

## **ERF weekly briefing note**

### **wc 18 May 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**

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 County 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

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

- **Excess Death Planning** – the temporary mortuary site at Chelmer Valley Park and Ride. The site is on standby, and decision will be taken soon whether to decommission this.
- **Shielding the vulnerable** – Essex residents have come out in their thousands to volunteer to help shield the vulnerable. Essex County Council have now recruited around 3,000 volunteers via Essex Welfare Service. The service continues to make emergency food deliveries, give help with essential supplies to people who have asked for help.
- **Care Provision – Adults & Children** –The Every Family Matters Campaign, which provides advice on children’s health and wellbeing, continues. This week is Mental Health Awareness Week, and parents and carers are being encouraged to have a conversation with their child about how they’re feeling.
- **PPE** – As 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.
- **Volunteers** – Good practice guidance continues to be available. Volunteers can also continue to find support via the **Facebook Coronavirus Action Group**. The group is a collaboration between Essex County Council, the Essex Public Health team, and local Facebook group owners.

## Key updates from the Chair

**PPE** - Despite challenges with regards to supply and distribution of PPE nationally, locally we have a mature and well documented approach to the management of PPE through an agreed prioritisation and mutual aid protocol agreed by all partners of SCG. We continue to work with MHCLG and Dept Health and Social care to get clarity and assurance on the ability of central government to meet local demand.

**Recycling centres** - 18 recycling centres in Essex will be reopened on Monday, 18 May. Residents are being urged to be aware that when the recycling centres do open, new restrictions and strict social distancing controls will be in place to ensure the safety of residents and site staff. These restrictions will include limiting the number of cars on site at any one time.

**Schools** – Following the government’s announcement regarding the reopening of education and childcare settings, work is taking place to support reopening in the safest possible way. In Essex, the return will take place on a gradual, phased and small-scale basis, allowing for local flexibility within schools in terms of class size, staffing, and the constraints of school buildings.

**Recovery** - The LRF is planning for return to normal, with specific TCGs being set up across the agencies to approach this in a joined-up way.

**Testing** - There are a number of ways people can be tested across Essex. These testing sites are to enable key workers to return to work and keep vulnerable and older people safe. Anyone wanting to be tested must meet the eligibility criteria, pre-book an appointment, travel to the centre by car – i.e. not on foot or by public transport. The sites are open to symptomatic people who are: key workers/their household members who have symptoms, people aged 65 and over/their household members who have symptoms, those that are currently having to travel to work who fall outside of the key worker group, and their household members who have symptoms.

### **Extending Eligibility for Testing**

From this week, everyone in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland who is showing coronavirus symptoms is eligible to book a swab test to find out if they have the virus. People can register for a test at [www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) , after checking their symptoms. Those in England and Wales who do not have any access to the internet, or who have difficulty with the digital portals, will be able to ring a new 119 service to book their test. The four UK Chief Medical Officers have also announced today that anosmia – the loss or a change in your normal sense of smell or taste – has been added as a symptom of COVID-19. This means that individuals need to self-isolate immediately – and will be eligible for a test – if they have a new continuous cough, or they have a high temperature, or they feel a loss or changed sense of normal smell or taste. All members of their household must also self-isolate according to current guidelines, unless the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result.

## **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**

Essex residents continue to come out to volunteer. Over 7,000 volunteers have now been recruited via Essex Welfare Service. Around 3,000 of these are ready to support the vulnerable. 300 call handlers supporting this at EWS. Over 1,000 volunteers are linked to local hubs and co-ordination through the districts, although capacity in each district varies.

The Essex Welfare Service is now also providing support to any resident without support from family, friends, neighbours or their local community.

Anyone feeling isolated and in need of support can contact EWS for advice on:

- caring responsibilities
- mental wellbeing

- learning disability/autism
- dementia care
- sensory impairment
- keeping physically active.

Thurrock Coronavirus Community Action (TCCA) has recruited 460 volunteers who between them have given more than 6,000 hours of their time, delivered over 350 essential shopping packages and delivered 295 prescriptions. The team has also received more than 2,600 calls from residents seeking support or advice. Following a decrease in calls the weekend call hours have been reduced and the TCCA call centre is now operating 10am to 2pm on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

### **Community Engagement**

Thurrock Council is continuing to send twice weekly email newsletter to a mailing list of over 100,000 residents updating on health advice, council service updates and other news related to the pandemic and what it means for the borough's residents

Since social distancing measures came into place Thurrock Council has shared 818 social media messages relating to coronavirus. These have appeared on 1.9 million screens and have been interacted with over 14,000 times.

