

# Covid-19 Update

## Cabinet 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

- Update on Covid-19 London and Harrow
- National Lockdown update and Roadmap
- Council Response to Covid-19
  - Covid-19 related activity
  - service impact
  - wider agenda
- Vaccination roll-out update
- Planning for Recovery
- Overview of issues, priorities and capacity
- Questions

- Lockdown restrictions have resulted in a major reduction in Covid-19 cases – down to levels last seen in October
- Harrow is now 58.9 cases per 100k people when at the peak almost at 1000 cases per 100k people
- Case levels are increasing as restrictions begin to ease
- Hospital admissions and occupancy have fallen substantially over the last month
- Government have announced the Lockdown Exit Roadmap – 8<sup>th</sup> March to 21<sup>st</sup> June
- The vaccination programme is progressing well overall

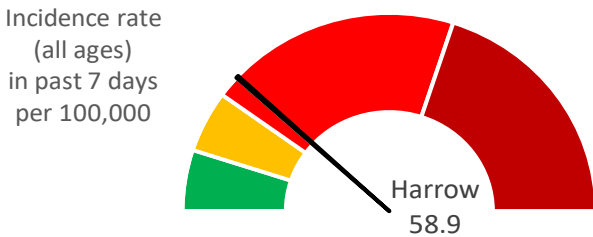
# Harrow COVID 19 Dashboard

report date: 16/03/2021

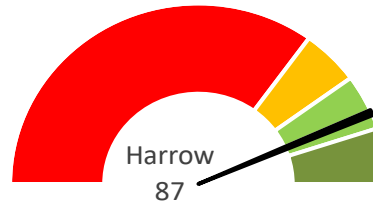
Data from March 6 2021 to March 12 2021

Confirmed Positive Cases in 7 days to 12/03/2021 **148**  
 % Change in past 7 days **-5%**

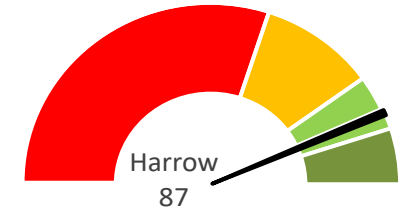
Interim positive cases in 7 days to 16/3/2021 **142**



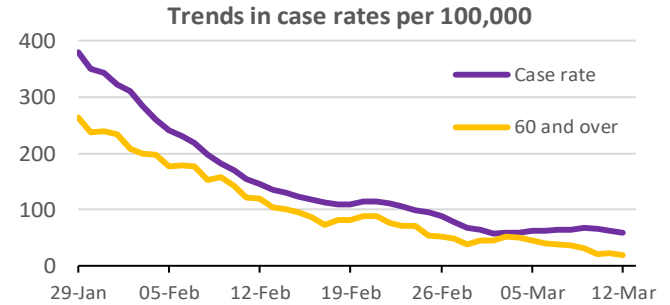
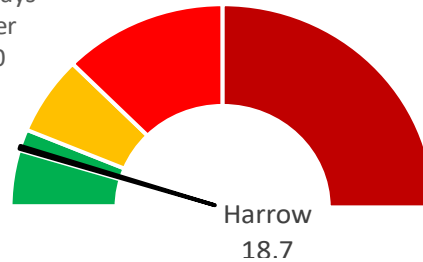
Test and Trace Cases (cumulative) % Complete



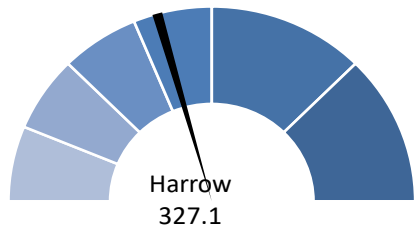
Test and Trace Contacts (cumulative) % Complete



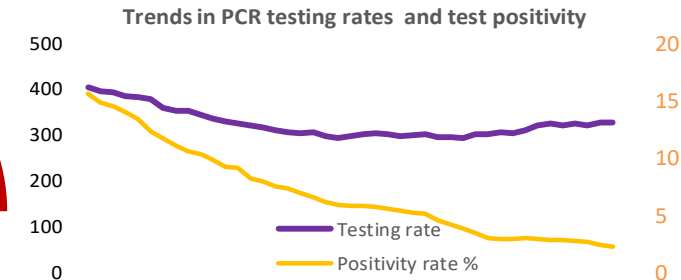
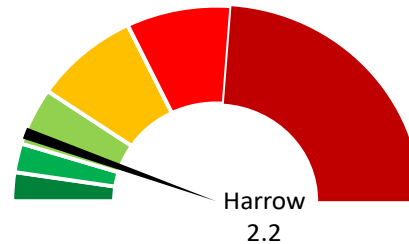
Incidence - 7 days in 60 and over per 100,000



