

## **ERF weekly briefing note**

### **wc 30 March 2020**

The Essex Resilience Forum Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) was put into action to provide coordination and alignment for member services in Essex.

The SCG is chaired by Chief Constable BJ Harrington and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Rick Hylton. The two Chairs rotate responsibility to provide resilience.

#### **Current SCG Chair – Ben Julian Harrington, Essex Police**

The purpose of the SCG is to:

- Minimise the risk to the public by assisting Public Health to contain the spread of the virus and to support the contact tracing
- Maximise, where practicable, the safety of our staff and partners by providing advice and appropriate PPE where necessary
- Ensure business continuity plans are in place to enable the provision of key services and continued delivery of essential services to the public
- To reassure the public by supporting Public Health guidance and Public Health messages
- To ensure that community tension and intelligence/information is being effectively managed through the strategic co-ordinating group and existing structures
- To support Local Resilience Forum partner agencies and local communities to mitigate the impacts of the virus
- To ensure a coordinated approach to any arrivals to UK (By Air or Sea) of persons who pose a Public Health risk arising from Covid-19
- To promote a return to business as usual and restoration of disrupted services at the earliest opportunity

To support the work of the SCG and provide consistency of messaging a Multi Agency Information Cell has been formed which provides daily updates from all of the Services on who COVID-19 is impacting in Essex. The report covers a UK Update, Health, East of England Ambulance Service, Essex Police – Including Community Tensions, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Ports, Southend Borough Council, Essex Council (Covering all 12 districts) and Thurrock Council.

We have an established joined up multi-agency approach in place, that is delivering against the expectations of the government. Our SCG is meeting twice-weekly, and coordinating the plans and response for Essex. This means we are working together, keeping everyone across Essex as safe as we can, and providing the most up-to-date information as possible.

## SCG work streams/tactical groups

Six streams continue to be the core focus for the SCG – notes/ issues as below.

- **Excess Death Planning** - end to end and inclusive excess death plan group established. Exploring using other emergency services (probable FRS) to help with manual handling, body removal. Body bags – national shortage
- **Education** – consistent approach by the Directors of Children’s Services across Essex. Key worker children to remain in school – uptake from key workers low.
- **Shielding the vulnerable** - following the announcement of the 1.5million people in the UK (approx. 28,000 in Essex), Gavin Jones (ECC Chief Exec) is leading on this piece of work for Essex. Three hubs have now been set up (Witham Southend and Thurrock) – Category A (super vulnerable) now being reached, and food being distributed to them ([see ERF partner updates below](#))
- **Care Provision – Adults & Children** – coordinated approach between heads of adult social care across Essex.
- **PPE** - PPE is in stock and being delivered to high risk areas – as a pan Essex approach. This remains an issue for whole of system. ECC has issued comms asking for PPE from Essex businesses ([see ECC partner updates](#))
- **Licensing** – Essex Police are ready. Seeking compliance is and will continue to be their first priority ([see Essex Police partner updates](#))
- **MOD Support Officer** x 3 military officers are now supporting and testing the plans of the forum
- **Waste disposal** – local authorities across Essex are providing varying collection services (some having been revised recently, others which remain unchanged) following the introduction of the government measures on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. In addition, some refuse recycling sites are closed. The ERF is examining the potential medium and long term impact.
- **Strategic faith and community group** – the ERF proposes a forum chaired by Bishop Roger Morris from Colchester to assess the impact of Covid-19 on different faiths, in order to ensure that the response to the virus by authorities and agencies is inclusive, and acknowledges the ethnic and religious diversity that exists across the County.

## Partner updates

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/coronavirus>

[www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus)

[https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/About\\_Us/Coronavirus/](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/About_Us/Coronavirus/)

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/government-and-health-information>

## Essex Resilience Forum

### Essex Community Shield

The Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) is tasked with ensuring that people with the most serious health conditions across – Essex, Southend and Thurrock - are shielded from social contact for 12 weeks during the peak of the epidemic. These people have been contacted already by the NHS and offered food package deliveries.

From now, public services across Essex are stepping up support for people who may not have help from their nearest and dearest.

A distribution hub has been set up in Witham (central Essex), with two other hubs set up by Southend and Thurrock Councils. From this weekend, food deliveries to hubs will begin to be dispatched to the most vulnerable residents.

