

To Parents and Carers

Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire SY2 6ND

Date: 22 November 2021

My Ref: TM 13

Your Ref

Dear Parents and Carers,

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself and to take a moment to reflect on how the pandemic has affected and will continue to affect schools and education.

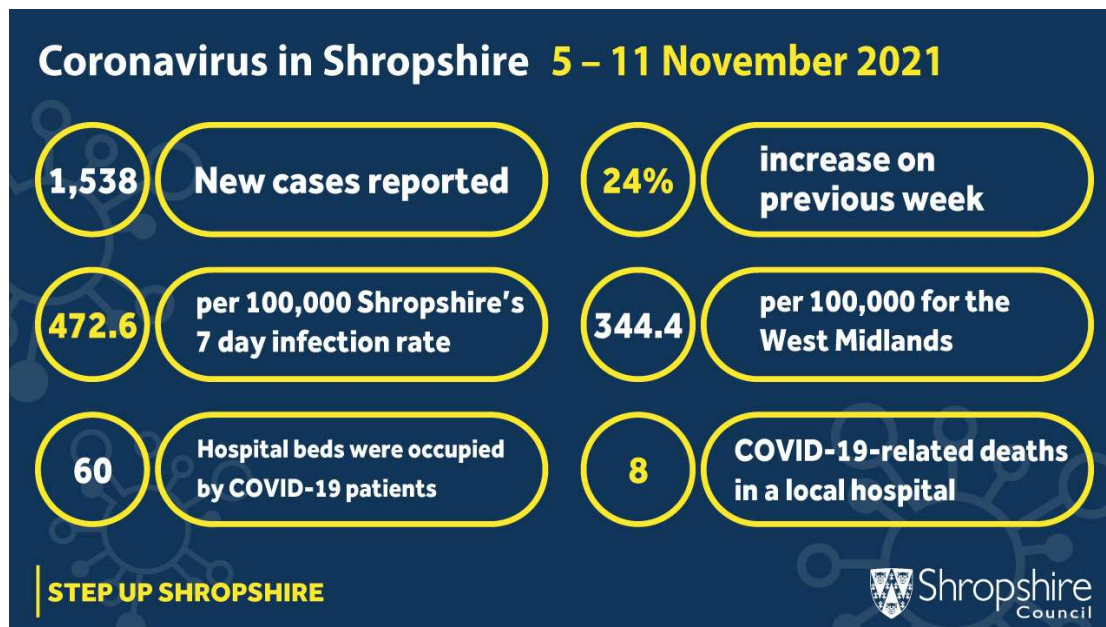
I was extremely pleased and proud to be appointed as Executive Director of People for Shropshire Council. I started this new role in late September and, as the role includes the responsibility for children and young people across Shropshire, I have spent recent weeks speaking to many headteachers across Shropshire and learning more about our education system.

Covid has brought us all many challenges and affected almost every aspect of our daily lives. It has unquestionably affected children and their education. Schools moved to remote education for a period time while also ensuring that key workers' children and vulnerable children could continue to access places in school. School staff have been some of our unsung heroes during the pandemic and our schools have done an amazing job. Parents too have played a vital role in supporting home learning and maintaining routines. I would like to say thank you for all of your efforts and support during this time.

The pandemic is certainly not over. Many schools will have seen a number of Covid cases since the start of the school year in September and some schools have seen quite a high number of cases. Equally, we have seen schools having to make difficult choices over events such as open evenings for Year 6 pupils. I know that this brings disruption not only to schools but also to families but by working together we have made our way through this difficult period.

Current Covid case rates in Shropshire are among the highest in the West Midlands (see table below). We should all continue to play our part to reduce the spread of the infection. We would urge parents and carers to remain vigilant towards Covid symptoms, arrange PCR tests where you have concerns and regular LFT testing, encourage handwashing and good hygiene, and keep indoor areas well ventilated. As always, we would encourage parents and carers to use face coverings in enclosed spaces such as in school buildings and to remember to observe social distancing guidelines.

The Covid statistics for Shropshire (5-11 November) are shown below:



Christmas is always a busy time in schools. Traditionally, schools would arrange a variety of exciting activities such as Christmas performances, carol concerts, school fayres and Christmas parties. Schools will be making decisions as to what can and can't go ahead this year. Each school will be different and headteachers will be making decisions based on factors that apply to their school. These factors would include the number of covid cases, the spaces available in school, corridor spaces, ventilation and so on. It is likely that some schools will arrange a number of Christmas activities while other schools will be unable to do so. Each school will have guidance from the DfE and from Shropshire Council. Importantly we place our full trust in headteachers and their ability to make the right decision for their school community.

Most secondary school pupils will now have been offered a Covid vaccination and I would like to thank not only parents and schools but also the School Aged Immunisation Service for ensuring that this process went smoothly. Our levels of vaccination in 12-15 year olds are the highest in the region.

By continuing to work together we can make sure that young people get the very best education possible and I look forward to working closely with parents and schools in the future.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Miles
Executive Director of People