



Somerset's Covid-19 Weekly Update

Friday 28 January 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of the weekly Somerset Covid-19 update for key stakeholders and subscribers, and the first edition in this new format. This update is produced on behalf of the Somerset Covid-19 Engagement Board and is designed to provide a weekly update on the current Covid-19 situation in Somerset.

Please be aware you are receiving this email because you have previously subscribed to Covid-19 updates from SCC or were a part of the Stakeholder mailing list. If you no longer wish to receive these mails you can use the 'unsubscribe' link at the bottom of the update.



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Covid-19 case numbers have increased slightly in the last week and remain high.

This week, certain regulations were eased and we returned to 'Plan A'. The full, updated guidance can be found [here](#).

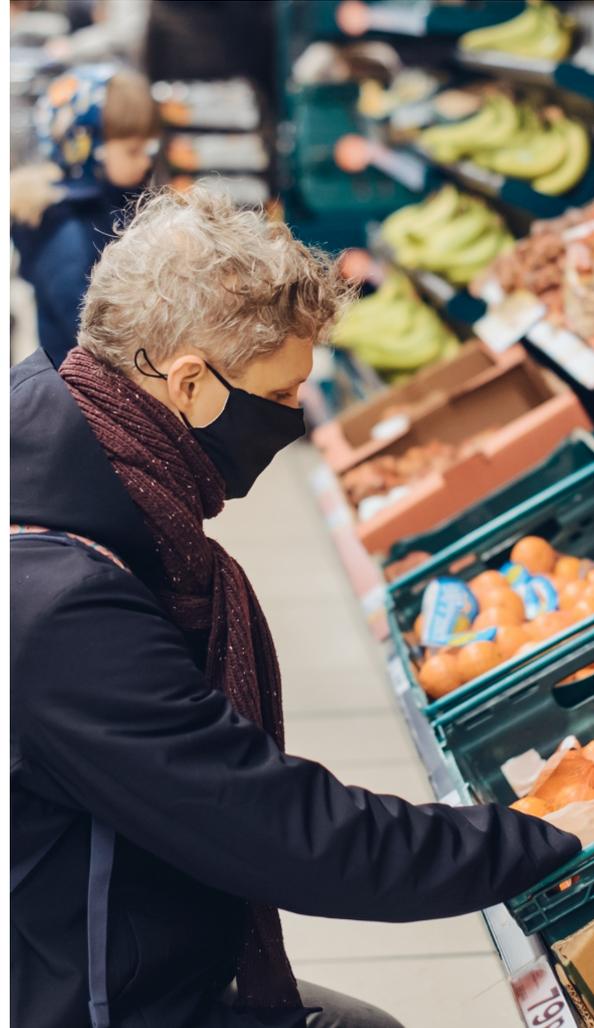
The main changes were:

- The government is no longer asking people to work from home if they can. People should now talk to their employers to agree arrangements to return to the office.

- Face coverings are no longer advised for staff and pupils in secondary school and college classrooms.
- Face coverings are no longer advised for staff and pupils in communal areas of secondary schools, nor for staff in communal areas of primaries.
- There is no longer a legal requirement to wear a face covering. The government suggests that you continue to wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces:-
- Venues and events are no longer required by law to check visitors' NHS Covid Pass. The Pass can still be used on a voluntary basis.

With the numbers still high in Somerset it is important for us now to focus on living safely with Covid-19 moving forward and so the following simple guidance and advice remains:

- If you haven't yet had a vaccination you should step forward, whether it's a first dose, second dose or booster. Please check [here](#) for full booking details.
- Please continue to take regular lateral flow tests – particularly before meeting others. These can be ordered [here](#). Also, remember to report your test results [here](#).
- Wear a well-fitting face-covering when in enclosed spaces such as supermarkets and try to meet others outside or ensure there is good ventilation when meeting inside.
- If you have any Covid-19 symptoms you need to take a [PCR test](#). If you test positive, you must self-isolate.
- Keep your hands clean by washing often with soap and water or using an antibacterial handwash, this protects against a lot of infectious diseases.



Please be aware there will be changes to care home visiting guidance from 31 January – the changes can be found later in this update.

'Remember, everyone can catch it, anyone can spread it.'



