



Message from Kelly O'Neill, Director of Public Health at Hounslow Council

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020

As of Wednesday 9 September, there were 76 people living in the borough who have had a confirmed positive test in the last seven days. People aged between 20 and 50 years old are the most affected group, and a small number of people are currently in hospital after contracting the infection.

Hounslow's rate is below the figure where a local lockdown would be considered, but this sustained increase, especially over the last two weeks, is a serious health concern. If we are to stop this increase in infection we have to all take responsibility - follow the guidance – look after yourself by socially distancing, wearing a mask and washing your hands. By doing so you protect your family, friends and neighbours, and together let's reduce the risk that comes with the ongoing spread of infection. We don't want any risk of a lockdown.

The data suggest the three main causes of the increase in positive cases are; **people not self-isolating when they return from a destination abroad which is not on the exempt list; parents not socially distancing outside school; and younger people ignoring social distancing when they meet up with friends.** We all want to get back to the things we enjoy but coronavirus has not gone away, and lives are still at risk.

Coronavirus can spread without symptoms. Don't be the person who spreads it to a vulnerable friend or family member for whom catching the virus could lead to serious illness. This week we welcomed children back to school. Teachers have put huge efforts in place to open their schools and make them safe for children to return. **Please be responsible as parents – don't gather in groups at the school gates, wear a mask if it's busy, don't send your child to school if they have symptoms and be patient with the schools phased opening arrangements.**

If you're going on holiday soon, keep up to date with the latest coronavirus news on travel bans and travel corridors. If your destination is not on the official exempt list you will need to self-isolate on your return for 14 days. It is against the law to leave your house during this period. Don't put others at risk. You should make a plan for how you will get your food and supplies during this time.

We all need to take responsibility and follow the guidelines if we want to avoid a situation where we cannot visit each other's homes and where shops and other businesses need to close again.