



# Briefing

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## RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL WEEKLY ROUNDUP

**30 October 2020**

Good afternoon,

With darker nights and colder weather drawing in, there's no doubt that we are once again entering the winter months.

Although the Council's services operate year-round, winter always brings added pressure and makes service delivery more challenging. Colder temperatures and seasonal illnesses consistently trigger increased demand for our health and social care services. This is accompanied by spikes in, homeless support, domestic abuse and child safeguarding.

This winter brings with it the added complication of COVID-19, which means more people than ever before are likely to find themselves turning to councils for help. We fully expect to be offering support to people who would not usually be considered vulnerable.

It's important that our residents know Council services are open and available to provide help and support, despite the current pandemic. We are currently gearing up to increase our communications about these vital everyday support services and will be asking for your help to direct people to us if they need assistance.

We are also mindful of the impact that winter will have on our own staff, who are preparing to enter a busy period having been operating at heightened level for the past eight months, as a result of COVID.

I am incredibly proud and grateful to all RCC staff for their continued hard work and dedication. This is something which I know is echoed by our councillors and members of the wider Rutland community.

Regards,  
Mark

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## 1. COVID-19

### a. Latest situation

As of 6.45pm on Thursday 29 October, 965,340 people have tested positive for coronavirus in the UK.

As of 6.45pm on Thursday 29 October, of those tested positive for coronavirus in the UK, 45,955 people have died across all settings within 28 days of a positive test.

These figures will also be published on the daily dashboard: [coronavirus.data.gov.uk](https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk).

Rutland recorded 35 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the latest week (21-27 October). This equates to 88 cases per 100,000 people. The average area in England had 149.

A total of 24 coronavirus-related deaths have been registered in Rutland as of 16 October.

## **b. Update from the Rutland Tactical Coordinating Group (RTCG)**

### Track and Trace

RTCG discussed the current local arrangements in place for Track and Trace in Rutland. Public Health are overseeing Track and Trace for RCC and will contact the council's RISE team if they are unable to get in touch with individuals identified through the tracing system. There is minimal demand for Track and Trace follow up activity in Rutland at present. Discussions are taking place around the possibility of using other resources to perform this work if an increase in referrals were to place pressure on the RISE service.

### Impact on services

RCC has taken steps to respond to a request from the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) to provide information about what council services would continue to be implemented in the event that Rutland were to enter into Tier 3 of the government's local COVID alert system.

This work is being done in parallel with existing resourcing activity that is ongoing at RCC to understand where COVID is creating additional pressure on service delivery and how this can be absorbed or mitigated.

## **c. Guidance for Education and Early Years Settings**

The Department for Education (DfE) has published a list of actions that Early Years, schools and further education colleges must follow in the event that a child or young person displays symptoms or if they confirm they have tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) which can be accessed using these links:

- [Action list for schools](#)
- [Action list for early years and childcare providers](#)
- [Action list for further education colleges](#)

When notified of a positive case, Early Years providers, schools, further education colleges and out of school settings contact the DfE Helpline on: 0800 046 8687, which is a dedicated advice service introduced by Public Health England (PHE) and delivered by the NHS Business Services Authority.

Callers will be put through to a team of advisers who will inform them of what action is needed based on the latest public health advice.

## **d. Faith, Cultural, and Community Events and Activities**

Due to the continuing risk posed by COVID-19, faith, cultural and community groups are urged to adhere to the following guidance in order to protect individuals and communities when organising events or activities:

## DO

- Communicate any safety measures and restrictions in advance
- Try to offer an online event so people can celebrate at home
- Complete a full risk assessment
- Have one person to take overall responsibility
- Limit the number of participants and make sure your community know that the numbers of people involved will be restricted
- Restrict access by using time slots, tickets or invitations only
- Let people know that celebratory, festive or cultural elements of any activity won't be possible
- Use stewards or volunteers to manage social distancing guidelines and prevent close contact
- Make sure people only attend and remain in their household group or support bubble
- Make sure people bring any devotional offerings from home and take them when they leave

