



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Services to Place
Public Health Department
Upper Ground Floor North
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1st June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Firstly, let me thank you for all that you have been doing over recent weeks and months in response to Covid-19. It has been an exceptionally difficult time, and we acknowledge and appreciate everything that you have been doing, both as residents contributing to the reduction of transmission of the virus, and as carers in supporting your child/children through these challenging times.

I also want to credit and acknowledge the efforts of our early years settings and schools at this time. Most have remained open, supporting the children of key workers and our borough's vulnerable children.

I am aware that parents are now having to make the difficult decision about whether to return children to their early years and childcare setting and school as the provision widens. I wanted to set out the latest position on the evidence of the role of, and impact on, children in this disease, and our local position for Stockport.

Studies have shown that a very small proportion of Covid-19 cases are in children. This may be in part because a proportion of children that are infected, do not show any symptoms. If children get symptoms, these are typically like other respiratory illnesses: mild fever, cough, sore throat, sneezing, muscle pain and tiredness. There is scientific consensus that children generally have much milder disease than adults, with a very small number of infected children becoming seriously ill.

It is still slightly unclear exactly what extent children are involved in transmitting the virus. Current UK data suggest that they are as likely as adults to become infected and carry the virus, but they may be less likely than adults to transmit the virus because, for instance, adults are contagious for longer than children.

The UK government has set out five tests for assessing whether the time is right to make changes to the lockdown measures introduced in March. These measures and the Stockport situation for each are set out below:

First test: Making sure the NHS can cope

Stockport's health services, following national trends, are in a good position to cope with the demands of Covid-19. Stockport NHS Foundation Trust has seen a fall in the number of admissions and beds occupied by patients with Covid-19 and has beds that are available

and unoccupied, other health services such as GP Practices are available to help patients who need support with any health issues.

Second test: A 'sustained and consistent' fall in the daily death rate

Sadly almost 300 people in Stockport have died as a result of Covid-19 so far, the number of daily deaths peaked at the end of April at an average of 8 deaths per day. By the middle of May this had fallen to less than 4 (more than halved) and is expected to have fallen further by the end of the month.

Third test: Rate of infection decreasing to 'manageable levels'

The level of diagnosed new cases of Covid-19 in Stockport has been falling since the middle of April (more than 30 cases per day) and has been lower than 10 cases per day since the 10th of May and is dropping further. These numbers are based on the testing arrangements, and so true numbers of infection in the community are likely to have been higher. The rate of infection is falling and we are constantly monitoring for signs of change in this measure.

Fourth test: Ensuring supply of tests and PPE can meet future demand

Stockport has worked hard to ensure that all services requiring PPE have access to the equipment they need to stay safe. Stockport established a PPE hub in late March to source and provide PPE stock to a variety of services and settings, where usual supply chains are challenged. Stockport continues, on the whole, to purchase sufficient volumes of PPE and hygiene products to cover SMBC staffing requirements. Stocks are maintained for emergency usage for care home, home care and community groups.

Testing is now available for everyone with any of the following covid-19 symptoms:

- New continuous cough OR
- High temperature OR
- Anosmia: loss or change to normal sense of taste or smell

For those with symptoms all members of their household must self-isolate in line with current guidelines, unless the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

Fifth test: Being confident any adjustments would not risk a second peak that would overwhelm the NHS

A second peak cannot be ruled out. We are working at an extraordinary pace to develop our Local Outbreak Plans and to support the National Test and Trace programme. It is important to recognise that these plans will largely build on the health protection duties that we already have. The work that has been going on throughout this pandemic, including managing outbreaks in settings such as schools and care homes and support for vulnerable people, continues day in and day out.

Our early years settings and schools have been working tirelessly to undertake risk assessments, supported by colleagues from the local authority. These risk assessments are to ensure that any schools that can increase the number of children returning, are doing so in the safest possible way, in line with national guidance. The decision to open to more pupils, when and how, is a decision for the school based on this risk assessment and the guidance. We are supporting the schools to make these informed decisions.



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Our priority remains to keep both children and staff as safe as possible. We will never be able to guarantee there is no risk, but by continuing to work together we can ensure that children can return in a safe way as possible and continue to benefit from education, learning and childcare.

Finally, I wanted to remind everyone of the important resources available to everyone, to support you through this difficult time. The council's web pages have up to date information on a number of resources that may be of use, including advice on emotional wellbeing, money advice and support and keeping yourself healthy and well. All this information is available at: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/showcase/coronavirus>

By following guidance on social distancing, maintaining good hand hygiene, and keeping within the limits of what activity is permitted, you're helping to protect yourself, your family, the NHS and your community.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Connolly'.

Jennifer Connolly
Acting Director of Public Health
Stockport Council