

**SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL COVID-19 UPDATE – 14<sup>TH</sup> April 2020**  
County/District Councillor Linda Vjeh

- There has been a total of 3,500 reported cases in the South West to date
- In Somerset to date there have been 35 deaths, and a total of 187 NHS reported cases, of which there are 46 hospitalised confirmed Covid-19 cases, with 7 people requiring ventilation
- Total Somerset hospital bed occupancy is at 45% at present
- Across the county there are 17 care homes with suspected Covid-19 cases. SCC are in daily contact with all care homes. It is difficult to establish the exact cause of death outside hospital admissions
- Up until now government guidance on PPE for care homes has been that only those dealing with Covid-19 cases are required to wear face masks = 26,000 masks required per week. Guidance is now changing, whereby care home staff are advised to wear face masks at all times = 150,000 a week required now, a huge jump
- SCC are unable to predict the timing of the next delivery of PPE, so SCC has ordered £700k of PPE equipment independently. The provision PPE deliveries is being prioritised to care homes with suspected/confirmed Covid-19 cases and staff have volunteered to do this
- SCC is in daily contact with care homes, and temporary staff are being provided where necessary, including the provision of food parcels
- Covid-19 testing in care home remains on a case by case basis
- Some concern has been raised about the possibility of elderly patients with Covid-19 symptoms being released into care homes
- The two re-commissioned care homes mentioned previously are ready to be become operational, with 40 staff having offered to be re-deployed to staff the Yeovil centre
- The Easter weekend was quiet across the county, with the police reporting good levels of compliance
- Overall staffing levels remain high and morale good
- Schools remained open over the Easter holiday to support critical workers and vulnerable children
- The low take-up of childcare provision at school from vulnerable families is of concern; there remains a stigma for some families in need, in relation to sending children to school when their peers are not required to attend
- 50% of early years providers are operating at present, which compares well with the rest of the country (33%)
- Free school meal provision – this should be provided through schools, or via online vouchers. In addition to this, food parcels can be delivered directly to the family home if necessary
- Young Carers – have either an allocated support worker or social worker in place and schools have a duty to provide support as necessary
- Courts are now holding necessary court hearings virtually
- Domestic violence – there has been some increase but not significantly at present. It is expected that the longer lockdown is in place the more this is likely to increase. There has been an increase in out of hours calls from families seeking support, and the government is providing additional support for voluntary groups working with troubled families

- Staff re-deployment – 1,500 responses have been received from staff (out of 3,500+) indicating areas in which they are willing to work. Adult social care and the registration service are areas most requiring additional resources at present
- A Somerset GP surgery which said autistic adults should have plans to prevent them being resuscitated if they become critically ill has been heavily criticised. I am investigating this
- Chinese lanterns – concern has been raised about the suggestion of celebrating the NHS by releasing Chinese lanterns, which are considered a severe risk to livestock.