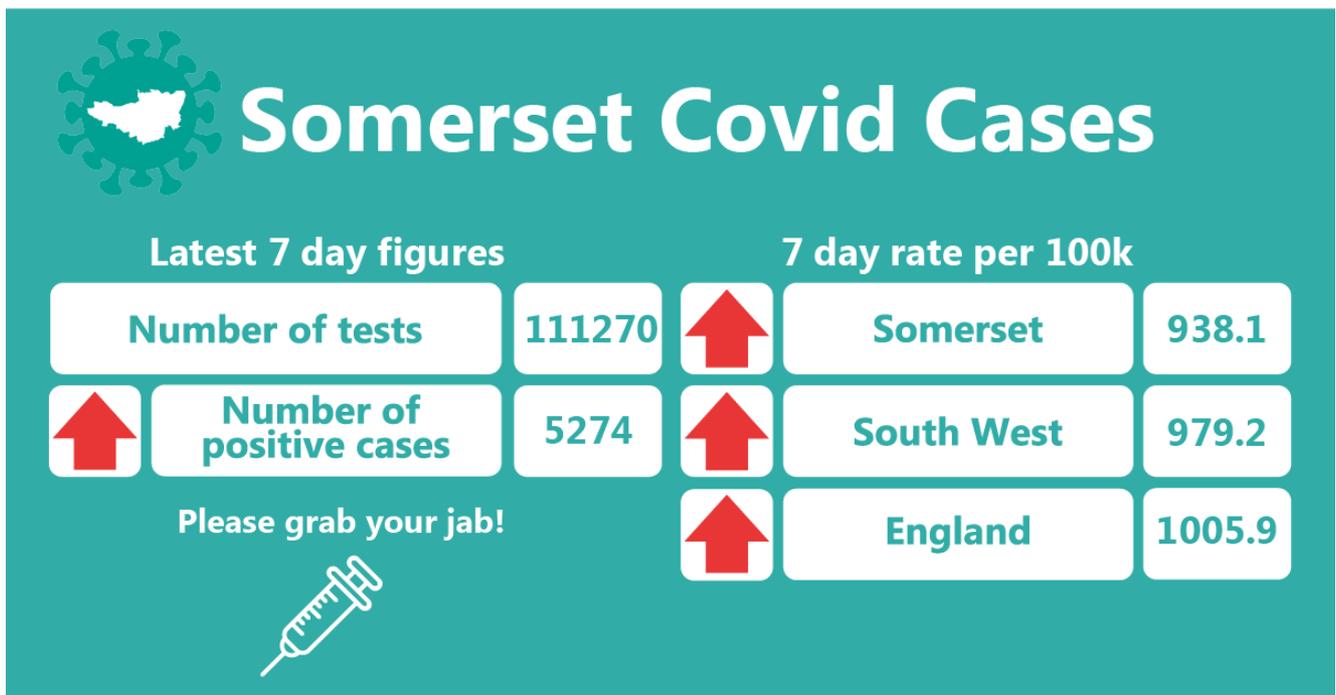
This Weeks Top Headlines

The main items featured in this week's update are:

- Workplace, Care and School settings
- Vaccinations Update
- Testing Update
- Latest Covid Catch-up Film
- Resources and further information



Somerset Covid Cases



In the week ending 23 January, approximately 111,270 tests were carried out across the county – this is a slight reduction on last week. There were with 5,274 new confirmed cases identified by these tests. The rates of Covid-19 remain high and have increased in the last reporting week to 938.1 per 100,000. This is below both the South-West average and the national average.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset is around 59 Covid-19 in-patients in Somerset hospitals.



Workplaces

The Government has updated guidance on working safely in line with the move to Plan A regulations. The full details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Throughout the pandemic, the Somerset County Council Public Health Incident Room has been assisting businesses with managing Covid-19, especially in outbreak situations. Rest assured, we will still be here if needed, but, with the relaxation of regulations and wider controls, we are moving to a new phase of the response. So, with immediate effect, we will no longer be routinely notifying employers of cases in their workforces.

Early in the pandemic we notified every case. During the second wave and each wave subsequently we could no longer do this due to case numbers, and so we only notified when the case numbers appeared to us to be significant for the individual business setting, inviting them to provide more details of the situation and offering a telephone call for assistance if needed. We have reached a stage now where nearly all businesses have experience of managing Covid-19, and only in very few cases is help requested.

If you need help with managing Covid-19 in your workplace we are still here to help and you can request help by emailing us at:

SCCPHIncidentRoom@somerset.gov.uk or by calling 01823 356100.

