

Councillor and Parish Council Update – 18 January 2021

Local Coronavirus figures

The current local Coronavirus figures can be found on the Government website:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/cases?areaType=ltla&areaName=King%27s%20Lynn%20and%20West%20Norfolk>

The figures yesterday were:

- For the time period 04/01/2020 to 10/01/2021 the Norfolk seven-day incidence per 100,000 is 486.3, East of England is 665.3 and England is 622.3
- RED incidences are for Breckland with an incidence rate per 100,000 of 532.3, Broadland 552.1, Great Yarmouth 551.7, King's Lynn and West Norfolk 432.7, North Norfolk 352.9, Norwich 631.7 and South Norfolk 345.

The figures last week were:

- For the time period 28/12/2020 to 03/01/2021 the Norfolk seven-day incidence per 100,000 is 508.3, East of England is 800.0 and England is 626.2
- RED incidences are for Breckland with an incidence rate per 100,000 of 508, Broadland 555.9, Great Yarmouth 633.2, King's Lynn and West Norfolk 479.6, North Norfolk 399.7, Norwich 494.4 and South Norfolk 501.9.

National Lockdown – Stay at Home

We remain in lockdown. The government guidance for the national lockdown is available on their website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

Support for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable during Lockdown 3

To ensure that CEVs can access food and essential supplies whilst they are shielding but avoid creating dependencies on free food into the future, there are two types of offer:

1. **Accessing Food** - Support that enables a CEV person that can afford food to access food
2. **Urgent Food** - Support that provides in the short-term urgent food for CEV people who are unable to access and/or afford food. This offer can be defined as:
 - a) Emergency Provision – where CEV person only has enough food for next 3 days (5 days if a Friday).
 - b) Interim Provision - Final/only option to provide the CEV person with food where the barriers to accessing food will take time to breakdown and there is a food need in the meantime.

CEVs are being contacted, but if you are aware of anyone who is a CEV and shielding and needs help, please refer them to 0345 800 8020.

Supporting our NHS colleagues

The borough council has always had a close working relationship with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and has been providing support and assistance in a variety of ways throughout the pandemic. As we head into an even more challenging period, we have been in contact with the management team at

the hospital to offer more support where we have resources that would be helpful, for example in admin roles or to assist with the vaccination programme.

We have established schemes in place to speed up discharges from hospital beds including our buddy button scheme which provides patients going home with reassurance that help is at the touch of a button at no cost for a few weeks, and District Direct which ensures any property adaptations that are needed to enable a patient to return home safely are prioritised. This is more important now than ever as it relieves the pressure on hospital beds.

We are also prioritising falls prevention measures for those who may have had to wait for appointments due to Covid to help reduce the chance of them needing a hospital admission (see separate note on falls prevention below).

In addition to everything that is already in place, we have been in constant dialogue with the hospital. In readiness for what is believed to be a very challenging period ahead, we have offered to redeploy some of our staff at short notice to provide admin support where this is helpful, for example to ensure that the critical vaccination programme is not slowed down due to lack of resources.

If there is a wider ask for resources that is beyond our capacity, we will direct the request through to our Norfolk Resilience Forum partners. While this support may impact on our own resources and some of the services we provide, it is vital that we prioritise support actions to respond to the pandemic.

Falls prevention work

The new Falls Prevention Initiative was brought about at the end of 2020 – an initiative, working with the CCG to offer low level preventative measures for those Orthopaedic cases at the QEH awaiting hip/knee surgery (delayed due to Covid pressures)

The initiative was planned and organised very quickly over November/December and Care & Repair sent the first round of 20 letters last week to introduce the initiative. Ten of those contacts have taken up the handyperson service – representing a 50% take up. The next round of 20 letters will go out this week.

We are working on the over 70s list currently (this is 131 patients in West Norfolk) as the first stage of the pilot. We send a letter, then follow up with a triage call within 5-7 days with the offer of the handyperson service – equipment, rails, steps etc or indeed an OT assessment if the person is really struggling. We are speaking to the IHAT Strategy Group next week about the initiative to encourage other areas across Norfolk to do the same.

Alive West Norfolk activities for kids

See the below websites for the full range of activities available to keep families occupied through the lockdown.

- Corn Exchange [Community events | King's Lynn Corn Exchange](#)
- Stories of Lynn <https://www.storiesoflynn.co.uk/learning-during-isolation/>
- Sports - <https://www.alivewestnorfolk.co.uk/active-at-home/#toggle-id-10>

Vaccinations

The latest information about the government's vaccination programme, which is being led in this area by the Norfolk and Waveney CCG is available on their website <https://www.norfolkandwaveneyccg.nhs.uk/>.

Please remember the key message is to be patient. The vaccination programme is being rolled out, more sites will become available as supplies of equipment and the vaccine are provided, and people will be dealt with in accordance with the government's priority list. People must wait until they receive an appointment, rather than contacting the hospital or their GP.

Enhanced contact tracing

A press release giving more details about the enhanced contact tracing we are working on proactively with our Public Health colleagues at Norfolk County Council is attached. We have received very positive feedback to this so far. We are grateful to all the teams who have been redeployed to this work across the council, whether that's making phone calls, organising the house visits or actually doing the visits. Whilst redeployment of staff may impact on the delivery of some council services this is a critical tool in helping to stop the spread.

Grants for businesses

We were not able to pay most grants last week due to a software issue, which has now been resolved. Payments are now being made. We will pay ongoing grants based on the existing application form from the November grants (if there is one) without needing a new form. Only people who have not previously applied for a grant will need to submit an application.

