

From: Charlie Stewart
Sent: 17 April 2020 17:46
Subject: Covid-19 Update - The Tunnel and Its Light
Attachments: Corona_All_Households_C_4pp med res.pdf

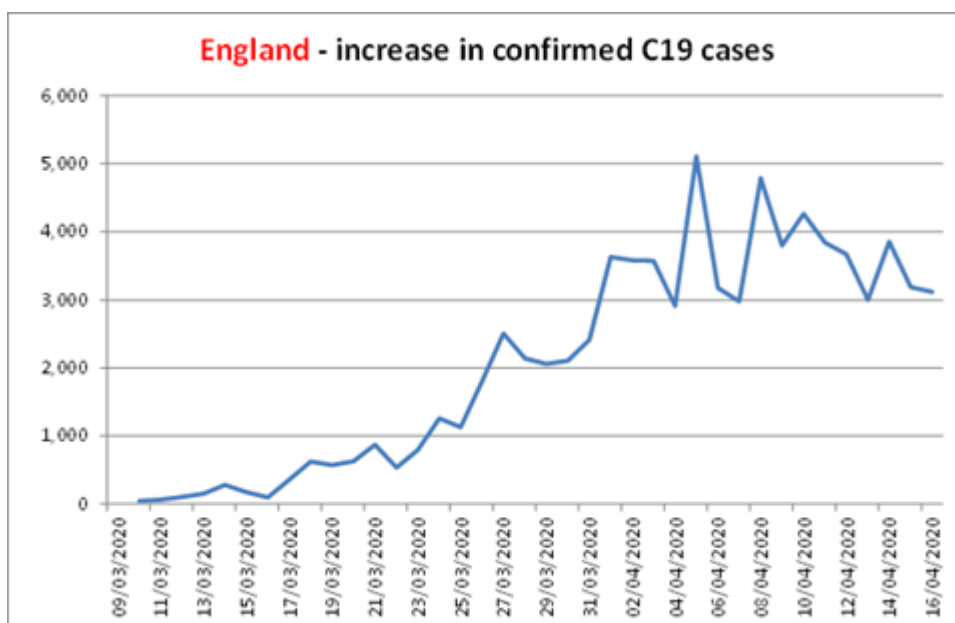
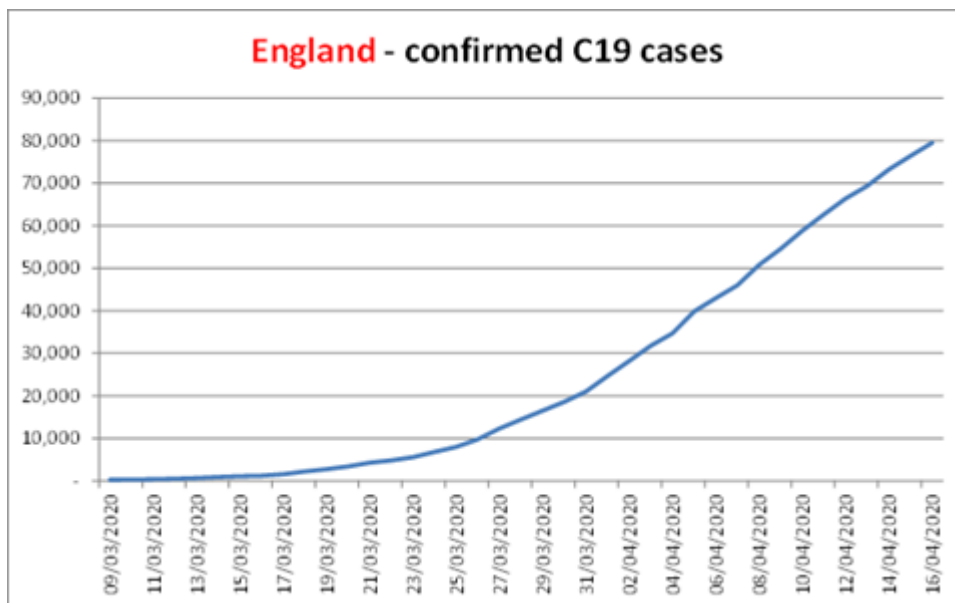
Dear Councillors

