

Pausing of lockdown easements in Blackburn with Darwen, and Luton

Press release

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock responds to pausing of lockdown easements in Blackburn with Darwen, and Luton.



Blackburn with Darwen and Luton councils are doing excellent work with their local communities to address an increase in coronavirus cases and we continue to work collectively with them. Strong community engagement, major boosts in testing and increased support are already underway to manage outbreaks in these areas.

The latest data shows the incidence of COVID-19 in these areas is higher than in other areas of the country, and we have today agreed to support both local authorities to pause the further easing of lockdown measures in these areas. This means indoor gyms, swimming pools and other sport and exercise facilities will not reopen in Luton or Blackburn with Darwen on 25 July.

I appreciate this will be disappointing for many people and some businesses in the area but we are in complete agreement with local leaders that the priority must be to protect local residents by stopping the spread of this virus.

I have every faith in the local leaders' ability to help their areas return to normal as soon as possible and in local communities coming together during this time.

Blackburn with Darwen and Luton local authorities have agreed that increasing rates of coronavirus in the areas means further measures are required to prevent further transmission of the virus.

From 25 July indoor gyms, pools, and other sport and exercise facilities will remain closed in these areas until at least the review date. The changes

apply to all organisations within the upper-tier local authority boundaries of Blackburn with Darwen, and Luton.

New regulations will be signed by the Health Secretary to make the local authority regions exempt from the national changes taking place on 25 July.

Both areas will now be categorised as an 'area of intervention'. This means these areas will receive increased national support, capacity and oversight, alongside partnership working and detailed engagement with high-risk groups and sectors to help increase the effectiveness of testing and tracing at a regional level.

These areas will also benefit from extensive communications, expanded testing, and the new regulations signed today. The new categorisations are set out in more detail in the [PHE surveillance report](#) published yesterday afternoon.

The government will keep these regulations under review and will make changes as necessary.

Published 24 July 2020