

## **ERF weekly briefing note**

### **wc 06 April 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 – Rick Hylton, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service**

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 County Council and linking with Southend and Thurrock to share complementary practice where it makes sense. Three hubs have now been set up (Witham Southend and Thurrock) – Category A (super vulnerable) now being reached, and food being distributed to them, LA’s are acting as a safety net for any that do not receive directly. Work is now underway to understand those within the Government Cat B, and support those needs utilising volunteers and partners capacity as required.
- **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 with some success and Fire and Police are seeking to tap into other supply chains, however this continues to be a significant challenge for us.
- **Licensing** – Essex Police are ready. Seeking compliance is and will continue to be their first priority
- **3 MOD Support Officers:** 1 x excess death planning, 2 x PPE and adult and children care provision and 1 x validating ERF plans
- **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. Some district councils and boroughs are now looking at reinstating some of the services that have been temporarily suspended.
- **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.

## Key updates from the Chair

**Community hospital beds:** Following a request from Karen Wesson, NHS, for some assistance through the SCG to move beds to create care provision at Braintree and Brentwood Community Hospitals, the ERF has secured the assistance of 13 Essex County Fire and Rescue staff who have volunteered their time as well as securing the services of a Witham based logistics company, SIMARCO, through Denise Rossiter at the Essex Chambers Of Commerce, to complete this task over the weekend to support a deep clean move in 200 hospital beds.

**PPE:** At 21:20, 6 April, we took delivery of just five palettes of the 17 we are expecting from MHCLG. These were instantly unpacked and distributed to the three hubs across Essex – Witham, Southend and Thurrock. The health specific FFP3 masks were sent directly to the acute hospitals across Essex.

PPE still remains a huge issue, nationally and for Essex. For context the stock we have received is around a day supply and the entire expected delivery is around 3 days' supply. We continue to request this from the MHCLG, whilst looking locally through Police and Fire Procurement routes to source additional PPE.

## Wider 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>

<https://www.essex.police.uk/news/essex/news/news/2020/march/keeping-you-safe-in-challenging-times/>

## Key Focus Areas for communication

The proactive communication of the ERF will focus on four main strands:

- **Protecting the vulnerable;**
  - Community Shield;
  - Engaging volunteers;
- **Staying safe in the home;**
  - Tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims;
  - Prevention and tackling fraud;
  - Preventing exploitation;
  - Fire safety in the home;
- **Social cohesion and communities together;**
  - Paying tribute to frontline workers keeping people safe;
  - Activities which bring people together – volunteering, acts of kindness, community spirit, cultural activity, support to others;
  - Recognising those staying at home and following restrictions;
  - Visible policing in our communities;
  - Accessible and available fire and rescue services;
  - Emergency services working together;
- **Health and social care;**
  - Building capacity within our health service;
  - Keeping frontline worker safe;
  - Maintaining frontline services.

This briefing will focus on providing detail and messaging to help support and amplify these strands of work as the fight against the pandemic continues.

## Protecting the vulnerable

### Shielding

Mapping across our key public services and major voluntary/community organisations is now underway to help us understand the volunteering capacity across Essex- so we can match supply to known demand in places

Working closely with colleagues from the Essex Alliance to help us understand what smaller voluntary organisations have in terms of additional capacity to support our efforts

- Over 6,000 volunteers recruited via Essex Welfare Service (EWS), of which around 2,000 will be ready to support vulnerable people by Wednesday 08/04.

- 300 call handlers supporting this at EWS.
- Key businesses such as Stansted offering to support the volunteering offer across Essex
- Over 1,000 volunteers linked to local hubs and co-ordination through the districts, although capacity in each district varies.

## Engaging volunteers

ECC 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

## Staying safe in the home

Campaign material has been commissioned and is being created by the Essex Police Media and Communications Team to deal with the areas highlighted above for release this week (w/c 6 April).

### Emergency services launch online education hub

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and Essex Police have launched an online education hub to enable them to continue delivering safety lessons to children while schools are closed:

We're working to add content and resources for all ages, from 5 through to 18.

[www.essex-fire.gov.uk/education](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/education)



"The joint education teams do a fantastic job, teaching our young people in schools.

"Now with some innovative thinking, that learning can still be delivered during these difficult times - education and preventing incidents from happening in the first place is the best way to keep people safe from harm."

Roger Hirst, Police,  
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex



Education Hub:  
[essex-fire.gov.uk/education](http://essex-fire.gov.uk/education)

**Policing:** The police approach to enforcement continues to be engagement and encouragement led, with enforcement as a last resort. This continues to be well-received by members of the community.

Messaging for the weekend was focussed on continuing to encourage residents to continue to abide by the restrictions, even with the weather anticipated to be sunny and nice.

**Fraud:** Fraud relating to Covid-19 is being experienced by all forces across the country. Content has been developed by the Essex Police Media and Communications Team which can be shared on your channels.





Further content can be made available. Please contact the team on [pressoffice@essex.police.uk](mailto:pressoffice@essex.police.uk)

**Fire safety:** This week, colleagues from ECFRS start their training to support the East of England Ambulance Service as drivers. They will take part in a two day Ambulance familiarisation course and their role will focus on the same kind of support we offer during road traffic collision incidents.

This is an excellent example of partnership working: we are one of the first Fire and Rescue Services in the country to be pressing on with this initiative.

An official press release and more information will be released when it is available.

