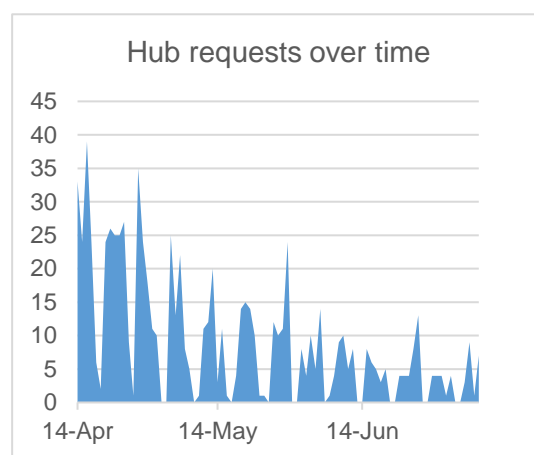




Weekly News Bulletin for Community and Voluntary Groups, Town and Parish Councils, Partners and Hub Update Subscribers

Facts and figures as of this week

- **2,758** shielded* residents of West Berkshire are registered on the government's website, out of a total of **4,357** identified by the NHS
- **Nearly 82%** of shielded residents registered have now indicated they do NOT require support
- **355 shielded residents** are receiving Government food parcels – a significant reduction from 574 on June 4th
- **2,673 residents** have been contacted by council officers and **15 police welfare visits** have been carried out where our calls or emails were not answered
- **69%** of all requests for Hub assistance were from shielded residents
- **73%** of the requests related to food and medicine
- As of Thursday July 9th there have been 474 lab confirmed cases of coronavirus in West Berkshire, an increase of 3 cases since last week. This includes testing results from pillar one (swab testing in Public Health England labs and NHS hospitals for those with a clinical need, and health and care workers) and pillar two data (swab testing for the wider population, as set out in government guidance on testing).
- The coronavirus infection rate of 299 in West Berkshire is lower than the regional average (South East) of 372.6 and the national rate of 442. Rates are calculated by the amount of confirmed cases for each area divided by the total population and multiplied by 100,000. Rates are used to compare different areas and account for different population sizes.



Shielded people are those who have received a letter from the NHS telling them they must stay at home because their health condition makes them extremely vulnerable to Covid-19. The shielded list is under constant review by GPs and hospital clinicians, and they are responsible for informing people that they have been removed from the list. Shielding guidance is due to be 'paused' at the end of July but the list will continue to be maintained and data will be provided to local authorities in case of a local outbreak of Covid-19. See **Updated National Guidance on page 3 for the Government's update on Shielding.*

Draft Recovery Strategy published by West Berkshire Council



The Strategy, which will be considered by councillors at Executive on July 16th, sets out the Council's priority focus areas to help the community recover as quickly as possible from the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak. The proposed Strategy is structured around three core elements - health, education and the local economy - and gives details of how the council and its partners aim to improve the quality of life of all of those who live or work in the district.

In line with the council's commitment to enhanced community engagement, there is a strong emphasis on plans to inform, consult and involve local residents in the development and delivery of these local recovery plans. The council has also published its Recovery Action Plan as an appendix to the Strategy. This provides information about what has been done to date to support the local recovery in each of the three priority areas as well as further planned actions. For further details see [Recovery Strategy news announcement](#). The proposed strategy can be read in full [HERE](#).

Volunteer Group Survey **REMINDER**

Volunteer Group co-ordinators are kindly reminded to complete our survey by the closing date of Sunday, July 12th if you haven't done so already. The survey link has been emailed separately.

We do hope that all group co-ordinators will complete our survey – thank you very much if you have done so already. Your feedback will help us understand the current position, learn from the experiences of all our wonderful volunteer groups, and contribute to the development of future services and support. Finally, the information we collect will be used to update our list of community groups, which is linked to a postcode search facility on our website [HERE](#).



District Parish Conference on Local Outbreak Control Plan – Monday, July 13th, 5pm (Zoom)

West Berkshire's Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan

In last week's Hub Bulletin (edition 12), we shared information about West Berkshire Council's [Local Outbreak Control Plan](#), part of a nationwide effort to prevent and control future outbreaks of the coronavirus in each local authority. The Council will be holding a District Parish Conference at 5.30pm on Monday, July 13th to provide an update on the plan to Town and Parish Clerks and Councillors. Community Group Leaders are also welcome to attend this meeting (Zoom). To register your place, please follow this [LINK](#).

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information on how to join.

The agenda is as follows:

- Introduction and welcome - Nick Carter, Chief Executive West Berkshire Council
- Local Outbreak Control Plan - Matt Pearce, Head of Public Health and Wellbeing
- Budgetary position and Recovery - Joseph Holmes, Executive Director Resources
- Q&A
- Closing remarks - Lynne Doherty, Leader of Council

Results are in from the Residents Survey on the impact of Covid-19

Almost 3,300 district residents responded to the Council's survey in May to understand how communities are feeling about the impact of Covid-19 on their health and finances, the environment and on the wider community. The survey also asked respondents whether they had volunteered in their community as a result of the pandemic, as well as whether they intended to in the future.



Key findings included:

- Awareness of the Community Support Hub was fairly high, at 72%.
- 86.5% thought the council's response to Covid-19 was either excellent, good or fair. 8.8% declined to answer with 4.7% judging it to be poor.
- 70.8% said they have volunteered during the pandemic and 78.2% of these intend to continue doing so.