Given the importance of social distancing and the most at risk being able to stay in their homes, ERF members and the voluntary sector are also mobilising resources across the county to provide assistance to a larger group. These are residents who are also vulnerable during the peak of the epidemic, and include residents over the age of 70 or pregnant women, and who do not have the support of friends, family or neighbours.

These residents will be contacted by the NHS or their GP surgeries, starting from w/c Monday 30 March.

The message will set out the instructions for those people who do not have the support of friends, families and neighbours to register with the Essex Welfare Service (EWS), part of PROVIDE (a health and social care provider), should they need food deliveries.

They will be able to contact the EWS via their website [www.essexwelfareservice.org](http://www.essexwelfareservice.org) and phone on 0300 303 9988 (Mon-Fri 8am-7pm and Sat-Sun 10am-2pm)

Councils across the county are working with supermarkets, delivery companies and other organisations on developing supply lines to people.

District Councils will also use their local hubs, which have been established in every district/borough/city council area, and using volunteer support.

## Essex County Council

### Operation Shield

#### Emergency Food Provision – Community Shield starts in Essex

Essex County Council under the leadership of Chief Executive Gavin Jones has been leading Operation Shield for the county – including Southend and Thurrock.

The operation has launched today, Monday 30 March, and seeks to provide essential supplies to the county's most vulnerable residents.

Category A residents are those with the highest risk, including those with severe, pre-existing medical conditions. Over the weekend, Essex County Council has mobilised help for over 1,000 of our most vulnerable residents who needed food provisions. We remain determined that nobody should go hungry or be forced to go to the shops putting their health at risk, and have worked throughout the weekend to ensure we keep our residents safe.

The next most-vulnerable residents - the over 70s, pregnant women and people with underlying health conditions – will receive a message from GP surgeries on Tuesday and Wednesday, to check if they need food supplies.

Over the course of the last week, a central food distribution centre in Witham has been established and there was enough food to provide over 220 initial food packages to support all residents who require it.

An appeal has gone out to Supermarket Managers to make urgent contact to support food deliveries to people who need it around the county and help with providing food, essentials or delivery services in your area.

The operation also needs an army of volunteers to help us make sure that our most vulnerable residents are supported. If residents and businesses would like to volunteer, they can help with a wide variety of roles, including shopping, transport, being a phone buddy, posting mail, delivering urgent supplies such as food and medicine. If you are able to help join over 3,000 Essex residents who have already signed up by visiting [essex.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://essex.gov.uk/coronavirus) and clicking on 'Volunteer to help your community'.

## Urgent appeal for PPE

An urgent appeal has just been launched by Essex County Council for any small businesses to donate any unused Personal Protective Equipment they may have within their stock.

With many small business currently closed, the council is appealing for any PPE equipment such as Masks, Disposable Gloves, Aprons, Eye Goggles, Overshoes and also any Sanitising Gel that businesses may have, that can be provided to the front line care staff who are caring for our most vulnerable residents in Essex over the coming days and weeks.

Essex County Council are willing to purchase any stocks if needed. To donate or advise them of stock please email [PPESupplies@essex.gov.uk](mailto:PPESupplies@essex.gov.uk) with your PPE supply details including quantity and postcode, plus a contact name and phone number and someone will be in touch.

Any items offered and suitable will be collected safely with collectors observing social distancing and hand hygiene.

## Volunteering

The County Council has set up a [Coronavirus Action Group](#) on Facebook, working with local community Facebook group admins to create a group of volunteers willing to help those in need.

Essex Coronavirus Action is a collaboration between the council, the Essex Public Health team, and local Facebook group owners to provide 3 main services during the coronavirus outbreak:

**Prevent:** to give advice to help people prevent coming into contact with coronavirus and passing it on to others, including those who are vulnerable

**Inform:** to inform people about hoaxes, myths and fake news circulating social media about coronavirus

**Assist:** to assist vulnerable members of our local communities who may need help due to self-isolation or other factors, by putting them and their carers and families in touch with local volunteers

## Essex Highways

It is vital that priority roads in Essex are maintained for emergency vehicles, essential staff travel and food deliveries, and Essex Highways is rapidly adjusting its scheduled activities and ways of working in order to ensure the public and its employees remain safe.