Thurrock Council and [Stronger Together Thurrock](#) have launched an [arts and culture portal](#) to give residents ideas of creative projects they can do at home while the country continues social distancing.

Thurrock Council has distributed over £20 million worth of government grants to 1,566 local businesses. Any business owner who thinks they are eligible for one of these grants and has not yet received it should go to Thurrock Council's [business rates web pages](#) to find out more about the help on offer and update their contact and payment details via an [online form](#).

ECC have a targeted social media advertising campaign to drive take up of business grants due this week. A partnership promotional campaign with Newsquest (online and in print) will be launched to promote support for businesses and the business grants too.

Thurrock Council will be promoting the new Ministry of Defence test site scheduled to open outside the Civic Hall, Blackshots, Grays on Wednesday 20 May. Communications will emphasise who the site is available for and what conditions those eligible should attend under.

Brown bin waste collections will be increasing in frequency in Thurrock with collections taking place every fortnight. More details about this [can be found here](#).

## Country Parks

All Essex Country Parks will be reopening on Thursday 21 May.

Following the easing of restrictions to outside space announced recently by the government, ECC Country Parks team have been working over the past few weeks to put in place necessary safety measures to ensure the parks can open in line with government guidance, and ensuring visitors and staff can remain safe.

The parks, car parks and toilets will be open to the public, however the children's play equipment, visitor centres and cafes will remain closed, in line with government guidance.

All visitors using the Essex Country Parks are asked to follow social distancing rules, paying particular attention to these in areas such as the car parks and toilet facilities. It is anticipated that the parks will be busy, and so residents are asked to use their judgment in relation to their visit – considering the time of their visit and the park they choose to visit.

## Communications content and messaging

The Essex Comms Group has commissioned a communications key messaging pack for partner use across the Bank Holiday weekend and beyond to tackle emerging issues around attendance at recycling centres as well as country parks and other beauty spots as restrictions are relaxed. Content will be circulated for use by all.

## Engaging volunteers

Essex County Council continues to support the **Facebook Coronavirus Action Group**. This involves close working with local community Facebook group administrators to create a group of volunteers willing to help those in need. The group is a collaboration between the council, the Essex Public Health team, and local Facebook group owners.

## Excess death planning

Bereavement services (hospitals, funeral directors, crematoria and faith organisations) and the county council continue to work together to cope with the number of extra deaths expected in Essex due to COVID-19. To date, the extra mortuary capacity provided at hospitals and community hospitals has been sufficient.

Since 27 April, the Chelmer Valley mortuary site has been on standby (with 72 hrs notice needed for activation). The first peak of covid-19 in Essex has passed. At the peak during w/c 5 April 20, 25% of mortuary storage in hospitals (318 spaces) remained available. The Chelmer Valley site was not required. The decision, whether to maintain the site at its current state of readiness or to decommission it and begin the process of returning the park & ride site to its original use, must now be taken. There is currently no definitive modelling that provides the details of expected deaths for second waves and winter peak.

## **Social cohesion and bringing communities together**

### **Light-Up Campaign**

To help commemorate Florence Nightingale's 200th birthday, the following buildings joined this national light-up at sunset on Tuesday 12 May.

- Saffron Walden Castle
- Colchester Castle and Colchester Town Hall
- Essex County Fire
- Tendring Town Hall
- Essex County Fire and Rescue turned on their blue lights across the county

### **Protection for Taxi/ Private-Hire Drivers**

The MAIC is investigating whether there is any specific operational advice available for taxi drivers to protect themselves from catching COVID-19 and has made contact with the London Resilience Forum to identify whether there is any enhanced guidance for taxi drivers from TFL.

### **Essex Unites Interviews, BBC Essex**

Tracy Rudling, from Community 360 Colchester, spoke about volunteering on Tuesday 12 May.

#### **She outlined the following:**

- As strategic leader of Community 360, and a voice of the community, I'm now doing shopping, helping residents, packing food parcels and leading the COVID-19 response in Colchester.
- I have been in this role for 26 years, co-ordinating over 900 volunteers, but it has changed over the last 6 weeks.
- I'm leading the organisation through the most challenging times and frightening times. Everybody is doing their bit, we're all pulling together here in Colchester.
- It's been boots on the ground and everybody mucking in, no matter what your role is or what your hierarchy is.

