

County Councillor report April 2020

Virus update correct as of writing 6th May 2020

Spike in demand for help from the County Council Co-ordination Hub

Requests for help and support coming into the county council co-ordination hub have continued to rise over the past fortnight.

The hub has received a total of 2,101 telephone enquiries over the past four weeks. The team has resolved a total of 5,856 individual requests for help and support, which include delivering urgent food supplies to 832 people. A further 129 people have been provided with more specialist food, for example that is suitable for people who are seriously ill.

There are now almost 15,040 people on the registered shielded list across Cambridgeshire and around a third of this group have told us that they have no support in place and will need our assistance.

This increase in demand is down to the fact that the hub have been contacting people who need to shield who have not yet registered – a nationally commissioned service has also been doing the same thing. In addition, more names are being added to the shielded group by local GPs and medical services.

All shielded people are receiving regular telephone contact from case officers to ensure their needs are being met. The Hub is also contacting everyone by email or letter, to ensure they know the County Council Hub is there, and that nobody is missed whose existing support arrangements break down.

There are a further 112 case officers trained who are now fully operational and able to help with this work.

Around 5,000 shielded people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are receiving a national food delivery over the course of this week.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Strategic Co-ordinating Group update

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough continues to see a moderate decline in new infections, there continues to be good intensive care capacity in our hospitals and capacity to transfer people, when they no longer need hospital treatment, safely into the community. Referrals of other illnesses into primary care are returning to near normal.

The Strategic Coordination Group is clear that while some limited lifting of restrictions are beginning to be made or planned for, it continues to be imperative to keep the rate of COVID-19 infection down - and that adherence to government messages is what is allowing health and social care services to manage the emergency locally.

All organisations are asked to continue to promote the stay at home, social distancing and hygiene messages as this remains the best defence we have against the virus spreading.

Information has been released about the opening of Household Recycling Centres from May 11 - but this information will stress that these are for essential trips only to dispose of waste which cannot be collected by doorstep collections and which otherwise might cause harm or hazard to householders. Strict traffic control measures around the sites are also being planned.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary has confirmed that while it is in the 'top half of the bottom end' of the league table for forces issuing fixed penalty notices for people breaking social distancing measures, it did issue a further eight fines over the past weekend. The Chief Constable has confirmed the Force will continue to issue fixed penalty notices - although it will rely most heavily on the 'Educate, Engage, Explain' part of its Four E strategy, before it reaches 'Enforce'.

Work is underway to contact around 6,000 local people who government believes should be on the shielded list locally and have been contacted by letter, but have not registered. All of these

people will receive information first containing a password to be used by staff and volunteers from the district and city hubs who will then be making personal contact to make sure all of these people are safe and being supported. No contacts from the volunteer hubs will be asking for money to undertake tasks, and all will carry identification which can be checked.

The Warn and Inform group of public sector communications leads will continue to highlight the difference between these activities and scam calls to vulnerable people by fraudsters attempting to gain money for non-existent shopping trips or provision of other services. False claims online of specific faith groups failing to adhere to social distancing measures across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough which are being picked up will also be dealt with as and when they are seen.

Preparations are underway to manage contact tracing initiatives which we are expecting to be nationally led, but locally implemented, following trials that are happening in different parts of the UK now.

Now we're talking - coming together in isolation

Organisations across the county have joined forces to launch a wellbeing campaign and additional mental health support for people during the coronavirus outbreak.

'Now We're Talking', encourages people to get talking to combat loneliness or stress whilst self-isolating, and to seek help if they are struggling with their mental health.

The campaign, led by the County Council, also directs people to increased mental health support available including:

- **Lifeline Plus** - a mental health and wellbeing helpline for people aged 18 and over living in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, is available **Monday-Friday between 9am and 2pm** via Freephone 0808 808 2121. The line will support people to manage their wellbeing, provide self-help advice or signpost to other organisations for particular concerns.
- **7 days a week, between 2pm and 11pm** the same number is Lifeline, managed by Lifecraft who provide support for those in mental health distress: 0808 808 2121.
- **Qwell** - an online wellbeing support, including educational and self-help articles and peer-to-peer support via forums. Adults are also able to receive help from qualified counsellors via drop-in or scheduled online chat sessions. www.qwell.io
- **Keep Your Head** – this website brings together all the mental health support available across the county - www.keep-your-head.com/now

Search for [#nowweretalking](#) on Twitter and Facebook.