## DO NOT

- Arrange anything that will lead to close personal contact or social interaction between households
- Arrange for any dancing, singing or chanting by the audience
- Provide any food or drink as part of any prayer or communal worship
- Permit households or support bubble to mix
- Allow individuals to touch any devotional offerings other than their own
- Play music at a volume that makes normal conversation difficult
- Encourage singing or shouting

### **e. Bereavement Information and Advice**

Our Local Resilience Partnership has updated its information for families, friends and carers who have lost a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This information is freely available through the Council's online Coronavirus Hub and has been produced by a number of local organisations in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, working together during the pandemic.

This includes Councils, the Police, coroner's office, NHS, faith leaders, and local funeral, crematoria and burial services.

Full guidance and links to additional support can be found at:

[www.rutland.gov.uk/bereavement](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/bereavement).

## **f. Down to Us campaign**

RCC's Communications Team has developed a digital toolkit to support the dissemination of public health guidance and information about COVID-19 as part of the *Down To Us* campaign.

The toolkit contains a background information about the campaign, draft wording for blogs and websites, example posts for social media platforms and links to download posters and graphics. We are asking local stakeholder groups, including businesses, sports clubs and licensed venues, for any help they can give us to share these materials as widely as possible.

We are also asking these groups to get in touch with us via directly if they would like to support the campaign in a different way but need some help to do this. We are keen to adapt the materials and the approach based on any feedback or suggestions we get.

Now that a digital presence for *Down To Us* has been firmly established, we are looking at ways to increase the visibility of campaign messages in our market towns.

## **2. WIDER COUNCIL OPERATIONS**

### **a. Free School Meals**

Rutland County Council has received no funding to provide free school meals to children during the half term holiday. However, we have invested additional funds to ensure the most vulnerable in the community are supported:

1. Contribute to foodbank (£12,500) - we have been referring people to the foodbank and continue to do so.
2. Top up key worker prepayment cards (key workers have these so if they see a problem they can ensure people get emergency supplies) - £5,500
3. Additional contribution to CAB (£5,000) as they run our crisis fund

We are working closely with Rutland Foodbank and Citizens Advice Rutland to ensure that any parent who is concerned about food poverty contacts us to receive support.

To date, we have seen no increased requests for this type of support, either through our children's centre services or children's social care.

We are making sure though that parents know there is support locally, and are vigilant to any potential need, and have increased our communications with the Rutland community so that any parent who is concerned about food poverty knows how to access support and this is offered quickly.

It is important for our residents to know that there is support available and this is being kept under close review in light of changing demand.

Information about where and how to get support during the current pandemic period can be found on the RCC website: [www.rutland.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/coronavirus).

## **b. New 'My View' App**

Children's Social Care has launched a new app for children in our care to be able to access information and contact their social worker easily.

We are the first local authority in the East Midlands to use the app, which has been used internationally to improve communication links for children and young people who receive children's social care services.

At the launch, the app is limited to children and young people in our care. However, as we move forward and develop this further, it will be available across children's services to improve communication routes for children and young people with us and make sure that we hear their voices effectively.

## **c. Occupational Therapy Week**

Occupational Therapy Week 2020 runs from Monday 2nd to Sunday 8th November. The aim of this year's theme is to raise the profile of Occupational Therapy as a career.

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists will be running a social media advertising campaign to raise the profile of occupational therapy as a career with school students, particularly in cities and areas where large numbers of the population are ethnic minorities. The campaign will direct people to a new career microsite which will provide more information about becoming an occupational therapist.

RCC Therapists are being encouraged to get involved in the campaign, by sharing their own stories about why they chose to be an Occupational Therapist. Our Principle OTs will be reaching out virtually to our local schools, using digital tools and social media to promote our amazing profession, sharing the team's stories with the aim of inspiring both girls and boys, to pursue a career in Occupational Therapy.

## **d. NHS 111**

On Thursday 22 October, local Clinical Commissioning Groups hosted a webinar for NHS staff across LLR, introducing NHS111 First.

