

BRIEFING NOTE FOR WORCESTERSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Title of meeting:	Worcestershire County Council internal GOLD meeting in respect of COVID 19
Meeting number:	31
Date:	Thursday 25th June – 17:00

Key Messages

- Despite the relaxation on social distancing guidance in schools, the three-tier system (smaller schools/lower staff numbers) presents challenges for the wider re-opening of schools in the Autumn.
- Given the above we are working closely with schools to identify options to provide additional capacity in readiness for the Autumn Term. Potential to use container storage to free up space in classrooms.
- Pupils in years 10 and 12 in secondary schools, sixth form and further education colleges across the county returned this week. A limit of 25% of pupil numbers is in operation to ensure compliance with social distancing guidelines.
- We unable to advise when Kidderminster Household Recycling Centre will reopen. The council are working in partnership with their contractor on solutions to address the specific challenges the location of the site presents, with the options still being worked through.
- Town centres continue to be busy as non-essential shops have begun to open. District Councils (working in partnership with the County Council) have measures in place to enable safe shopping accepting that people need to be responsible for their own actions
- Worcestershire's libraries will begin to reopen next month after being closed for 3 months because of the coronavirus lockdown. Six of Worcestershire's libraries are currently due to re-open on Saturday July 4th, in line with phase three of Central Government's relaxing of lockdown restrictions.
- Libraries re-opening to customers during the first phase are: The Hive, Redditch, Kidderminster, Malvern, Bromsgrove, Evesham. These will be open from 10:00 to 1700 Monday to Friday and 10:00 to 16:00 on Saturdays
- A "COVID summer school fund" is being set up by the government to help feed children during the holidays. Children eligible for free school meals in term time in England will get a six-week voucher.
- Testing: The Regional Testing Facility at Worcester Warriors can process approx. 600 tests per day. Capacity is managed within the Department for Health and Social Care system, with availability being released to meet demand as required. Review of "pop-up" locations underway as some of the locations re-open, e.g. West Midlands Safari Park.
- The level of infections in Care Homes in Worcestershire remains stable and in line with levels across the West Midlands. All staff and residents in Care Homes with positive cases of COVID-19 have been tested.
- The Test and Trace service is live. A team of Environmental Health Officers and Public Health Practitioners will provide this locally in Worcestershire.
- The Worcestershire COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan will be submitted by 30 June and will be publicly available form 1 July.
- Request submitted to Department for Transport for 200,000 free-issue face coverings for public transport operators and passengers.

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- Pressure continues to ease on the Acute Trust with the number of active cases and new admissions still falling.
- In line with moving from “Response” to “Recovery” mode, WCC Silver and Gold meetings will reduce from twice weekly to weekly from early July.

Key Service Areas

Adult Services

- Increasing concerns re the financial viability of Care Homes linked to a reduction in admissions.
- As with school capacity issues, adherence to social distancing guidance will impact on Day Care capacity provision.
- Worcestershire County Council Care Home Support plan has been published and is available at:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/download/1437/worcestershire_s_covid-19_care_home_support_plan
- Recovery planning underway, especially in relation to day service provision for adults with learning disabilities.

Children’s Services

- 202 schools across the county are currently providing education to reception, year 1 and year 6 pupils. The total proportion of children in school remains higher than the national average.
- Positive feedback received from parents, teachers and pupils regarding the experience within schools since the re-opening.
- Worcestershire is the leading authority in the West Midlands for contact with children in Social Care.
- Awaiting further guidance on the opening of holiday clubs in the summer break.

Community Services

- The Here2Help Contact Centre has scaled its opening times to reflect the reduction in calls for assistance. Options around extending the service on a more permanent basis, working as a multi-agency partnership with the Health and Care Trust.
- Working together across District and County councils we continue to make contact with shielded individuals whilst the cohort is being advised about changes to advice and guidance

Economy & Infrastructure

- Traffic volumes are estimated to be running at 78% of pre COVID 19 levels.
- Highways surface dressing and maintenance returning to “Business as Usual”.

Workforce and Training

- The message continues to be that everybody who can work from home, should work from home. Access to offices should therefore continue to be for

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essential need only, defined as business critical and cannot be delivered through working from home with digital solutions.

- County Hall has now been certified as COVID Secure and site-specific protocols have been agreed, which includes that access by anyone to the building must be authorised in advance.

Communications

- Developing messages around transitioning to the Recovery Phase of the crisis and the forthcoming changes due for implementation on July 4th.

