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Coronavirus update from Somerset County Council

All our help and information is now **available in a single place** on the SCC website <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-latest-advice/>

This page is refreshed through the day so please check in regularly to keep across developments and news.

Public Health dashboard: Detailed Public Health information dashboards are available on our website www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus just scroll down to 'Covid-19 dashboard'. These are updated daily.

Top stories today:



Shuttle bus boost for county vaccination programme

A free Somerset County Council Taunton town centre shuttle service has been launched to get people straight to their vital vaccination slot at Taunton Racecourse.

The Covid vaccination shuttle bus service started on 1 March and will run every 30 minutes from Castle Way in Taunton town centre to Taunton

Racecourse – one of Somerset's large vaccination centres.

The seven-day a week service uses one of the Council's fleet of minibuses and will help to support those who don't drive and will link easily with other operators coming into the town centre.

This follows other key transport support from the Council and partners including a regular shuttle to Bath and West Showground from Shepton Mallet, the suspension of concessionary bus pass rules for all public services before 9.30am and working with Community Transport and Slinky Demand Response services to allow free travel for bus pass holders attending vaccination appointments.

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County Council commits to care workers

Somerset County Council has reaffirmed its commitment to care workers today promising them full pay for Covid-related absences - on top of committing to an additional £10m for adult social care services next year.

The announcement comes following negotiations between UNISON and the Council, and means that if care workers are required to self-isolate they will continue to receive full pay to do so.

In August 2020, the Council became the first in the South West to sign up to UNISON's 'Stop the Spread' pledge, an initiative to protect care workers throughout the pandemic.

Measures included priority testing for care workers, suitable personal

protective equipment, and pay protections such as full pay during self-isolation, and carers leave on full pay for workers caring for a dependent with Covid 19.

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What's changing from Monday 8 March

From Monday 8 March, some of the rules on what you can and cannot do will be changing as lockdown begins to slowly ease. But please continue to follow the Hands, Face, Space guidance to keep yourself and others safe.

- **You will be allowed to spend time in outdoor public spaces for recreation** on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble. This means you can sit down for a drink or picnic. You must continue to maintain social distance from those outside your household. This is in addition to outdoor exercise, which is already permitted.
- **Schools and colleges will re-open for all pupils**, and they will be able to return to face-to-face education.
- **Wraparound childcare can reopen and other children's activities can restart** for all children where it is needed to enable parents to work, attend education, seek medical care or attend a support group. Vulnerable children can attend childcare and other children's activities in all circumstances.
- **Care home residents will be able to have one regular named indoor visitor**, providing they are tested beforehand, wear personal protective equipment and avoid close contact.

- **There will continue to be restrictions on international travel.**
Holidays will not be a permitted reason to travel. Those seeking to leave the UK must complete an outbound declaration of travel form ahead of departure.
- **Those who have been identified as 'Clinically Extremely Vulnerable'** are advised not to attend work or education settings until at least Wednesday 31 March.

For more information, visit: [National lockdown: Stay at Home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-lockdown-stay-at-home)

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Health Secretary's statement on coronavirus

Health Secretary, Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, has given a statement on coronavirus and provided an update on the vaccination programme, the effectiveness of the vaccine and the six cases of the Variant of Concern first identified in Brazil (P.1) which have been detected in the UK.

Public Health England (PHE) has identified three of these cases of the Variant of Concern in England. Two of the cases in England are from one household in South Gloucestershire with a history of travel to Brazil and further investigation is currently underway into the third, currently unlinked case.

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Support for Somerset residents

Help is available for anyone in Somerset who may need additional support. The five councils in Somerset have been working together since the first lockdown to provide a single phone number for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support.

Residents are reminded they can call 0300 790 6275 if they need any help themselves or are concerned about relatives or neighbours. Lines are open seven days a week between 8am and 6pm.

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Reduce the risks and follow advice

It's vital everyone acts to reduce their own risk, and the risk to others, from getting ill with coronavirus.

There's really important information available to help Somerset residents, businesses and visitors take all-important precautions.

Read more



Send to a friend

These coronavirus bulletins are now available to anyone. Please send to a friend who would like to stay up to date with the latest developments. To sign up simply visit [Coronavirus updates \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://Coronavirus%20updates.%20(somerset.gov.uk))

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