PCR Testing rate per 100,000



PCR Test Positivity rate



After a week of small increases in rates, the past three days have shown a slight decrease in cases/rates. The most recent data on notifications suggests that this will plateau again. The driver behind this is an increase in cases in 18-24 year olds. The rates have more than doubled since the end of February in this group. There has also been an increase in cases in secondary school age (13-17) young people. Testing rates have increased in past 7 days to 327.1/100,000 which will increase in coming days due to the surge testing. The positivity rate for PCR testing has decreased to 2.2% indicating lower levels of community transmission. This may also decrease with the surge testing.

- Roadmap out of Lockdown was published 22<sup>nd</sup> February with first change on 8<sup>th</sup> March with schools fully reopening
- Plans being developed to support the further changes planned for April, May and June
- To support the Roadmap the Council is involved in four key areas:
  - Advice and Enforcement
  - Testing and Track and Trace
  - Variants of Concern
  - Vaccination programme

- Phase One

March – initial but not much release

- Phase Two

April and May – businesses start up again and some release of social gathering constraints

- Phase Three

21<sup>st</sup> June – nearly back to normal but there is likely to still be a need to keep offices and businesses Covid-19 secure

Phase two and three timings are subject to four Government tests covering infection levels, vaccination rates, and variants

- Helping schools to fully reopen with support on logistics and testing
- Supporting community testing and track, trace and isolate
- Further support to the NHS vaccination roll-out which will massively increase in size and scale
- Continue to educate and enforce due to concerns that people think 'lockdown is over'
- Provide further grants to businesses who remain closed
- Plan for wider reopening of non-essential retail and outdoor hospitality in April

- Practical steps for supporting businesses to open
  - Opening up outside spaces
  - Providing signage
  - Informing residents on what's open
- Engage and inform residents on overall changes and rules
- Reopen Council services e.g. libraries and leisure centres
- Start roll-out of economic recovery plans
- Ensure our buildings are Covid-19 secure against new guidelines



- Changed significantly since introduced in December
- Programme extended to end June at least
- Four ways to access testing - complex landscape
- Key message - get tested twice a week
- Started with schools re-opening 8<sup>th</sup> March and regular testing of anyone living or working with school children
- Expected to expand further as more restrictions lifted
- Government agreed to fund all reasonable costs

- Moved from mass testing to targeted community testing
  - Self-employed, sole traders, SMEs less than 50 employees
  - Education – early years, childcare bubbles and anyone working with schools
  - Our own staff – workplace testing
  - VCS – carers
  - Shoppers & hard to reach groups at higher risk of infection/low testing take up – Somali, Tamil, Black Heritage, Romanian
- Moved from five large testing sites to five smaller sites whilst retaining sufficient flexibility for surge testing and increase in demand
- Improved access via community pharmacies, extended opening hours, lowering age to 11+

- Council has developed an updated Outbreak Management Plan
- Key focus of OMP is dealing with Variants of Concern
- Two cases have been identified in Harrow recently
- One case in in Headstone North and one case in Wealdstone
- A strategy for undertaking surge testing has been put in place
- The surge testing plan has been developed in partnership with PHE and DHSC
- Up to 5000 tests will be undertaken to increase surveillance
- Surge testing for variants of concern will become part of our response to Covid-19 going forward

- The VOCs are the South African variant not associated with travel
- They were picked up through routine national random genomic sequencing
- The individuals isolated and recovered well
- Our rationale for surveillance testing
  - Areas surrounding case address
  - Workplaces or schools attended (not applicable to these cases)
  - Areas /premises/events identified through enhanced contact tracing by case
- Two areas identified for door to door testing in Headstone North and Wealdstone
- Areas around Hatch End and Harrow Weald are asked to attend for testing at Harrow Art Centre.
- A pop-up testing unit will be covering the area of Wealdstone High Street over the weekend.
- In the first two days of testing, over 1,500 tests were returned