**There's been a slight change this week from the lessening of the lockdown rules, what's the situation in Colchester?**

- Community 360 have been leading the response, working with First Site on the local hub - we've been delivering food parcels, carrying out welfare calls, prescriptions deliveries, just generally supporting all the charities coming together.
- We are now talking about how to get some of our teams back into the office environment. We've been able to work from home using technology, but we are now considering how to start moving people back to the office and lessen the number of people working from home.
- We run a community transport support scheme. This is one of our major challenges at the moment.

**I've been hearing you've had the most amazing response from volunteers and people right across the area.**

- We have, we already had 900 volunteers supporting us across Colchester over the years, but once we put the call out, we saw an additional 500 offering support across all of the areas. What I'm really keen to do is create a legacy out of that, we've seen some of the employers who have furloughed staff and allow staff to volunteer while on furlough, that's really important, it makes a community.
- Never have we proved more that it is doable. I think we've proved we can create community and kinship, and we want to reach out to employers to still give people that time to give, they have been doing an amazing job.

**Are there any particular stories that have stood out?**

- There have been so many really heartfelt human stories.
- Just going to read one out. This lady says: "I live on my own. I'm one of many who has been identified as being vulnerable and is now being shielded. Being isolated for so long took its toll on me mentally. It was Easter Sunday and then it dawned on me just how alone and depressed and isolated I was. Out of the blue, I received a call from one of your Community 360 volunteers, he wanted to know how I was. Had I got everything I needed and was there anything Community 360 could do for me? 'I cheekily asked for two Easter eggs. He said: 'we can do that'. What happened next completely lifted my spirits. There was a knock on the door, I opened my door, looked down and there was a bag with three Easter eggs, a volunteer from Community 360 had driven to my home and dropped off the eggs. Community 360 did not know what that gesture meant to me. I was touched and still am'.

- That's the sort of things we are getting every day from people who ordinarily would not have needed support from us. Small gestures go a long way.

## Staying safe in the home

### Recycling Centres

In response to the Government's modified approach in tackling coronavirus spread the local authorities are preparing to reopen the Essex HWRC network on the morning of Monday 18 May

- Essex CC is mobilising to reopen 15 (out of 21) sites
- Southend BC is mobilising to reopen 2 (out of 2) sites
- Thurrock BC is mobilising to reopen 1 (out of 1) sites

Although the sites will accept all waste types this is not a return to normal site operations. Users of the site will:

- Be required to adopt social distancing on site – limiting the number of vehicles permitted on site at any one time will assist with this.
- Be asked to initially only travel to sites if it is essential, i.e. to dispose of waste if it poses a risk of injury or compromises health when stored at home.
- Be prevented from walking in waste.
- Be asked to avoid using vans or trailers to access the site.

These operational restrictions and the number of sites being opened will be kept under review in response to changes in government guidance and service pressures.

Thurrock Council has implemented plans to re-open it's Household Waste and Recycling Centre with [restrictions in place to maintain social distancing](#). A [video has been produced](#) to let residents know what to expect when they arrive at the site and what they can do to make sure it remains safe for staff and users traffic management plans are in place to create a one way system around the site to ensure cars can queue safely. Traffic restrictions will be monitored and lifted when no longer required.

### Education

Following the government's announcement last week regarding the reopening of education and childcare settings, work is taking place to support reopening in the safest possible way.

In Essex, building on the government's plans, the return will take place on a gradual, phased and small-scale basis, allowing for local flexibility within schools in terms of class size, staffing, and the constraints of school buildings.

Teams have been working with Essex schools and early years settings, and partners such as the Department for Education, Ofsted, education professional associations, unions and other local authorities to prepare for reopening. Resources, experiences, and approaches are being shared across all education settings, giving school leaders a wealth of information and support, which will help them to make the best decisions to support their school community.

### **Every Family Matters campaign**

This year's International Day of Families is being used to remind people of the support available across Essex if they need help managing the extra pressure that the COVID-19 pandemic has put on family life.

We understand that while trying to make sense of this new world, some also need to support their child with understanding what is happening. This will be unfamiliar territory and it's completely normal to feel overwhelmed trying to navigate the current circumstances we're all living in.

