

## Local context

### Covid-19 High Tier

It was announced yesterday (26 November) that starting on Wednesday 2 December, new local Tiers will replace national restrictions across England, with Hampshire placed under [Tier 2: High alert](#).

The decision was made by the Government, based on the criteria as set out in the [COVID-19 Winter Plan](#). The Government will review the allocations every 14 days, with the first review complete by the end of 16 December.

In a [press release](#), the Leader of Hampshire County Council and Chairman of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board, Councillor Keith Mans, is quoted: “It is vitally important that we continue to follow the rules to help keep the virus under control as we head further into winter. My sincere thanks to all Hampshire residents for their resilience and co-operation during the recent period of national restrictions. What we all do makes a big difference, and it is only by working together and following the rules that we can continue to protect ourselves, our communities and our loved ones.”

The County Council continues to proactively communicate the Tier guidance as widely as possible to all stakeholders and settings across Hampshire including: issuing alert emails to stakeholders, updating the [County Council Covid-19 webpage](#), issuing a [Your Hampshire](#) residents’ e-newsletter, undertaking broadcast interviews television and radio, and promoting digital assets across social media platforms, including a new [short and informative animation](#).

### Trading Standards Service warning

Hampshire County Council’s Trading Standards Service is reminding residents how to shop safely online and avoid the risk of buying unsafe goods as more shoppers are making purchases online ahead of the festive period. A [press release](#) has issued and more information is available on the [Trading Standards](#) webpages.

### Train travel over the festive period

Rail operators in the region have confirmed rail services which will be running over the Christmas and New Year period:

- [South Western Railway](#)
- [Great Western Railway](#)
- [Southeastern](#)

To help those who are travelling this year to do so safely and comfortably, operators are asking customers to check their journeys before travel online and to follow [government guidance](#) about safe travelling.

## National context

### Statements on returning to a regional tiered approach

Yesterday (26 November) the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, made a [statement](#) on Covid-19 and provided an update on the return to a tiered system of local restrictions at a special press conference. The Prime Minister outlined the new regional tiered approach and the reasons behind it, including the need to continue preventing further transmission of the virus, while protecting jobs and keeping schools open.

The Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, delivered a [statement](#) in Parliament on the Tier allocations and the Government’s testing programme.

In addition, a [written statement](#) from the Health and Social Care Secretary to the House of Commons was issued which contains the full table of Tier allocations across the country, and the reasonings for each Tier allocation. For **Hampshire**, Portsmouth and Southampton it states: “There is a mixed picture across this area although the overall case rate is now 152/100,000 and falling in almost all areas. NHS admissions were increasing rapidly until mid-November and are now stable.”

## Communities

### **Health and Safety Executive business spot check**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are carrying out spot checks by calling and visiting workplaces, often unannounced, to make sure employers are following Covid-19 Secure guidelines. HSE has [announced](#) that they have extended this offer to councils and are able to contact local authority enforced businesses to help councils understand how many businesses in their area are following government guidance.

### **Jobcentres**

The Department for Work and Pensions has [issued](#) guidance for customers to confirm that under the new regional Tier system, Jobcentres will remain open, as they have throughout the pandemic. The guidance outlines how support will work under each Tier.

### **Wedding refunds**

The Competition and Markets Authority has issued new warnings to firms over concerns that people are still not receiving fair refunds for weddings that could not go ahead during the pandemic. All updates on the CMA’s work on refunds can be found on the [COVID-19 response page](#).

## Children and education

### **Technology use survey**

The Department for Education (DfE), in partnership with Cooper Gibson Research, has launched a new survey to explore how technology is being used in schools. Schools will be randomly selected to participate and will be contacted by email or phone by Cooper Gibson Research over the coming days.

### **Ofqual reports**

Ofqual has [published](#) two reports evaluating summer 2020 qualification results by student group. The research suggests that students were not systemically disadvantaged in 2020 on the basis of their protected characteristics or socioeconomic status – they compared this year’s students with those taking qualifications in summer 2018 and 2019.

### **Further education colleges and schools guidance**

DfE has [updated](#) the guidance on actions for FE colleges and providers during the Covid-19 outbreak on the appropriate use of face coverings outside of the teaching and learning environment, safe behaviour off-site, residential providers and managing national and local restrictions. In addition, DfE has [updated](#) the guidance for early years, schools and special schools to reflect the local restriction Tiers.

### **Children's social care services guidance**

DfE has [updated](#) the sections on support for foster families, access to respite care, short break services, restrictions on visitors in residential settings and mental health of looked-after children and care leavers. This is to reflect the new local restriction Tiers which will come into force on 2 December.

## Adults' social care and public health

### **Contain Outbreak Management Fund**

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has [announced](#) that the Contain Outbreak Management Fund will be extended so that it can provide monthly payments to councils facing higher restrictions until the end of the financial year. For authorities in Tier 3, the funding will amount to £4 per

head of population per month, and for those in Tier 2, it will amount to £2 per head of population per month.

### Care homes

DHSC has [updated](#) guidance on how to protect care home residents and staff in line with the local restriction Tier system that will be in place in England from 2 December.

### National flu and Covid-19 surveillance reports

Public Health England (PHE) has [published](#) the latest weekly national influenza and Covid-19 report, monitoring rates of Covid-19, seasonal flu and other seasonal respiratory illnesses.

### Flu vaccine uptake

PHE has [announced](#) that flu vaccine uptake among people aged 65 years and over is on track to be highest on record. Three-quarters (75%) of those aged 65 and over in England have received the free vaccine so far this year – up from 72.4% at the end of the last flu season. Uptake is also the highest it has ever been in 2 and 3 year olds, at 47.6% and 49.4%, [data published by Public Health England](#) shows.

### Vaccine guidance

PHE has [published](#) new guidance to support frontline workers in delivering the Covid-19 vaccine to the most vulnerable.

### Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine

The Government has formally [asked](#) the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to evaluate whether supply of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine can be authorised.

## Environment, transport and travel

### Travel corridors

The Department for Transport has [confirmed](#) that Aruba, Bhutan, Mongolia, the Pacific Islands and Timor-Leste have been added to list of travel corridors for the UK. Also, Estonia and Latvia have been removed from of the UK's travel corridor list as data shows a significant increase in confirmed cases. People arriving in the UK from Estonia and Latvia from 4am Saturday 28 November will now need to self-isolate for two weeks.

## National Covid-19 data

As of 5.30pm on 26 November, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19 was **1,574,562** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **17,555**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **57,031**, with **498** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **0.9-1.0** and the growth rate range is **-2% to 0%** per day as of 27 November.

## Additional links

- Hampshire County Council webpages on coronavirus (including links to press releases): <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus>
- Latest information on coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- NHS information on coronavirus: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- FAQ from the Cabinet Office: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

- PPE guidance hub: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>
- Guidance for local government: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-local-government>
- County Councils Network (CCN) coronavirus information pages: <https://www.countycouncilsnetwork.org.uk/coronavirus-information-for-local-authorities/>
- Local Government Association (LGA) councillor guidance: <https://www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-outbreak-councillor-guidance>

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