

Published:  
Wednesday, 11th November 2020

People across west Norfolk are being urged to do their bit to protect each other, and help our area emerge in a good position from lockdown.

With Covid-19 cases rising in our district, local people are being asked to each play their part by following the rules – helping their neighbours, families, friends, communities, and themselves to stay safe.

Councillor Stuart Dark MBE, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Public Protection said: "We have already seen what a difference we can make when we work together, as all of us did at the start of the crisis earlier this year.

"Now we need to do it again, west Norfolk. Please follow the rules. What you do today will have an impact tomorrow and will determine how we emerge from lockdown when the national restrictions end.

"What we do in the next few weeks is crucial. We must act together to make a difference now, to drive the numbers of cases down. Every little action that each of us takes will add up to a big shift.

"We can influence the tier that west Norfolk will be placed in and the rules that we will face when we come out of the national restrictions. But only if each of us acts together.

"If we each play our part, together, as west Norfolk, we can make the difference and help to stop the spread of coronavirus in our area."

Councillor Dark's comments were echoed by James Wild MP for North West Norfolk who said: "No one wanted to have national restrictions and I know how challenging they are but with increasing rates they are necessary for a limited time to prevent QEH and local NHS services from being unable to cope.

"Everyone in west Norfolk can play their part now by following the rules to bring infection rates under control so that when the national restrictions end Norfolk can go back to fewer restrictions on our way of life."

They were also supported by Dr Louise Smith, Director of Public Health who said: "Rates of coronavirus in west Norfolk have continued to climb over the last week and we can't link this to any one outbreak in a factory or other setting – it is likely that the virus is being spread in the community.

"We are seeing more admissions to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and very sadly we are seeing an increase in the number of people dying as a result of this disease. The people of west Norfolk have pulled together throughout this pandemic and it's only by working together again that we will bring down rates of the virus and protect King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

"Please follow the restrictions – stay home as much as possible, wash your hands, make space and wear a face covering where needed."

The new national restrictions are in place until 2nd December and are designed to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, and the impact of this on the NHS. Caroline Shaw, Chief Executive at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is also asking the public to do everything they can to help west Norfolk during this crucial period of time:

Caroline said: "The Trust is doing everything it can to safely care for our patients this winter but we really need our local community to help us by playing their part. This includes getting a flu jab if you are eligible for one and following the Government guidelines on social distancing, hand washing and wearing face masks. These actions will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 as well as flu, both of which will reduce pressure on beds at QEH and our staff.

"There are many ways patients can access care this winter – local pharmacists can provide advice on medicines and care for the common cold and very minor injuries, GPs should be the first port of call for longer term issues while our hospital is there for urgent, life-threatening conditions like suspected stroke, heart attack or for suspected fractures and wounds that won't stop bleeding. Choosing the right service will ensure patients can get the care they need quickly."

Inspector Mark Askham also urged west Norfolk to take the steps necessary to protect the area: "It has been a tough year for our communities in West Norfolk. People have fundamentally changed the way they carry out everyday life and we recognise the huge challenge and sacrifice this continues to bring.

"We now find ourselves seven months into the pandemic and in a second national lockdown and it is so important that each of us play our part in tackling the virus and reducing the spread. People know what the risks are and what is expected of them in relation to the rules. Officers will look to engage and establish people's circumstances in a fair, sensible and proportionate manner. That said, for the small minority who breach the rules, they can expect a fixed penalty notice and a fine.

"Now is not the time for complacency and we must all play our part by following the rules. We will continue to provide a first-class service to our communities and do everything we can to get us through this crisis."

West Norfolk residents are being reminded of how vital it is to minimise contact with each other, for