



## 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.

### Top stories today:

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## Free coronavirus testing will be available to all

Everyone in Somerset will be able to access free, regular, rapid coronavirus testing from Friday 9 April as part of a new Government initiative in England.

Rapid testing has so far been available to those most at risk and people who need to leave home for work, including frontline NHS workers, care home staff and residents, and schoolchildren and their families. Now rapid testing will be offered to everyone, with people encouraged to take regular tests (twice a week) to help prevent outbreaks and reclaim a more normal way of life.

One in three people with COVID-19 do not experience any symptoms and may be spreading the virus unwittingly. Rapid testing detects cases quickly,

meaning positive cases can isolate immediately.

The expanded regular testing offer for people without symptoms will be delivered through:

- community testing on site at one of the testing sites, offered by all local authorities
- collection at a local test site to take away during specific test collection time windows
- workplace testing programmes, on-site or at home
- testing on-site at schools and colleges
- a home ordering service, which allows people to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to their home: [About the people in your household or bubble - Get a coronavirus test - GOV.UK \(test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/about-the-people-in-your-household-or-bubble)

To find out how to book a lateral flow test if you do not have any symptoms, please click: [Coronavirus – Getting tested \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus-getting-tested)

A new 'Pharmacy Collect' service is also launching which will provide an additional route to regular testing. People aged over 18 without symptoms will be able to visit a participating local pharmacy and collect a box of 7 rapid tests to use twice a week at home. More details on which Somerset pharmacies are participating will be available shortly.



## **Please take part in our survey**

People taking part in lateral flow testing on a regular basis will be really important as we move forward especially as society starts to open up again.

Regular testing helps break the chain of transmission which might otherwise have gone unidentified and helps to identify and suppress new variants of concern - more people getting a test will increase the ability to identify and control these variants.

We have recently launched a community survey to seek the views of people across Somerset. The team is keen to hear from as many people as possible

about three key areas:

- testing
- vaccination
- self-isolating

We would like to understand people's knowledge of the above and any barriers that may prevent them from doing these things or having the vaccine when it is offered. Please share the survey with your networks:

[Please respond below: - Covid-19 Testing and Vaccination - Somerset County Council Consultations \(inconsult.uk\)](https://inconsult.uk)

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## **NHS app updated from Thursday**

To coincide with the offer of free rapid testing for everyone, there will be updates to the NHS COVID-19 app in England from 8 April.

In line with new regulations, when a group enters a hospitality venue, every individual must check either by scanning the official NHS QR code poster with the NHS COVID-19 app, or by providing their contact details. Previously, only the lead member of the group needed to provide contact details to check in.

If an app user tests positive, they will be asked to share their venue history in a privacy-protecting way via the app. This will allow venue alerts to be generated more quickly and improve the ability to identify where outbreaks are occurring and take steps to prevent the virus spreading.

If a person has been at a venue on the same day as several other people who have since tested positive for COVID-19, they may receive an alert advising them to book a test immediately, whether they are showing symptoms or not. This is to support finding asymptomatic cases who may have caught the virus but are not displaying symptoms.

[Read more](#)





## How the rules will change from Monday 12 April

Yesterday, the Prime Minister confirmed that some of the rules on what you can and cannot do will change on 12 April. From that date:

- non-essential retail will be able to reopen
- personal care premises such as hairdressers and nail salons will be able to reopen
- public buildings such as libraries and community centres will be able to reopen
- outdoor hospitality venues will be able to reopen, with table service only
- most outdoor attractions including zoos, theme parks, and drive-in performances (such as cinemas and concerts) will be able to reopen
- some smaller outdoor events such as fetes, literary fairs, and fairgrounds will be able to take place
- indoor leisure and sports facilities will be able to reopen for individual exercise, or exercise with your household or support bubble
- all childcare and supervised activities will be allowed indoors (as well as outdoors) for all children. Parent and child groups can take place indoors (as well as outdoors) for up to 15 people (children under 5 will not be counted in this number)
- weddings, civil partnership ceremonies, wakes and other commemorative events will be able to take place for up to 15 people (anyone working is not included in this limit), including in indoor venues that are permitted to open or where an exemption applies. Wedding receptions can also take place for up to 15 people, but must take place outdoors, not including private gardens
- self-contained accommodation will be able to open for overnight stays in England with your household or support bubble
- you should continue to minimise the amount that you travel where possible

- care home residents will be able to nominate two named individuals for regular indoor visits (following a rapid lateral flow test)

[Read more](#)



## Enjoy the countryside – and follow the Code

A new, refreshed Countryside Code has been launched by Natural England and Natural Resources Wales, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the creation of the founding booklet.

With more people enjoying the outdoors than ever before, the code has been revised to help people enjoy countryside in a safe and respectful way.

Changes include advice on creating a welcoming environment, for example by saying hello to fellow visitors; clearer rules to underline the importance of clearing away dog poo; staying on footpaths; and not feeding livestock. It also provides advice on how to seek permissions for activities such as wild swimming.

[Read more](#)



## 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).

Read more >

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