

## **BRIEFING NOTE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE MPs**

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>Worcestershire County Council internal GOLD meeting in respect of COVID 19</b>
<b>Meeting number:</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Thursday 25 February – 17:00</b>

### **Key Messages**

- Confirmed cases in Worcestershire have reduced by **8%** in the last 7 days compared to the previous 7 days. The rate of cases has increased slightly in Redditch, Wyre Forest and in Malvern Hills during that period.
- As of today, the Worcestershire rate stands at **139** cases per 100,000. The current England rate is **120**. The West Midlands rate stands at **160** per 100,000.
- Redditch has the highest number of cases in Worcestershire. There are currently **223** cases per 100,000 in Redditch. Wyre Forest has **144** cases, Malvern Hills has **131**, Wychavon **128**, Worcester has **119** cases while Bromsgrove has **100** cases per 100,000.
- The number of cases in people over the age of 60 currently stands at **108** per 100,000. In that age group Redditch has **135** cases, Malvern Hills has **122**, Wyre Forest **121**, Bromsgrove has **119**. There were **88** cases in Worcester and there have been **80** cases in Wychavon per 100,000.
- In the last 7 days there have been **825** confirmed cases of coronavirus recorded in Worcestershire.
- The highest percentage of individuals testing positive has been in Redditch (**9.0%**) and in Wyre Forest (**5.5%**).
- **50** care homes in Worcestershire have current outbreaks (more than 2 cases, linked in either time place or person).
- Community testing is operational at **Pershore Leisure Centre, Redditch Town Hall, Worcester Cathedral, Worcester University, Ryland Leisure Centre in Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest House in Kidderminster** and at **20** pharmacies.
- We have community testing capacity in Worcestershire for **13,000 to 15,000** people per week.
- The county's hospitals remain under significant pressures.
- The daily registered deaths from all causes has dropped below the 5-year average and is below the peak that we saw in April. We continue to monitor this closely.
- The latest phase of the vaccination programme is underway in Worcestershire this includes the vaccination of unpaid carers.
- All of our GP-led Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are running vaccine clinics for eligible patients. A number of pharmacies are also administering vaccines
- The vaccination sites at **The Artrix in Bromsgrove** and **St Peter's Church in Worcester** are operational. The site at the **Three Counties Showground in Malvern** is expected to open on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March.
- The vast majority of care home residents in Worcestershire have been offered their first vaccination.
- Here2Help Worcestershire has seen a significant increase in contact from the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) cohort since more groups were added to the CEV list by the NHS.
- The supply of free PPE has been extended to unpaid carers
- It has been announced this week that schools will reopen from Monday March 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **BRIEFING NOTE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE MPs**

- Until then and in line with lockdown restrictions all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges have moved to remote learning, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children.
- **16.9%** of the total school population were in school during the week before the half-term holidays.
- Updated data (as at 25/2/21) shows there are **9** collapsed bubbles affecting **35** staff and **113** pupils.
- Early years provision is remaining open to all children.
- Planning is in progress in conjunction with the District Councils for Covid secure polling stations and count venues for Elections in May.

### **CONFIDENTIAL SERVICE AREA UPDATES:**

#### **Adult Services**

- It has been announced this week that indoor visits to care homes will start again, from 8 March, for a single named visitor.
- 50 care homes in Worcestershire have current outbreaks (more than 2 cases).
- 31 older people homes and 4 learning disability homes are currently closed to new admissions due to Covid.
- 2 homes have temporarily ceased trading (residents have been moved to other homes owned by the same provider on the same site).
- There are 13 supported living / extra care locations where either staff or service users have tested positive.
- We are aware of 22 domiciliary care agencies with positive cases among staff or service users. We are supporting the management of these situations.
- The vast majority of care home residents in Worcestershire have now been offered their first vaccination, unless there is a clinical reason for not vaccinating.
- We are writing to all providers to offer all other care staff to have the vaccination when it is available to them.
- The roll out of the vaccination programme continues with domiciliary care staff.
- The latest phase of the vaccination programme is underway in Worcestershire this includes the vaccination of unpaid carers.
- People with learning disabilities are now being prioritised for vaccinations
- All of our GP-led Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are running vaccine clinics for eligible patients.
- A number of pharmacies are administering vaccines.
- The vaccination sites at The Artrix in Bromsgrove and St Peter's Church in Worcester are operational. The site at the Three Counties Showground in Malvern is expected to open next week.
- We have purchased nursing capacity to support hospital pressures. We are closely monitoring this situation.
- Screens and digital tablets are being used to enable families to keep in touch with residents virtually.
- Infection prevention training for care homes and domiciliary care providers continues.
- All Resource Centres remain open for those with the most complex disabilities. Additional hygiene measures have been put in place.
- Adult Learning Services are continuing to be provided.

