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Somerset's Covid-19 Weekly Update

Friday 18 February 2022

Welcome to the latest edition of the weekly Somerset Covid-19 update for key stakeholders and subscribers. 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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The Current Picture



**Somerset
Coronavirus
Helpline**

(The helpline is available from **8am to 6pm** every day, including weekends).

Although Covid-19 case numbers have reduced slightly in Somerset they remain high and we need to focus on living safely with the virus.

To help prevent the further spread of the virus and other illnesses the following simple guidance 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 - this can protect against a lot of infectious diseases.

We are awaiting the Government update scheduled for 21st February 2022 regarding the reduction or removal of some Covid-19 restrictions. Until this date, all current guidance still stands, including the need to self-isolate if you test positive.

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

Covid-19 Dashboard



Top Headlines This Week

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

- Vaccinations Update

- Testing Update
- Covid Catch-up Film
- Schools, Workplace and Care settings
- Resources and further information



Somerset Covid Cases



Somerset Covid Cases

Latest 7 day figures

Number of tests

111644



7 day rate per 100k

Somerset

769.3



Number of positive cases

4325



South West

734.4

Please grab your jab!



England

540,1

In the week ending 13 February, approximately 111,644 tests were carried out across the county. There were with 4,325 new confirmed cases identified by these tests. The rates of Covid-19 in Somerset remain very high but have decreased slightly in the last reporting week to 769.3 per 100,000. This is above both the South-West average and the national average.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset is around 58 Covid-19 in-patients in Somerset hospitals.

Covid-19 Vaccinations & Boosters



There are bookings and walk-in clinics available NOW across Somerset. Head to somersetccg.nhs.uk/covid-vaccines to book yours.

Area	Vaccination Centre	Dates	Timings	Location	
South Somerset	Haynes Motor Museum	Mon - Fri	09.00 – 17.00	Sparkford, Yeovil, BA22 7LH	Walk in & bookable
South Somerset	Dillington House	Weekly on Weds & Thurs	16.00 – 20.00	Illminster, TA19 9DT	Bookable
SWAT	Firepool, Taunton	Mon - Thurs	09.00 – 17.00	Canal Road, Taunton, TA1 1NY	Walk in & bookable
SWAT	Wellington Community Hospital	Mondays in Feb	09.00 – 13.00	Bulford Lane, Wellington, TA21 8QQ	Walk in
Sedgemoor	Bridgwater Town Hall	Fridays in Feb	09.00 – 17.00	High St, Bridgwater, TA6 3BL	Walk in
Sedgemoor	Jhoots Pharmacy	Mon - Fri	09.00 – 17.00	Victoria Park Drive, Bridgwater TA6 7AS	Walk in and Bookable
Sedgemoor	Bridgwater And Albion Rfc	Sundays	09.00 – 11.00 and 15.00 – 17.00	Bridgwater And Albion RFC (Cranleigh Gardens Pharmacy)	Walk in and Bookable
Mendip	Livestock Market, Frome	Weds 23 rd Feb	10.00 – 14.00	Livestock Market, Standerwick, Frome BA11 2QB 1 st , 2 nd , boosters, 12-15yr old vaccines	Walk in
SWAT	Priorswood Library	Thurs 24 th Feb, 3 rd March	09.00 – 18.00	Priorswood Library Eastwick Road Taunton TA2 7AD.	Walk in
Sedgemoor	Hamp Pantry	Thurs 24 th Feb	13.00 – 18.00	South Bridgwater Together Team Hub, 2-3 Grenville House, Rhode Lane, Bridgwater, TA6 6JE	Walk In
Sedgemoor	Sydenham Pantry	Weds 23 rd Feb	13.00 – 18.00	Parkway, Bridgwater TA6 4QZ	Walk in
Sedgemoor	Auction / Market at Junction 24	Thurs 24 th and Saturday 26 th Feb	9.00 – 15.00	Market Way, North Petherton TA6 6DF	Walk in

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.

Every vaccine matters and there are plenty of walk-in and bookable slots available across the county over Half Term. It's quick, easy and open to everyone 12+ for 1st, 2nd or booster doses, with sites open in Priorswood, Sydenham in Bridgwater and the Livestock Market at Junction 24, among others. Full details are included above, or search 'grab a jab' for all local sites.

JCVI has now advised a non-urgent offer of two 10 mcg doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine to children aged 5 to 11 years of age who are not in a clinical risk group. Further details of how this programme will be rolled out in Somerset are expected in coming weeks.

