

## COVID – local update on cases and testing

South Cambridgeshire's COVID-19 infections continue to rise; as of Tuesday this week, the Clinical Commissioning Group reported that we have 338 cases per 100,000 population in our district. The plea from health partners is to remember that COVID hasn't gone away, so we still need to:

- Take twice weekly [rapid \(Lateral Flow\) tests – you can do this immediately or collect test at home packs from a number of sites, or you can order packs online to do at home](#)
- Isolate and [book a test if you have COVID symptoms](#)
- Remain cautious
- [Get vaccinated](#)

## Universal Credit: available support

Changes are being made to the Universal Credit system this month which will see the temporary £20 a week uplift to payments coming to an end. The uplift was introduced by the Government in response to the pandemic and ended on 6 October, when Universal Credit payments returned to their pre-pandemic levels. With that in mind, we thought it would be useful to set out the support that is available from us to residents who may be facing financial hardship.

Residents finding it difficult to transition back to previous Universal Credit payment levels should contact us as soon as possible so that we can discuss the support that we may be able to provide. There are a range of options for those struggling financially, including:

- Discretionary Housing Payments which provide financial support towards housing costs. You can [apply for these Discretionary Housing Payments here](#)
- The Council Tax Hardship Fund, which aims to provide support to those who are struggling financially because of the pandemic. You can [apply for this Hardship Fund here](#)
- Support and advice from our Welfare and Money Maximisation Officer, Lucy Tompkins, who can be contacted via [lucy.tompkins@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.tompkins@scambs.gov.uk)
- Signposting to external support and advice agencies
- Along with Cambridgeshire County Council and partners, we also still offer a one-off small payment to help with immediate food or fuel needs. Anyone needing that one-off help should [email our communities team](#).

[Email our Benefits team](#) if you have specific questions or call 03450 450 061. Residents on Universal Credit can also seek financial advice and support via [Citizens Advice](#). This should be accessed via a referral from their work coach at [DWP Cambridge](#).

## Council services to support people to live independently



As the world increasingly gets 'back to normal', we're aware that local voluntary groups may have been providing regular support for individuals who may otherwise not

have much contact with others. We wanted to let you know about a few Council services that are in place to support people to live independently at home, to keep connected and to know that someone will regularly be in touch with them or on the end of the phone if they need some practical help.

Our Visiting Support Service is free for people over the age of 65, with a short-term focus to support people in their home – perhaps someone recovering from an operation, or who will be on their own for a short time-frame, or who is having an unexpected crisis. The Community Warden Service is longer-term, and a nominal fee is payable; these clients can be of any age, and the wardens will ring up or visit on a regular basis, and can help with tasks such as form-filling, picking up essentials from the shop, or just being a friendly face. The Community Lifeline Service (costing under £4.50/week) provides a worn pendant that individuals of any age can press in an emergency, such as if they have a fall at home on their own. You can find out more about all of these services on our website:

- [www.scambsgov.uk/visiting-support-service](http://www.scambsgov.uk/visiting-support-service)
- [www.scambsgov.uk/mobile-wardens-scheme](http://www.scambsgov.uk/mobile-wardens-scheme)
- [www.scambsgov.uk/lifelines](http://www.scambsgov.uk/lifelines)

We have produced some leaflets and posters to raise awareness of these services – please see these attached. If you would find it useful to have a batch of leaflets to share with residents who may find the information useful, or a few posters to display in your village, please email [Lesley.McFarlane@Scambsgov.uk](mailto:Lesley.McFarlane@Scambsgov.uk) who will be happy to post some to you. You may also wish to share our social media posts within your communities – please feel free to share our links from [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

## New grant for projects with children and young people

As part of the District Council's work to help people recover from the pandemic, a £38,000 fund is available for projects which help to empower children and young people; helping them to build self-belief and make a positive difference to themselves and their community. Organisations that are independently set-up for charitable or social benefit (including parish councils) can apply for funding grants of between £4,000 and £8,000 via an application form on our website.

The deadline to apply for the grants is Wednesday 10 November. It is expected that the fund should be spent between January 2022 and December 2022. Fine more details online on the [grant scheme and how organisations can apply](#).

## £10,000 match-funding available to community groups

If your group has been impacted financially by the pandemic you could be eligible for up to £10,000 match-funding from the National Emergencies Trust's Local Action Fund in partnership with Crowdfunder. The Local Action Fund aims to support long-term sustainability for local groups that are making a real difference to the people in their communities. [Find out more online.](#)

## Black History Month at the Council

The Council is marking Black History Month 2021 with a programme of virtual events (including a Q&A with the team that worked in Malawi on the film Mbeu Yosintha (Seeds of Change), a one-man play set on the night of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's assassination, plus a number of topical webinars and recommendations of things to read, watch and listen to during October to learn more about Black history and culture. Colleagues and residents alike are invited to [visit our webpage](#) to find out more and join in with any of the virtual events. Please feel free to share our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) posts during October within your communities.

## What works? What doesn't? Let us know...

We have introduced a number of surveys to capture feedback from residents about their interactions with different departments. We will read the responses and use them to shape the way we deliver these service in the future. Currently, residents are being encouraged to take a couple of minutes to tell us about their experiences with:

- our Benefits service – [click here to complete the Benefits survey](#)
- our Council Tax service – [click here to complete the Council Tax survey](#)

As part of your work supporting local residents and businesses, please feel free to share these links with anyone who you feel may give useful feedback. You can always find the links on the relevant areas of the website as 'alerts' at the top of the pages. Please note that this is only the start of a larger scheme of work, and surveys will be introduced to seek feedback in other services in the coming months.

We will send a further community update when there is useful information to share.

Thank you again for all your support.

Best wishes

Bill Handley

Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health and Wellbeing  
South Cambridgeshire District Council