See the [Residents Survey news announcement](#) to read further details on the findings and upcoming plans.

Schools Food Survey is underway to further understand food needs across the district



The Community Support Hub has written to Head Teachers across the district to better understand the role that schools have been playing in the distribution of food parcels to their vulnerable families during the Covid-19 pandemic (outside of the Free School Meals provision already in place). The information will be used to help food providers more fully understand the level of food need in the district and how this can be addressed going forward. The Community Support Hub will be meeting with food providers on July 22nd to share the findings of this survey.

Updated National Guidance from the Government

Government plan for controlling future Covid-19 outbreaks - The Government's approach, as announced by the Prime Minister on Friday, July 3rd, is made up of five principle components:

1. Monitoring. Public Health England, working with the Joint Biosecurity Centre, will examine carefully data on the spread of the disease and people's behaviour across the country.

2. Engagement. If monitoring identifies local problems, NHS Test and Trace and PHE will work with the relevant local authority to develop a deeper understanding of the problem and identify solutions.

3. Testing. Scaled-up testing at a local level, combined with contact tracing through NHS Test and Trace, can control the virus and thus avoid more stringent measures.

4. Targeted restrictions. If the virus continues to spread, activities will be restricted at particular locations and close individual premises.

5. Local lockdown. If the previous measures have not proven to be enough, local lockdowns will be introduced, extending across whole communities. Local lockdowns will be carefully calibrated depending on the scientific and specific circumstances of each outbreak and smarter means of containing the virus are continually being explored.

[You can read the Prime Minister's full speech transcript here.](#)

Shielding Update - The [Government's guidance for those shielding](#) was updated on July 8th. From August 1st 2020, people in England who are at high risk from coronavirus will no longer be advised to shield unless the transmission of COVID-19 in the community starts to rise significantly.



As of July 6th, those shielding are advised that they no longer need to socially distance from people they live with. If they want to, they can meet in a group of up to 6 people outdoors, including people from other households. They may also form a 'support bubble' with one other household if they want to, but one of the households in the 'support bubble' should be a single adult household (either an adult living alone or with children under 18 only).

The government support offer has been extended: those shielding can still get a food box, care and/or medicine delivery until July 31st if they want them, and have registered online by July 17th.

The latest evidence indicates that the risk of serious illness for most children and young people is low. The majority of children currently considered extremely clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 will be able to be removed from the shielded patient list as of July 8th. A clinical discussion with a paediatric specialist or GP will be needed before any child or young person is removed from the shielded patient list.

[Click here for the Full Guidance on Shielding](#)

Safe Places of Worship Update - Advice on how places of worship can open, for limited permitted activities, in a manner that is safe and in line with social distancing guidelines (published July 4th) on: [Guidance on safe places of worship](#)

Green Spaces and Meeting People Updates - The advice for the public in England on using green spaces, and the guidance on seeing people you do not live with (updated on July 4th). See [Guidance on green spaces](#) and [Guidance on meeting people](#) for further details.



Phased Reopening of Libraries and Extended At Home Library Service

West Berkshire Council will be restoring its library service to the public and staff on a phased reopening to keep everyone safe. From July 13th the first stage will be to re-open Newbury, Hungerford and Thatcham Libraries for book collections during limited opening hours. We hope to open our other libraries on the same basis the following week.



In addition, West Berkshire At Home Library Service is extending its delivery service to include those who are self-isolating from Covid-19. Books and Spoken Word CDs will be exchanged at home doorsteps at a pre-arranged time every 3 weeks with no face to face contact. It is not necessary to be a library member to sign up for the service and there are no library fines. Residents who are self-isolating are very welcome to call 01635 519827 or email library@westberks.gov.uk

Home Energy, Fuel and Water Bill Advice Helpline



Helen Dean of Connecting Communities in Berkshire is running a telephone advice line for families who are worried about their bills, or who would like information about ways to reduce their costs. Helen offers personalised one to one (1:1) advice over phone or WhatsApp calls in a friendly and accepting way, and will follow up on advice after it's been given. Further information about the service is available [HERE](#).

Practitioners can refer families by emailing helen.dean@ccberks.org.uk. Helen works on a Tuesday and a Thursday, and can call families between 9.30am and 3.30pm. If a family on a low-income wishes to refer themselves, please email Helen with your details. Alternatively, you can call Helen on 0773 8887612 on a Tuesday or Thursday between 9.30am and 3.30pm.

West Berkshire Lottery celebrates one year since its first draw and a £2,000 winner!

The West Berkshire Lottery was set up last year to offer local good causes and charities a fun way to fundraise. Since then, members of the community have signed up to the cause to help the charities in their local community, especially during the global pandemic. To date, there are 118 local good causes signed up to the West Berkshire Lottery and over 1,000 players currently supporting the lottery each week. So far, the lottery has paid out nearly £20,000 in winnings and has recently celebrated the third £2,000 winner! More details can be found in the [news announcement](#).



Good news stories – please keep them coming in!

In the weeks to come, we will be featuring more of your good news stories on our social media and [Hub Facebook](#) page and you can find more stories, photos and videos about the wonderful work of West Berkshire's volunteers on our [Local Heroes](#) website.

With our grateful thanks and best wishes
The Hub Team

Please ensure that all queries about individual cases are directed to the Hub via the general email westberksbct@westberks.gov.uk or by calling 01635 503579. This is to ensure they are dealt with promptly, effectively and in line with guidelines on dealing with vulnerable adults.