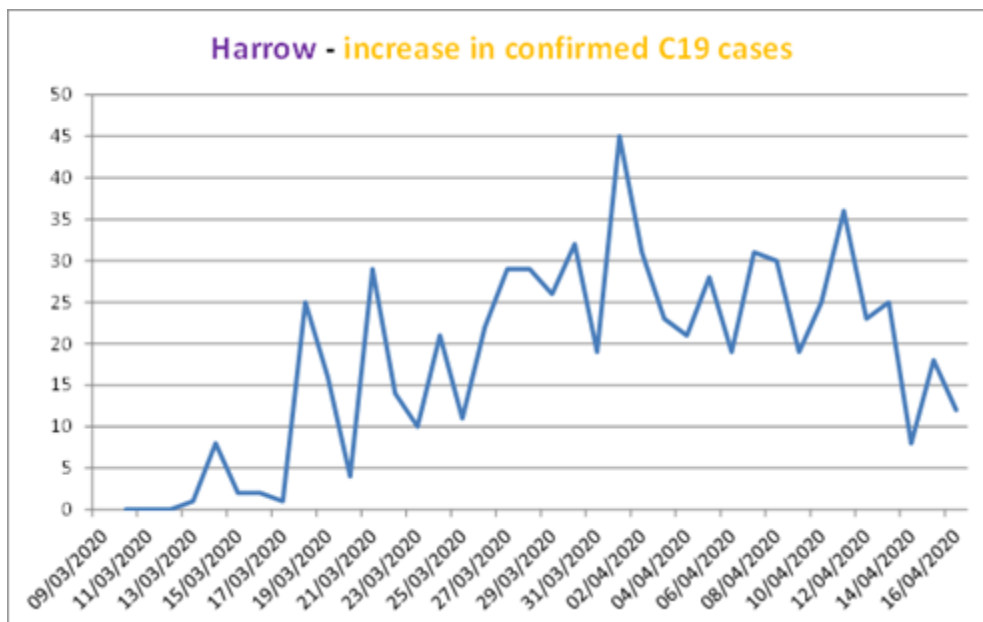
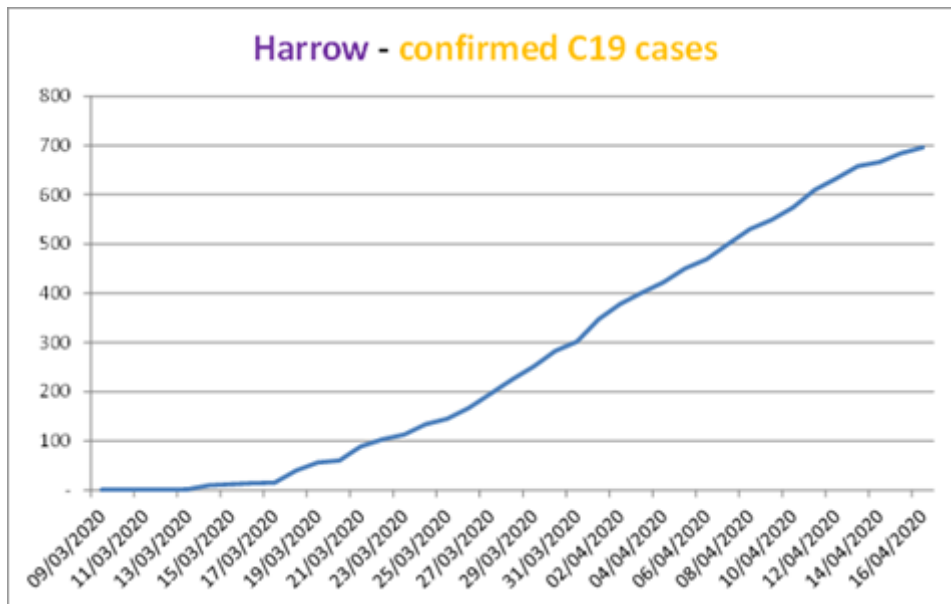
I hope you are all keeping safe and well.

