



## 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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## Stay safe and well this Bank Holiday weekend

Covid infection rates in Somerset are low, but the virus is still with us. It's very important to remember we are still in Step 3 of the lockdown and we keep following guidance ([COVID-19 Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

Everyone wants to help high streets and businesses recover after a difficult year – so please enjoy Somerset respectfully, follow the guidance and help to keep the county safe. Remember - the more people mix with one another, the more opportunity the virus has to spread.

For those heading off for a weekend break in the UK, remember to travel safely and plan ahead – things like insurance, checking on accommodation,

what to do if you develop symptoms or test positive during your stay and ensuring you have your testing kits.

If you need to get tested while you're travelling, there are options:

- If you have symptoms and need a test, book on here [Coronavirus – Get a test if you have symptoms \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#) or call 119
- If you do not have symptoms, please continue with your lateral flow test routine.

If you test positive while on holiday, you should make your own assessment about where to self-isolate for 10 days based on your health and safety.

Options are:

- Staying in the accommodation you are currently in if the accommodation is happy/has capacity to host you, and you have the funds to cover extra costs
- Looking for other local accommodation you and your travel party could move into and safely self-isolate if your current accommodation cannot extend
- Driving home in your own vehicle without stopping anywhere en route if you are well enough to travel and have the means to do so



## **“Fresh air is your friend” Bank Holiday message**

Somerset's Director of Public Health Professor Trudi Grant has issued a message to Somerset residents in the lead up to the bank holiday weekend and half term break, encouraging people to enjoy Somerset with caution.

In a video message posted on Somerset County Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts, Professor Grant said a big thank you to all Somerset residents for getting us this far. She reminded people that although infection rates in Somerset are low at the moment, the virus is still here and that sticking to the guidance is still important.

On the question of taking a trip, she stressed the importance of planning

ahead and travelling safely, including remembering things like insurance, checking in with accommodation on what to do if you or a family member become symptomatic during the stay and taking regular testing kits with you.

In her video she says: “If you do decide to meet inside (in groups of up to six or two households) make sure you let the fresh air in.

“Even if you have been vaccinated either once or twice, we all must stick to the rules, the reason for this is because the vaccine protects us as individuals but we could still pass the virus on to other people.. we must all follow the rules.”

Professor Grant finished the message by wishing everybody a great weekend.

The video message is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ub4Dk26xog8>

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## **Could you help out the vaccination programme?**

Local charity, Spark Somerset, and Somerset NHS are calling on people to support Covid-19 vaccinations at Taunton Racecourse.

An amazing team of volunteers have been helping since January and as the lockdown restrictions have eased many volunteers have had to return to work.

More volunteers are now urgently needed to help with welcoming and directing people attending their appointments for vaccination.

Steward volunteers provide crucial support to the programme by marshalling in car parks and guiding people on site, ensuring social distancing is followed, and identifying people who need additional support.

In a recent survey more than 97% of those who volunteered said they enjoyed the experience, and say the team working and sense of contribution

to the overall effort to beat Covid-19 is very rewarding.

Find more information and sign up [here](#) on Spark a Change, Somerset's online volunteering platform or email [volunteer@sparksomerset.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@sparksomerset.org.uk)

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## **New testing site opens in Brean**

A new walk-through coronavirus testing facility opened today (Friday 28 May) for those with symptoms to book appointments at the Seagull Inn, Northam Farm, South Road (TA8 2RF) in Brean, as part of the Government's UK-wide drive to continue to improve the accessibility of coronavirus testing for local communities.

Testing at this site is only available for those with coronavirus symptoms – a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Anyone with one or more of these symptoms can get a test at the site, or by booking a test at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or calling 119

The new site is easily accessible without a car. Anyone attending an appointment at a walk-through test site will be provided with guidance on getting to and from the site safely, with extra support for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities.

Anyone testing positive for the virus in England will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to help them trace their contacts. Close contacts of those testing positive will also hear from NHS Test and Trace, asking them to stay at home for ten days to prevent them from unknowingly spreading the virus. They will be advised to also get a test if they develop symptoms.

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## **Vaccination Buddies are here to help**

Somerset County Council has recently launched a Vaccine Buddy Programme in partnership with Spark Somerset to support people who are feeling unsure about whether to have their Covid-19 vaccine.

[Vaccination Buddies](#) can offer 1-2-1 telephone support to people who are worried or unsure about having the vaccine. The Buddies come from all walks of life and have the right skills to support people to make informed decisions about having the Covid-19 vaccination.

People can be referred (or self-refer) to the scheme and a fully trained Vaccination Buddy will contact them by phone to discuss their concerns and offer information and reassurance.

To make a referral on behalf of yourself or someone else, please visit this link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=OHJjjJwmFUCZhsVRNs7Z2qHP5jo6OOpEtcMUHypCWIRUREFCQ01KSUhCNVpYOFIPOUdUUUMxTFhKQy4u>

The Vaccination Buddy scheme builds on the success of the Covid Community Champions initiative – a network of volunteers who help people in Somerset get the latest advice about Covid-19 to ensure residents stay as happy and healthy as possible during these difficult times.

To become a Vaccination Buddy, volunteers simply need to register through [Spark Somerset | Spark a Change](#) and attend a short ‘myth buster’ training course on Zoom. More information on the Covid Community Champions initiative is available by visiting:

<https://www.sparksomerset.org.uk/projects/covid-community-champions>

So far Somerset’s coronavirus vaccination programme has seen more than 570,000 Covid-19 vaccinations given, and the success of the vaccination roll out has contributed to significant falls in infections, hospitalisations and deaths from the virus.

Read more >



## Somerset Covid catch-up

In this week's Covid Catch Up, Clinton discusses the need for people to self-isolate to prevent the spread of Covid-19 should they have symptoms or be advised to do so.

Clinton also meets one of the amazing Somerset volunteers who has spent the last 12 months helping people in the local community who needed support – particularly when they needed to isolate.

And he also has a discussion with Alison Bell, a consultant with Somerset Public Health to explain the benefits self-isolation has in helping stop the spread of Covid-19 and new variants of concern. [Covid Catch Up week 25, 26 May 2021 - YouTube](#)

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## Feeling unwell? Choose Well this May bank holiday

Now that lockdown is easing and more of us are out and about, NHS services are very busy. You can help us, help you this May bank holiday by making sure you 'Choose Well' and if you are injured or unwell, use the health service that best meets your needs.

This might be your local community pharmacy. Pharmacists are experts in medicines and can help you and your family with minor health concerns. As qualified healthcare professionals, they can offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as colds, sore throats, tummy trouble and aches and pains.

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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