

SCC CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING FRIDAY 26TH JUNE 2020

The overall outlook is very positive. All SCC services that are open are working well and other services are starting to move towards recovery with phased openings taking place, including the registration service, using Perspex screens where necessary, and libraries (Ilminster is not in the first phase). One area of concern in relation to libraries is how to manage physical contact with books etc., and how to support a 'click and collect' service safely. This cautious approach is to ensure public safety.

Weddings and civil partnership services will be able to take place from 4th July.

There remains a backlog of birth registrations at present.

From this weekend all waste re-cycling centres will be accepting all waste as usual and permit holders with trailers will be able to access sites as normal. For the time being staff will not be able to offer assistance with unloading and nothing will be accepted for re-use.

Adapting work practices to include online access and training continues to be developed; an ongoing survey has shown that a significant number of staff feel that their work-life balance has improved, although those with children have been finding some aspects of lockdown a challenge, including the inability to socialise by visiting local pubs etc. Consideration is being given to how future working practices future might be adapted, also taking into account tax implications for those who may be affected by working from home.

The government has issued Covid-19 secure standards, based on 5 key principles, which SCC has adopted and adapted to the different settings involved.

The COVID -19 - Local Outbreak Management Plan has now been produced. It is an extensive document 61 pages in length, covering all aspects of how the county, going forward, is planning to manage the virus, as it is expected that clusters of outbreaks will still occur. The Somerset plans are considered to be such that this approach is being adopted nationally.

It is hoped that local lockdowns will not be necessary, particularly as tracking and tracing. As the national alert level is reduced and lockdown measures relaxed, it is likely there will be more localised outbreaks, which will require greater capacity across the system. It is for this reason that appropriate measures are now being put into place.

The message continues to be social distancing (still 2m. where at all possible) washing hands and working from home where possible.

Somerset continues to be in a good place, with the total number of deaths related to Covid-19 at 195 and the total number of cases across the county at 795 (there have been just 3 new cases in the community this week, but there has also been a significant outbreak in one care home in Chard).

The 'R' number provided by SAGE (the SW was unable to accurately use this data before) is now the lowest in the country at 0.6 - 0.9.

SCHOOLS - 348 laptops have now been allocated to schools, plus an additional 70 former SCC ones to other educational units.

Locally, re-payment by the NHS for PPE equipment provided by SCC is being pursued and requires an application by the NHS for central government funding.