

# Somerset's Covid-19 Weekly Update

Thursday 17 June 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of the weekly Somerset Covid-19 update for key stakeholders. 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.

On Monday, the Prime Minister announced we will remain in stage three of the roadmap out of lockdown for a further four weeks. We welcome this pause and, while we understand that some people and businesses will be frustrated, the Government has always made it clear the roadmap would be based on the data at the time, and it would not be held to fixed dates if the data suggested caution was needed.

Here in Somerset we remain in a relatively good position compared with many local authorities across the country. However, our cases have risen threefold this week and we urge everyone to continue to follow the guidance.

And finally, people aged 21 and above will now be able to receive the coronavirus vaccine as the NHS Covid-19 Vaccination Programme enters the final phase of the first dose roll-out. Here in Somerset more 'walk in' vaccination sessions are being planned over the coming weeks, and you can read more about this later in the update.

The link below shows the Somerset Dashboard which tracks our local epidemic from the start in March 2020, to the current time: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/covid-19-dashboard/>

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



David Fothergill  
Leader  
Somerset County Council  
Twitter: @DJAFothergill



Professor Trudi Grant  
Director of Public Health  
Twitter: @SomersetDPH



Clare Paul, Cabinet Member  
for Education and Public  
Health  
Twitter: @Clarepaul\_



# Somerset Covid Cases

## Latest 7 day figures

Number of tests

75291



Number of positive cases

103



## 7 day rate per 100k

Somerset

18.3

South West

46.1

England

74.7

We're all in it together



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

In the week up to 12 June approximately 75291 tests were carried out across the county and there have been 103 new confirmed cases. The rates have increased since last week going from 5.3 to 18.3, however we still remain well below the South West and England rates as you can see in this graphic.

## THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES:

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

- Workplace, care and school settings
- Vaccination update
- Testing Update
- Vaccine buddies
- Communications Focus
- Self-Isolation guidance
- Access to GPs
- Accessible resources

**Workplaces:** You can see from the communications section of this update, that we continue to promote regular testing as a vital tool in our fight against coronavirus. Businesses can give confidence to customers by ensuring that staff without symptoms test regularly to identify if they are carrying the virus. There are some very useful posters which can be downloaded from here which can show people your staff are testing regularly: [Posters - Coronavirus Resource centre](#)

Please also make sure that you are aware of the requirements to self-isolate if you are a close contact of a confirmed case of Covid-19, and from this week getting a PCR test if you are a close contact of a case but not from the same household.

It is important for all business to be Covid-19 secure and there is some excellent guidance here: [Working-safely-during-covid-19](#)

**Care Sector:** Cases of Covid remain low in care settings across Somerset.

**Mandatory vaccinations for care staff:** It has been reported in the news that there are plans to make vaccinations compulsory for care staff. The current guide for social care staff regarding vaccination was last updated on 1 March 2021 which outlines why it's important for social care staff to get vaccinated and other information – See [Covid-19 vaccination: a guide for social care staff](#). Once the guidelines have been updated further we will share them with you.

**Care home visits from 21 June:** The new guidelines [Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do](#), updated on 15 June 2021 have the following impact on care home visits (further updates are expected on 18 June 2021):

- All care home residents will be able to nominate an essential care giver who will be able to visit the care home resident, even if the resident is isolating.
- In most cases, residents who go on a visit out of a care home will no longer need to isolate for 14 days when they return.
- Residents returning from some higher risk visits out of the care home, such as an overnight stay in hospital, will still be required to isolate.

[Guidance on care home visiting](#) updated 15 June 2021 (update expected 18 June 2021)

[Visits out of care homes](#) updated 15 June 2021 (update expected 18 June 2021)

**Somerset Adult Social Care Provider Survey:** All of us within Somerset's Health and Care system would like to hear feedback from care providers across Somerset about how supported you have felt during the pandemic, what you consider is important for the people you care for, your staff and your business or organisation as we recover from the pandemic. This is an opportunity to provide your views so we can use your feedback to tailor services in the future. The survey is short and the closing date is 30 June. Here is the link: [Complete the Somerset Adult Social Care Provider Survey](#)

**Further information:** Information and guidance related to Covid-19 within adult social care settings is updated regularly, including guidance on PPE, testing, vaccinations, visiting and working safely within care homes, home care and day care – please visit [Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

**Schools and Early Years settings:** We continue to see very little activity in terms of positive cases, however the number of tests being carried out has dropped considerably. As society slowly opens up, please do test twice a week every week if you are symptom free, as this will help to identify those people carrying the virus without being aware of it, and will help us to reduce the spread.

**Are you a close contact of a case from another household?** Individuals who have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, but who are not from the same household, are now encouraged to take a PCR test as soon as they are advised that they are a close contact of a case. **This is regardless of whether or not they have symptoms.**

A negative test does not release a close contact from isolation. In the event of a negative test, it is really important that people still complete their isolation period regardless of test result in case they go on to develop symptoms after the test. If this happens, it will be necessary to take another PCR test.

To get a PCR test you can either order a home test kit or attend a test site. Both can be requested here: [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

**Self-isolating? Stay in your households:** Somerset's Public Health Team has received a few queries from schools where parents and carers have asked them whether children can self-isolate at other households, such as with grandparents and friends. We would therefore like to reiterate the guidance on self-isolation of children who have been contacts of a child with Covid 19.

- A child who has been advised to self-isolate **must return home immediately and self-isolate in the household where they live.**
- A child who is required to self-isolate may be incubating the infection and become infectious, so it is advised they **do not have contact with anyone outside of their own household** (e.g. grandparents or other families, regardless of their vaccination status) during their 10 days of self-isolation due to the risk of transmitting the Covid 19 infection to another household or vulnerable person.