With so much information out there, we know it can be hard to find what's right. The key organisations and resources that can help support families are being collated and shared through the Every Family Matters Campaign (on subjects including children's mental health and wellbeing, social distancing and young people, and how you can keep children safe online).

[Staying Well Children and Families page](#) has more information.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse can take many forms, including emotional, physical and sexual. If being at home doesn't feel safe right now, or you're concerned about someone you know, please contact [Essex Compass](#) who will be able to help you.

### **Sextortion**

There is now content as part of the Stay Safe at Home campaign around sextortion. Please contact the Essex Police Press Office if you would like this to use on your channels: [press.office@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:press.office@essex.pnn.police.uk)

### **Fire safety:**

For all coronavirus specific information and safety advice during these unprecedented times, please visit: [https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/About\\_Us/Coronavirus/](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/About_Us/Coronavirus/)

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is an emergency service, and rest assured, there is currently no change to the way we will respond to incidents. Keeping people who live, work and travel in Essex safe is our priority.

Though the situation involving COVID-19 is unprecedented, ECFRS has a robust operational and business continuity plan which we regularly update and test, so that in events such as this, we are prepared and confident in meeting these challenges. We intend to use operational staff who are not currently on front line duty to provide resilience to our frontline services if needed, increase remote working across our whole Service and reduce non-essential interaction with our public, but not at the expense of upholding our emergency service.

### **Does your parking put lives at risk?**

While tackling a bungalow fire in Jaywick last week, crews were unable to access a fire hydrant as a car was parked on top of it. Crew Manager Jeremy Castle from Clacton Fire Station said: "When we couldn't access the fire hydrant, it cost us valuable time in dealing with the fire while we located another water source. "Please consider where you have parked, are you blocking access to a fire hydrant and have you left enough room for emergency service vehicles to get through? Every second we are delayed could be the difference between life and death or your property being destroyed." Full press release: [https://www.essexfire.gov.uk/news/Does\\_your\\_parking\\_put\\_lives\\_at\\_risk/](https://www.essexfire.gov.uk/news/Does_your_parking_put_lives_at_risk/)

### **National Sprinkler Week: Is your business protected by a sprinkler system?**

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is urging businesses throughout the county to #ThinkSprinkler and make sure they are protected by sprinkler systems. Mark Earwicker, Head of Technical Fire Safety, said: "Sprinkler fire suppression systems offer unrivalled fire protection. We have seen fires which could have caused devastation and instead has been stopped in its tracks. Fires can devastate businesses but those with sprinkler systems are in a much better position to recover following a fire. In many cases they are able to re-open the day after the fire thanks to sprinklers limiting the fire spread and damage. As well as commercial properties, sprinklers are an unrivalled way of protecting blocks of flats and sheltered accommodation, and our scheme has seen hundreds of people live more safely in their home thanks to sprinkler protection."

Full press release: [https://www.essexfire.gov.uk/news/National\\_Sprinkler\\_Week\\_Is\\_your\\_business\\_protected\\_by\\_a\\_sprinkler\\_system/](https://www.essexfire.gov.uk/news/National_Sprinkler_Week_Is_your_business_protected_by_a_sprinkler_system/)

### **ECFRS encourages acts of kindness as it reminds people 'it's ok not to be ok'**

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week (18-24 May, 2020), Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is reminding people that no matter who you are, it's ok not to be ok. Jo Turton, Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive, said: "We offer mental health services to all of our staff and encourage them to take up the offer whenever they need it, regardless of whether it's something at work or home that's made them feel like they need a helping hand. Being honest about how you feel is never a weakness, it's a strength. No matter who you are, or what you do, the most important thing to remember is it's ok not to be ok."

Full press release:

[https://www.essexfire.gov.uk/news/ECFRS\\_encouragesActsOfKindnessAsItRemindsPeopleItsOKNotToBeOK/](https://www.essexfire.gov.uk/news/ECFRS_encouragesActsOfKindnessAsItRemindsPeopleItsOKNotToBeOK/)

## Health and social care

Essex County Council, Adult Social Care and Health, is working in partnership with [Alcove](#) and [RETHINK Partners](#) to roll-out a new technology-enabled service as part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will enable care and support to be delivered to appropriate residents through a virtual care model.

The aim is to ensure vulnerable older people and those at risk can maintain independent living during the COVID-19 outbreak in a way that minimises the risk of cross-infection, supports self-isolation, and maximises productivity of the care workforce and maintaining income - while their numbers are diminished through illness or self-isolation.

