



COVID-19 Advice & Support

Fortnightly Update – 20th July 2020

This is the first update for us to provide after a 2-week gap. It provides a summary of all the information and key developments relating to the workforce implications of COVID-19.

Sharing Information

We have attached the latest update compiled in conjunction with the other Regional Employers and the LGA. The main themes within this update are:-

- Gov's New Recovery Plans
- Local Lockdowns
- Shielding
- Adult Social Care
- LGA support Update

We'd just like to pass on a gentle reminder to those who haven't done so as yet to complete the latest national COVID workforce survey. The survey has been revised to ensure the questions cover relevant and current issues; the deadline for completion by close of play on **Wednesday 22nd July**. **The most recent report can be accessed here: [survey findings 14th July 2020](#)**

Secondment Opportunities for East Midlands Test, Trace & Contain Hub

As part of the national response COVID-19 the Test, Trace and Contain programme has been established to support local authorities and public health departments in managing outbreaks. Testing is a core part of managing and minimising COVID and Mobile Unit Testing plays a key role. The East Midlands has recently established a hub which will be the main team undertaking this work and will be hosted by Leicestershire County Council. We are now seeking to fill two key roles on a 12-month secondment basis:-

A Co-ordinator (Testing) to support the deployment of Mobile Testing Units, working with Department of Health and Social Care as the military commence their transition from the programme. Secondees will require experience of managing and delivering programmes, with the ability to build and maintain positive working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders. (Indicative salary £35,000-£42,000.)

A Project Support Officer to support to the programme including the Regional Convenor for the East Midlands Test Trace and Contain Project. Secondees will need experience of writing and implementing operational processes and procedures as well as providing secretarial and administration support. They will also have experience of implementing systems and processes that will support the team's delivery. (Indicative salary £21,500-£23,000.)

We would be grateful if you could promote these opportunities within your organisations and support the release of staff on a secondment arrangement in order to quickly resource this important team.

Full details will be available soon and we will circulate a link in due course. In the meantime, you can contact Sam for any further information.

Introducing Exchanges - A new way of sharing information and approaches

We have seen an increase in requests to share information and are happy to continue to co-ordinate this through our usual email request and compilation. However, there are some issues where having the opportunity to discuss approaches you are considering and ask each other questions may be a more effective way of sharing information, practice and intelligence.

We are therefore introducing “**East Midlands Exchanges**”, where the issue and information will be discussed and shared through a virtual meeting. EMC will co-ordinate these requests and will prepare for the discussion by sending out in advance some questions for consideration. Where appropriate, we will also invite an expert speaker or a council who would be happy to lead on sharing their experience/policy as an introduction to the discussion.

Our first Exchange will be on the topic of **casual and relief workers** – giving you the opportunity to discuss how you may be reviewing the arrangements for this group of staff as services may now be re-opening. Further details will be circulated soon.

Public Health England Chief Executive’s Latest Weekly Message

Please see below, COVID-related extracts from the message from Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England issued on Friday 17th July:-

“Risk and investment

The world will never be the same again following the COVID-19 pandemic but this now presents a genuine opportunity to achieve a better balance between risk and investment in the public’s health. PHE is rightly recognised for its science capability, public health expertise and national to local connectivity, but resilience also requires flexibility and ability to adapt to a changing context. No public health agency has entered this pandemic thinking it will look the same afterwards. The public’s health is what matters most and whatever future decisions are to follow, the organising principle will be how we as a nation more effectively close the health gap between the rich and the poor and be better ready in capability and at scale for a future pandemic. Meantime we remain fully focused on fighting the virus.

Protecting seasonal and transient workers

Special thanks to Karen Wright, Director of Public Health for Herefordshire Council, and her Chief Executive Alistair Neill and their teams, for working round the clock this week with our excellent PHE West Midlands team to contain a complex outbreak of COVID-19 in seasonal and transient agricultural workers on a farm in their patch. Careful contact tracing has led the team to subsequently trace more than 100 further agricultural workers in England and Scotland, who have been promptly followed up and offered advice and testing. Exemplary teamwork.

