

Bolton Position – 5 National Tests

28/5/2020

The Government has set out five tests that must be satisfied for adjusting or easing the lockdown. The following considers the local situation in Bolton against each of these tests:

1. Protect the NHS ability to cope. To be confident that we are able to provide sufficient critical care and sufficient capacity treatment across the UK

The NHS across Bolton along with social care colleagues have tirelessly worked to meet the challenges of the pandemic crisis. Throughout the response Bolton NHS Foundation Trust has provided excellent care and managed demand for local residents requiring critical and specialist care, and this has included provision for children and young people. The number of people being admitted for critical care relating to covid-19 related disease is falling.

Throughout the response there have been active communication campaigns with children and families to remind everyone that health care services have been working differently but are still open across Bolton. Please remember that for children and young people who are injured, sick or unwell services are still available through local GPs, by telephoning NHS 111 or accessing the local accident and emergency department.

2. See a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rates from covid-19 so we are confident that we have moved beyond the peak

As of the latest data announced on 27th May 2020 there have been 210 deaths with COVID-19 at Royal Bolton hospital. Looking at deaths that take place in the hospital only gives us a partial picture and we have been monitoring weekly data from the Office for National Statistics on all deaths to our residents. The latest figures we have from ONS were announced on 26th May, for deaths that occurred up to 15th May and registered up to 23rd May and area a total of 266 deaths. The majority of these are amongst older people. Since the beginning of May, the numbers of deaths with COVID-19 have been falling and the local picture indicates that we have moved beyond the peak.

3. Reliable data from SAGE showing that the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board

Many of you will have heard of the 'R number' and the importance of keeping this below 1. The reproduction number or 'R number' is the average number of secondary infections produced by one person with COVID-19 infection. If R is greater than 1 the epidemic is seen to be growing, if less than 1 the epidemic is shrinking.

As of 22nd May 2020, the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has reported that the R number lies between 0.7-1.0. SAGE have indicated that they are confident that overall the R is not above 1. This means that the number of infections is not increasing, and is very likely to be decreasing.

R cannot be measured directly so there is always some uncertainty around its exact value. It is an average figure so we can expect variations, for example between different areas of the country. Whilst in theory R could be calculated at Bolton level the number would be largely meaningless given the uncertainty that would be inherent in a figure at this lower geography.

No single piece of data tells the whole story of any outbreak. R is not the only important measure of the epidemic. R indicates whether the epidemic is getting bigger or smaller but not how large it is. The number of people currently infected with COVID-19 – and so able to pass it on – is very important.

It is difficult to be certain about the impact of any easement or adjustment of lockdown on the rate of infection.

Recently the Department for Education published an overview of scientific advice and information on coronavirus (COVID 19)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885631/Overview_of_scientific_advice_and_information_on_coronavirus_COVID19.pdf

This includes information on the spread and vulnerability to covid-19 infection amongst children and young people:

- There is a high degree of confidence that children who are infected with Covid-19 tend to have less severe symptoms than adults who are infected: children are often asymptomatic or have a mild course of illness.
- Serious COVID19-related illness and death amongst children and young people is extremely rare: mortality seems to be consistent at around 0.01% - in a similar region to seasonal influenza
- There is evidence that susceptibility to infection of younger children (up to 11-13) might be lower than for adults but the degree of confidence in this is low. There is not enough evidence to indicate whether susceptibility to infection is different to adults.
- There is no evidence to suggest that children transmit the virus any more than adults. Some studies suggest younger children may transmit less but the evidence is mixed.

4. Be confident that the range of operational challenges including testing capacity and PPE are in hand with supply able to meet future demand

Schools are being supported to develop risk assessments in preparation for the opening up to more children. Further advice, guidance and support has been given to school leaders covering topics including PPE and infection prevention control. If schools are struggling to source PPE directly, they can request a pack from the Council by emailing policyandperformance@bolton.gov.uk Webinars and further resources have also been issued to support schools.

Testing is now available for everyone over the age of five years with any of the following covid-19 symptoms:

- New continuous cough OR
- High temperature OR

- Anosmia: loss or change to normal sense of taste or smell

For those with symptoms all members of their household must self-isolate in line with current guidelines, unless the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result.

There are imminent plans to offer testing to under 5's and information on this will be disseminated through communication channels as soon as the detail becomes available.

Full details of testing arrangements in Bolton are provided in Appendix 1.

The NHS Test and Trace system has been launched on Thursday 28th May 2020. This means that anyone who has had a positive test will be contacted by the test and trace team to identify who they may have come into contact with. All close contacts considered at risk will be offered further advice on self-isolating and testing if they develop symptoms. We are quickly working to embed local policies and procedures relating to the local test and trace system for Bolton and will be engaging with local schools around these arrangements.

5. Be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infection that overwhelms the NHS

As with the previous point, it is difficult to be certain about the impact of adjustments. Analysts from Bolton Council's public health team and the local NHS are closely monitoring a range of data to understand the impact on Bolton's residents and will continue to do so throughout the pandemic.

Appendix 1

Testing for the general public

Testing is available at the University of Bolton Stadium and can be booked by visiting: <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/council/coronavirus-covid-19-testing/1>

Or through the national portal: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus Those without internet telephone: 119

Testing for educational staff

There are currently two key routes for the testing of essential workers and/or their household members in Bolton who are symptomatic:

1. National Testing

The government has launched a national website which enables individuals to self-refer for testing <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/> and access a regional testing centre.

2. Local Testing

Education and childcare workers can be tested at the University of Bolton Stadium drive-through facilities.

If the local test route is preferred, Headteachers need to contact by email their designated Senior HR Adviser who will issue a booking referral form and then submit it on School's behalf. For schools that do not buy the HR SLA then please contact Tanya Johnson, School's HR Manager, Bolton Council at tanya.johnson@bolton.gov.uk who will manage the referral.

This action needs to be carried out by 11.30 am each day.