

Information

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for Councillors

From:	Cllr Clare Paul, SCC Cabinet Member for Public Health & Wellbeing and Climate Change and Trudi Grant, Director of Public Health
Date:	Friday 13 March 2020
To:	All Councillors (County, District and Parish/Town)

Coronavirus Update

As I'm sure you are aware, the number of cases of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) continue to increase in the UK and across the world, so much so that the World Health Organisation declared it a global pandemic earlier this week.

As of 9am today (Friday 13 March), 32,771 people in the UK were tested, with 798 confirmed positive. Sadly, ten patients have died as a direct result of the disease.

For most people, COVID-19 produces mild symptoms which include a cough, high temperature (fever) and shortness of breath and you'll be fine after plenty of rest. However, for some (older people or those with an underlying health condition), it can lead to severe respiratory disease requiring hospitalisation.

The Somerset situation

In Somerset, we currently have no live recorded cases of Coronavirus. The Somerset Coronavirus case listed on the government website is historical and relates to a Somerset resident who caught the virus abroad and was treated out of county.

Somerset Health, Social Care and Councils have been gearing up for the outbreak. We have well-rehearsed plans in place and continue to work closely to ensure our services continue and our most vulnerable residents are supported during the outbreak.

We've entered the Government's new 'Delay' phase

The Government announced yesterday that we have now entered the 'delay' phase in the fight against the Coronavirus. This means people with symptoms will no longer be routinely tested. In line with the latest Government guidance, people with a fever and/or new continuous cough are asked to stay home and self-isolate for 7 days. School trips abroad should now be cancelled and anyone aged over 70 urged not to go on cruises.

Please help get the word out that anyone who develops a high temperature or a new, continuous cough is asked to stay at home in self-isolation for seven days. For advice on how to self-isolate, read the NHS [advice about staying at home](#).

Somerset County Council preparing for the outbreak

Simon Clifford, Director of Corporate Affairs at Somerset County Council is coordinating the County Council's response, linking closely with Trudi Grant, Director of Public Health, who along with Somerset CCG, lead the response locally. We've been running dedicated Coronavirus incident rooms in both Somerset CCG and Somerset County Council for well over a month now to prepare for and mitigate against the outbreak.

As part of the national effort to reduce its spread and get everyone washing their hands regularly for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap, Simon's first task was to ensure 'wash your hand' posters were put up prominently in all Council buildings. Posters have also been issued to libraries, leisure centres, community venues and district offices. I attach posters in case there is anywhere you can include them in your communities. All visitors to our Council buildings now wash their hands upon arrival.

What can we all do?

Please help support the national message and promote the following through your own communities and contacts.

- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water
- Avoid touching your face (particularly your nose, mouth and eyes)
- Wipe down surfaces and objects regularly
- Use a tissue when coughing and sneezing, then binning it and washing your hands. If you don't have a tissue, use the crook of your arm rather than your hand. 'Catch it, Bin It, Kill It.'

To keep up-to-date with all the latest information, visit the NHS site at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

#COVID19

Many thanks

Cllr Clare Paul

P.S If you are approached by the media to comment on Coronavirus, feel free to link in with the Council's Communications team via pressoffice@somerset.gov.uk for the latest messages and advice.