

## **Message from Cllr Sir Steve Houghton CBE, Leader of Barnsley Council and Chair of the Barnsley Outbreak Control Engagement Board.**

This message is not one that I ever wanted to share, but we're now in a position where Barnsley, along with our other South Yorkshire councils, has been placed in the government's high covid alert level due to our rising Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection rates.

Our most recent 7-day rate of new COVID-19 infections in Barnsley is 190.4 per 100,000 people in the population (7 days ending 6 October). This is serious; Coronavirus (COVID-19) and, more importantly, its transmission, are a genuine threat in our borough. If the rates continue to rise, there is no doubt that the government will impose more, extreme measures on our borough, and we all want to avoid this at all costs.

Being in the high-level means that from Wednesday 14 October, we all need to adhere to the additional measures to reduce the transmission of the virus. The government will provide more information on this shortly, but it includes:

- People must not meet with anybody outside their household or support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place.
- People must not meet in a group of more than six outside, including in a garden or other space.
- People should aim to reduce the number of journeys they make where possible. If they need to travel, they should walk or cycle where possible, or plan ahead to avoid busy times and routes on public transport.

### **Our local approach**

We continue to work closely with Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield councils as well as partners from health, Sheffield City Region and South Yorkshire Police to make local decisions that support our residents, communities and businesses, and protect lives. It's important, though, that we recognise that we are all distinctive communities with different infection drivers and that we need to have our local action plans that complement other South Yorkshire authorities.

Our Barnsley Outbreak Control Plan (OCP) is driving our approach to prevent, detect, respond to, and reduce the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) among our communities. We'll not be complacent in our approach; our focus is on:

- using our local knowledge and expertise to boost the national NHS Test and Trace programme at a local level. We're developing our COVID-19 support service to provide advice and guidance to residents, schools and businesses on self-isolation. The service is also following up the contact tracing of confirmed COVID-19 cases that have not successfully been contacted by the national programme.
- building on the financial support and advice that we've already provided to our local businesses by making plans to further support those who are most affected by the government's new additional measures
- prioritising support for Barnsley's care homes and their residents, working with them to ensure they can continue to deliver safe and effective care. We'll do this through financial support, help with guidance and advice from local NHS and social care teams, support with training and help to minimise the risks of increased infections. We'll also do whatever we can to support families to keep in touch with loved ones living in care homes

- making sure that residents that need our support the most get it through a range of support via our hardship funds and community assistance
- supporting schools, colleges, and early years settings to make sure they robust control measures in places, with updated risk assessments and outbreak control plans to keep children and young people safe. We continue to support them to deal with any positive cases and potential outbreaks quickly
- developing a process to support people to self-isolate properly when they have symptoms, test positive or are told to by test and trace. We'll be looking at how we can ensure compliance and work with South Yorkshire Police to enforce this when people are repeatedly not following the legislation
- supporting our local businesses to operate safely, providing advice on how to follow the government's legislation. We'll be responding to concerns about businesses who are not following the legislation, working with colleagues at South Yorkshire Police to take enforcement action on those that are repeatedly putting people at risk
- provide information, so people understand their role in protecting themselves, their families and their communities by adhering to social distancing measures, washing their hands, wearing a face covering and getting a test and self-isolating if they have symptoms
- work closely with Public Health England and our local health partners to share information, resource and best practice so our response is the best it can be
- pay very close attention to what the data is telling us about the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19); continuously reviewing our action plan so we can identify high-risk areas, target our support and respond to any changes, trends or potential outbreaks.

## **Don't stop with the basics**

I want to thank you all for your efforts so far, and I appreciate it has been challenging, but we need to pull together and double our efforts to get us through this pandemic. We all need to do the right thing. Make sure you're following the new additional measure as well as the basics:

- Don't be a contact – follow social distancing guidance at home, work and when you're out and about.
- Wear a face covering and wear it correctly.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Only travel if it is essential or for work.
- If you have symptoms such as a new continuous cough, a fever or loss of taste or smell isolate straight away and book a test.
- Isolate immediately if you are told to do so.

**Issued by Barnsley Council's Communications and Marketing team.**