While most repair work will continue for as long as it is possible, Essex Highways' planned programme of more extensive improvements is being reviewed in light of the unprecedented situation the country is in.

Essex Highways is also working with utility companies and developers to see if any changes need to be made to planned work. As of 25 March 2020, existing roadworks will generally remain in place.

If advice from the Government changes, Essex Highways will reconsider its current approach.

## Essex Police

The current approach by the force to encourage the public to adopt measures necessary to defeat Covid-19 Essex Police is one of offering helpful advice in the first instance, in line with the guidance issued by the National Police Chiefs' Council.

This approach is summarised as follows:

The Government has introduced enforcement powers to allow police forces to deal with people who do not comply with sensible social distancing. The approach we are taking is to advise, explain and appeal to people to do the right thing, only using enforcement when it is absolutely necessary.

Enforcement will be a last resort. Where it is absolutely necessary, and reasoned conversations have failed, officers will direct people to return home.

This may include providing instruction as to the route by which people are required to return. Officers are empowered to take people home, using reasonable force and powers of arrest where it is necessary to do so.

## What the new legislation means:

- People should only leave home for the reasons listed in Government guidance which can be found by visiting [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus);
- Police can instruct gatherings of three or more people to disperse and / or remove any person from that gathering to their home;

- Anyone outdoors without a valid reason may be committing an offence and can face a fine. For those continuing to disregard these requirements, they can face further fines or a summary conviction. If a fine is paid, there is no criminal offence committed
- The initial fine is a fixed penalty notice of £60. This is lowered to £30 if paid within 14 days. Refusal to pay will lead to proceedings in the magistrates court;
- Essex Police is very much part of the community. We are all in this together. Please help all those working tirelessly around the clock to keep you safe. Where you possibly can please stay at home and help to save lives.

## Fraud:

Fraud relating to Covid-19 is being experienced by all forces across the country.

Nationally Action Fraud is coordinating the response and advice to residents over this and Essex Police has been sharing this advice and guidance. We are also in the process of producing a leaflet to go to people's homes to ensure that we reach as many people as possible, particularly those who do not have any digital platforms, on which the messaging has already been shared as per the below.

SCAM WARNING



## Coronavirus-related frauds increase by 400% in March

Between 1st February 2020 and 18th March 2020, Action Fraud has received **105 reports** from victims of coronavirus-related frauds, with losses totalling close to **£970,000**. The majority of the reports are related to online shopping scams where people have ordered protective face masks, hand sanitiser, and other products, which have never arrived. We have also received over **200 reports** about coronavirus-themed phishing emails attempting to trick people into opening malicious attachments or revealing sensitive personal and financial information.

<p><b>Watch out for scam messages:</b> Don't click on the links or attachments in suspicious emails, and never respond to unsolicited messages and calls that ask for your personal or financial details</p>	<p><b>Shopping online:</b> If you're making a purchase from a company or person you don't know and trust, carry out some research first, and ask a friend or family member for advice before completing the purchase. Where possible, use a credit card to make the payment, as most major credit card providers insure online purchases.</p>	<p><b>Protect your devices from the latest threats:</b> Always install the latest software and app updates to protect your devices from the latest threats.</p>
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## Stay safe at home campaign:

The Media and Communications Team are working this week on producing a home safety campaign which encompasses advice and support to potential victims of the following:

- Child victims of online sexual offences
- Victims of Domestic Abuse
- Victims of cyber crime including fraud

The campaign will pull together existing messaging used by Essex Police within these crime-type areas to:

- Provide potential and existing victims with support and advice on staying safe;
- Alert potential and existing perpetrators that they will not be able to use the current situation as an excuse to commit crime;
- Alert potential and existing perpetrators that police are still focusing on these offences and they will be caught.

This campaign will be produced by the team but will be available to be branded by any of the ERF partners to be used by them across their channels and networks.

### **Content to share:**

The Essex Police Media and Communications Team are generating content designed to unite the County, and specifically to encourage audiences to follow the government advice and in so doing support the NHS.

Content is available from the Essex Police website news section:

<https://www.essex.police.uk/news/essex/news/>

There is additional content, which elected representatives and their networks are invited to share on the main Force twitter and facebook accounts:

**@EssexPoliceUK** and <https://www.facebook.com/EssexPoliceUK/>

If any elected representative wishes to make use of any content from the force website or social media accounts on any other platforms, such as on websites or in newsletters, this will be made available to them if they telephone the force Press Office on 01245 452 450.