Care Sector

The number of cases of Covid-19 affecting the care sector has been consistently high for some time now. This has alerted care staff to ensure all the principles we have become used to are adhered to and refreshed their IPC knowledge and training. Care workers across Somerset have been closely monitoring their residents and staff for signs and symptoms of Covid-19 as well as ensuring regular asymptomatic testing takes place. The Capacity Tracker completion of Covid-19 vaccination and importantly of boosters continues to be important.

Care home visiting guidelines: We are expecting the visiting guidelines to be updated on 31/01/22 with changes expected to reduce the length of time residents are required to self-isolate for as well as the limit on visitors to be lifted. We will continue to follow the principles in the latest version of the guideline document until the new guidance document is published.

[Guidance on care home visiting - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/care-home-visiting)

Covid-19 reporting of cases: Please continue to report care sector cases of Covid-19 to the Health Protection Team (HPT) at UKHSA on 0300 303 8162 (option 9 for a Covid call) and for more than one case or any resident cases, please report to swhpt@phe.gov.uk

New care setting risk assessment tool: From next week, when Adult Social Care providers across the South West report 2 or more cases of acute respiratory infections, including Covid-19 to UKHSA, they will be asked to complete an online form to provide further details. Details will include numbers

of residents/service users/staff, numbers of symptomatic residents/staff, number of vaccinated residents/staff for both Covid-19 and Flu and further details about the situation. This will then be reviewed by the Health Protection Practitioners and the appropriate support provided depending on the information in the form. This new process will hopefully help save time for providers and allow completion of the form at a time most appropriate to care staff.

Wellbeing support: If you are feeling the strain, there is always someone to talk to at [Samaritan's dedicated line for health and care workers](#). These calls are answered by highly trained, compassionate and confidential volunteers who provide confidential, non-judgemental support.

Schools and Early Years settings

With ongoing transmission in our community, we continue to see the impact of education staff and pupils being unable to participate in face-to-face learning because they have Covid-19. This is causing business continuity challenges in providing onsite education in some settings. With reduced mitigations in place in the community, following a return to 'Plan A' measures, we are likely to see continued high Covid-19 case rates in schools and therefore operational challenges well into this term.

Rates are particularly high in the school age population, and our highest rates are amongst our primary age students. Most children and young people who are infected with Omicron will have mild symptoms or are asymptomatic. Hospitalisation for severe Covid-19 illness remains highest in older age groups and the unvaccinated.

All national and local guidance is available and updated regularly here: [Covid-19 School Toolkit | Support Services for Education](#).

There is a new DfE contingency framework – please find the full details [here](#).

Childhood Immunisation Programme

The Somerset Foundation Trust manage the childhood immunisation programme with SAINT (School Age Immunisation Nursing Team, part of the NHS). SAINT deliver the nasal flu vaccination to all schools in Somerset.

All schools that were cancelled prior to Christmas due to team redeployment have now been rebooked and SAINT aim to complete the school flu programme delivery by the end of January.

Appointment only FLU clinics

To attend a clinic that requires an appointment please email Somersetsaint@somersetft.nhs.uk
[Flu vaccination programme - SAINTS \(School Age Immunisation Teams\) \(somersetft.nhs.uk\)](#)

The following walk-in flu clinics are available

Date	Time	Location
Saturday 5th February 2022	09:30am until 11:30am	West Mendip Community Hospital (Outpatients) Old Wells Road Glastonbury BA6 8JD
Saturday 5th February	1:30pm until	Westlands Entertainment Venue

2022 3:30pm Westbourne Close
 Yeovil
 BA20 2DD
 Sunday 6th February 9am - noon The Families Hub, Level 2, East Reach House, Taunton,
 2022 TA1 3EN

Covid-19 Vaccine Programme:

There are new clinics starting regularly in other areas in the coming weeks. Please encourage parents/guardians to [check the NHS walk in site for up to date information](#).

Bookings can be made through [the national booking service](#) or by calling 119

Vaccination Centre	Dates	Time	Location
Haynes Motor Museum	Mon - Fri	09.00	Sparkford, Yeovil , BA22 7LH
		17.00	
Firepool, Taunton	Mon - Sun	09.00	Canal Road, Taunton , TA1 1NY
		17.00	
Bridgwater Town Hall	Fridays in Jan & Feb	09.00	High St, Bridgwater , TA6 3BL
		17.00	
Cheese and Grain	w/c 24th Jan	10.00	Market Yard, Justice Lane, Frome BA11 1BE
		17.00	
Alfred Gillett Trust, Clarks Village	Sunday 30th Jan	10.00	The Grange, Farm Rd, Street BA16 0BQ (Access via Grange Car Park 2 then follow the path to the right-hand side of Clarks Village Entrance.)
		16.00	
Dillington House	Weekly from Weds 19th Jan & Thurs 20th Jan	12-	Illminster , TA19 9DT
		20.00	

COVID-19 Vaccinations & Boosters

Bookings & walk-in clinics available NOW across Somerset

somersetccg.nhs.uk/covid-vaccines



SAINT will be we will be commencing the HPV and Covid second jab programme for 12-15 year olds next week and should be completed just before the Easter holidays.

