

Stronger measures brought in to tackle virus in Bolton

- Ban on mixing outside households in homes and in public outdoor settings will be enforceable by law
- It comes as cases in Bolton reach 120 per 100,000 – the highest in the country

Following discussions with local leaders, the Health Secretary, NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), and the Chief Medical Officer for England have agreed to take further action to stop the spread of the virus in Bolton following a significant rise in cases.

The following action will take effect in Bolton immediately:

- all hospitality for food and drink will be restricted to takeaway only
- late-night restriction of operating hours, meaning venues will be required to close between 10pm and 5am

Current guidance on restricting people from socialising outside their household will also be brought into law.

It follows proactive action taken over the weekend by Bolton Council, in consultation with the government and Public Health England (PHE), to implement additional measures on household gatherings and use of public transport.

The North West regulations currently prohibit households from mixing indoors or in gardens. Guidance is already in place on not mixing with those outside your household in public outdoor places and today we are announcing this guidance will be brought in as regulations.

This means all socialising outside of your household will be banned and will be enforced by law. These new regulations will be laid at the earliest opportunity.

Face coverings must be worn on public transport and failure to do so could result in a fine.

The number of positive cases in Bolton have risen to 120 cases per 100,000 – the highest in the country – a change from 98.8 per 100,000 over the weekend. Data shows the rise in cases in Bolton is partly due to socialising by people in their 20s and 30s. Social distancing remains our main line of defence against the virus and it is crucial everyone follows the rules.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Unfortunately, after improving for several weeks, we have seen a

very significant and concerning rise in cases in Bolton.

Bolton is now up to 120 cases per 100,000, the highest case rate in the country. Working with the local council, we are taking further local action.

I want to say directly to everyone living in Bolton: I know how anxious this can be and I know the impact that these measures will have but we need to take this crucial step to keep this virus at bay.

PHE, the JBC and NHS Test and Trace are constantly monitoring 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.