In these difficult days, it's really important that you keep in touch with friends and family, a short call regularly can make all the difference if your friends or family are struggling, or just need to chat.

County Council mobile library vans helps distribute food to rough sleepers in Cambridge

Cambridgeshire Mobile Library staff are maintaining their strong community spirit during Covid-19 by helping with the distribution of food and other essentials to rough sleepers in Cambridge.

Thanks to their highly effective teamwork, mobile library staff are distributing around 55 meals daily along with toiletries, clothes, books, magazines and jigsaws as requested.

The service had initially offered its helpful staff and fleet of three mobiles to support local foodbanks in their efforts to deliver food to those in need.

Staff were then approached by agencies in Cambridge to support a joint venture aiming to deliver hot meals to rough sleepers housed in temporary accommodation during the lockdown.

Meals are freshly prepared by volunteers from the Wintercomfort day centre and Sally Ann's charity and other local church groups. They are then loaded onto the Mobile Library for delivery to three hotels providing rough sleepers with temporary accommodation.

Meals include curry and rice, baked potatoes with chilli con carne, sausage casserole as well as sausages mash and gravy. Rough sleepers also get a bag with sandwiches, crisps, chocolate, yogurt and cereal to last them the rest of the day.

Library staff are able to adhere to social distancing guidance whilst at the hotels by wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including plastic aprons, gloves and face masks. A team of volunteers remain inside the vehicle and distribute the meals from the back, while another volunteer stays outside to check the names of meal recipients, note who has received food, and record any other welfare-related queries, which are then fed back daily.

Further support for Cambridgeshire's children affected by domestic abuse

The County Council is delighted to have been awarded [Home Office funding](#) to support children affected by domestic abuse. Just over £400K funding will be coming to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to ensure a number of much needed services are delivered including trauma based therapy for children who have experienced domestic abuse, dedicated children's workers in refuges and support to help women and children remain safely in their homes. This will include one-to-one and group counselling sessions to improve the mental health of children affected and early intervention schemes.

The funding comes at a crucial time as the Covid-19 lockdown has seen increased calls to national domestic abuse helplines and also an increase in children calling specialist helplines about abuse at home.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership website (www.cambsdasv.org.uk) has all the local contacts for anyone living with or experiencing domestic abuse to use, along with information for friends and family of victims as well as information for professionals.

Royal Navy's Submarine Service and our local regiment helps our Countywide Hub

Simon Cartwright, Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Navy's Submarine Service, tells us how he is using his military planning skills to assist the Countywide Hub.



Simon said: "Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic I was an instructor for an organisation known as Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST), preparing submarines for pending deployments. I have served my country for almost 18 years and I continue to do so to assist in the response phase, leading into the recovery phase for the Covid-19 pandemic."

As part of the MoD's response and contribution to the Covid-19 pandemic, military planners have been deployed all around the UK in order to assist the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in dealing with planning operations.

"I have been a part of Cambridgeshire County Council's Co-ordination hub for almost four weeks now. I began my work helping to set up the food distribution hub, supplying food to people on the shielded list. Considering we were starting from

scratch and building this operation up from the ground up we had our work cut out for us! In the proceeding two weeks we managed to secure a warehouse, get it fit for purpose, risk assessed, racks fitted and filled with food for distribution. This was a tremendous achievement all involved and a large step towards sustainability. The warehouse then became dual purposed with the delivery of PPE for distribution to a multitude of health care facilities.

I have recently shifted my focus from the logistical efforts to the recovery group and I look forward to working with this new team and helping the County Council take the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough communities back to normality."

Also, members of our local regiment, the Royal Anglian Regiment, are deployed around Cambridgeshire and Stansted, carrying out the all-important tests for Covid-19. They also helped to design and build the Nightingale Hospital in London.

