

**BERA E-NEWSLETTER 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020** – [www.bera.co.uk](http://www.bera.co.uk)  
(printable version of Newsletter is available soon on website if needed)

Dear Member,

Please see below your daily update as promised.

Keep well,

Regards

Ron

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

**23 March 2020 – issued at 18:00**

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## 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) is warning of the need for governments to act fast to slow the spread of the virus. WHO reports that it took **67 days** from the first reported case to reach the first 100,000 cases of Covid-19, but it took only **11 days** for the second 100,000 cases, and **just four days** for the third 100,000 cases.

- Risk Level – remains at **HIGH**
- UK Tests (as of 18:00, 23<sup>rd</sup> March): **a total of 6,649 (2,667 since last Friday) were confirmed positive**. There has been a total of **335 (54 today - 18:00, 23<sup>rd</sup> March) 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 8 positive cases to-date, but we anticipate that this will increase in line with other parts of the UK.

## Government action

Local government, through Environmental Health and Trading Standards supported by the police, will be responsible for enforcing regulations requiring those businesses asked to close on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, in new guidance. Prohibition notices challenging unsafe behaviours where businesses do not follow these restrictions, will be issued.

A letter from the Minister of State for Care has been sent out calling upon recruitment agencies in the health and care sector to work in constructive partnership with the NHS during a time of heightened need.

As part of a number of measures, Working Tax Credits payments will be increased by £1,045 to £3,040 per year from 6 April 2020 until 5 April 2021.

## **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 is now co-ordinating the national request to protect people who face the highest risk of being hospitalised by the virus to shield themselves and stay at home.
- We are joining forces with Thurrock and Essex and with the support of members of the Armed Forces, we will have the local support hub ready by this Friday.
- Our new Business Continuity planning is now in operation with only an essential skeleton team working at the Civic Centre from today to maintain business critical work whilst enforcing social distancing, including proximity of seating and infection control around cleaning work spaces. The majority of staff are now working from home.
- Working with the NHS to further develop our local modelling for acute hospital services and workforce planning. We will also be looking at how we support safe hospital discharge planning.

## **Other local actions:**

- The dedicated public facing link at [www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://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.
- The supply and distribution of personal protective equipment is being reviewed.
- Health Visiting service to support new births and safeguarding is now agreed across Greater Essex.