



## Coronavirus update from Somerset County Council

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

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](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus) just scroll down to 'Covid-19 dashboard'. These are updated daily.

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## Council staff book 30,000 Coronavirus vaccines for Somerset residents

More than 30,000 local people have been contacted and invited for a Covid-19 vaccination by staff from Somerset's five councils.

Since the opening of vaccination centres in the county, staff from Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council have been working together contacting residents in the top nine priority groups offering them a vaccine appointment – to date they have been in touch with more than 30,000 residents. The latest data shows more than

310,378 vaccinations have been given in Somerset.

Staff have found the calls are well received with the majority of the public thankful of the opportunity to be vaccinated against the deadly virus.

Trudi Grant, Somerset County Council's Director of Public Health, said: "I want to thank the many Council staff who left their day jobs and answered the call to help support the largest vaccination programme in history. Over 30,000 Somerset residents have been contacted and invited for a vaccine – an enormous feat. It has been a huge help working together and an honour to support the NHS.

"If we are to protect our community and stop the spread of this virus, we need to vaccinate at least 80% of our population as soon as possible. So, I urge you turn up for your appointment, and help protect yourself, your family and our society by having the vaccine when we offer it to you."

People are reminded that the vaccine takes three weeks to give you protection from the virus and whilst it will help protect you from getting serious symptoms, you may still be able to catch Coronavirus and spread it to others – so continue to work from home where you can, socially distance in public and maintain the hands, space, face and fresh air guidance.

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## **Somerset's Public Health leaders encourage residents to take new freedoms 'day by day'**

Lockdown restrictions were eased on Monday - and while we all want to make the most of the new freedoms, we must be careful too. Somerset's Public Health leaders are urging residents to be responsible and stay safe as lockdown eases in order to keep infection rates down.

The changes to restrictions mean outdoor gatherings of either six people or

two households will be allowed, and outdoor sports facilities such as tennis and basketball courts will be allowed to reopen. People will also be able to take part in formally organised outdoor sports.

However, people should continue to work from home where they can, and minimise the number of journeys they take where possible. If you do have to travel, stay local where possible and avoid the busiest times and the busiest routes.

Somerset's Director of Public Health, Trudi Grant, said: "We've all pulled together through these difficult times, but let's keep going; keep sticking to the hands, face, space guidance and take a gradual approach to enjoying new freedoms one day at a time. It will only be through a collective effort of acting responsibly and cautiously that we be able to move closer to a future that is more familiar."

There are further relaxations of restrictions planned on April 12th, May 17th and June 21st. However the roadmap dates are all based on data and may change.

Somerset County Council's Deputy Director of Public Health Lou Woolway added: "The dates set out are the earliest points which we may reopen – not necessarily will. While it will be a great relief to many of us to see the lockdown restrictions beginning to ease, we must not take advantage of this period of transition. By persevering and being patient now, we can all help to keep the number of cases as low as we can which will help people to stay well and ease the pressure on our local healthcare services."

For more information on the Governments roadmap, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021-summary>

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# Be prepared and choose the right service this Easter

Local health leaders are asking people to prepare for the upcoming Easter bank holiday weekend by organising their prescriptions, keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet and calling 111 first for urgent, but not life-threatening, health advice and treatment.

They will make sure you get the help from the most appropriate service for your healthcare needs.

GP surgeries will be closed as normal over the bank holiday weekend and will reopen on Tuesday 6 April.

Helen Thomas, Associate Clinical Director for Urgent and Emergency Care with Somerset Clinical Commissioning group, said: “While your local GP is closed, there are still lots of healthcare options available for you, including local pharmacies and contacting NHS 111 for advice and support to get you to the service that best meets your needs including Minor Injury Units and emergency services.

“If you need medical advice or treatment and you’re not sure what to do visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) first, or call NHS 111. If needed, they can arrange for you to be seen safely at your local A&E, emergency dental service, pharmacy or another more appropriate local service. They can also send an ambulance if your condition is serious or life-threatening.”

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## Support for families over Easter holidays

Somerset County Council has taken several steps to ensure there is robust support for families in place over the upcoming Easter holidays.

The County Council has provided schools with funding for food vouchers over Easter worth £30 (£15 per week) for children eligible for Free School Meals, as well as additional funding so that schools can help a wider range of children in need of food support.

SCC is also working with Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership on the Easter Holiday Activities and Food Programme, which is aimed at countering the triple inequalities facing Somerset's most disadvantaged young people – holiday hunger, physical inactivity, and social isolation.

More than 2,000 young people aged 5-16 years will have access to these opportunities over Easter, with organisations across the county offering four half days of activities to young people in receipt of free school meals.

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## **Vaccination programme making good progress**

Vaccinations have now been given to more than 300,000 of the most vulnerable residents and front line health and care workers across the county.

As of March 21, a total of 310,378 people had received vaccination jabs in just over 16 weeks since the launch of the programme.

Uptake of the COVID vaccine has been very high with around 88% of Somerset residents within the top priority groups as described by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) having at least one dose.

Health and care teams, supported by an army of volunteers have worked tirelessly to support the roll out of the programme across 21 vaccination sites across the county, including two hospital hubs, thirteen GP-led community locations, two large vaccination centres at Taunton Racecourse and the Bath and West Showground and four pharmacy-led sites at Taunton, Yeovil, Bruton

and Burnham-on Sea.

In addition to the vaccination sites, roving teams of vaccinators have worked closely with GP practices to deliver vaccines to the most vulnerable residents, including hospital in-patients, housebound people, people with learning disabilities, homeless people and hard to reach communities, to ensure that everyone has equal access to the vaccination programme.

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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 >](#)

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## 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://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus-updates).

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