Today's brief (perhaps) gives some light at the end of the tunnel. You may feel otherwise, so I thought I would start with a quote

'Sometimes life seems a dark tunnel with no light at the end, but if you just keep moving forward, you will end up in a better place.'

National and Local Picture





Our Corporate Director of People Services reported to Gold this morning that ‘*Covid-19 discharges from hospital are definitely slower*’. Not wanting to count chickens before they hatch, but we may be winning the war.

Our Services

The demand for out of hospital care continues to be met locally in Harrow, with the **hospital social work** team operating 7 days per week. Our hospital discharge system has capacity to respond to a surge over the next week.

On 15th April the Government published the National Action Plan for Adult Social Care. It was good to see that the crucial importance of **Adult Social Care** services was recognised and puts us on a par with the NHS. The Thursday 8pm clap is now for all carers. I hope you will join me next Thursday in, once again, putting your hands together at 8pm to recognise the great work all are doing to combat this dreaded virus.

Testing for care-home staff in Harrow is now being rolled out. This will help build capacity as we can quickly check if someone has Covid-19 if they go home to self-isolate as they feel they have the symptoms. The amount of testing is very limited at the moment, but the expectation is that all the care sector will be covered in the next few weeks.

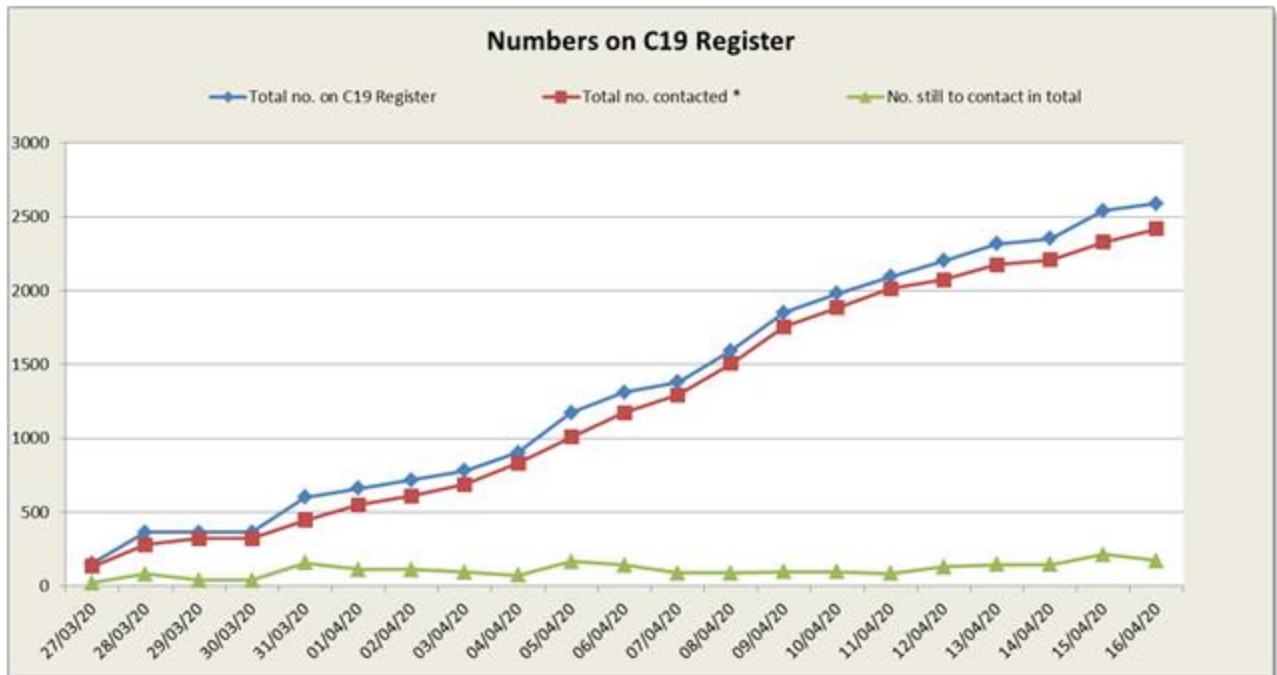
Thanks to the hard work of our **school admissions teams**, we can reassure residents that the National Offer for school admissions has gone smoothly. Letters to parents and other communications have been sent out, and there will be a local press release in due course. We are pleased that 95% of Harrow children received an offer for a place at one of their top three preferred primary schools. We understand that some parents may be disappointed with the offer and want to appeal this decision. Parents should submit their appeals in accordance with the guidance in the offer letters. We are awaiting new regulations and guidance from the Government on determining appeals during the current crisis. Once these are available we will advise parents, who have submitted appeals, how we will deal with them; we hope to do this in early May. At the same time we will advise parents who have already submitted appeals against offers of secondary school places how we will deal with their appeals