Children aged five to 11 years old who are clinically at risk from Covid-19, or who live with someone who is immuno-suppressed, are now eligible for a lower, paediatric dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. All those eligible

will have been contacted by their GP, or local NHS inviting them to book an appointment through a local booking system at their GP practice or a nearby vaccination centre. At the moment, this group will not be able to book through the national booking system.

Over 80% of eligible residents have received two doses of the vaccination. The Vaccination Programme is working with health and community partners to identify locations for mobile vaccination pop-up clinics. By localising the offer, the programme aims to reduce barriers to access and better understand community needs.

Covid Vaccinations in Sydenham

Wednesday 23 February, 1pm to 6pm

Sydenham Pantry, Hub hall 2 (behind the community centre off Parkway),
Fairfax Road, Parkway, Sydenham,
Bridgwater TA6 4QZ

Just walk in and get your jab, no need to book

NHS  **SOMERSET CORONAVIRUS**  **SOMERSET County Council**

Plenty of walk-in appointments are available across the county. Please check our local NHS website [Covid-19 vaccinations in Somerset - Somerset CCG](#) to find clinics in your area or use the national portal to find a clinic: www.nhs.uk/grab-a-jab.

You can also pre-book an appointment. To do this, visit www.nhs.uk/Covid-Vaccination or call 119 for an appointment. The helpline has over 200 languages available if you or someone you know requires an interpreter.

NHS staff are ready to welcome you whether it's for your first, second, or third dose.

A review by UKHSA shows vaccinated people are less likely to have long Covid than unvaccinated: On 15 February, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) published the results of a new review showing how people who have had one or more doses of a vaccine are less likely to develop long Covid than those who remain unvaccinated.

The rapid evidence review undertaken by the UKHSA looked at the effects of vaccination against long Covid or post-Covid symptoms and included 15 UK and international studies that were undertaken up until January 2022.

The review concluded that people who received 2 doses of a vaccine against Covid-19 were less likely to develop long Covid symptoms or experience symptoms for a shorter time, compared with those who were unvaccinated.

Individuals who received a vaccination after being infected with Covid-19 also reported that the duration

of post-Covid symptoms was shorter than for those who were unvaccinated.

More details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-review-shows-vaccinated-less-likely-to-have-long-covid-than-unvaccinated>

Covid-19 Testing

There have been changes to the International travel rules, which came into effect on 11 February. People who are fully vaccinated do not need to take any Covid-19 travel tests before they travel to England, and when they return. There are exceptions, for example if you are travelling from a red list country to territory in the 10 days before you travel. Currently there are no countries or territories on the red list.

For people who do not qualify as being fully vaccinated, there is no longer a need to quarantine when you arrive back in England. You should still however take a Covid-19 test in the two days before you travel and take another PCR test after arrival - this needs to be taken before the end of day 2. If the test result is positive or unclear, you have to self-isolate and follow the guidance on [how long to self-isolate for](#). If you need to self-isolate, this needs to be done at the address provided on your passenger locator form. There is no requirement to take a day 8 test anymore.

You can check if you qualify as being fully vaccinated here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countries-with-approved-covid-19-vaccination-programmes-and-proof-of-vaccination>

Further details on the changes in International Travel rules can be found here: [Travel to England from another country during coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#)

Following tests with volunteers, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has launched a new service making it easier for partially sighted people to use lateral flow tests in their home. Full details can be found [here](#).

Covid Catch Up Film

This week Clinton discusses the need for regular health checks and in particular the need to keep a look out for heart health during heart health month and beyond.

Please click the image below to watch.



Setting Specific Updates

Schools & Early Years

Given the continued high Covid-19 rates in the community, staffing pressures and operational issues continue to impact on the provision of face-to-face learning in some settings. The pressure in the education and childcare system has continued for many months now but has been particularly acute in recent weeks as staff have dealt with the impacts of the highest Covid-19 case rates Somerset has experienced.

Although Covid-19 poses a low risk to children, young people and those who are fully vaccinated, whilst case rates (particularly among school-aged children) remain high we appreciate this can be an anxious time for many working in education and childcare settings.

Ultimately, vaccinations are our best defence against Covid-19, so thank you to everyone who has supported the vaccination programme for children and young people so far.

**THIS HALF TERM
BOOK YOURS
THIS HALF TERM
BOOK YOURS**

Why wait?

Getting a Covid vaccine will never be as quick and easy as it is right now.