We have paid 41 wet-led pub grants today totalling £41,000 which account for the majority of the applications. There are a handful outstanding where we are waiting for more information.

We received guidance yesterday for the National Lockdown 3 and Closed Business Lockdown Payment, and we will pay these when the software has been updated to cater for them.

If businesses to contact you, please assure them that we are working on it, and will get the payments made as soon as we can, as we do understand the financial pressure they are under.

All the information about the grants available and how to access them is available here:

https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20148/business_rates_and_bid/819/business_help_due_to_coronavirus_covid-19

Homelessness

Further to last week's update, Government has halted evictions until 21 Feb 2021 however there are exceptions to the ban which include antisocial behaviour and rent arrears if certain criteria is met. This could therefore mean that we see evictions taking place before 21st February.

Over the course of the pandemic key focus and efforts have been around single people with support needs as this is where the need has been arising. We are mindful of pressures that are likely to emerge in the not too distant future of spring/early summer as a result of the economic impacts which will, undoubtedly, see increases in rent arrears, reduced incomes and increases in levels of homelessness. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) is a key tool in prevention work, to keep people in their homes rather than finding alternative accommodation. We are seeking additional funding to help with this prevention work. Whilst it is difficult to predict the numbers that are likely to require assistance we are making a judgment at this stage based on ongoing monitoring of various national data sets and information received from our key partners to the challenges that people are facing. Back in November we made a similar judgement on increasing the number of welfare cabins available for the winter period and this has additional provision has been invaluable in our response to rough sleeping during these unprecedented times.

We would urge anyone who is experiencing difficulties to get in touch as soon as possible, using the following contact details:

Advice services

If someone is worried about becoming homeless, the following organisations might also be able to help:

- [Shelter](#) - free housing advice service
- [The Money Advice Hub](#) - free debt and specialist insolvency advice
- [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) - free confidential advice on a range of topics

If someone is threatened with homelessness, contact us as soon as possible:

- phone us on 01553 616200
- email us at housingoptions@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Please do pass these contact details to anyone in your area who might need support

Elections

At this stage we have been advised to continue to prepare as if elections are going ahead. However the Chief Executive (Returning Officer) has written to the local MPs to ask them to seek an early decision on whether the elections will go ahead. It is difficult to see how, with such a manual process, they could be organised and run in a covid safe manner. We understand that this question is being raised by returning officers across the country. We will advise as soon as we hear further information.

Communications

Further communications materials have been provided in respect of vaccination scams, lockdown guidance, and some behavioural change assets designed to make everyone think about the part they play in helping to reduce the spread. Follow our social media channels to share this content within your communities.

Facebook @BCKLWNnewsandevents, Twitter @WestNorfolkBC

Self-isolation assistance scheme

If anyone in your patch has tested positive for Covid-19 or has been told to self-isolate, they may be entitled to a support payment. There is an NHS Test and Trace Payment and a Local Council Discretionary Payment, each of £500. If they can't work from home and would lose income due to self-isolation, these payments are intended to help them stay at home by reducing money worries. This has the added benefit of ensuring the self-isolation is happening and people aren't finding a way to go back to work.

For more information search Test and Trace Support Payment on the Norfolk County Council website: www.norfolk.gov.uk/supportpayment or the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk website: www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/testandtrace

There is additional support available through the Norfolk Winter Covid Support scheme, including access to free school meal vouchers, for families in need. To find out more visit: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/campaigns/winter-covid-support-scheme>

For anyone with no access to the internet, please call **0344 800 8020**. Please share this information with your community. Access to this help is crucial to encourage people to self-isolate when they have been advised to.

Support and guidance for supermarkets

We have this week, written to the larger supermarkets in our area, to let them know we will be visiting to check the procedures in place, but also to offer any advice and support, and to offer the presence of our marshals if they would find it helpful and where our resources permit. It is emerging that with the new strain, supermarkets, and areas around them where people are stopping and chatting, are becoming places where people are coming into contact with the virus. Supermarket staff and managers have done so much to enable us all to have access to food through this pandemic, and to keep us safe, that we wanted to thank them for their efforts and to offer some support.

The authority has teamed up with HSE to carry out Covid spot checks of small retail premises including convenience stores, post offices, pharmacies and petrol stations. It is a 3-stage process whereby the HSE call the premises to determine Covid compliance and provide an assistance and support the business requires. Where the business fails to engage or there are queries about their Covid security, details are then forwarded to the EH team to follow up with a visit.

The project will begin this month and run for 6 weeks.

Reporting issues

Since 5 January we have been in National Lockdown: Stay at Home. The rules are very clear but if you are concerned about businesses or individuals not complying you can report them as follows:

To report of business visit [west-norfolk.gov.uk/reportabusiness](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/reportabusiness)

To report individuals who are not complying with the rules and are putting others at risk you should call the police 101 number. They will of course prioritise the most serious issues first with the resources they have.

Lily

Please promote the asklily.org.uk website to anyone within your community who may need help with getting supplies or deliveries through the Lockdown period as well as highlighting support and activities that may reduce social isolation.

Borough Council service impacts

All of our service impacts can be found here: www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus

Over the next few weeks, we will need to continue to thin out our staff in our main offices as we allocate them to other duties including the preventative enhanced contact tracing and other Covid related work, including community testing, and support with vaccination centres. This may mean that there is an increase in the number of service impacts. We will inform you about these, as and when arrangements are agreed. Our core duty must be to do whatever we can to support the response to Covid and to reduce the spread of this virus.

If you require specific information about any of the issues raised in this update, please contact communications@west-norfolk.gov.uk