

Updated guidance for areas with additional COVID-19 measures in place

As England moves cautiously to Step 4 of the roadmap, the government will continue to work closely with local authorities and provide national support to local areas.

Local areas including Blackpool, Cheshire East and Oxford City have been receiving extra support as additional measures have been needed to slow the growth rate of COVID-19.

Going forwards, the additional support package will now be secured in place for five weeks to allow for targeted local action. Areas that have recently started to receive this support package will continue to do so for five weeks, and those that have been receiving it for longer will be reviewed.

The support package includes the option to deliver extra testing within targeted areas, the provision of logistical support to maximise vaccine and testing uptake, further help for local campaigns and the option to work with secondary schools and colleges to temporarily reintroduce on site testing and proportionate use of face coverings in areas of high prevalence.

The guidance applying to these areas will be updated from Monday 19 July as the majority of COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and personal responsibility and informed choice are emphasised.

Existing guidance applying to areas receiving the support package, including advice to keep 2 metres apart and minimise travel into and out of the areas, is being removed as part of step 4, but local residents are urged to remain cautious and follow the national guidance; including to wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport; meet outdoors where possible; let fresh air into homes or other enclosed spaces, and consider minimising the number, proximity and duration of social contacts.

The vaccines are helping prevent over 8 million infections and have saved thousands of lives in England. The vaccination programme has substantially weakened the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths. Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms and even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it and there is growing evidence that they are less likely to pass the virus to others.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

As we carefully tread the path on our roadmap and move closer to normal life, we have been guided by the data to pinpoint areas that have needed additional support to beat back the growth of COVID-19 cases.

Working with local authorities and their directors of public health, we are managing the rising number of cases with more testing, more vaccinations and more local contact tracing.

We will continue to support local areas and encourage people to protect themselves and loved ones by getting jabbed. Vaccines are building a wall of protection around us all and we must all enjoy our restored freedoms with caution.

The test, trace and isolate system will remain a vital tool to reduce transmission. The legal requirement for contacts of confirmed cases to self-isolate will continue until 16 August for those who are double vaccinated. After the 16 August, positive cases and all adults who have not received two vaccine doses will still be legally required to isolate. This is helping to slow the rise in cases that we're expecting to see as we unlock, and in turn help to protect the NHS.

Guidance has been set out on how to stay safe, including wearing a face covering in enclosed and crowded spaces and keeping spaces well ventilated.

Extra support deployed in Birmingham on 14 June is being scaled back as the latest data shows local enhanced support has helped slow the growth rate of COVID-19 in the area.

The areas where additional support is in place are:

- Bedford Borough Council
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackpool Council
- Cheshire East Council
- Brighton and Hove City Council
- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan)
- Lancashire County Council (Burnley, Chorley, Fylde, Hyndburn, Lancaster, Pendle, Preston, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, South Ribble, West Lancashire, Wyre)
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, Wirral)
- Oxford City Council
- Warrington Borough Council