

New restrictions for Wigan, Stockport, Blackpool and Leeds as coronavirus cases increase

Update: local authority watchlist areas 25 September

- New restrictions on household mixing brought in for Wigan, Stockport, Blackpool and Leeds
- London added as an area of concern as hospital admissions rise
- Teesside added as an area of enhanced support

In close discussions with local leaders, the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), Public Health England (PHE) and the Chief Medical Officer for England have agreed to introduce local measures in parts of the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber.

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise, Wigan, Stockport, Blackpool and Leeds have been escalated to areas of intervention and London has been added as an area of concern. Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, Darlington, Redcar & Cleveland (Teesside) have been escalated to areas of enhanced support.

From Saturday 26 September, residents and visitors in Wigan, Stockport, Blackpool and Leeds will no longer be allowed to mix with people outside their household or bubble in private homes, including gardens. This will be enforceable by law.

Residents and visitors in these areas are advised not to meet people outside their household or bubble in any setting, whether a bar, shop or leisure facility – indoors or outdoors.

As announced this week, childcare bubbles will be able to form in areas of intervention to allow families to share caring responsibilities with another household, as long as they are consistent. This includes formal and informal childcare arrangements.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We continue to see an acceleration of COVID-19 cases across the country, especially in the North West and the North East. Working alongside our scientific and public health experts and local leaders, we are prepared to take swift and decisive action to reduce transmission of the virus and protect communities.

I recognise the burden and impact these additional measures have on

our daily lives but we must act collectively and quickly to bring down infections.

We all have a part to play and I urge everyone to isolate and get a test if you have symptoms, follow the advice of NHS Test and Trace, and always remember 'hands, face, space'.

Cases are rising in parts of the North East, and discussions are ongoing with local leaders about potential further measures.

The changes come as the [weekly surveillance report](#) is published by Public Health England (PHE), with a number of updates to this week's local authority watchlist, published on GOV.UK.

PHE, the JBC and NHS Test and Trace constantly monitor the levels of infection and other data on prevalence of the virus across the country. As has always been the case, measures are kept under constant review to reduce the spread of the virus and save lives.

Changes to this week's watchlist

London

- London has been added to the watchlist as an area of concern

North West

- Wigan and Stockport to be escalated as areas of intervention and will follow the restrictions currently in place in Greater Manchester
- The additional restrictions in Bolton remain in place
- Blackpool to be added to as an area of intervention in line with the rest of Lancashire
- Merseyside and parts of Cheshire remain subject to additional measures and restrictions

West Yorkshire

- Leeds escalated to an area of intervention and will follow the restrictions currently in place in West Yorkshire (Calderdale, Kirklees and Bradford)

West Midlands

- Birmingham, Solihull, Sandwell and Wolverhampton remain as areas of intervention with restrictions on household mixing in private dwellings
- Stoke on Trent removed from the watchlist

East Midlands

- Corby and Northampton removed from the watchlist
- Leicester and Oadby and Wigston remain areas of intervention
- Blaby remains an area of enhanced support

North East

- South Tyneside, Gateshead, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Sunderland, North Tyneside, Northumberland and County Durham remain as areas of intervention. Cases are rising, and discussions are ongoing with local leaders
- Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees, Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland escalated to areas of enhanced support

Background information

The [surveillance report](#) includes this week's watchlist and what the different categorisations mean.

The three definitions for JBC and PHE's watchlist are: 'Areas of concern', 'Areas of enhanced support', and 'Areas of intervention'.

'Areas of concern'

Upper-tier local authorities (UTLAs) will work with partners, supported by regional PHE and NHS Test and Trace resource, to take additional actions to manage outbreaks and reduce community spread of the virus to more normal levels. Actions taken may include additional targeted testing at high risk areas or groups, for example care homes, enhanced communications around the importance of social distancing, hand hygiene and other preventative measures, and more detailed epidemiological work to understand where clusters of the virus are occurring so that appropriate action can be taken.

'Areas of enhanced support'

These areas will be provided with increased national support, capacity and oversight, including additional resources deployed to augment the local teams where this is necessary. Actions taken may include significant additional widespread testing deployed to the UTLAs, national support for local recommendations put in place to manage outbreaks, and detailed engagement with high risk groups and sectors to help increase the effectiveness of testing and tracing in these areas.

'Areas of intervention'

The areas are defined where there is divergence from the lockdown measures in place in the rest of England because of the significance of the spread of COVID-19. There are a range of non-pharmaceutical interventions available to local and national leaders, from extensive communications, expanded testing, to restrictions on businesses and gatherings.

See the [Contain Framework](#) for more information.