Listening to local people

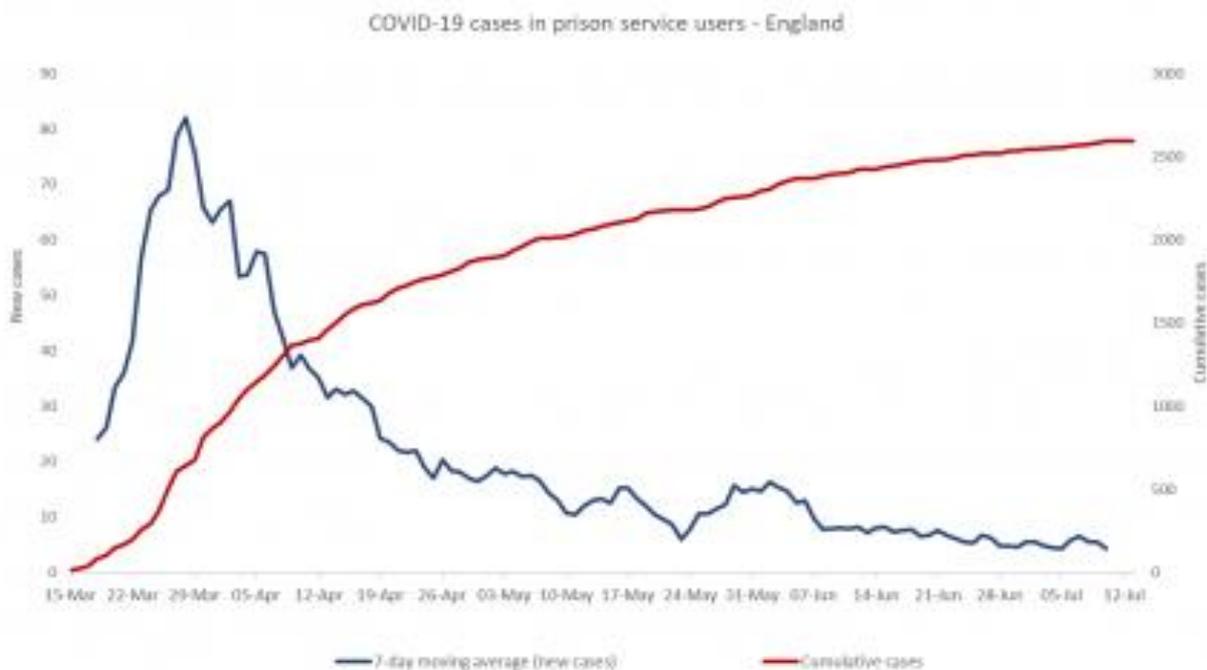
The critical importance of listening, gaining local knowledge and community engagement was ably demonstrated by Blackburn with Darwen Council this week as they responded decisively to rising rates of COVID-19, notably within their South Asian populations. Listening to local leaders about the way their community lives, works and interacts throughout this pandemic enabled the council to take swift action to protect their residents and hopefully avoid a stricter lockdown.

Knowledge, insight, data and partnership working remain the foundation stones to tackling local flare-ups and the council's [approach](#) has empowered everyone to take responsibility, which is a further exemplar of good practice. Listening to people is integral to all public health work, whether we are in a pandemic or not, and the superlative leadership shown in Blackburn with Darwen is a credit to the Director of Public Health Professor Dominic Harrison and the whole council team.

Prisons

A big concern through the pandemic has been the risk of outbreaks in prisons, where people living in close and sometimes crowded conditions can be the perfect breeding ground for COVID-19. PHE has worked closely with HM Prison and Probation Service to protect the prison estate by implementing a population management strategy to enhance social distancing and increase 'compartmentalisation' to protect vulnerable inmates and reduce the risk of transmission in other prisons.

The evidence so far shows this has been a successful strategy. PHE has led outbreak control teams for each of the 62 reported COVID-19 prison outbreaks, developed surveillance reports to guide public health action and produced [guidance on response to incidents and outbreaks](#). In our capacity as the global lead for the World Health Organization's Health in Prisons Programme, the PHE team have worked closely with international partners to develop [WHO recommendations](#) on the management of COVID-19 in prisons and delivered an [international training programme](#) for COVID-19 in prisons as part of the [Worldwide Prison Health Research and Engagement Network](#).



Wider impacts

PHE has published a Wider Impacts of COVID-19 on Health (WICH) tool, which is complementary to our [weekly surveillance report](#). This looks at measures including wellbeing, physical activity, smoking and drinking, as well as how people are travelling and shopping and importantly, the impact on health inequalities. You can see some of the notable findings from the [first publication of the tool here](#).

Seroprevalence

And finally, knowing the extent to which COVID-19 has spread is critical to controlling further spread. As part of this, it is important that we also find people who had mild infections or no symptoms at all, who therefore would have otherwise remained undetected. This can be done by testing blood for the presence of antibodies to the virus and PHE is working with the NHS Blood and Transplant service and NHS laboratories across the country to gather this seroprevalence data. We also have a number of other seroprevalence surveillance programmes underway, including studies testing samples from healthcare workers and school pupils and teachers, and [our blog](#) details how this all fits together.”

We hope this update, providing a round-up of all recent COVID-19 guidance in one place is useful to you.

Contact Sam Maher and Lisa Butterfill at EMC with any workforce queries or issues relating to COVID-19 at:

sam.maher@emcouncils.gov.uk and lisa.butterfill@emcouncils.gov.uk

All guidance relating to COVID-19 can also be found by visiting our website: [Workforce Information - COVID-19](#)