

Further measures in additional areas to tackle Delta (B1.617.2) variant

- Measures introduced in Greater Manchester and parts of Lancashire to stop spread of the Delta variant
- Follows decrease in cases in Bolton after the introduction of additional measures
- Response to suppress the spread of the variant, and break chains of transmission

The new interventions follow extensive COVID-19 surveillance which has detected a number of cases of the Delta (B1.617.2) variant in these communities.

Introduction of these additional measures will be led by local authorities to ensure the right steps are taken at the right time.

Testing, isolation and vaccinations will – in combination with existing guidance such as hands, face, space and fresh air – help suppress and control the spread of the virus and variants.

As part of the package, there is extra guidance on steps people can take, such as minimising travel in and out of the affected areas, to keep their loved ones and their communities safe.

Support available to local areas will include:

- specialist Surge Rapid Response Teams – these can be deployed to support local authorities with logistics, planning and workforce to support measures such as testing, door-to-door visits to engage with residents and other activities
- military support to help local areas with testing, door-to-door community engagement, planning and logistics with decisions made based on local needs, including support from the nationally funded Military Aid to the Civil Authority (MACA)
- supervised in-school testing
- wastewater testing samples prioritised for sequencing
- specialist communications support to increase awareness and focus engagement with disadvantaged groups
- maximising vaccine uptake by expanding existing assets, developing new capacity and increasing local and targeted communications
- supervised in-school testing and discretion to reintroduce face coverings in communal areas in schools if directors of public health decide it is appropriate
- surge testing and enhanced contact tracing
- enhanced monitoring (genomic sequencing, genotype assay testing)

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said today in the House of Commons:

Working with local authorities, we are providing a strengthened package of support, based on what is working in Bolton, to help Greater Manchester and Lancashire tackle the rise in the Delta variant that we are seeing there. This includes Rapid Response Teams, putting in extra testing, military support and supervised in-school testing.

I want to encourage everyone in Greater Manchester and Lancashire to get the tests on offer. We know that this approach can work – we have seen it work in South London and in Bolton in stopping a rise in the number of cases.

This is the next stage of tackling the pandemic in Greater Manchester and in Lancashire, and of course it is vital that people in these areas, as everywhere, come forward and get the jab as soon as they are eligible because that is our way out of the pandemic together.

Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency Dr Jenny Harries said:

This variant is now the dominant strain of this virus across the UK, with cases continuing to rise in some areas. The most important thing that people in these areas can do is remain cautious, work from home if possible and remember to practise hands, face, space and fresh air.

Getting the vaccine gives a strong level of protection against this variant and I strongly recommend that everyone gets the jab when the NHS invites you – it will protect you and your loved ones.

Early research shows that vaccines provide strong protection against the new variants. Effectiveness against symptomatic disease from the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant is similar after 2 doses compared with the Alpha variant (B.1.1.7), and even higher levels of effectiveness are expected against hospitalisations and death.

The government and its world-leading scientists are closely monitoring the evolving situation and the rates of variants, and the government will not hesitate to take additional action whenever necessary.

Further details about the measures in each area are being made available through individual local authorities.

Lancashire County Council covers:

- Burnley (where further measures are already in place)
- Chorley
- Fylde
- Hyndburn
- Lancaster

- Pendle
- Preston
- Ribble Valley
- Rossendale
- South Ribble
- West Lancashire
- Wyre

Greater Manchester covers:

- Bolton (where further measures are already in place)
- Bury
- Manchester
- Oldham
- Rochdale
- Salford
- Stockport
- Trafford
- Tameside
- Wigan

Further measures are already in place in [Bedford, Blackburn with Darwen, Bolton, Burnley, Kirklees, Leicester City, Hounslow and North Tyneside](#).

Public Health England published its [study into the effectiveness of vaccines against the Delta \(B.1.617.2\) variant](#) on 22 May.

The study found that between 5 April and 16 May:

- the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine was 88% effective against symptomatic disease from the Delta variant 2 weeks after the second dose, compared with 93% effectiveness against the Alpha variant
- 2 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine were 60% effective against symptomatic disease from the Delta variant compared with 66% effectiveness against the Alpha variant
- both vaccines were 33% effective against symptomatic disease from Delta 3 weeks after the first dose compared with around 50% effectiveness against the Kent variant

Genotype assay testing is a new technology which helps identify mutations linked to variants of concern, [announced by the Department of Health and Social Care on 22 March](#).