- Vaccination has been delivered very effectively in Harrow by the PCN sites at The Hive, Byron Hall and Tithe Farm for priority cohorts 1-4
- Next phase of vaccination cohorts 5-9 – all over 50's and clinically vulnerable – timetable March to April
- Ongoing focus to also drive up numbers in highest risk cohorts 1-4
- Challenges continue to maximise uptake for social care staff, certain BAME Communities and our most deprived residents
- Priority to target those groups and communities who are more hesitant to be vaccinated – focus of Community Champions Fund
- Joint Borough Plan being developed by Council and NHS
- Mass Vaccination Site will go live at the end of March

# Vaccination Uptake in Harrow

- Harrow has good overall vaccination rates but more needs to be done
- c90% of over 80's have been vaccinated
- c89% of 75-79's have been vaccinated
- c88% of 70-74's have been vaccinated
- c83% of CEV have been vaccinated
- c85% of 65-69 have been vaccinated
- c71% of 60-64 have been vaccinated
- c39% of 55-59 have been vaccinated
- c30% of 50-55 have been vaccinated
- c89% of care home residents have been vaccinated
- c68% of care home staff have been vaccinated
- c52% of social care staff have been vaccinated

- The whole of 2021 is likely to be dominated by Covid -19 response
- Gradual move from an emergency response, to mix of an emergency response and recovery and then recovery
- The timing and detail is reliant on vaccination roll-out, impact of any new variants and the pace of the lifting of restrictions
- NHS and social care will be focussed on treatment catch up
- Economic challenge for business and residents will increase as furlough and other grant support schemes end
- Major focus on catch up for children re missed education
- Longer-term impact of “hidden harm” and mental health very likely
- Capacity and resilience will remain stretched impacting on priorities

## Planning Assumptions for Covid-19 Unlock and Beyond:

- As an emergency we should plan for this to last until May/June 2021
- With regards Covid-19 related Services we should plan for these to stand down during June to September 2021
- We should therefore plan for the return to Business as Usual from September 2021
- The recovery will be substantial - economic, health, education and planning will need to start before the end of the emergency phase
- There is a very significant amount of activity for the Council to undertake while continuing to run services in a pandemic



- There will be a number of areas where the Council will be focussed over the next few months
- Covid-19 work – our ongoing response to the Pandemic
- Delivering Core Services, e.g. refuse collection, street cleaning adults and children’s social care during and post the Pandemic
- Delivering key corporate initiatives including HSDP, accommodation strategy, MTFS and equalities and diversity
- Recovery – the work we need to do this year and in future to Build Harrow Back Better
- This is a very significant ask in respect of balancing all of these demands especially given the challenge of the last 12 months

- NHS – delay of elective and other treatment on top of an already stretched system
- Recognition that this will have a knock on impact onto Adult Social Care System
- Family support will be of critical importance with a number facing multiple challenges: health, economic, housing and overall resilience
- Educational outcomes will be more at risk for those with challenging circumstances
- Hidden harm has risen, and to date we don't know by how much
- Those who were digitally 'divided' pre-Covid are likely to be more so now
- Poverty levels have increased, but the size of this is unknown until the economy comes off life-support, e.g. Furlough, business grants etc
- We may not see a return to some form of 'business as usual' until the summer of 2022, and for some recovery could be a lot longer before getting back to 'pre-Covid' levels

- **The Economy** – about local businesses and those who need work - the creation of sustainable and good paying jobs locally which the Council’s Economic Development Strategy will set out later this year
- **Education** – no child left behind – narrowing the gap will become even more of a priority to avoid disproportionate impact, particularly for black heritage boys
- **Poverty and Hardship** – for a number of people and families Covid has had a disproportionate impact on their lives, through job loss, worsening health, and access to much needed services.
- **The Council as an Organisation** – examining the organisation and the impact on resilience – how do we continue to motivate and move towards Great People, Great Culture

- National Lockdown has reduced case rates and pressure on the NHS and social care
- Lockdown restrictions will be eased slowly over the next three months
- Council response to the Roadmap includes supporting the unlock, testing, variants of concern and vaccination
- Vaccination programme is going very well and provides hope for the future in respect of reduced hospitalisation and deaths
- Planning for recovery and ensuring capacity and resilience is in place is a key focus
- Covid-19 will continue to dominate Council's work and priorities for many months challenging organisational and staff resilience

## **Cabinet is requested to agree the following:**

- Council's ambition to carry out 70,000 asymptomatic tests between Jan 11<sup>th</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>
- The Government's promise to reimburse "reasonable and actual costs of test delivery"
- Authorise the payment of £2.693m being the estimated cost of Harrow's Community Testing Programme until the end of March 2021, which includes premises, staffing, contractors, consumables, waste and communications