

Liverpool City Region to move into 'very high' local COVID Alert Level following rise in coronavirus infections

Following discussions over the weekend, the government and local leaders have agreed the need for further action to reduce the spread of coronavirus in the Liverpool City Region.

From Wednesday, Liverpool City Region will be placed onto the 'Very High' Local Covid Alert Level. The Liverpool City Region includes the local authority districts of Halton, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral, as well as the City of Liverpool.

Under the country's new three tiered Local Covid Alert Level system, the Very High alert level applies in the areas of greatest concern.

The new restrictions for the Liverpool City Region include:

- Pubs and bars will close. They can only remain open where they operate as if they were a restaurant – which means serving substantial meals, like a main lunchtime or evening meal. They may only serve alcohol as part of such a meal
- Indoor gyms and fitness/dance studios, sports facilities, leisure centres, betting shops, adult gaming centres and casinos will close
- Wedding receptions will not be permitted
- People should try to avoid travelling outside their local area, or entering another area rated Very High other than for work, education, accessing youth services, or to meet caring responsibilities
- People should avoid staying overnight in another part of the UK if they are resident in the Liverpool City Region and avoid staying overnight in the Liverpool City Region if they are resident elsewhere

The Prime Minister chaired COBR this morning, which was attended by Liverpool City Region Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram. COBR confirmed the new restrictions and the PM has announced these in a statement to the House of Commons this afternoon.

It follows a briefing earlier today by Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jonathan Van Tam, Medical Director of NHS England Steve Powis and Dr Jane Eddleston, Medical Lead for the North West, where they set out the latest data on the rising infection rates across the country.

The latest figures show that the North West has around 40% of all Covid-19 cases, with an eight-fold increase in patients being admitted to hospital. Currently, 30% of the North West's intensive care capacity is taken up with Covid-19 patients.

They warned that in in four weeks' time the North West could see more patients in intensive care than at the peak of the first wave unless action is taken.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I am hugely grateful to local leaders in the Liverpool City Region for the constructive discussions this weekend over the further steps we will take together to combat coronavirus. They will be critical to save lives and protect the NHS – so it can continue to provide the essential services that so many of us rely on.

This is a vital moment in our national effort against the second wave of the virus. We will continue to work closely with other local leaders in the days ahead.

The government has also confirmed £14 million for the Liverpool City Region to enhance enforcement and NHS Test and Trace. Local leaders will be able to use this for a range of activities including compliance and enforcement, enhanced contact tracing and support for the clinically extremely vulnerable.

They will also be able to call on the armed forces to provide additional logistical support if necessary.

The support is in addition to the package announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak last week to protect jobs and support businesses required to close their doors as a result of coronavirus restrictions.