

Extra COVID-19 support deployed to parts of the South West

From Friday 27 August additional support will be deployed to some local authorities in the South West of England.

Following the latest review of COVID-19 data, additional support will be deployed to Cornwall, the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay local authority areas in response to a rise in COVID-19 cases in the area.

The decision has been made in partnership with local authorities and is based on the latest data and local insights. Targeted additional support will be provided in response to the growth of COVID-19 cases in the region, while NHS pressures and the number of cases and deaths will be carefully monitored.

The package includes:

- logistical support to maximise vaccine and testing uptake
- further help for local public health campaigns
- temporary use of face coverings in communal areas outside classrooms in secondary schools and colleges
- increased surveillance using multiple methods to monitor the situation.

This additional support will be in place for five weeks from Friday 27 August to allow for targeted local action. Pupils will return to school from next week as planned.

Local residents and visitors to the areas are urged to remain cautious and follow the national guidance, including to get vaccinated, wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport, meet outdoors where possible, let fresh air into homes or other enclosed spaces, and consider minimising the number, proximity and duration of social interactions.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Vaccines have built an enormous wall of defence that spans the length of the country, allowing us to regain our lost freedoms – from seeing our loved ones to going on holiday. The vaccines have already helped to prevent over 24 million infections and saved more than 105,000 lives.

While vaccines have tipped the odds in our favour, we have to keep listening to the data. To control the spread of the virus we're working closely with local authorities and the directors of public health in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, supporting the great work that's already underway, to make sure testing is widely available and as many people as possible are protected by the vaccine.

I would urge anyone whether they live in, work in or are just visiting these beautiful areas, to test regularly and make sure you come forward for your jab at the earliest opportunity.

Public Health England data shows that the vaccination programme has substantially weakened the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths. Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms and even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from the virus.

Background

Surveillance methods will include genotype assay testing, genome sequencing and wastewater sampling.

The full list of areas in the South West where additional support will be offered is:

- Cornwall Council
- Council of the Isles of Scilly
- Devon County Council
- Plymouth City Council
- Torbay Council

And includes the district authority areas:

- East Devon District Council
- Exeter City Council
- Mid Devon District Council
- North Devon District Council
- South Hams District Council
- Teignbridge District Council
- Torridge District Council
- West Devon Borough Council