

Local COVID alert level update for Warrington

Following close discussions with local leaders, Warrington will move from local COVID alert level 'high' to 'very high' from 00.01 on Tuesday 27 October. This means that new measures will come into place including:

- people must not socialise with anybody they do not live with, or have not formed a support bubble with, in any indoor setting, 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, any alcohol must only be served alongside such a meal
- 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
- residents should avoid staying overnight in another part of the UK, and others should avoid staying overnight in the 'very high' alert area

In addition, following discussions with local leaders it was agreed that from 00.01 on Tuesday 27 October additional closures will include betting shops, adult gaming centres, casinos and soft play centres and areas.

The rate of COVID-19 infections is rising rapidly across the UK. The case rate in England stood at 180.6 people per 100,000 from 12 October to 18 October, up from 100 people per 100,000 for the week 25 September to 1 October. Cases are not evenly spread, with infection rates rising more rapidly in some areas than others.

In Warrington, infection rates are among the highest in the country and are continuing to rise rapidly, with case rates at 361 people per 100,000 among all age groups. Although infection rates were originally higher in the younger population, we are now seeing rises in the older population with case rates at 217 per 100,000 for over 60s, which is a 20% rise on the previous week. In order to reduce these numbers and ensure that the NHS isn't overwhelmed and has capacity to treat other conditions, we need to act now. As of 20 October there are 117 confirmed COVID-19 cases in hospital in this area, with 17 mechanical ventilation beds occupied by confirmed COVID-19 patients.

To support the local community during this period, the government will be providing a financial support package of £1.68 million as well as £4.2 million in business support funding. This will support local contact tracing, the enforcement of restrictions, and the provision of further local-level data. This is in addition to the £1 billion of funding for local councils the Prime Minister set out on Monday 12 October.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Infection rates are rising in Warrington, and we have agreed with local leaders that it's time to take action. I know that these new measures will mean sacrifices must be made by the people in Warrington, and I want to extend my thanks to each and every one of them for recognising the severity of the situation and sticking to the rules.

We have agreed a support package designed to help businesses while boosting efforts to control the virus locally, and will not hesitate to take similar action in any area of the country if infection rates continue to rise. Please remember: now is the time for us all to work together to get this virus under control.

Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

I thank local leaders in Warrington for the productive discussions we have had to help get the virus under control in the area as quickly as possible.

I'm pleased that we were able to reach an agreement that ensures swift action is taken in accordance with public health advice. I recognise the huge impact this will have on the area and sacrifices that will need to be made. That's why we have agreed an extensive package of support for local people, businesses and the council.

The restrictions we have agreed together will only be in place for as long as they are absolutely necessary. They will be reviewed jointly in 28 days' time.

The government is working closely with local leaders as we tackle this challenge together, for the benefit of all the people of Warrington.

All available data for the areas that move to 'local COVID alert level: very high' has 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.

It is essential that these outbreaks are contained to protect lives and our NHS, and prevent greater economic damage in the future. We face a new challenge as we head into the winter, and we know that even mild cases of COVID-19 can have devastating consequences for people in all age groups, along with the risk of long COVID. Our strategy is to suppress the virus while supporting the economy, education and the NHS. Local action is at the centre of our response, and engagement with local authorities is, and will

continue to be, a key part of this process.

On 12 October, the government introduced a new, simplified framework for local interventions based around 3 new local COVID alert levels.

The [postcode checker](#) shows which alert level applies in each area.

The NHS COVID-19 app will also direct people to this information.

Warrington will receive £1.68 million net from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, including £630,042 previously committed at 'high' alert level, as well as £4.2 million in business support funding.

We have provided £3.7 billion of funding to local authorities in England to respond to pressures in all their services. The Prime Minister also announced on Monday 12 October additional COVID-19 funding of £1 billion, which will provide local authorities to protect vital services.

Over £900 million of this funding will be provided to councils for their ongoing work to support communities during the pandemic, and it brings the total funding provided directly to councils during the pandemic so far to £6.4 billion. This includes £4.6 billion in un-ringfenced funding, £1.1 billion from the Infection Control Fund, £300 million to support Test and Trace as well as funding allocated to councils from the new local alert level system and a number of grants to support communities and vulnerable people. Councils can also claim funding through a compensation scheme for lost income from sales, fees and charges.

To address the ongoing challenges local authority leisure centres are facing, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has also confirmed £100 million will be used to introduce a new fund that will support council leisure centres most in need. Further details on the scheme will be set out shortly.

See [guidance on each local COVID alert level](#).

Throughout the pandemic, the government has listened carefully to the views of the scientific community, in particular the information from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its sub-groups when taking decisions on the best way to tackle the pandemic.