The service involves the rapid roll-out of the Alcove Video Carephone – an integrated, easy-to-use care device - together with remote monitoring software, to enable continuity of care delivery.

The Video Carephone is like a telephone but with a screen and pre-programmed call tiles for easy use. By clicking on a tile on the **Video Carephone**, the recipient can call their friends or family members, care workers or get general help and technical assistance as required.

## North East

St Helena Hospice in Colchester has been named as a Top 100 Social Enterprise for 2020 in the NatWest SE100 Index today. This was in recognition of the hospice's innovative income generation work operating lotteries on behalf of other charities across England and Wales. St Helena currently runs lotteries for over 20 other charities, including the Colchester and Ipswich Hospitals Charity. Last year they raised £1.5m in total for all these other good causes as well as providing an important income stream for the hospice.

The government has launched a new portal for care homes to arrange coronavirus testing. Ministers are currently prioritising testing for care homes and other areas with the greatest need. All symptomatic and asymptomatic care home staff and residents in England are now eligible for testing which will be prioritised for care homes that look after the over-65s.

Colchester Borough Council and its partners are urging all local businesses to complete a survey to find out what impact Covid-19 has had on the borough. It aims to find out what kinds of support businesses might need to help them into recovery.

The results will be comparable with similar surveys taking place by other local councils, so that a clearer picture of the broader economic impact of Covid-19 can be understood. To access the survey please click [HERE](#).

Our system continues to support the NHS *Help Us Help You* campaign, which is aimed at persuading the public to seek the urgent care and treatment they need. It comes as new findings show four in 10 people are concerned about being too much of a burden on the NHS to seek help from their GP. Much has appeared in the local and regional press over recent days.

### **North East Essex and Suffolk Testing Sites**

Testing for NHS staff in North East Essex and Suffolk is being carried out at Colchester Hospital, Ipswich Hospital and West Suffolk Hospital.

There are two ways to access this service:

- West Suffolk Hospital  
Staff members can use the link <http://www.wsh.nhs.uk/swabrequest> and request a swab themselves, or line managers can complete the form on behalf of their staff.
- Colchester and Ipswich Hospitals  
Please use this link <https://bit.ly/nhs-staff-testing> to access the online swab request form.

### **Mid and South Essex**

As a result of the reconfiguration and consolidation of services across community hospital settings, Brentwood Community Hospital is now accepting step-up admissions from across mid and south Essex. Bed capacity at the hospital has been increased to 158 beds which are accessible for step-down and step-up patients. Step-up patients are those who have a care need that cannot be managed in their current setting (e.g. at home or in a care home) and may benefit from being stepped up to a community hospital, thus avoiding the need to visit A&E or a potential admission to an acute hospital. The Mid and South Essex step-up service will assess patients within their place or residence. Clinicians requesting a step-up bed can enquire about availability by contacting the Community Bed Bureau [www.provide.bed-bureau.co.uk](http://www.provide.bed-bureau.co.uk)

A crisis mental health phone line has been launched by Essex Partnership University Foundation Trust (EPUT). This service is now being widely promoted across the system. The 24-hour phone line offers immediate and specialist support to adults experiencing mental health crisis. Anyone in need can dial 111 at any time and select the option for mental health crisis (option 2). Callers will be connected to trained staff at EPUT who can provide timely and appropriate support and advice.

It is hoped the service will help alleviate pressure on hospital accident and emergency services and GP surgeries.

A new 24/7 advice and guidance hotline is being set up to ensure GPs and other primary care partners can get rapid access to specialist consultant advice to support decision making on the clinical management of frail and elderly patients in the community. Each of the three hospitals will have a dedicated hotline number supported by a rota of available and appropriate clinicians to provide advice and guidance over the phone. The service will be working on a shared care plan and all decision making will be in the best interests of the patient, recognising the risks versus benefit of having to admit patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have embarked on a system wide programme to capture patient experience of remote consultations including Mid and South Essex Hospitals Foundation Trust, NELFT and EPUT. This will be beneficial to ensure that we are capturing direct experience regarding the new way of delivering services and will support how we retain this going forward. Patients who have had a remote consultation will be sent a survey to complete, with a further sample contacted by telephone with their consent for a more in-depth interview. This is also being supported by a more general survey of residents' experience of COVID 19 through our Virtual Views citizens' panel.

