

# ECC Report January 2021

## **Grants available to help Essex residents self-isolate**

ECC is providing extra funding to city, districts and boroughs in the county to help people who need to self-isolate to stay at home.

Because the new variant of COVID-19 is spreading so fast, it is important that everybody asked to self-isolate does so.

The £3 million funding is to ensure that those that must stay at home are given the financial means to do so. The £500 grant per resident will be a one-off payment to cover the two-week period of self-isolation.

Essex residents who test positive for Covid-19 could be entitled to a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment from the Government.

However, many residents who have to self-isolate may be ineligible for the Government payment. It is these people this new fund aims to help.

People may not qualify for Government support because, for instance, they are on zero hours contracts, self-employed and trading for less than one year or self-employed without access to support because of low trading returns.

Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, said that throughout this pandemic ECC has emphasised the need to test and self-isolate. Now with the picture of rising rates we are all seeing this has never been of greater importance.

The Council is very keen to help people to self-isolate without fear that self-isolation will worsen their personal finances.

The funds ECC have been able to access come from the Government's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) which is aimed to support city, borough and district councils with their test and trace isolation payments schemes.

The funds can be accessed by residents by making an application on the local city, district or borough website. Follow the link to your local council at: <https://www.essex.gov.uk/test-and-trace-support-payment>.

The allocation of funds to each council is based on population. See table below

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Authority allocation of £3m</b>
<b>Basildon</b>	185,862	377,317
<b>Braintree</b>	151,561	307,683
<b>Brentwood</b>	76,550	155,404
<b>Castle Point</b>	90,070	182,851
<b>Chelmsford</b>	177,079	359,487

<b>Colchester</b>	192,523	390,839
<b>Epping Forest</b>	131,137	266,220
<b>Harlow</b>	86,594	175,794
<b>Maldon</b>	64,425	130,789
<b>Rochford</b>	86,981	176,580
<b>Tendring</b>	145,803	295,994
<b>Uttlesford</b>	89,179	181,042
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,477,764</b>	<b>3,000,000</b>

### **New fast Covid-19 testing centre opens in Epping Forest**

From Friday 8 January 2021, a new fast testing centre opens in Epping Forest for those who DO NOT have symptoms of Covid-19.

The new Epping Forest Testing Centre is situated at Theydon Bois Village Hall Coppice Row, CM16 7ER.

Anyone WITH symptoms should book a test via the NHS Test and Trace App, or at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

This additional centre has been established in response to the current infection rate in the district of Epping Forest now reaching 1321.9 per 100,000 (according to the latest available data, released on 7<sup>th</sup> January). This testing centre is the sixth of its kind in Essex joining the line-up of existing centres, in Rayleigh at the Megacentre, the Civic Centre in Harlow, the Nightingale Centre in Brentwood, the Towngate Theatre in Basildon and The Place Leisure Centre in Pitsea. These new centres are among the first of their kind in the region, offering new and fast Lateral Flow Tests to the wider population.

Dr Mike Gogarty, Essex's Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, said: "Infection rates in Epping Forest are rising rapidly and local NHS services are coming under significant strain as a result of the new variant of Covid-19. A 'critical incident' was declared last week, with critical care and bed capacity rising as well as high staff sickness and self-isolation levels.

"This additional testing centre will allow us to test even more people in the worst affected areas where we continue to see worryingly high rates. We know that over 5,000 people have already been tested at the first three fast testing centres which we have opened.

"Testing people who feel well will help identify the hidden cases in the community – people who may be unwittingly infecting others. If you test positive with one of the new fast tests, you will be asked to self-isolate, and take a further test to confirm the initial result."

The County Council is totally determined to do all it can to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in Essex, especially in the areas like Epping Forest where cases continue to increase considerably as a result of the new variant.

## **Latest Covid-19 Data**

Covid-19 data for Essex (excluding Southend and Thurrock) is published online here:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/local-outbreak-control-plan>

### **Cases and rates**

In the seven days to 31/12/20, there were 15,474 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Essex. This is the latest date for which complete data is available.

As at 31/12/20, the weekly case rate for Essex is 1,039 per 100,000. This is the latest date for which complete data is available.

As at 31/12/20, the highest weekly case rates were in Epping Forest and Castle Point, with rates of 1,321.9 and 1,326.3 per 100,000, respectively.

### **Hospitals**

As at 05/01/21, the data that Essex County Council has received shows that there were 1,024 beds occupied by confirmed Covid-19 patients in Essex hospital trusts. This equates to 34% of trust capacity and is 7% lower compared to bed occupancy one week previous (29/12/20). **However, data was not received from one hospital meaning that the data relating to bed occupancy stated above is under reported by circa 250. With this data added, it equates to an approximate 15% increase.**

The latest Covid news and statements from Essex County Council are available here:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/latest-news>

## **Colchester and Ipswich Hospital**

Last Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January I attended a remote meeting of the Council of Governors at Colchester hospital, where its CEO, Nick Hulme, who last week celebrated 41 years working for the NHS, gave a report on how they were coping with the Virus, on vaccination and other areas.

- Out of the 10,000 people who work there, over 3500 had already received.
- Both hospitals were full.
- They recorded the highest number of patients for Cancer treatment.
- The amount of Intensive Care Units (ICU) had doubled in both sites.
- The Pathology unit had performed miracles in turning results round.....

He finally blasted those idiots who very recently stormed the momentarily empty A&E section, and who were in self-denial of the dreadful situation, and urged everyone to treat their injudicious claim that COVID does not exist with the contempt that it deserves.

## **New funding to cut fuel bills and help tackle climate change**

A Government grant has been awarded to Essex County Council and seven of the county's city, district and borough councils to install insulation and energy efficient heating in Essex homes.

The new funding will see even more people in Essex who are unable to heat their homes properly get help to keep their homes warm this winter.

The £813,000 funding comes from the £200m Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme, established by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The funding is designed to support local authorities to help homeowners and landlords install energy saving measures in homes across Essex.

Aran Insulation has recently been appointed as the contractor to deliver the measures which include installing energy efficient heating and all types of insulation.

The installation of these measures will take place between now and the end of March next year.

Nina Heigham, Business Development Manager at Aran Insulation said: "We are very excited to be working on this project with Essex County Council and other local authorities and hope it will build on the previous programmes of work across the county, improving the efficiency of homes and reduce fuel poverty."

To be eligible for up to £10,000 grant, homes to be improved should be currently rated as Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) E, F or G and the household income below £30,000.

Cllr Simon Walsh, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action said in these difficult times no one should be forced to choose between putting food on the table and keeping their home warm. It is wonderful that we can help make a difference to people's lives in this way.

This is a fantastic initiative which will not only help make residents' homes warmer and save money on bills but will also help cut the county's carbon emissions to help tackle climate change.

Residents can check their eligibility for the funding and, if applicable, apply for the grant by emailing Aran Insulation at [info@arangroup.co.uk](mailto:info@arangroup.co.uk) or calling 0800 587 7795.

The seven local councils involved in the bid are:

Braintree District Council

Chelmsford City Council

Colchester Borough Council

Epping Forest District Council

Rochford District Council

Tendring District Council

Uttlesford District Council

