England have been admitted to hospital with COVID-19 symptoms. The largest number is in London, with 3,915 people in hospital care.

It is therefore worth repeating the message:

The single most important action we can all take, in fighting coronavirus, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives. People should only leave their houses for one of four reasons:

- shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
- one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
- any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid or escape risk of injury or harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
- travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home

When you are outside, you need to stay safe. You should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensure you are 2 metres (6 feet) apart from anyone outside of your household.

### **Our Services**

Our critical services continue to hold up well and our latest risk assessment is that we can cope over the next two weeks. Our biggest current risk is in relation to care homes and the capacity and staffing of provider services; we are offering support.

Beyond the next two weeks it is difficult to tell, but there are concerns over our ability to cope with placement of discharges from hospital and that priority one housing

repairs may not be able to be done if contractors do not respond. Adult Social care Brokerage team are working closely with Harrow CCG to prepare for any surge in discharge numbers.

As of today, there are no delayed hospital discharges in Harrow and all **vulnerable adults** are receiving a service based on levels of risk and need. Northwick Park continues to be one of the busiest Hospitals in London for Covid 19 with high mortality rates.

Further supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (**PPE**) are expected this week and although our critical services have just sufficient, it continues to be a concern. New guidance for using PPE is being signed off by Government today and will be issued within 24 hours.

Within **Children's social care**, safeguarding continues to be robust. There is sufficient capacity in 'Placements' and to-date there have been no significant placement breakdowns. Additional capacity is being built across in-house foster care and a programme for respite care is being put in place over Easter

The majority of **schools** in Harrow remain open for key workers' children and vulnerable children and schools are making provision to remain open over Easter. Children 'Looked After' are receiving bespoke packages of education through the virtual school. The Special Needs Transport service is operating, but to meet a reduced demand as parents and guardians making local choices and some schools close.

**Housing** emergency repairs and other critical services, such as gas safety checks, are still coping. A process for contacting known vulnerable households living in council property has been put in place and volunteers identified within Housing Services to make contact with each household on a regular basis.

The **Waste Services'** priority has been to keep all bins emptied and main routes clean. This has required the suspending of the new garden waste service until May (the suspension may be for longer). All but emergency **highway** works has ceased. The **Meals on Wheels** service continues to run to schedule and demand has increased. **Public Protection** officers are on our streets along with Kingdom officers to maintain a public presence.

## **Community Engagement**

Our new critical service, the Community Hub operated last weekend and the Council, together with the Community and Voluntary sector, provided food where needed to our residents who are most vulnerable to Covid19. So far we have received three (shielding) lists of vulnerable people from the central Government contact centre. There were a total of 558 people on the list of whom c150 needed food.

The Government's direct supply of food from food suppliers to the doors of the most vulnerable (shielding) has begun and it is expected that we will not in future be providing this service except for specific cases. In due course, the Government will be directing people who are vulnerable (but not protected by the shielding exercise) to their local authorities, but there will not be an expectation local government delivers food parcels or medicines to them. We will be expected to work to our best efforts with local volunteer groups to help these people where they can. Work is currently being undertaken to define what this support could and should entail.

## **Our People**

Our people continue to be an inspiration; going well beyond what would normally be expected.

Today the Chief Executive gave a brief, by telephone conference call, to over 1900 of our staff. An amazing feat of technology and of our Chief's resilience (as he had to talk over the builder's next door ....). The brief was well received and is one of many ways we are communicating daily to our staff.

This week we have started to plan for the wider reduction and stopping of non-critical services and the potential re-deployment of staff to critical areas. A 'Talent Hub' has been set up to link re-deployable people to shortages in critical services.

That's all for today.

Please stay safe and look after each other (and the NHS and Social Services ...)

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BUILDING A **BETTER**  
**HARROW**