

Another busy week particularly with restrictions lifting on hospitality businesses and planning for the opening of nail bars, beauticians, gyms and leisure centres – so let's just hope everyone enjoys the return to more normality whilst adhering to the government guidelines. We are certainly going to have to live in the presence of this virus for many more months 😞.

COVID-19 Update

The cumulative cases in the county are now 2477 up from 2449 with confirmed cases in Stratford on Avon District at 521 up 5 cases from 516 since the previous week. These cases now include data from both Pillar 1 (hospitals and NHS settings) and also Pillar 2 (community). Testing is continuing at Stratford College and the Track and Trace initiative is continuing to work well.

Out of the 423 SWFT Hospital Beds there are currently two confirmed cases of COVID-19 at present and no patients are in the intensive care unit. The cumulative deaths across Stratford District has increased by one over the last week to 165 and the number of deaths remains at 80 from the care home settings (no increases in the last two weeks) from a cumulative of 3454 'all cause deaths'. The cumulative total of all COVID-19 deaths in Warwickshire is now 571 and over the same period there have been 2883 non COVID-19 related deaths in Warwickshire. Across the county there have been 205 COVID-19 deaths in care homes settings (no increase in the last week) compared to 1032 'all cause deaths' over the same period.

The capacity in hospitals remains excellent with .5% of beds occupied by COVID-19 patients but there are 15.5% beds taken up with suspected COVID-19 patients. There are 36% of beds occupied by Non-COVID-19 patients and a spare capacity of 48% reinforcing that the NHS is very much open for business!

Whilst the cases have flattened there is still a serious risk of a second wave with the lifting of many lockdown restrictions and so the message from Public Health Warwickshire is that it is absolutely essential to continue to respect social distancing procedures, where possible keep this at two meters apart and implement rigorous hand hygiene measures. The Outbreak Control Plan is in place and in the event of specific outbreaks occurring there could be the situation of more stringent localised lockdowns as implemented in Leicester.

SDC Environmental Health

The environmental health teams at Stratford District Council are continuing to work really hard to provide advice and guidance to businesses and retail outlets including restaurants, pubs, cafes, garden centres and shops, in light of the new guidelines. The team has also provided a wealth of information with links to government guidance which can be accessed from its website <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-recovery.cfm>

Budget Update

The following provides a summary of the Chancellor's budget statement/update focused on jobs this week which I hope is useful. Total package is around £30bn, however the figures can change depending on uptake of certain schemes.

The Chancellor said the plan was based on three pillars: supporting jobs, creating jobs and protecting jobs.

1. Pillar one - supporting jobs

- Job Retention Scheme - Employers who bring back furloughed staff into work will receive £1000 per employee. If all 9m furlough were returned then it would cost £9bn.
- A pledge to provide 30,000 new traineeships for young people in England, giving firms £1,000 for each new work experience place they offer. High demand sectors have £100m for training up to level 2&3

- Apprenticeships businesses will receive £2k per apprentice and a £1,500 bonus for each 25+ aged apprentice.
- The doubling of front line staff at job centres, as well as an extra £32m for recruiting extra careers advisers and £17m for work academies in England. In total £1bn for DWP.
- Kickstarter scheme: £2bn Under-25s job scheme - six months for each "kickstarter" job, the government will cover the cost of 25 hours' work a week at the National Minimum Wage. Employers will be able to top up that payment if they wish. The scheme requires jobs to be additional, include a minimum of 25 hrs per week and must include training and support for future employment.

2. Pillar two - Job Creation

- Restatement of Budget commitment of £88bn and additional £5bn of capital investment
- Vouchers of up to £5,000 for Green/energy-saving home improvements as part of a wider £3bn plan to cut emissions this covers up to 2/3 (£5k per household) and a full cost (max £10k) for poorer households.
- £1bn for Public Sector Buildings adjustments, £50m for new approach to decarbonise social housing.
- A temporary stamp duty holiday to stimulate the property market. This would exempt the first £500,000 of all property sales from the tax.

3. Pillar three - protect jobs

- VAT: Targeted cuts for food, accommodation and attractions for 6 months from 20% to 5%
- Encouraging 'Eating out': New model not quite a full voucher scheme is proposed - allows business to claim back up to 50% (£10 per head) of a meal out on a Monday- Wednesday.

Wishing you all a great weekend! Keep safe, healthy and socially distanced and continue to enjoy the relaxation of the rules by supporting our local businesses.

Kind regards

Anne

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