



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/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 just scroll down to 'Covid-19 dashboard'. These are updated daily.

Top stories today:



£10m boost for public health to aid Somerset's recovery from Covid

Somerset County Council is putting the health of Somerset's residents first with a £10m boost to embed public health across all areas of council services.

In announcing its spending plans for 2021/22, the County Council has confirmed investment to keep residents safe, improve people's physical and mental wellbeing, and help the county recover from the unparalleled impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

The major investment will include £2m to support Somerset communities – helping address anxiety and those with mild mental health issues. There will

be programmes to help people who have been shielding to regain their strength and physical conditioning, as well as encouraging everyone to either keep healthy habits or to lose unhealthy ones they may have picked up during lockdown.

There will a further £2m expanding Somerset's expert health protection programme – this is the hugely-successful work carried out by SCC's public health team and redeployed staff throughout the pandemic. As society opens back up, the key focus will be on controlling outbreaks, managing testing, providing localised contact tracing, and supporting businesses and communities.

Although the situation in Somerset and further afield is improving, some funding will be invested in research and work to improve our understanding of Covid and the changing needs of the Somerset population as a result of the pandemic. Other funding will be reserved in case infection rates rise again and further response is required.

Another major investment will be working with businesses and communities to tackle the inequalities in vaccine uptake, both for Covid and flu – vital to reduce pressure on the NHS next winter. By tackling health inequalities such as heart and circulatory disease we can help reduce the impact on those who are unfortunate enough to catch Covid.

A further £500,000 will be made available for town and parish councils to help them reconnect with their communities by safely reopening facilities like halls, rooms and other sites with good prevention control measures in place.

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Play your part to reduce spread

Somerset's residents are encouraged to enjoy new freedoms like hugging and socialising indoors – but to do so carefully, as lockdown rules are further

eased.

The rules have been relaxed to enable people to socialise in limited numbers, hug loved ones, and visit pubs and restaurants indoors.

But with Somerset still seeing high numbers of Covid-19 cases in some areas, the county's Public Health leaders are calling on residents to remain on their guard while enjoying the new freedoms.

[Read more](#)



Variants of Concern

The latest Public Health England (PHE) data show cases of the Variant of Concern, B.1.617.2, first detected in India, have risen from 520 to 1,313 cases in the UK last week.

The variant was confirmed as a 'Variant of Concern' on 7 May after a rise in cases and evidence of spread in some areas. The government is closely monitoring the variant and taking action along with PHE, NHS Test and Trace and councils.

On 14 May, the Prime Minister confirmed that the government will follow the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's (JCVI) recommendation to bring forward second doses of vaccines for over-50s and the clinically vulnerable groups.

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More restrictions eased for care homes

Care home residents can now have more named visitors and more opportunities to make visits out with no need to self-isolate when they return.

The number of named family members or friends able to visit their loved ones in care homes will be increased from two to five, as the visiting restrictions continue to ease.

A maximum of two visitors will be allowed at any one time or on any given day. This follows a reduction in COVID-19 cases and the ongoing successful vaccine rollout with 95% of older care home residents receiving their first jab.

As well as low-risk outdoor visits out, such as a trip to the park, a garden or the beach, residents will also be able to go to medical appointments, a workplace, educational setting and day centres without having to self-isolate on their return.

Each care home is unique and will have developed suitable plans and processes to protect residents, visitors and staff, so please speak to them directly to find out more about visiting your loved one safely.



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).

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