Finance

- Further announcements of financial support to Local Authorities are expected in the next couple of weeks.

COVID-19 STATISTICS

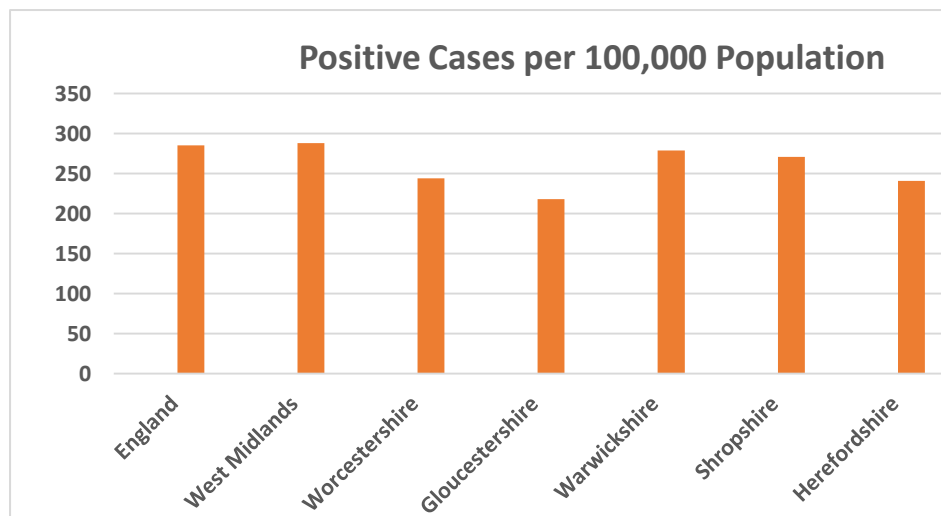
Official statistics and information are available on the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-track-coronavirus-cases>

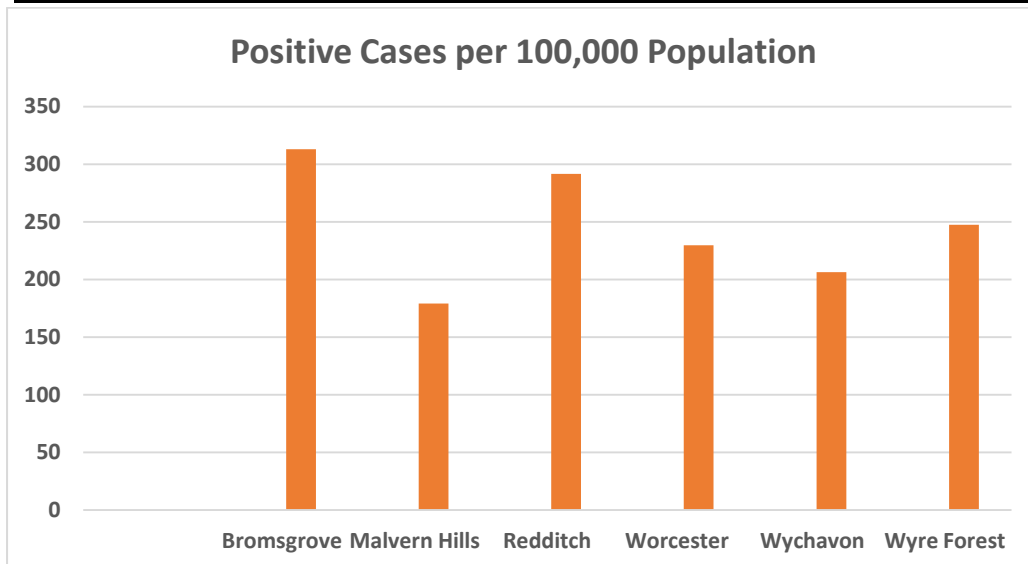
Some key statistics being:

Number Testing Positive in Worcestershire	1444
Number Testing Positive in UK	307980

UK	25/6
Number of Tests carried out on the day	167023
Daily Increase in Cases	1118
Cumulative Deaths	43230



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WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION, HELP AND ADVICE?

Reminder that the Here2Help website www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help is the first point of contact if people want to offer assistance or gain support. The other option is the telephone contact number which is staffed 8am-6pm 6 days a week – 01905 768053.

Carers who support a family member or friend who require support should contact the Worcestershire Association of Carers on www.carersworcs.org.uk or call the Helpline 0300 012 4272.

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS Website for information on Coronavirus
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

