Updates from Stockport Council - 23rd March

Today, 23 March, marks the day in 2020 that the UK first went into lockdown.

On this second anniversary, a National Day of Reflection, has been organised by charity Marie Curie, to remember those who have died during the pandemic and to show support for everyone who has been bereaved. To honour this day there will be a minute's silence at 12 noon.

The charity is also inviting people to make small gestures of support to show solidarity to those grieving, and help them feel less alone:
- wear or display daffodils
- shine a light at 8pm - outside or in your window

The Council will be lighting up the Town Hall and flying the flag at half-mast. Their online memorial book offers the opportunity to pay tribute to loved ones who have died from COVID-19. For further support and guidance, including bereavement support, you can visit the Healthy Stockport website.

COVID-19 update

Rates in Stockport are rising rapidly again, and cases are currently at 647.9 per 100,000 population. This rise is likely to be an underestimate in cases as people are testing less frequently. Hospitalisations are also rising again. See the latest published data online.

While protections have been lifted legally, the pandemic is far from over and we still need to do our best to help keep the most vulnerable to the virus safe, including the elderly and immunosuppressed. The best way you can do this is by getting vaccinated and keeping up with basic methods to stem the transmission. The guidance on what you can do to keep yourself and others safe outlines these measures well.

Remember if you do test positive for Covid, the best advice to help stem the spread is that you should still self-isolate for five days and beyond, until you have received two negative tests on consecutive days.

Until 1 April free Lateral Flow Device and PCR testing for the public are still available. LFD tests can be ordered online, or picked up at many local libraries, Stockport pharmacies and at Fred Perry House. From April, there will be some ongoing free testing for a small number of at-risk groups, which the government will outline later.

All-Age Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy Consultation

Stockport Council want to hear about what matters to you, and your ideas for how we can work together to look after our mental health and wellbeing.

While many of us experience mental illness at some time in our lives, mental health is more than the absence of illness. Positive mental health means feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment. "Mental wellbeing" includes feelings of happiness and contentment, as well as experiencing positive relationships, feeling that we have some control over our life and a sense of purpose.

The pandemic has affected all of us, leading many of us to reflect on our health and mental wellbeing. By completing this survey, you can help to shape the shared priorities for action for the future. The survey closes on 11 April 2022.

£45 voucher for some Stockport residents to support with rising cost of living

Stockport Council is distributing £45 vouchers to eligible households, to help support with the rising cost of living. This payment is separate to the government's £150 energy rebate, and the additional £15 for some households from Stockport Council.

To be eligible, a household must receive council tax support and/or housing benefit as paid by Stockport Council, and they must not have benefited from the holiday support vouchers scheme which has seen a minimum of £105 awarded to eligible families.

Vouchers will be sent by post and are expected to land from Monday 28th March. Residents should take their letter with the barcode attached to any Post Office branch to redeem the voucher. This must be done within 3 weeks of the date of issue.

If residents have queries, please direct them to the Stockport Council News page, which will be updated in due course.

Free Smart Works Greater Manchester Jobs Fair for women

Smart Works, provider of free Career Coaching, Interview Styling and services for unemployed women, have organised a free Jobs Fair for women looking to get into work. The Fair, which takes place on Monday 28th March, 10:30am - 2pm at Stockport Central Library, is an opportunity to meet employers who have live job vacancies. There's no need to register - just show up on the day. For any queries call: 0161 974 0669 or email greatermanchester@smartworks.org.uk.

Free digital and podcasting workshops for the over 50s

Sonder Radio, a community-driven radio station and organisation, who deliver workshops to people aged 50+, have organised a free workshop to develop digital and podcasting skills. 'Let's Get Digital', starts 4th April, is completely free to attend and open to Stockport residents aged over 50. There is also a preliminary session to assist with getting online on 31st March. Please share with the people you support. Download the flyers.

£2.63m funding for new Stockport digital arts neighbourhood

Stockport Council has been awarded £2.63m of Cultural Development Funding to deliver a Creative Campus in the Town Centre. The aim is to provide a three-year town centre reinvigoration programme, continuing with the transformation of the town centre into a sustainable, leading digital arts neighbourhood. The award will also support training and engagement, building skills for the future and ensuring inclusiveness and access to digital art activities. Read more on Stockport Council's news page.

Laura – are you mentioning Neurodiversity Celebration Week this week?
We're doing some promotion of our website assistive technology:

Neurodiversity Celebration Week

During Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Stockport Council are highlighting the ways you can customise how you view and move around their website using the ReciteMe tool. You can find it at the top of every page using the 'Accessibility' link: Welcome to Stockport Council.