Latest Information from Shropshire Council on Civid 9

To Local Councils Shropshire

Latest update from Shropshire Council’s Community Reassurance Team

Good afternoon,

Observing data available up until the 20th October,  Public Health England has put Shropshire’s Covid case rate at 95.0 per 100,000. In conduction with this, please see the recent statement below from Rachel Robinson, Shropshire Councils Director of Public Health:

*“We are now at a dangerous and critical time in our fight against Covid-19. Infections are rising across the county and we expect to see a further increase in cases over the coming days. Day-by-day, the threat of further restrictions is closer to becoming a reality. Thank you to those who are stepping up to protect their friends, loved ones and the wider community, but we need everyone to do their bit. We all need to Step Up, think of others and play our part to avoid severe restrictions that will have a huge impact on our way of life.”*

With this in mind, Using the ‘Swiss cheese’ approach to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 could be the method to take. <https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2020/10/coronavirus-swiss-cheese-approach/>

The government has now also introduced a 3 level system of restrictions across England and currently we are in the lowest category with the least restrictions, the point at which we would be considered for moving to the next category is 100 case per 100,000. We don’t automatically move up a level based only on infection rates. Hospitalisations, hospital capacity and the rate of increase in infection are among the factors that determine which category we are in, however it looks possible that we will face more restrictions in the weeks to come. Please see attached some useful posters to explain the different levels. To reiterate, Shropshire is currently in the ‘**medium**’ risk category, however, the high and very high posters help to illustrate the measures that would need to be adopted if we were to enter those levels locally.

With all of this in mind, we'd like to concentrate on the help that's available to our community in Shropshire. In preparation for a potentially challenging winter here's a brief run-down of the information and support that's currently on offer.

**Isolating payments**

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/benefits/benefits-news/test-and-trace-support-payments-update-9-october/>

If people are on a low income, they may be entitled to a test and trace support payment of £500 if they:

1.       Have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by the NHS Test and Trace service, either because they’ve tested positive for coronavirus or have recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, and

2.       Are employed or self-employed, and

3.       Are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result, and

4.       Are currently receiving universal credit, working tax credit, income-based employment and support allowance, income-based jobseeker’s allowance, income support, housing benefit and/or pension credit.

**Welfare Support and Benefits**

Please visit <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-the-public/your-rights-and-benefits/> for more information about additional financial support. The government have [relaxed the rules for some benefits](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-support-for-employees-benefit-claimants-and-businesses) to help with the effect of coronavirus. Shropshire Council is offering residents whose employment or income have been adversely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, the opportunity to [delay payment of council tax for 2 months .](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/council-tax/support-for-residents-impacted-by-the-coronavirus-pandemic/)If you need to claim universal credit because of coronavirus there is useful information to help you on the [Understanding universal credit](https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/) website.

Additionally, we currently have an emergency assistance fund. Applications are open to anyone who has been financially affected by coronavirus and is finding it hard to meet their essential outgoings as a result. If you, or someone you know, is having difficulty meeting outgoings, or there is risk to your home, **call us on 0345 678 9078 or 03456789028.**

**Shropshire Larder**

As the recession deepens, more people are losing their jobs and facing hardship. It is vital that people in Shropshire know where to get help. The [Shropshire Food Poverty Alliance](https://www.shropshirefoodpoverty.org.uk/) has created resources for people and organizations in Shropshire to find advice and support:

1. [**Shropshire Larder**](https://www.shropshirelarder.org.uk/)**(shropshirelarder.org.uk)**- is the most comprehensive directory of services for people living in Shropshire on a low budget. It has information on how to access a foodbank or community food project, and how to eat well on a budget. It also covers how to get support with benefits, housing, and debt.

*2.*Please help us make sure this info is reaching everyone who needs it.

**Scams**

We shared some comms last week around test and trace scams – <https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2020/10/coronavirus-warning-over-test-and-trace-scam/>

The image below reiterates these key points:

**Shielding**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

With this guidance in place, we are contacting Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents to ensure they are supported, more options may be introduced as we move into the winter period.

**Step Up Shropshire**

For those of you who wish to contribute to our video showing how you are Stepping Up for Shropshire, entries can be sent to the following:

* email to [CommunityReassurance@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:CommunityReassurance@shropshire.gov.uk)  (if file under 10 MB)
* WhatsApp message to Gareth in our comms teams – 074580855249

**Staying safe in the workplace**

Please see the web link below, and the attached poster, for some simple advice and guidance on how to protect from the Coronavirus whilst in the workplace.

<https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2020/10/coronavirus-staying-safe-in-the-workplace/>

**And finally..**

**Shropshire Council praises voluntary and community sector’s work during pandemic**

<https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2020/10/coronavirus-response-praised/>

Councillor Gwilym Butler, cabinet member for communities, place planning and regulatory services, said:

*“I would like to take the opportunity to recognise and congratulate the voluntary and community sector, including the collective support from Shropshire VCS Assembly, and town and parish councils, including the work of Shropshire Association of Local Councils, in their response to Covid-19. I recognise how fortunate we are locally with the resilience of many of our communities. The Community and Rural Strategy will be important in working to endorse and enhance that resilience as we move forward.”*

**Covid-19 Helpline and on-line information**

For non-medical support and enquires call direct Covid-19 Helpline 0345 6789028  or email [customerfirst@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:customerfirst@shropshire.gov.uk). On the Shropshire Council website, there is a wide range of information available to help you support people. Find the full range of information here: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-the-public/>. This includes the three directories on: food provision, community support and community social networks. Please check that your support group’s details are correctly recorded on the relevant directories. Please email me as soon as possible if you would like changes to be made.

Take care and Step Up for Shropshire,