To book yours, search 'Grab a Job'

SOMERSET CORONAVIRUS
SOMERSET County Council

Advice for the return to school term: We know the infection prevention and control measures most settings have in place do help slow the rates of transmission of many seasonal illnesses and have a positive impact on reducing sickness levels and improving business continuity. These include good hand and respiratory hygiene for everyone, maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes, keeping occupied spaces well ventilated, and following public health advice on testing and managing confirmed cases of Covid-19.

Our school community has demonstrated resilience and expertise in adapting to new processes and guidance. As we all adjust to the national move to 'living safely with Covid' the way Covid-19 cases in education settings are managed will change. Further guidance will be communicated as soon as the detail is understood in the weeks following the Government announcement next week.

For the return to term on 28 February, the 'escalation process' still stands, including the use of measures advised as per the thresholds of the [national contingency framework](#). Any changes in how Covid-19 is managed in education settings in Somerset, reflecting changes to the national contingency framework for education will be communicated as soon as possible via the regular school's bulletin.

Workplaces

The updated guidance on working safely can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-Covid-19>

While we await Government announcements next week regarding the next stage of the Covid-19 response, it is important to remember that if and when legal requirements to isolate are dropped, Covid-19 is still circulating in Somerset at high levels, so enabling and supporting staff to isolate will remain sound practice if they have tested positive or if they have symptoms that could be Covid-19 or flu.

The Association of Directors of Public Health is urging employers to help by creating a culture in which coming to work when ill, whether with Covid-19 or the flu, is discouraged and considered not in the interests of the individual concerned, their colleagues or customers.

Care Settings

We continue to see high case numbers of Covid-19 in our care settings. During these high case rates, Infection Prevention and Control measures, strict adherence to PPE, distancing where possible, ensuring adequate ventilation, regular testing and ensuring staff take up the offer of vaccination, including boosters is key. It is also important for visitors and essential care givers to follow good IPC measures to support the care home in keeping their loved ones free of Covid-19.

Key guidelines: Please look out for updates in the key guidance documents:

[Coronavirus \(Covid-19\): admission and care of people in care homes](#) - updated 14 February

- the term fully vaccinated (for the purpose of this guidance) is where a resident has received their primary doses and any eligible booster dose
- changes in isolation requirements – residents who are identified as a close contact of a Covid-19 case or who test positive should self-isolate for 10 days (it may be possible to reduce the period of self-isolation)
- change in isolation requirements following an emergency hospital admission – residents should only self-isolate for 10 days (it may be possible to reduce the period of self-isolation provide advice on ending isolation before day 10)

[Covid-19: management of staff and exposed patients and residents in health and social care settings](#)

updated 14 February

- The advice on ending isolation for residents who are contacts of a coronavirus (COVID-19) case in social care settings has changed. They can end their self-isolation earlier than 10 days subject to a risk assessment and negative LFD test results. These changes are described in detail in the [Admission and care of residents in a care home during Covid-19 guidance](#).
- The advice for staff returning from travel abroad has also been updated. Staff who are not required to quarantine after travel should take an LFD test just before the start of their first shift and should only return to work if this test result is negative.

[Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) testing for adult social care settings](#) - updated 16 February

[Visiting arrangements in care homes](#) updated 2 February

Covid-19 reporting of cases: Please continue to report 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

Outbreaks: Unfortunately, we are seeing a high number of care homes with Covid-19 outbreaks. An outbreak is defined as ‘two or more identified cases in a facility that are linked and within a 14 day period’. Outbreak restrictions are required for 14 days after the last positive case. Recovery whole home testing after 14 days of no positive cases is undertaken and if all negative results, outbreak measures can be released. All cases need to be reported as above to UKHSA and the following guidance followed: [Covid-19: management of staff and exposed patients and residents in health and social care settings](#)

New care setting risk assessment tool: The new risk assessment tool has been launched, so 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. This will then be reviewed by the Health Protection Practitioners and the appropriate support provided depending on the information in the form. A setting will not necessarily get a call back from UKHSA, but may receive an email, informing them if they have a cluster or an outbreak and the measures which should be put in place to control onward spread.

This new process will hopefully help save time for providers and allow completion of the form at a time most appropriate to care staff. Please could the form be completed as soon as possible and if any problems with the completion, please contact UKHSA. It is essential that UKHSA have this information to make risk assessments and of course **it is a requirement to report all notifiable diseases**.

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.

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](#).

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.

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

Finally, please follow Trudi Grant, our Director of Public Health's Twitter account [here](#).



We're all in it together



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