

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

READING COVID-19 OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD

4 SEPTEMBER 2020

QUESTION No. 3 in accordance with Standing Order No 36

Tom Lake to ask the Chair of the Outbreak Engagement Board:

RBC Covid-19 objectives/Test & Trace/Guideline Conformity

1. What are the objectives of Reading Borough Council in respect of Covid-19?
2. Please explain the flow of data about people with positive test results for Covid-19 to our local Public Health team and our GPs. Are full personal contact details available to them? How long after a positive test result and in which cases? What are the consequences for contract tracing in Reading?
3. Informal observation indicates that record-keeping at some town centre pubs has become lax and the wearing of face coverings is also not well observed in some shops. Will the board and the Borough Council act to increase conformity with laws and guidelines? Could business organisations and business-related social organisations assist in improving the situation?

Tom Lake
Information Officer
South Reading Patient Voice

REPLY by Councillor Hoskin (Chair of the Outbreak Engagement Board):

Thank you for your questions Mr Lake. I'll answer them in order.

1. I'm not entirely clear what kind of objectives your question might be referring to. In strategic terms our overall aim at this point is to ensure Reading can be a thriving, virus-resilient community. To achieve this there are three strategic objectives:
 - 1) To ensure the Council itself is resilient and fit for the future
 - 2) To help people be safe and communities thrive
 - 3) To secure the economic future of Reading
2. People with a positive test result are automatically entered into the national test and trace programme. From there they are given advice re self-isolation and information obtained about those that are considered "contacts" and also need to isolate. The council receives data on a daily basis on those who test positive which includes postcode data so that any local clustering or outbreaks can easily be identified.

The role of Local Authorities in supporting the NHS Test and Trace system in local contact tracing is currently under review. In some high incidence areas, such as Leicester or Blackburn who have also had low completion rates on contact tracing, a role has been taken on by the councils to support a higher completion rate. In these areas of course, contact detail information is shared with councils so they can undertake this role. In Reading we already have, at the moment, a relatively well performing Test and Trace programme that consistently reaches, or is extremely close

to, the 80% completion target and as such at this time we have not taken on this role locally.

Personally I believe that the test and trace system should be almost wholly run locally rather than through large national privatised contracts but, clearly, we need to do the best with the situation as it is rather than as we would like it to be.

3. We have established a dedicated team made up of Environmental Health Officers and Officers from regulatory services to proactively inspect premises and work with owners to ensure all areas of their operations are “COVID Secure”. This includes, but is not limited to, complying with Test and Trace record keeping and face covering requirements. We have also written to all businesses in Reading to outline their requirements for being COVID secure and have established a reporting phone number and email address for members of the public to report to the council any establishments where they have concerns about their COVID practices.