## **Essex County Fire and Rescue Service**

**There is still currently no change to the way we respond to incidents.**

**Additional duties.** Following discussions between the National Fire Chiefs Council and representative bodies, an agreement has been reached regarding additional duties for operational colleagues.

These additional activities will be done via the existing capabilities and competencies of all Fire and Rescue Services and will occur to support our communities through

this public health crisis. All of the activity will be risk-assessed, with any necessary additional training and personal protective equipment provided.

To date, over 50 of our operational colleagues volunteer for this. As a Service we will continue to put the welfare of our staff first, while making sure we can still deliver a service that the public deserves.

**Keeping people safe in their homes.** We have seen a slight increase in house fires this month (compared to March 2019). We are focusing on home safety messages, using our data campaigns and NFCC campaigns

**Social distancing.** We've been asking our residents to respect our Firefighters and keep a safe distance from them. We have had a number of members of public still approaching them.

**We've temporarily stopped home fire safety and safe and well visits** - but expect to start delivering them in the coming days, prioritising them for people who are particularly vulnerable to the risk of fire. During this time we will provide home safety advice over the phone, and ensure more staff than ever are available to reassure, educate and advise anyone who needs this information.

## Southend Council

- The Southend Coronavirus Action Helpline has launched.. This is a major piece of community work with partners and local staff and residents to ensure that the Council and its partners can continue to support vulnerable members of the community that may not have support networks in place. A cross channel campaign to promote this is also being devised and will include leaflets directly to homes, radio and print advertising, digital and media. This will complement the work already carried out to promote volunteering.
- Voucher system for free school meals – goes live wc 30 March
- All car parks that can be locked, will be.
- A dedicated email address for urgent councillor queries regarding Coronavirus has been created. Please email: [councillorqueries@southend.gov.uk](mailto:councillorqueries@southend.gov.uk)

## Thurrock Council

**Stronger Together Partnership** – The council has set up a central distribution hub and satellite hubs in every ward (some are still in progress). The council will work with its partners under the stronger together partnership to ensure vital food and supplies are delivered to those identified by government.

**Housing repairs** - To protect residents and council staff and increase opportunities for social distancing all routine housing repairs and maintenance have now been being suspended until further notice. Emergency and make safe repairs will continue as normal. All transforming homes work has stopped.

**Homelessness** – There has been no increase. Officers are keeping in regular phone contact with everyone placed in temporary accommodation as well as ensuring people have the required support in our three hostels.

**Rough sleepers** - The council have received a very small amount under the Rough Sleepers grant. This is not a significant problem in Thurrock at the moment. However, through the stronger together group and our own team of LACs we will be reaching out to any rough sleepers identified.

**Cleanliness in communal areas/spaces** - The council is currently providing a full service to all blocks with communal areas, carrying out our regular cleaning duties.

**Sheltered accommodation** - Sheltered housing is still providing a service within the government's guidelines on social distancing as much as possible. SHO's made contact with all tenants to update records and ensure the tenant had next of kin to support them.

**Free school meals** – The council anticipates further guidance from the DfE regarding how the food vouchers will be distributed to schools for them to issue to families entitled to free school meals. The council awaits government guidelines on the national voucher scheme.

**Transport** - Ensign Buses will be operating a skeleton service from Monday 23 March. Local buses – First, Ensign and NIBS - are allowing concessionary bus passes to be used anytime rather than off peak as is usually the case. In addition they will run two additional journeys tonight to service care homes.

#### **Waste collection and skips**

- Week commencing Monday 30 March will see the last brown bin collections
- From Monday 6 April only general waste and recycling will be collected

The Linford Household Waste and Recycling Centre is closed until further notice

**Grass cutting services** – The council will continue to maintain grass verges to enable clear lines of sight for traffic.

The council have followed government guidance to close children's playgrounds. Parks and open space remain open in line with guidance to ensure residents are able to exercise once a day.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US

PPE appeal – share ECC plea for PPE and send to [PPESupplies@essex.gov.uk](mailto:PPESupplies@essex.gov.uk)

Volunteering – Essex County Council [Coronavirus Action Group](#) – Facebook

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