CCG (NHS) update

Don't delay seeking medical treatment

NHS organisations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are reminding local residents that they are still open 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide urgent medical treatment and support healthcare concerns.

The amount of people going to Emergency Departments has significantly reduced compared to last year, and clinicians are concerned that some patients are not seeking the urgent and emergency help they need for important conditions such as strokes, heart attacks, meningitis, sepsis and cancer. Many GPs are also finding that fewer people are contacting them to flag early signs of cancer, which would need urgent investigations to take place, or to report deterioration in their long-term conditions, both physical and mental.

“We want to remind the public that the NHS is still open for business and that the sooner we see you, the more we can help you.”

The NHS is still open 24/7 to provide urgent medical treatment for everyone - it is important that you don't ignore the signs of a potentially life-threatening condition such as a stroke, heart attack or cancer. GPs surgeries are still open and there to offer support. You can speak to your GP from the comfort and safety of your own home via the telephone or an online service. If the GP decides you need to be seen in person, you will be offered a face-to-face appointment, in safe environment for you and your GP or Practice Nurse.

If you are not sure where to go for medical support, we would recommend you visit <https://111.nhs.uk/> in the first instance.

Ely Minor Injury Unit extends hours for urgent treatment

During the Coronavirus outbreak, more people can get treatment for minor illnesses and injuries at the Minor Injury Unit (MIU) in Ely, which is now open seven days a week from 8am to 10pm.

MIUs offer treatment and advice on illnesses and injuries that need attention urgently but are not critical or life threatening. No appointment is required, and patients are assessed by nurse or paramedic practitioners.

The Ely MIU based at the Princess of Wales Hospital is always on hand to treat minor illnesses and injuries such as sprains and strains, broken bones, minor burns and scalds, minor head and eye injuries, cuts, bites and stings. X-Ray services are also available from Monday to Sunday between 8am and 8pm.

Testing or Swabbing for COVID-19

Testing or swabbing is an important part of the Covid-19 plans to ensure that people can return to work as quickly as it is safe to do so and take the appropriate actions if they test.

For all of the latest information about who is eligible to access a testing, and how to book a test at one of the national testing facilities located in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>. **Please note, all tests must be booked in advance.**

Nursing and Care Homes speak of 'much appreciated support' from the County Council during 'the hardest weeks of our lives'

Many Care homes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have responded with gratitude for the support they've received from the County Council.

Support from the County Council to residential and nursing homes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has included a 10% uplift in funding from April 10, support and advice, including essential PPE when the homes own stocks were low, and providing additional staff, including

those redeployed from other roles in the council, to support homes where staffing levels were affected by the epidemic.

“Thank you,” writes the National Operations Director of Trust Care which runs some of our nursing homes. *“We have been very well supported during the pandemic, please pass this on to your team and thank you for acknowledging our highly skilled Registered Managers”*.

“The staff team and I would like to thank you,” says the Registered Care Home Manager at Peterborough’s Philia Lodge. *“We have worked through the hardest weeks of our lives during the current pandemic. This has never deterred us from ensuring that each and every one of our dearly loved residents have been given the best person-centred care with sincere love and affection.*

“Thank you, we really appreciate your understanding and support. The phone calls every week from Cambridgeshire County Council catching up with the Home managers is reassuring us during this difficult period and they are supporting with any issues,” writes the Registered Manager of the Star Nursing Home.



In a further response from a care home in Cambridge which received additional staff support from the council’s Enhanced Response team which is part of the Reablement Service, came this tribute - *“Thank you for your support so far in providing us with the necessary staff cover during this COVID-19 crisis. They all worked with dedication and have demonstrated excellent professionalism at this unprecedented time that we are facing.*

“I specifically wanted to acknowledge and thank Claire for demonstrating high professional values and standards. She was with one of our residents’ during their last moments of life, holding their hand in the absence of their relatives as they passed away.”

Pictured: Claire Hodge, Assistant Team Manager (left) and Gillian Sproule, Assistant Care Coordinator (right) from the council’s Enhanced Response Team.

Peter Hudson
County Councillor
Longstanton, Northstowe, Oakington, Westwick, and Over