

District Report for November 2020

NHS stories

As you heard last week, all our hospitals are currently nearly at capacity. Earlier this year, hospitals coped by clearing wards to deal almost exclusively with Coronavirus patients. They cannot do that this time. Our hospitals are mostly full of patients with non-Coronavirus symptoms, but they are sicker than usual due to the delays in accessing healthcare from earlier this year. So, our hospitals will not be able to cope if there is a significant increase in Coronavirus cases.

The R number and growth rate in the UK

The latest estimates by NHS England regions. Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-r-number-in-the-uk>

New measures to support roll-out of vaccines in the UK

The Government announced new laws allowing more healthcare workers to administer flu and potential coronavirus vaccines. The measures aim to save thousands of lives by increasing access to vaccines. They will also support the Government's plans for the roll-out of a potential coronavirus vaccine that is proven to be safe and effective through robust clinical trials and approved for use by the regulator.

Announcement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-support-roll-out-of-vaccines-in-the-uk>

Alternative Halloween ideas

Cambridgeshire County Council is encouraging residents to consider doing Halloween differently this year to prevent the spread of coronavirus and has provided some inspiration for an alternative approach to a 'Spooktacular' Halloween. #DoHalloweenDifferently (a campaign the County Council is running this week) will give residents fun ideas they can enjoy safely without going out and about trick or treating.

Some of the ideas that will feature through the week include creating spooky snacks at home with the family, scary film nights, taking part in a scavenger hunt or making a Halloween themed face covering. Please do feel free to check out their posts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for some #DoHalloweenDifferently inspiration – or check our usual channels as we will be sharing these messages too.

Community Engagement Pilot in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc

The Government is in the early stages of planning the future vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and wants to hear from residents and communities to understand local priorities. Understanding these will help the Government plan for the right infrastructure to meet social, environmental, and economic needs, for the benefit of existing and future communities. Your community's thoughts will contribute to the Government's early insights for the region, and there will be more opportunities to engage in the future.

The Ministry of Homes, Communities and Local Government has launched a digital engagement platform to trial community engagement across the Arc. You can find more on <https://placebuilder.io/oxcamarc/place> to make your suggestions.

Briefing on 4 November

On Wednesday 4 November District Council will be hosting the next online briefing for parishes, community groups and councillors, from 6pm.

There will be an opportunity to hear an update from the Council on the coronavirus situation, both national and local, plus an opportunity to have your questions answered. Hope to hear some expert advice on mental health issues arising from the coronavirus, as well as on loneliness and isolation.

District will also be running a breakout session where neighbouring communities can get together for discussion and to share best practice.

Update on financial support available

The different types of support that are currently available to residents.

- The self-isolation grants offer £500 to people who have been asked to self-isolate and who meet the Government's eligibility criteria
- Grants of £500 are also available to self-isolating people who do not meet the criteria of the above grant, but who meet the criteria of our discretionary scheme
- District is also working with Cambridgeshire County Council to help self-isolating people who do not qualify for the national schemes shown above. These are assessed on a case by case basis so please ask people to get in touch with us via your patch lead. More to find on <https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/self-isolation-payment/>

£100 to £400 grants

The small grants of £100 to £400 are allocated for parish councils and community groups to fulfil residents' short-term needs, one-off needs, such as one food shop. More information is available on duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk

Food support for families during school holidays

District Council is working with Cambridgeshire County Council to remind families that there is additional food support available for people who need it this half term. Anyone in need of extra help is being asked to call the Countywide Covid hub on 03450 455219. More information is available on <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/cambridgeshire-hubs-offer-support-to-vulnerable-families-during-half-term> was issued by the County Council yesterday. Both Councils are working together to provide further support to families who receive free school meals during the Christmas break.

Hot food scheme extended for winter

Over Day Centre is able to extend the hot food scheme that we run with them until the end of March. The scheme caters for nearly 100 people each week, but the chefs have advised that they can now produce a few additional meals, if required. If you know of any residents who would benefit from receiving a weekly meal, please get in touch. The meals are prepared by the professional cooks in the Day Centre kitchen and then chilled, so the resident would be required to reheat it at home. A community volunteer would also be required to collect the meal from Over Day Centre. Collection times are 10-11am on Wednesdays and Fridays.

If you know of an individual who would benefit from this scheme please email duty.communities@scambs.gov.uk.

The Over food scheme is available to all in the district, District Council is also looking another scheme to set up so that people living further away from Over would not have as far to travel to collect the meals.

The 3-tier system

It is very likely that you are already aware of the [Government's 3-tier system](#) of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus. South Cambridgeshire is currently in Tier 1 (medium), which is "the level which incorporates the current national restrictions, including the rule of six and the 10pm curfew on hospitality".

We wanted to give you a very brief update on how shielding links into this system. Currently the guidance is that [shielding would only possibly be introduced in some areas that move in to Tier 3](#) (very high); it is not automatically triggered for all areas moving into Tier 3.

It remains incredibly important that we all adhere to the government guidance and (because infection levels in the district have, so far, been low) that we do not become complacent.

Friday 23 October 2020 - Home-Link consultation

A consultation begins from Friday 23 October for 8 weeks into proposals to make minor changes to how Council and Housing Association homes across the County are allocated. This follows a detailed review of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Lettings Policy. The consultation is open from 9am on Friday 23 October 2020 for 8 weeks. Neighbouring Councils that are part of the Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk [Home-Link sub-region](#) will also be running consultations. Responses must be received by the end of the day on Friday 18 December 2020. You can [respond to the consultation](#) <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/cambridgeshire-and-west-suffolk-home-link-partnership-lettings-policy-consultation/> or read our news release which will be published on <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/news/>

Comment on proposed changes to Social Housing allocation policy

A consultation has begun into proposals to make minor changes to how Council and Housing Association homes across the County are allocated. This follows a detailed review of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Lettings Policy.

The main aim is to ensure that homes are provided to those most in need and to let Council and housing association properties in a fair and transparent way. South Cambridgeshire District Council owns and maintains around 5,500 Council homes and hosts the Home-Link service that covers Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. This system helps to decide which residents are allocated which homes. All local Councils and housing associations in the area use this system to let their homes.

No changes to any of the 'bandings' that people seeking housing are placed into are proposed. This sees those in the highest need of housing given priority over those with less of a need.

Most of the proposed changes to the policy are alterations to wording to make it clearer what the policy means and to ensure it is applied consistently across

Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk. This is important as the system that people use to apply for Council and social housing, Home-Link, is joined up across this wide area.

In addition, the proposed new policy incorporates changes to how a “local connection” is defined and sets out greater clarity as to what is meant in relation to employment requirements.

There are also proposed changes to give ex-partners or spouses of armed forces personnel the same exemption from local connection requirements as their former partners when they must move out of a Ministry of Defence property due to a relationship breakdown. This change would be to ensure policy meets the requirements of the Military Covenant.

You can read the full changes proposed, and take part in the consultation, by following the links at www.scams.gov.uk/consultations
Responses must be received by the end of the day on Friday 18 December. If you would like a paper copy of the consultation and questions, please call 03450 450 051.

Following the end of the consultation, comments received will be analysed and taken into account before the new policy is finalised in 2021.

Guidance for the safe use of places of worship and special religious services and gatherings during the pandemic

Updated guidance for the safe use of places of worship and special religious services and gatherings to include a checklist and to incorporate changes in regulations announced by the Prime Minister on 12 October 2020.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

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