Please note: If a child has tested positive for Covid-19 and is not at high risk from Covid-19, they need to wait 12 weeks before they can have a Covid-19 vaccine. This starts from the date they had symptoms, or the date of the positive test if they did not have symptoms.

Vaccination Update

We are continuing with the general public offering as described below and the Vaccination Programme will be focussing more vaccination resources on areas or population groupings of lower vaccine uptake.

In terms of booking vaccinations this should continue to be done via our local NHS website [Covid-19 vaccinations in Somerset - Somerset CCG](#) this gives local information but also leads into the National Booking Service. Depending on your location, circumstances and availability this system will then show you when and where there are available appointments for vaccination. This may or may not be within Somerset but will give the best options available for vaccination as quickly as possible.

To get your vaccine visit www.nhs.uk/Covid-Vaccination or call 119 for an appointment. There are also convenient walk-in options across the country, which you can find on www.nhs.uk/grab-a-jab.

Currently there is a lot of spare capacity at vaccination sites and locations so there is plenty of choice and opportunity to get vaccinated. The overall aim to vaccinate 95% of the general eligible population still remains with the younger age groups in particular being asked to consider vaccination if they have already not done so.



Testing

How to quarantine at home after international travel – Changes to international travel rules from 11 February 2022:

If you are arriving in England from abroad, and you have not been in a country in the red list in the 10 days before, and you need to quarantine at home or in another place after international travel, the following rules will apply to you, if you arrive in England after 4am, 11 February:

Fully vaccinated – from 11 February:

If you qualify as fully vaccinated for travel to England, you:

- will not need to take a COVID-19 test before you travel to England or after you arrive
- will not need to quarantine when you arrive
- will need to [complete a passenger locator form](#) before you travel to England

[Check if you can follow the rules for people who are fully vaccinated](#) - includes people aged 17 and under. If your test results are positive, and you are fully vaccinated, you must self-isolate. You will need a [follow up PCR test](#) if you tested positive using a lateral flow test. If you tested using a PCR test, you should isolate, but you can end your isolation earlier if you test negative on day 5 and 6 using a lateral flow test, **both tests are 24 hours apart**, and you do not have a high temperature.

Not fully vaccinated – from 11 February:

If you do not qualify as fully vaccinated for travel to England, you will need to:

- show proof of a negative Covid-19 test – to be taken in the 2 days before you travel to England
- [book and pay for a COVID-19 PCR test](#)– to be taken after you arrive in England
- [complete a passenger locator form](#) before you travel to England

You will need to book the PCR test before you travel.

You will not need to quarantine, unless the result of the PCR test is positive. If your test is positive, you will need to quarantine for 10 full days, and day 0 is the day you arrive in England.

If you arrive in England before 4am, 11 February you must:

- follow the current rules set out in [Travel to England from another country during coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#)
- continue to follow the quarantine rules set out below, if they apply to you

Further guidance can be found here: [How to quarantine at home after international travel](#)

Covid Catch-Up Film

This week Clinton discusses the changes which have occurred this week in the move from Plan B to Plan A regulations.

The film can be viewed [here](#).

Resources and Further Information:

Please do keep an eye on our Healthy Somerset website, which has a huge amount of information and resources to help keep everyone healthy, happy and safe at this time:

<https://www.healthysomerset.co.uk/covid-19/>

For the latest local information as well as digital resources, posters and flyers please visit:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

The Somerset Local Outbreak Management Plan outlines how we, the council, will work with the NHS Test and Trace Service, PHE, the NHS and other partners to ensure a whole system approach to preventing and managing local outbreaks. This can be found [here](#).

Finally, please like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and share our posts with your networks to help us communicate these important messages.

Follow our Director of Public Health account [here](#).

We would really welcome your feedback on this email update, so please email any comments to the team using GHaslock@somerset.gov.uk.



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