

# Local Covid Alert Level update for Greater Manchester

Following discussions between local leaders and the government which today concluded without an agreement, Greater Manchester will move from Local COVID Alert Level High to Very High from 00.01 on Friday 23 October.

This means that new measures will come into place including:

- People must not socialise with anybody they do not live with, or have formed a support bubble with, in any indoor setting or in any private garden or at most outdoor hospitality venues and ticketed events;
- People must not socialise in a group of more than 6 in an outdoor public space such as a park or beach, the countryside, a public garden or a sports venue;
- All pubs and bars must close, unless they are serving substantial meals;
- Betting shops, casinos, bingo halls, adult gaming centres, and soft play areas will close
- People should try to avoid travelling outside the very-high alert level or entering a very-high alert level area, other than for work, education or for caring responsibilities or to travel through as part of a longer journey; and
- Residents should avoid staying overnight in another part of the UK, and others should avoid staying overnight in the Very High Alert area

The rate of COVID-19 infections is rising rapidly across the UK. The ONS estimate that one in every 240 people in England had the virus in the week from 25 September to 1 October and that the numbers infected are doubling every seven to 12 days. Cases are not evenly spread, with infection rates rising more rapidly in some areas than others.

In Greater Manchester, infection rates are among the highest in the country. As of 12 October, the weekly average for new cases was 1591, an increase of 302% in one month since 12 September.

There are now more COVID-19 patients in Greater Manchester Hospitals than in the whole of the South West and South East combined, and on the current trajectory the number of COVID patients in Greater Manchester will exceed the numbers from the first peak in April in 2 to 3 weeks.

To support the local authority during this period, the government will be providing a £22 million funding package to protect public health and local economies, including compliance, enforcement and contact tracing activity across Greater Manchester. The government will also continue to discuss further business support funding with local leaders in line with what was agreed for Lancashire and Merseyside.

The funding is in addition to Jobs Support Scheme set out by the Chancellor earlier this month, which will pay up to two thirds of employees' wages for

businesses required to close and provide grants worth up to £3,000 per month. Employees will have access to Universal Credit on top of this.

The Government has already provided £1 billion of additional funding for all local authorities to support their COVID responses, on top of the £3.7 billion provided since March.

Local COVID Alert Level: Very High will take effect across all parts of Greater Manchester: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan.

Measures will only be in place as long as necessary, with case rates and epidemiology reviewed regularly. The restrictions in Greater Manchester will be reviewed by at least 11 November.

All available data for the areas that will move to Local COVID Alert Level: Very High on Saturday have been assessed by the Government, including the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), Public Health England (PHE), the Chief Medical Officer and the Cabinet Office. Data assessed includes incidence, test positivity and the growth rate of the virus.

The government's strategy is to suppress the virus while supporting the economy, education and the NHS, until an effective vaccine is widely available. Local action is at the centre of our response, and engagement with Local Authorities will continue to be a key part of this process.