



## 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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## Tributes to HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

On behalf of our residents, Somerset County Council offers deepest sympathies to the Royal Family on the passing of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh.

While people may want to [gather to lay flowers and pay their respects](#) Government Covid-19 guidelines mean physical books of condolence cannot be opened in public places at the moment. Please be mindful of the current coronavirus restrictions and consider safer alternatives, such as making a donation to charity.

If you wish to express your condolences, please send a message to the Royal Family via the online Book of Condolence on the Royal website: [Send](#)



## The rules are changing from Monday

Some of the restrictions on what you can and cannot are changing from Monday with shops, hairdressers and outdoor hospitality opening as lockdown starts to ease.

Please do enjoy the new freedoms and take advantage of the lifting of restrictions from 12 April – but do not be tempted to meet indoors as the risk of spreading the virus is significantly higher inside. The current planned date for allowing households or groups of up to six people to mix indoors is 17 May at the earliest.

Our message is to stay local, keep travel to a minimum and continue to follow ‘hands, face, space and fresh air’ to reduce the risk of catching Covid-19 and spreading it to others – even if you have been vaccinated.

- Here’s a quick reminder of some of the changes that will take place after this weekend:
- 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 - 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.
- weddings, civil partnership ceremonies, wakes and other commemorative events will be able to take place for up to 15 people. Wedding receptions can also take place for up to 15 people, but must be outdoors, not including private gardens
- self-contained accommodation will be able to open for overnight stays in England with your household or support bubble.

Read more



## Libraries ready to open up again

Somerset Libraries are getting ready to welcome customers back into library buildings again from Monday.

Shelves will be crammed with an array of brand-new book with something for everyone. Library members can borrow up to 20 books at a time, all for free! Covid secure measures will still be in place, and charges will still apply to some other items including DVD's and Talking Books.

For some members, this will be the first time they have used their local library in a while. To check if memberships are still active then just use the simple 'membership checker' form on [www.somersetlibraries.co.uk](http://www.somersetlibraries.co.uk) or pop into your local branch where staff will be happy to help.



**100 Covid Community Champions helping Somerset stay safe**

A major milestone was reached this week with more than 100 trained Covid Champions now in place to help people in Somerset stay up to date with the Covid-19 latest advice.

The Covid Community Champion Network has been going from strength to strength since it was first launched in October. There are now just over 100 trained Champions across Somerset, sharing messages about Covid-19 and how to stay healthy, happy and safe with their friends, family and work colleagues.

The Covid Community Champions scheme is funded by Somerset County Council and delivered by a partnership between Spark Somerset and the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP).

To build on the success of the Covid Community Champion network, Spark Somerset and Somerset County Council are offering Vaccination Myth Buster Training to anyone who is in a position to have conversations about the vaccine.

People attending this training will also be offered the opportunity to become Vaccination Buddies: specially trained volunteers who have supportive telephone calls with people who have questions and concerns about the Covid-19 vaccine.

Read more >



## Catch up with Clinton

This week's Covid Catch-up video sees Clinton Rogers highlighting the work of the Covid Champions. Clinton speaks to Helen Fielden, who co-ordinates the programme as well as one of the Champions themselves. He also discusses the work and importance of the new 'Vaccine Buddies' programme with one of Public Health's Consultants Matthew Hibbert.

Watch here: <https://youtu.be/GbRMHizhvQs>



## Rapid testing is next step in reducing spread of Covid-19

People in Somerset will have access to regular coronavirus testing from today (Friday 9 April) as the country takes another vital step towards society reopening.

The Government is encouraging everyone in England to access free, regular, rapid Covid-19 testing. This regular testing is for those without symptoms of Covid-19 and helps break the chain of transmission which might otherwise have gone unidentified, as well as helping to identify and suppress new variants of concern.

From today, there will be several routes people in Somerset can use to access Lateral Flow (rapid) testing.

[Read more](#)



## Vaccine and Testing Survey

To support people's ability to access testing we are keen to hear your views and have launched a community survey to seek the views of as many people across Somerset as possible.

As we continue the cautious journey out of national lockdown, we are keen to hear from you about three key areas:

1. testing
2. vaccination
3. self-isolating

Please help us by responding to our survey to help us get a better understanding of any barriers that may prevent people from doing these tested or having the vaccine when it is offered.

[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.



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

Read more



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