

Taskforce to bolster local response to coronavirus

Local Government Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has launched a new taskforce to strengthen local plans to help tackle the outbreak of coronavirus.

The taskforce will bring together senior experts from across key sectors – including resilience, local government, public health and adult social care fields – who will assess Local Resilience Forum (LRF) plans and provide support and advice to ensure they are robust.

It will be led by Andy Battle, the recently retired Assistant Chief Constable for West Yorkshire and the LRF chair for that region, and Dr Ruth Hussey CB OBE, the former Chief Medical Officer for Wales.

There are 38 LRFs in England which are made up of emergency services, a range of government agencies, health bodies and local authorities.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We all have a part to play in managing the spread of coronavirus and I am working to ensure local partners are fully equipped to play their part, too. Today I established a taskforce to support Local Resilience Forums, helping them fully prepare for a range of scenarios at a local level.

This includes ensuring that LRFs have robust plans in place for helping local people and dealing with pandemic flu of all types, including coronavirus.

With extensive experience, the new taskforce will provide LRFs with the capability and expertise to respond quickly and effectively.

As part of the review process the taskforce will:

- Analyse LRF local flu response plans;
- Discuss support with LRF chairs for vulnerable people, and how key services could be maintained;
- Commission a tabletop exercise in each LRF area; and

- Examine relationships between LRFs and Local Health Partnerships to ensure they can facilitate and support cross-LRF working

The taskforce will also strengthen LRF capability through inputting specialist advice from health, local government and resilience experts and ensuring that areas of good practice are actively shared.

The outcome of the review will be used to gauge the level of LRF preparedness for coronavirus, align and strengthen relationships between LRFs and health partners, and support LRFs to enhance their planning by identifying priorities and key risks in their current planning or capability.