Patients from across the three hospitals in mid and south Essex are participating in a high-profile genome sequencing study aimed at determining why COVID-19 affects some people far more seriously than others. The genomes of some 35,000 people will be sequenced by a consortium led by the University of Edinburgh and Genomics England. Around 20,000 of the genomes will be from people admitted to intensive care due to the virus and 15,000 from people who experience mild or moderate symptoms. Patients are only enrolled in the study if they or their next of kin have given consent.

System partners worked together on a successful social media campaign celebrating International Nurses Day on Tuesday 12 May. Video messages recorded by senior nurses were published across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts as a thank you to the extraordinary work staff are doing not just in recent weeks but every day. The campaign also asked people to join in at home by "Shining a Light for the NHS" at sunset on that day.

Another example of a collaborative social media campaign across Mid and South Essex is Dying Matters Week. Multiple organisations from across the health, social care and commercial sector have worked together to expand the national campaign promoting details of the support available locally for residents experiencing or facing bereavement or dying.

## Mid and South Essex Testing Sites

Key workers in mid and south Essex can also access sites in Basildon, Southend and Chelmsford for testing. These are run by the NHS and the same [eligibility criteria](#) applies, but the booking arrangements are different. To book at test at Basildon, Southend or Chelmsford please email [mse.stafftesting@nhs.net](mailto:mse.stafftesting@nhs.net)

## West

### Testing

Testing at the national centres at Stansted and Ipswich continue to be used however there has been a downturn in uptake in bookings in the last week.

Home testing kits are available up until midday, which marks the deadline for same day delivery. Availability is an improvement on previous weeks. Booking for all testing listed here continues to be via the Gov.uk website.

Turn around for results is at around 72 hours and coming down.

Last week the mobile testing units run by the Ministry of Defence Mobile visited Harlow, Rayleigh and Clacton. This week (w/c 18 May), units will operate in:

#### Monday 18 May

- Basildon Sporting Village, Basildon, SS14 3GR
- Clacton Leisure Centre, Clacton on Sea, CO15 6DB
- Dovercourt Bay Lifestyles, Low Road, Dovercourt, CO12 3TA

#### Tuesday 19 May

- Rayleigh Leisure Centre, Rayleigh, SS6 9NF
- Long Stay Car Park 3, Southend Airport, Southend on Sea, SS2 6YE

#### Wednesday 20 May

- Harlow Football Club, Harlow, CM19 5BE
- Clacton Leisure Centre, Clacton on Sea, CO15 6DB
- The Civic Hall, Grays, RM16 2JU

#### Thursday 21 May

- Basildon Sporting Village, Basildon, SS14 3GR

#### Friday 22 May

- Harlow Football Club, Harlow, CM19 5BE
- Rayleigh Leisure Centre, Rayleigh, SS6 9NF
- Dovercourt Bay Lifestyles, Low Road, Dovercourt, CO12 3TA

#### Saturday 23 May

- Long Stay Car Park 3, Southend Airport, Southend on Sea, SS2 6YE

#### Sunday 24 May

- The Civic Hall, Grays, RM16 2JU

The CCG has developed content for a testing-specific web page on Essex County Council's Coronavirus Hub. This provides information on all the testing options, criteria and will be updated weekly on the new mobile testing sites for the following week. The webpage can be viewed at:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/getting-tested-for-covid-19>

### **Care homes**

Care homes are able to book for testing kits directly through a new government portal. The multi-disciplinary care home hub continues to meet to assess the situation in all of West Essex's care homes.

### **NHS Help Us, Help You campaign**

The CCG continues to support and promote the national Help Us, Help You campaign to encourage people to contact their GP and attend hospital appointments with serious and urgent medical needs.

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week. The CCG will be supporting and promoting this campaign via social media and to staff, and will tie messages in with the Help us, help you campaign which focuses on mental health.

### **LOCAL MEDIA INTERVIEWS – ERF**

Representatives of the ERF have been giving regular media interviews on BBC Essex local radio from Tuesday 7 April.

A regular schedule has been 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.

Tues 19th May – Bishop Roger Morris

Friday 22nd May – Chair Rick Hylton

**Other events:**

ERF MPs' Briefing – Thursday 21 May

## 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)

Good news – Please flag any good news with your local communications colleague for potential highlighting in media opportunities.

Share content – New content will be sent to partners by Darren Horsman, but if you require anything released previously please get in touch.