

BERA E-NEWSLETTER 20th March 2020 – www.bera.co.uk

(printable version of Newsletter is available soon on website if needed)

Dear Member

We will be having a daily update from the Council on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and we will give this to you as and when we get it.

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Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Purpose This briefing is to update all daily on the ongoing development and management of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the current situation in the UK, and our local plans and responses.

Latest on Coronavirus

The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a pandemic in early March 2020. The global community are collaborating on the development of a vaccine and the testing of this vaccine on humans has started.

- Risk Level – remains at **HIGH**
- UK Tests (as of 14:00, 20th March): **a total of 3,983 (714 today; was 643 yesterday) were confirmed positive**. There has been a total of **177 (40 today) COVID-19 related deaths** in the UK – *please note that a second set of figures is being release later in the evening now.*
- In Southend-on-Sea there are 4 positive cases to-date, but we anticipate that this will increase in line with other parts of the UK.

Government action

With the announcement of school closures across the UK, more details were released today around who will be on the list of essential workers to access educational support. Further guidance is expected on how this reduced school's service will operate from Monday.

Guidance for employers and employees was also updated today to cover the need for employers to support and to encourage employees to maximise social distancing and working from home. The government's site is signposting employees onto this site - <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus>

The Government has also published all the evidence being provided by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) - <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-sage-coronavirus-covid-19-response>

Planning preparedness and response

- We are receiving regular updates from PH England and the Chief Medical Officer.
- The Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) has now revised the flu pandemic plan and response which will form our local strategy and response. ERF has now completed a series of test scenarios to review our preparedness. All the information from the major table-top exercise that took place yesterday have been shared across Greater Essex.
- All our Business Continuity Plans have been reviewed. An essential skeleton team will be working at the Civic Centre from Monday to maintain business critical work whilst enforcing social distancing, including proximity of seating and infection control around cleaning work spaces. The majority of staff will therefore be working from home.
- Working with the NHS to further develop our local modelling for acute hospital services and workforce planning.

Other local actions:

- The dedicated public facing link at www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus is being regularly updated and added to by the Communications Team. Please check this regularly and use to update local residents.
- Our external communications also include ongoing direct engagement with schools, the hospital and CCG, and local businesses for example. We are working closely with the hospital through our adult social care and hospital social work teams.
- Increasing community resilience – Linkage into the care sector to look at mutual aid and planning to support the NHS with discharge planning.
- School contacted on changes to School Nursing service.
- GPs and Social Care to be advised on minimum service to be in operation from the Health Visiting service to support new births and safeguarding by Monday.
- Officers have been working with schools and head teachers to deliver the local response to the Government's announcement to close schools. A media release on this was issued this afternoon.
- A number of areas of the Civic Centre are being closed and restricted. The Tickfield Centre has also closed.
- A Southend Coronavirus Facebook page has been created and will be launched on Monday.
- Waste collections are operating as normal, as are our HWRC's at Stock Road and Two Tree Island. Contingency plans are in place and will be enacted if and when necessary.