Schools are continuing to meet the demand for schooling the children of key workers and our vulnerable children. After a dip in take-up over the Easter bank holiday, the numbers of children in our schools have returned to the levels previously seen before the weekend.

Our Waste Services continue to operate well. The plan to ensure social distancing is maintained on Harrow streets, parks and allotments, which worked so well over Easter, are now being put in place for this weekend. Additional resources will be deployed to ensure an increased presence and the Police have indicated that they have sufficient capacity across the Borough. Recently, some delivery drivers were moved on from gathering outside Toros (Station Rd) and the queue control at Asda, Wealdstone needed some intervention.

All Housing Services continue to operate as previously noted. The number of rough sleepers that have been housed has risen to 12.

The **Community Hub** Shielding list continues to grow:



In addition, as of yesterday we had handled 1820 calls through the Help Line and there had been 471 requests for food.

A leaflet drop to all households started today. A copy of the leaflet is attached to this e-mail and it outlines our response to Covid-19 and provides useful information to residents. We are expecting an increase in calls to the Help Line as a result of the leaflet drop and we are monitoring the situation to try and ensure we have the right number of people on 'duty' over the weekend. The council's Talent Hub (which coordinates the redeployment of people from non-critical to critical services) will also be operating this weekend to provide support to the Community Hub if required. On another good note, the new IT system for the Community hub went live today. It will greatly help us ensure we can provide a good service for residents.

A Special on Business Grants

There has been a lot of discussion both in the press and locally on the allocation of Business Support Grants. A lot of work has been going on to set-up the procedure by which we get businesses to submit applications, check those applications and get payments out. Sounds easy, but the effort involved as we have old technology, old data and limited ways to pay (to name just a few of our problems) has been incredible.

In addition, Harrow is unusual in that we have a disproportionate amount of small businesses compared to other Boroughs. Out of the 5,705 commercial hereditaments in Harrow, 5224 or 91% fall under the £51,000 grant qualifying threshold. If you remove offices (which are not qualifying), Harrow still has 3199 potential cases entitled to a grant. Yet our team who normal work in this area (and who therefore have the skills to work our IT systems etc) is very small as we don't have a large overall business sector to normally support.

However, we now have a working system and resources in place. By the end of today, all businesses (where we can get through) will have been contacted. And by Monday, 20% of all potential cases will have had their grant.

As of close of play yesterday, grants totalling £4.3m had been awarded and we were processing around 70 per day. This is likely to increase to 200 per day from Monday which should see us clear the near 2,000 outstanding applications by 10 May. This timeline was discussed and accepted by MHCLG when the Minister discussed our approach with the Chief Executive yesterday.

On Monday, MHCLG will be issuing a 'league table' showing the number of grants each Borough has made. We expect to be in the bottom middle of the pack, but I hope this information is useful so you know what we are doing and can help the business owners of Harrow understand.

As always.....

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

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BUILDING A **BETTER**
HARROW