**Home Fire Safety** - Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) has outlined new ways of continuing its home fire safety and safe and well visits during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. We will still offer safe and well visits to our most vulnerable. To less vulnerable residents we will deliver smoke alarms for people to fit themselves and give our literature. Our home fire safety phone line is still staffed, and supported by home safety videos hosted on YouTube. [www.essex-fire.gov.uk/book](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/book)



## Give us some space – social distancing and parking campaign

**Our staff:** Our staff have reported to us that members of the public have approached them in the street without following social distancing guidelines. We are asking that if people see any of our staff working, particularly if we're not wearing personal protective equipment, to please remember to give us space.

**Our appliances:** As more people work from home there will undoubtedly be more cars parked in residential streets. We're reissuing our messaging around considering if an emergency service vehicle could fit through a space when you park – if we can't get through, we can't help you.

**Main message:** The one way you can help us right now is to give us some space - leave two metres between you and our staff and leave three metres gap for our fire engines to pass through.



**Give us some space**



<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
way to help us help you. Give us...	metres distance from our staff	metre gap for fire engines

## Social cohesion and communities together

Work is progression with Bishop Roger Morris to look at messaging which is useful for all communities including making clearer some of the restrictions including the interpretation of 'household' which is not universally understood as the people who live in the same dwelling.

This work is also seeking to coordinate the activity around the celebration of religious festivals as well as build a network of communicators in faith-sectors to disseminate messages from the ERF.

## Health and social care

### North

- Our North East Essex system has managed to secure an additional 70 beds for patients across Colchester and Tendring. It will mean that our teams of frontline clinicians will be able to care for more people;
- Like with many other areas of the country - PPE continues to be a significant issue for our system. We are receiving deliveries each week and have shared the new guidance around its use from Public Health England;
- The 111 option 2 mental health crisis line went on Friday north east Essex. This will support 111 and to reduce demand on local A&E services;
- We have agreed with St Helena hospice a four month arrangement to coordinate out of hospital End of Life care;
- Staff at East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation NHS Trust, which manages Colchester Hospital, are working closely with local private sector hospitals to utilise the additional capacity that has been made available through funding from central government. Regular calls are taking place to discuss local capacity and demand issues. The Trust has bed occupancy levels below the regional average.

### Mid and South Essex

We are working to significantly increase community bed capacity across the footprint and in particular at Braintree Community Hospital and Brentwood Community Hospital.

Across the five CCGs in mid and south we have completed work to identify staff who can support the system wide Covid-19 response and CCG clinical staff have been redeployed to support our hospitals and community services.

Primary care colleagues are being supported to work in different ways including providing online consultations, telephone advice and to work remotely. Video consultations for many outpatient appointments across the hospitals have also commenced, ensuring that patients do not have to travel but can still receive specialist input and advice on their condition.

The three acute hospital trusts in mid and south Essex, Basildon and Thurrock, Southend and Mid Essex trusts, formally became a merged organisation as planned on April 1 and are now the Mid & South Essex Foundation Trust, the result of years of hard work. All efforts currently though are focussed on COVID-19.

We are working closely with the national and regional NHS England teams on increasing the capacity for Covid-19 testing, including staff who are self-isolating to enable them to come [back to work if appropriate](#).

## West

Staff across West Essex CCG are working hard with partners and providers to support the Government's response to COVID-19.

- The CCG is actively supporting the delivery of PPE being received to allow staff to continue caring for patients safely.
- GPs are continuing to triage patients via telephone to support social distancing and protect patients and staff.

## COMMUNICATIONS FUNCTION DEVELOPMENT

The ERF is seeking to develop a core communications function to support the joint chairs and the wider group with countywide activity focus and coordination.

This function would see the strategic communications chairs from police and fire, supported by the following roles:

- Lead communicator
- Admin
- Proactive PR officer
- Campaigns officer

A decision on where these roles will come from is still in progress.

## LOCAL MEDIA INTERVIEWS – ERF

Representatives of the ERF will be giving regular media interviews on BBC Essex local radio from Tuesday 7 April – the first of which will be with Chief Constable BJ Harrington and Deputy Chief Fire Officer Rick Hylton, as joint chairs of the ERF.

From then a regular schedule will be established to ensure local residents are updated on the work of the ERF and the county to help keep them safe in uncertain and challenging times.

For this week the schedule is like to be:

Tues 7 Apr 8am – BJ Harrington and Rick Hylton on the work of the ERF

Tues 7 Apr 4pm – Cllr David Finch on Community Shield and volunteers

Fri 10 Apr 4pm – Rick Hylton on staying safe in the home

## HOW YOU CAN HELP US

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

**Essex Community Shield** – 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. [www.essexwelfareservice.org](http://www.essexwelfareservice.org)

### **East of England Ambulance Service Trust**

Due to unprecedented demands caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, EEAST is urgently recruiting 1,000 temporary workers and volunteers in all kinds of paid and volunteer roles across the region. Apply now at [www.eeastamb.nhs.uk/covid19](http://www.eeastamb.nhs.uk/covid19)

We are looking for people with:

- medical experience as a paramedic, nurse, healthcare support worker or even recent first-aid training to work in a variety of clinical and clinical support roles
- C1 driving licences who would be interested in driving patient transport vehicles or moving vehicles between sites (band 2 or 3).
- Five GCSEs at grades A-C to work as call handlers/dispatchers (band 3)
- A willingness to fulfil other support roles such as ambulance cleaning, general cleaning, and administration (bands 2-4).

Roles are available across the region immediately and all training will be provided. For paid work, please email [RapidBank.Recruitment@eastamb.nhs.uk](mailto:RapidBank.Recruitment@eastamb.nhs.uk) outlining the type of role you're interested in and relevant experience and qualifications.