# **BRIEFING NOTE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE MPs**

## **Children's Services**

- There are currently outbreaks of cases at 3 children's short breaks unit and children's homes in the county (including independent homes).
- It has been announced this week that schools will reopen from Monday March 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Until then and in line with lockdown restrictions all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges have moved to remote learning, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children.
- Detailed guidance for schools has now been received and is being shared.
- Early years provision is remaining open to all children.
- 16.9% of the total school population have been in school this week
- Updated data (as at 25.2.21) shows there are 9 collapsed bubbles affecting 35 staff and 113 pupils.
- 99.6% of schools in Worcestershire were open in the week prior to the half-term holidays, compared to the national average of 98.9%
- 50.1% of children with social workers have been in school in the last week
- Almost 32,000 tests have taken place in schools to date

## **Community Services**

- There is in excess of 3 months stock for all PPE items at current issue rates
- The supply of free PPE has been extended to unpaid carers
- Here2Help Worcestershire opening hours have now returned to normal following the support provided following the small number of cases of the South African variant in the county.
- Here2Help continues to support the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) cohort and those of our residents who have been newly identified as CEV. In Worcestershire we now have 40,000 people within the CEV cohort.
- We have seen a significant increase in the number of contacts from those people classified as CEV in recent days.
- So far there have been 718 Here2Help requests made by the CEV cohort.
- Here2Help is receiving regular requests for volunteers to provide support at vaccination clinics.
- There are a number of local voluntary and community groups who are also supporting individuals in addition to those coordinated through Here2Help
- Community testing is operational at Pershore Leisure Centre, Redditch Town Hall, Worcester Cathedral, Worcester University, the Ryland Leisure Centre in Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest House in Kidderminster and at 20 pharmacies.
- We have testing capacity in Worcestershire for 13 to 15,000 people per week
- The plan to use library staff has been implemented to provide additional support to respond to the increased demand following the announcement of a national lockdown.
- The daily registered deaths from all causes has dropped below the 5-year average and is below the peak that we saw in April. We continue to monitor this closely.
- The county's libraries remain open for essential computer use to help residents with digital access. A reserve and collect service replaces browsing and borrowing at all of our libraries. Activities are being provided through libraries for half term.
- The mobile library service is not in operation.

## **BRIEFING NOTE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE MPs**

- Registration Services continue to be open but by appointment only, with limitations to available services during the national lockdown. The bookings for weddings has now increased significantly following the announcement of the roadmap for unlocking.
- Covid Advisors, recruited by Worcestershire Regulatory Services, continue to be deployed and working closely with the Police. Compliance in the population is generally good.

### **Economy & Infrastructure**

- Working with Worcestershire Children First, planning is underway for home to school transport following the announcement of schools reopening on March 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Household Recycling Centres across the county are all operational.
- Highways maintenance works and our major construction projects continue to operate safely.
- Traffic volume increased slightly to 71% of pre-Covid levels this week.
- Bus travel is currently at 21% of pre-Covid levels
- County Enterprises is operational. This is regularly under review.
- Major infrastructure project work continues, within current Covid restrictions.
- There has been extensive work with Worcestershire Children First to support schools and key worker/vulnerable children and young people with home to school transport.
- 11% of Worcestershire employees were furloughed through the job retention scheme at the end of December.
- We continue to work with the Communications Team to send advice and guidance to businesses to support their workforces.