NHS 111 First offers patients and the public a different approach to accessing healthcare. Leicestershire, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) is the first area in the East Midlands to implement this national directive.

NHS111 will have the capability to book patients into a variety of services, including timed slots in Emergency Departments.

NHS111 First will make it easier and safer for patients to get the right care at the right time when they urgently need treatment; and help to manage the flow of patients into the Emergency Department.

You will hear more about the introduction of NHS 111 First in the coming weeks and months.

## e. Remembrance

Events to mark Remembrance Day have been scaled back this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

There will be no Remembrance Parade in Rutland this year and people should feel comfortable to observe Remembrance Day at home.

The Royal British Legion has shared alternative ways for people to honour Remembrance Day, including:

- Creating a remembrance space in your garden by planting plants that have a connection to Remembrance
- Using Zoom, Facebook or another online meeting resource to host an online Remembrance service or activity
- Creating an online exhibition of remembrance related photos from residents that schools or others could use to discuss local remembrance activities

Full details of information and resources can be found [on the Royal British Legion website](#).

COVID-19 has also meant that the Legion's 2020 Poppy Appeal has moved online, but families can still get involved by downloading and colouring in a Remembrance Poppy to display in their window as a show of support. [This can be found on the Legion's website](#).

### Events taking place in Rutland

#### Oakham

A Service of Remembrance is due to take place at the All Saints Church in Oakham at **2.30pm** on Remembrance Sunday (**8 November**). The service will be held outside, with a reduced number of participants, so that proper social distancing can be observed.

A pre-recorded version of the Service of Remembrance will be broadcast by Rutland County Council and All Saints Church on Sunday 8 November for anyone who would prefer to commemorate the day at home.

The Act of Remembrance that has previously taken place on Oakham High Street, near Crown Walk, is being moved to the grounds of Oakham Castle – again, to allow for social distancing – and will take place at **11.00am** on **Wednesday 11 November**.

The Act of Remembrance will be broadcast live online via the Council's [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages – again, allowing people to participate at home.

Links to the video feeds for both the Service of Remembrance and Act of Remembrance will be published at: [www.rutland.gov.uk/remembrance](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/remembrance).

#### Uppingham

Uppingham will also hold commemorations at the town's war memorial, starting at **10.30am** on Remembrance Sunday (**8 November**).

## **f. Firework Safety**

We have not received any requests to give authorisation for Bonfire Night or firework events locally, in the run up to 5 November.

As with all other activities, any plans that individual households may have around Bonfire Night must comply with the restrictions imposed on Rutland through our [Local COVID Alert Level, which is currently set at Medium](#). This means:

- You must not socialise in a group of more than six people. This rule of six applies indoors and outdoors, and includes children of all ages
- Follow social distancing rules at all times. This means staying two metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or one metre with extra precautions (such as wearing a face covering or increasing ventilation indoors)
- Remember to wash hands regularly, for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitiser gel

RCC is supporting Trading Standards to help disseminate information and guidance around the safe use of fireworks. This information has been shared with local partners in the Police and Fire Service and can be viewed online at:

[www.rutland.gov.uk/annualevents](http://www.rutland.gov.uk/annualevents).

## **3. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING**

### **a. Cabinet**

The Council's latest Cabinet Meeting took place on Tuesday 27 October.

The agenda and reports for this meeting, together with a record of decisions, are [available to view online](#).

### **b. Look Ahead**

There are no meetings taking place next week (w/c Monday 2 November 2020).

The latest version of the RCC Forward Plan [can be viewed online, here](#).

## 4. STAFF NEWS

### a. Introducing Katie Digby, our Occupational Therapy Student Placement

Rutland County Council recently provided a successful remote student placement, during the COVID-19 lockdown. Ahead of Occupational Therapy Week, Practice Placement Educator Hayley Winship and Northampton University Student Katie Digby offer their reflections on the placement.



Katie Digby a second year BSC Occupational Therapy student at University of Northampton, joined Rutland County Council for her second year practice placement.

