

Local context

Local Covid-19 data

The County Council will today (1 March) [publish](#) the latest weekly Covid-19 data summary. Hampshire is seeing a continued steady decrease in the number of positive cases but is urging residents to keep following the rules.

The total number of cases in Hampshire since March 2020 is now 60,937 and there have been 803 cases confirmed in the last seven days.

The county's current weekly case rate has decreased to 69 per 100,000 population and remains below the England case rate at 105.

There have been 2,550 Covid-19 associated deaths in Hampshire since March 2020, and 85 deaths reported in the last seven days.

The full data dashboard is available on the [Keep Hampshire Safe webpage](#). [Eastleigh Town Centre](#)

Schools

Following publication of the Government's [roadmap](#) out of lockdown, primary and secondary schools across Hampshire are preparing up for a safe full return to face-to-face education from 8 March.

Existing protective measures have been strengthened in schools, with adults and students in year 7 and above to wear face coverings in all indoor settings, including classrooms. In addition, there will be lateral flow testing for staff in all schools and for secondary aged pupils. This will mean a flexible return for secondary schools while testing is rolled out. Parents and students are reminded that testing is not a substitute for other protective measures: everyone must continue to follow 'hands, face, space' guidance throughout the school day, and parents and carers should observe social distancing in the playground and around the school gates during drop off and pick up.

In the [press release](#), Councillor Roz Chadd, Executive Member for Education and Skills, is quoted: "We welcome the announcement that the return to education is being prioritised in the Government's plan... access to high quality, face-to-face learning brings so many benefits for children and young people, not only in terms of academic progression but also for their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, through opportunities to socialise with their peers and get regular exercise through walking or cycling to school and taking part in sports."

Schools are communicating specific guidance to parents and carers around testing and face coverings. For more information, please see the [press release](#) and the [County Council's website](#).

Health and wellbeing support for business owners

Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is partnering with the Federation of Small Business (FSB) to offer businesses a care package. Solent LEP recognises that the pandemic is causing extra challenges for many and if a business owner is struggling with physical or mental health, getting help quickly can make a big difference to their business and personal life.

For more information please see the [Solent LEP website](#) or the [information leaflet](#).

National context

National Covid-19 cases, deaths and vaccines data

The Covid-19 vaccination daily data shows that up to 28 February, a total of **20,275,451** people have received the 1st dose and a total of **815,816** people have received the 2nd dose.

As of 4pm on 1 March, the total number of people tested positive for Covid-19 was **4,182,009** and daily number of lab-confirmed cases was **5,455**. The total number of Covid-19 associated deaths within 28 days of a positive test was **122,953** with **104** deaths reported on the day. The data is available to [view online](#).

The R number range for the UK is **0.6 – 0.9** and the growth rate range **-6% to -2%** per day as of 26 February.

Communities

Local elections

The Government has [published](#) guidance on how political parties, candidates, agents and campaigners can undertake Covid-secure campaigning activity for the May elections. One-to-one campaigning outdoors will be allowed from 8 March, such as leafleting and canvassing, however the Constitution Minister urges “social responsibility” from political parties and individual activists.

Children and education

Rapid testing

The Department of Health and Social Care has [announced](#) that whole families and households with primary school, secondary school and college age children, including childcare and support bubbles, will be able to test themselves twice every week from home as schools return from 8 March. Twice-weekly testing will also be offered to adults working in the wider school community, including bus drivers and after school club leaders.

Asymptomatic testing for early years staff

The Department for Education (DfE) is [expanding](#) the provision of home testing kits to staff in all private, voluntary and independent nurseries. All staff at school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools are already covered.

Adults’ social care and public health

Vaccination programme

Last week, the Health Secretary, Matt Hancock, [delivered](#) a statement on Covid-19 and provided an update on phase two of the vaccination programme.

This follows the publication of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation’s (JCVI) interim advice on the groups that should be prioritised in phase two of the coronavirus vaccination programme. The JCVI reports that an age-based approach remains the most effective way of reducing death and hospitalisation from Covid-19.

Community Testing Programme

Lord Bethell, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), has [written](#) to council chief executives, setting out the extension of the Community Testing Programme until at least 30 June 2021.

Testing for essential workers

The Business Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, has [written](#) to all businesses registered about PCR tests for staff who cannot work from home. In the letter, he encourages businesses to test their staff by [registering](#) for free testing kits provided by the Government.

Brazilian variant

Public Health England (PHE) has [confirmed](#) that up to 6 cases of the Variant of Concern first identified in Manaus, Brazil (P.1) have been detected in the UK.

Additional links

- NHS information on the Covid-19 vaccination programme: www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination
- 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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