### **Workforce and Training**

- All staff have been updated with advice and guidance for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) following the announcement from the NHS that an additional cohort of people are now classed as CEV.
- We have offered vaccinations to more than 1000 of our priority care and social care staff in line with JCVI guidelines.
- We are discussing an MOU with a large number of public sector organisations to support the roll out of the national vaccination programme.
- A plan to redeploy library staff has been implemented to provide additional support to respond to the increased demand for Here2Help
- We are working closely with colleagues at Worcestershire Children First to provide support for testing at schools.
- We have set up a pool of staff volunteers to be redeployed to support the vaccination programme and Lateral Flow Testing when required.
- Additional resources have been made available to the LORT which has provided extra capacity. The new staff have been trained and embedded within the service.
- Staff have been told that everybody should continue to work from home if they can do so.
- Advice and guidance for all staff is being provided regularly

## **BRIEFING NOTE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE MPs**

- County Hall and other Council buildings are Covid Secure and site-specific protocols are in place.
- Office working is only permitted for essential frontline workers and for those who cannot work from home.
- The first cohort of mental health first aiders have completed their training and are now accredited. Training of more volunteers continues
- Sickness levels are currently consistent with those recorded this time last year.

### **Communications**

- Updated communications following the Prime Minister's announcement this week on the Lockdown Exit Plan, are being shared across all channels.
- A 4-page newspaper advertorial to provide the latest information and advice has been booked in the Newsquest weekly papers for the weekend of March 6/7.
- We are supporting Worcestershire Children First to share up to date advice and guidance with schools, parents and with pupils
- Messages are being targeted at Redditch businesses and households where the number of cases continues to rise.
- We continue to focus our messages on encouraging people to stay at home and to reduce the occasions when they are mixing with others.
- The Here2Help service is being promoted for those within the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) cohort.
- Working with our District Council colleagues we are promoting community testing sites.
- We are producing case studies of Worcestershire patients who have had the virus and who have been treated for it in our acute hospitals.
- Through digital communications we are segmenting our audiences by age, geography and by shared interests
- We are providing updated information and guidance to businesses where workforces cannot work from home
- Roadside variable message signs and bus stop digital signs are displaying the key public health message: Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives
- Service changes due to the increased level of restrictions continue to be communicated.
- Staff are being provided with advice and guidance to support them during the lockdown.
- A vaccination information area on our website is directing people to the latest advice and guidance.
- District Council community engagement teams are helping us to target marginalised communities who are often hard to reach with our communications.
- Communication materials are being translated for those of our residents for whom English is a second language.
- Public health messages are being displayed at schools across the county aimed at parents and at pupils to remind them to avoid mixing and to keep a safe distance from others.

## **BRIEFING NOTE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE MPs**

- Advice is displayed in all town centres on street scene signage.
- Working closely with partners we are sharing information about the support that is available for our business communities.

### **Finance**

- We have received confirmation that the Home to School Transport Grant will continue after Easter.
- Financial spend due to the pandemic continues to be closely monitored and updates will be provided through the usual financial monitoring reports.

# **BRIEFING NOTE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE MPs**

## **COVID-19 STATISTICS**

Official statistics and information are available on the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-track-coronavirus-cases>

The methodology for reporting positive cases changed on 2 July 2020 to remove duplicates within and across pillars 1 and 2, to ensure that a person who tests positive is only counted once. Numbers of lab-confirmed positive cases throughout this website now include those identified by testing in all settings (pillars 1 and 2).

Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 are different kinds of data taken from coronavirus testing. Swab tests for Covid-19 are carried out in hospitals and surgeries as well as in the community all the time. Each pillar comes with specific coverage goals and a set purpose from one or several organisations:

- Pillar 1 data comes solely from the tests carried out in Public Health England (PHE) lab and NHS hospital settings.
- Pillar 2 tests come from out in the community, such as care homes.

The publication of pillar two data will show a marked increase in the number of our confirmed cases in Worcestershire. This data has been available to Public Health and the Director of Public Health for some time and has been closely monitored throughout. In Worcestershire, our figures remain stable and comparatively low for the Midlands. “

## **WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION, HELP AND ADVICE?**

Reminder that the Here2Help website [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help) is the first point of contact if people want to offer assistance or gain support. The other option is the telephone contact number which is staffed 8am-6pm 6 days a week – 01905 768053.

Carers who support a family member or friend who require support should contact the Worcestershire Association of Carers on [www.carersworcs.org.uk](http://www.carersworcs.org.uk) or call the Helpline 0300 012 4272.

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS Website for information on Coronavirus

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-covid-19-surveillance-reports#history>