

SCC COVID-19 BRIEFING 7/4/2020
County/District Councillor Linda Vjeh

- Adult Social Care update from Mel Lock, Director of Adult Social Services – there is awareness of the impact that Covid-19 is having on social service workers, who continue to support patients being discharged, and the families of those who have contracted it in both acute and community care settings. Work continues with both self-funders and others.
- The locality team are managing triage, and carrying out assessments, virtually if possible.
- Mental health service - the 13% increase in demand has been anticipated e.g. those with OCD, autism, dementia - all very anxious because of changes in routine.
- National picture – the Covid-19 Act will enable LAs to consider easement of normal statutory duties under the Care Act, ensuring any change is evidence based e.g. care reduction for certain individuals.
- Home Care & Discharge – there have been changes to the way this happens, and is working well. Processes are in place to ensure there is the same system across all acute hospitals, with a central hub to ensure the co-ordinated release of patients
- Staff now working in neighbourhood teams, 7 days per week, 8am – 8pm.
- Additional beds have been bought to enable discharge/prevent hospital admissions – 68 of which are in existing care homes beds. SCC are also expanding domiciliary care provision.
- There is recognition that some patients in the new beds may require end of life care which will entitle staff to an additional payment, and SCC is releasing this up front while they wait for gov't guidance.
- A new website for care providers to access info., and a dedicated helpline has been set up.
- Early Years – this provision is struggling nationally, and financial packages have been put in place to protect them.
- Concessionary fares to transport providers are being honoured to keep them viable.
- Flexible working arrangements are in place to cover for staff shortages.
- Risk assessments have been carried out for all those in residential care in relation to nay possible temporary reduction in care provision e.g. daily visits for personal care.
- PPE provision for care workers. A large shipment was received today and is in the process of being distributed. Future weekly distribution will be via 'Clipper'.
- Concern has been expressed about the possible escalation of Covid-19 in care homes. Clear guidance is now in place and where an increased level of care provision is required SCC will provide financial bridging until central government guidance becomes clearer.
- Currently hospital patients are NOT being tested for Covid-19 on discharge to either their own homes or care homes; by the time someone has had symptoms for 7-10 days there is apparently no need to test, and would not require testing is no symptoms had been evident.
- Public Health update from Director of Public Health, Trudi Grant – Nationally there are now 51k cases and 5,500 deaths. In Somerset 114 confirmed cases

and 15 deaths (in hospital only). South West cases are about half of what is being experienced elsewhere in the UK.

- The possibility of restrictions being lifted and the impact this might have is of concern. Somerset are looking to flatten the pandemic curve to enable the NHS to cope. Local capacity really good at present, with a focus on helping people to stay in, good hand hygiene and physical distancing, plus providing infection prevention and control information.
- Work has been carried out on older people stuck at home, and we are now also concentrating on pregnant women and new mums.
- New initiative is being put in place to set up test sites for care staff in Exeter and Bristol, with a limited amount of testing through the Somerset Partnership. I have raised the issue of the possible impact of people travelling distances to test centres.
- The necessary mortuary and burial space is being made available.
- Post Covid-19 – arrangements for supporting the supply chain are being put in place.
- Trying to ensure advice is consistent, relying on elected members to keep people informed.
- Taunton & Somerset and Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trusts have now merged and it is felt that this may be causing some challenges.
- An all-council helpline is now open 7 days a week (8am – 6pm), supporting anyone who is vulnerable and in need of help. **Tel. 0300 790 6275**. This is the best route for local support; food emergency, wellbeing, pharmacy, etc. and will signpost callers, or visit SCC's website.
- Shopping should be restricted to 'essential' items only.
- A Covid helpline is now set up for those wanting to help. www.corona-helpers.co.uk
- SCC is working with district councils to link up with food manufacturers e.g. Oscar Mayer, to provide meals, in addition to the food parcels currently being made available.
- There is an awareness of the increase in domestic violence cases, which is being closely monitored in conjunction with the police. At present this is not at the same level here as in other areas of the country.

SSDC COVID-19 UPDATE 7 APRIL 2020

Businesses - contact has been made with businesses SSDC believe are entitled to claim grants. So far 600 of the district's 3000 businesses have been in touch. An online form has been set up to enable them to submit details as quickly as possible. <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/forms/apply-for-something/business-support-grant-application/>

Homelessness - <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/news/2020/3/coronavirus-covid-19-how-we-are-helping-those-who-are-homeless-or-at-risk-of-homelessness-through-this-crisis/>

Anybody requiring help or who is at risk of being made homeless, contact 01935 462462.

use the StreetLink website, www.streetlink.org.uk for anyone concerned about rough sleeping.

Care workers - Former care workers are asked to come forward to help strengthen the system, ideally those who have ideally worked in care settings before. These are paid positions working for care providers, initially Somerset Care, the county's largest care provider. Refresher training and support will be provided. The following roles are needed:

- Care home workers who can assist with personal care
- Nurses who can oversee care plans
- Domestic support – cleaning and preparing meals
- Gardeners and property maintenance

Call 0300 123 2224.