Initially, a face to face placement was being offered. However, Health Education England and RCOT produced the Covid-19 directive requiring face to face placements to be carried out under a contract of employment, in order to provide in service death insurance.

Katie decided to pursue the remote placement as she thought as a practical learner this would be the closest option to a traditional face to face placement.

**Katie stated:** 'I believe this is how many services are going to be operating in the future, so my initial thoughts were 'why not embrace it now'. By choosing this option, I felt I was future-proofing my professional development by practicing what has become the new normal'.

'I anticipated this was the perfect time in my studies to master the concept of remote working in advance of my level 6, 12 week placement. I expect that during my final placement I will really need to focus on managing my own caseload instead of being pre-occupied by learning how a remote placement works.'

'Life in general often means that we have to respond to many different demands on how we function. I felt that this experience would be an excellent learning opportunity in maintaining flexibility, while developing resilience, which is paramount in today's workplace.'

Katie's fieldwork educator Hayley Winship was remote from home, completing client assessments with community residents using Microsoft team's video conferencing software.

**Hayley explained:** 'We were totally reliant on technology, with challenges over how reliable internet connections were. We predominantly used Microsoft Teams to communicate so that we could see and hear each other. This gave us the experience of being 'sat at the next desk' in our virtual home offices. When internet connections intermittently failed we had the backup option of dialling in through Teams on our mobile phone. This actually worked to the point of us feeling we were in the same room.'

## **Benefits of remote working**

Consent was never an issue, we realise how flexible service users and their care givers are, willing to embrace this new process of assessment.

Having family members / carers fully on board to operate the media format has meant they are at the core of the assessment process.

Since March, the OT workplace has changed significantly and the process by which an OT carries out their role has taken on a new direction. During the remote placement the student is actively joining the OT on their daily journey in real time, albeit without a physical presence.

**Katie stated:** 'The placement provided a very real experience and I valued client contact and the ability to build relationships, getting real feedback from service users. This made a difference to my learning as this was so much easier to apply when working with a real person with real needs and outcomes.'

Remote placement can indeed provide a valuable learning experience for a student.

Developing remote skills that will likely remain in future practice alongside essential face to face visits.

Katie felt on reflection that a simulated placement would not have suited her pragmatic learning style.

Remote placement had an added bonus of minimal outgoings for the student, with no need to pay for travel; parking; and buying lunches which would have been the case with a face to face placement.

## **Conclusion**

Remote placement was Katie's preferred option when face to face placements couldn't take place. From our first-hand experience, we have found remote placement offers the learning opportunities a student needs in order to be successful.

The goal of practice placement is to obtain practical experience to supplement academic learning. Placement competencies can equally be met with a remote practice placement incorporating video/media platforms and technology.

Part of the student experience is to build confidence during the placement setting, which is absolutely possible through a remote placement. Both Hayley and Katie expect that it would be harder to achieve the same level of confidence through a simulated placement.

On reflection, the experience for both Hayley and Katie has been very positive having had initial reservations about how the placement would work in practice amidst a Global pandemic and National Lockdown.

**Following the successful outcome at Rutland County Council, we are encouraging other teams/OTs considering offering a remote student placement to embrace the opportunity to continue to develop training OTs while working within the pandemic.**

## **b. New Starters**

- Claire Northrop - Casual Planning Support Technician
- Rebecca Ots - Senior Early Intervention Co-ordinator, Front Door & Partnership
- Esther Soledolu - Online Information Development Officer
- Heidi Coleman - Senior Housing Options Officer

## **c. Leavers**

- Tish Barnwell - Road Safety Officer
- Keri Rees - Business Support Assistant, King Centre

## **5. RCC IN THE NEWS**

### **a. Press releases issued this week**

[Change to branch library opening hours](#)

[Update to national Shielding guidance for vulnerable people](#)

[Celebrate differently to stay safe](#)

### **b. Other coverage**

[Rutland featured on best socially-distanced staycations list](#)

[Business grant was a lifeline](#)

**ENDS**