

Director of Public Health Office  
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Web Site: [www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk)

### **From the Director of Public Health: Greg Fell**

We have taken this decision based on carefully reviewing our local position against the Government's 5 tests.

- *Test 1: Protect the NHS's ability to cope.*
- *Test 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.*

With regards to Test 1, we know that the NHS in Sheffield is coping and that in regards to the second test, infection rates locally are coming down.

The Director of Public Health does not feel assured that the next three tests will be met in Sheffield by the 1st June.

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

The third test focuses on us having 'reliable data that shows the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels' - The Sheffield Director of Public Health, Greg Fell has advised that we do not currently have access to data about community transmission of Covid-19 at a local level. We cannot be confident of the rate of transmission and spread of Covid-19 at a community level. This is measured by R, which is based on how many people on average each person passes the disease onto. Our aim is to keep this below 1, resulting in a reduction to the number of cases. As shared in last night's Government briefing we were told that the R value is between 0.7 and 0.9 nationally. The Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance confirmed that this is very close to R=1.

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

At this point in the pandemic Test 4 is crucial. In relation to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) we are confident that our local framework approach will ensure that settings are supported with the use of PPE.

Locally, we do not feel confident that the recently announced NHS 'Test and Trace' programme is sufficiently well established and robust enough to effectively manage any local outbreaks of COVID-19.

This national NHS Test and Trace programme is welcomed and is essential in order for us to reduce virus transmission in Sheffield. The Director of Public Health's advice is the pace with which we can identify cases and then 'act' to isolate cases is vital. It requires an accurate and timely response. In Sheffield we want more time for this programme to mobilise, be tested and demonstrate that it is working before we start to rely on it.

- *Test 5: Be confident that any adjustments to the current measures will not risk a second peak of infections that overwhelms the NHS.*

We need to be confident that any adjustments will not risk a second peak or overwhelm our local NHS system. Given this is our aim we only want to increase the number of children in schools and settings when we are confident we have all the right systems in place locally and these are shown to be working and effective and that it is therefore as safe as possible for children and staff.

We will continue to monitor things closely and advise schools/settings when we do feel the time is right. For maintained schools, where the Council is the employer, we are instructing schools not to increase the number of children attending more widely. For all other schools, academies, and childcare settings, we are strongly advising that they also delay their wider reopening. We will continue to review our advice and guidance to all schools and childcare settings but, we advise that neither should open more widely before 15th June, in order to allow for a full 14 days cycle of the Test and Trace systems.

Greg Fell

Director of Public Health – Sheffield City Council

29 May 2020