

## **Kent County Council Services Update – Councillor Mrs Sarah Hohler – Member for Malling North Division**

This is a short summary of some of the key themes for KCC since lock down started in March: PPE supplies; the development of virtual meetings, both formal and informal, and member briefings; the need to keep on top of and adhere to the copious PHE and government guidance; the number of times national government has praised and called on the expertise of local government during the pandemic; the importance of testing and many more.

We have closed and re-opened HWRCs and country parks; popularity of library e-books and magazines and participation in online events; more investigations of scams by trading standards; changes in the way deaths have been registered (by phone) and the cancellation of birth registrations which need to be registered face to face. Support for businesses has been important, including through the Kent and Medway Growth Hub business helpline.

Kent Together was formed and has now dealt with nearly 6,000 requests for support from 4,200 people and continues to embody the way different organisations and communities across Kent have come together to help the vulnerable people most in need. Close partnership working with the NHS, Districts, VCS organisations, schools and providers has been essential as has the sterling work delivered by the Kent Resilience Forum.

You may have picked up from the media the problems facing KCC by the arrival of increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children whom we have a duty to care for. Government officials are seeking urgent offers of support from other local authorities through pledges of care placements, ever more needed with mandatory quarantine.

Recent news is the data on Covid outbreaks in care homes in the south east region. The data shows that Kent has the largest number of care homes and, currently, the lowest percentage of care homes which reported an outbreak, at 28.7%

Our priority has been the ongoing provision of as many of our public services as it has been possible to maintain and the safety and wellbeing of our staff, service users and residents.