

ECC COVID-19 Briefing – Parish Council briefing

Date – 11th March 2020

Headline Summary

Key points from the updates below and ECC situation

- Currently there is no on-going community spread of covid-19 in Essex, England or the UK.
- There are 6 confirmed cases in Essex as at 6pm 11.03.20 and a further case in Southend.
- Cases are being detected in people whose links to foreign travel or known cases cannot be established. This is a hint that community spread is starting.
- Internationally strong containment measures are continuing.
- It is thought almost inevitable that containment efforts will fail, and community spread of Covid-19 will occur throughout England. However, containment efforts are expected to delay and reduce the peak of infection. This will ease pressure on health and care services.
- The Chief Medical Officer and Public Health England is the authoritative source for advice and guidance.
- Recently guidance on social distancing, which may be used to delay the spread of Covid-19 has been added to the official advice but has not been enacted.

Director of Public Health Update

Information about the wider picture globally and nationally

Strenuous efforts are on-going internationally to contain the covid-19 virus and prevent widespread community transmission. There are significant outbreaks in our near European neighbours, most notably Italy but also Germany. As of 09:00 on Friday 6th March there were 163 cases of confirmed covid-19 in the UK. The vast majority of these cases, but not all, were linked to foreign travel.

It is likely that sustained community spread will occur the UK. We are currently still in the containment phase in which attempts are made to identify all cases and their contacts in order to prevent sustained community spread. This will continue until it is clear that containment is no longer possible.

The following phase is the delay phase. In this phase it will no longer be possible to detect every case and efforts will focus on slowing down the spread of infection.

Head of Communications Update

ECC Comms team remain linked into the situation via colleagues from Public Health within ECC and daily comms briefings sent from the regional PHE communications team.

Communications activity continues to be led by PHE with ECC focusing on local/regional media relations, internal comms and comms to key partners.

External communications activity this week:

- News page of Essex.gov.uk updated with the latest information.
- Dr Mike Gogarty (ECC Director of Public Health) interviewed on Facebook live 09.03.20
- Website and intranet messages revised to reflect latest advice (change in advice on those returning from Italy with symptoms).

Other activity:

- Social media content focusing on hand-washing continues.