**Vaccination Update:** Yesterday it was announced everyone aged 21 and over has been offered the vaccine so please go [online](#) or phone 119 to book if you have not already done so and are in this age group. Alternatively, if you are 21 and over, if you're able to get to the Bath and West Showground this week, then you can have your vaccination without making an appointment – details are below.

**Walk-in COVID vaccination clinic available at the Bath and West Showground this week!**

**No need to book!**  
Anyone aged 21 and over, can visit our walk-in vaccination clinics:

- Thursday 17 June 4pm - 8.30pm
- Friday 18 June 10am - 6pm
- Saturday 19 June 10am - 6pm
- Sunday 20 June 10am - 6pm

**Your vaccination journey**

- 1 Check in at reception
- 2 Clinical assessment
- 3 Queue for vaccine
- 4 Receive your vaccine
- 5 Post-vaccination area
- 6 Wait for 15 minutes
- 7 Check out

Thank you

When you have your vaccine, you will be told that you might experience some side effects – for example a sore arm, tiredness or nausea. You may also get a fever or headache, but these symptoms are usually mild and disappear quickly. If you're younger, you may feel you are less likely to be very ill from Covid-19 and question the need to have the vaccine. However, you might still catch Covid-19, and studies are now suggesting those who have been vaccinated are less likely to transmit

the virus to other people, so the more of us who are vaccinated, the safer we are as a society.

And as more people are now being offered their second dose, we urge you to please accept it at your earliest convenient date. The second dose has been found to be particularly important in ensuring improved protection. The vaccine is our best defence against the virus and returning to a more normal way of life. And while the first dose gives some level of immunity against coronavirus, it is vital everyone goes on to receive a second dose – regardless which vaccine you receive.

A single jab will not give the maximum protection against the virus – the best protection comes after the second. All three vaccines, Pfizer, Oxford AstraZeneca and Moderna are up to 90 per cent effective after two doses. Getting the second dose will send a powerful reminder for your immune system to attack when necessary.

Full information regarding the vaccination program can be found here:

[Covid-19 vaccinations in Somerset - Somerset CCG](#)

**Updated guidance regarding PCR test:** Individuals who have been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, but **who are not** from the same household, are now encouraged to take a PCR test as soon as they are advised that they are a close contact of a case. **This is regardless of whether or not they have symptoms.**

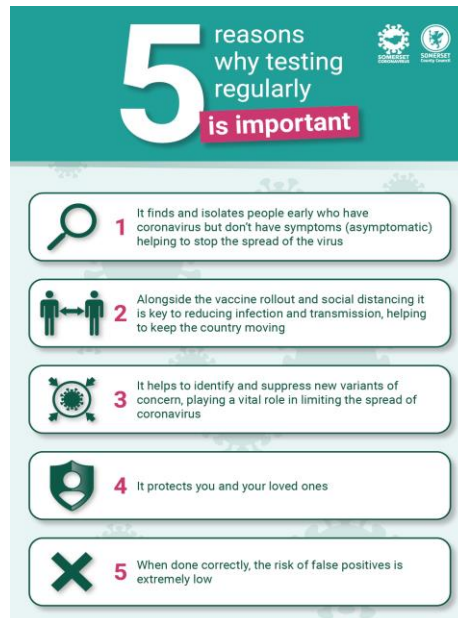
A negative test does not release a close contact from isolation. In the event of a negative test, it is really important people still complete their isolation period regardless of test result in case they go on to develop symptoms after the test. If this happens, it will be necessary to take another PCR test.

To get a PCR test you can either order a home test kit or attend a test site.

Both can be requested here: [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Please note: if someone has had a positive PCR test in the past 90 days, they do not need to arrange a further PCR test unless they develop new symptoms of Covid-19. As a close contact of a case they should isolate for the full 10 days.

**Five reasons to test regularly:** Please watch out for this list and an animated 'gif' explaining five reasons why it is so important for us all to test regularly. It will be on our social media channels and we would appreciate you sharing it with your networks.



**Do you have, or know someone who has concerns over receiving the Covid-19 Vaccine?** Our team of trained Vaccination buddies are here to help! The programme, in partnership with Spark Somerset, enables people to be offered support via a 'buddy' who can help them to make informed decisions about having the Covid-19 vaccination.

People can be [referred \(or self-refer\)](#) to the scheme and a Vaccination Buddy will contact them by phone to discuss their concerns and offer information and reassurance. Vaccination Buddies come from all walks of life and have the necessary skills and knowledge to support people in a friendly, non-judgemental way..

**Communications Focus:** As mentioned in the introduction, England remains in Step 3. Please find below a quick summary of the main changes:

**COVID-19 restrictions: what you can and cannot do**

- Step 3 restrictions remain in place until 19 July, though the data will be reviewed after two weeks in case the risks have reduced.



- The government will continue to monitor the data and the move to Step 4 will be confirmed one week in advance.

### **Weddings, civil partnerships and commemorative events from 21 June**

- The 30-person limit will be lifted for weddings and wakes.
- There will be no set limit on the number of attendees, but venues must adhere to covid secure guidance, maintain social distancing and provide table service.
- All weddings in private settings, such as gardens, must have completed a covid risk assessment to ascertain how many guests they can host safely.

### **Large events pilots from 21 June**

- A limited series of pilot events will take place to produce additional evidence on reopening events safely.
- Proof of vaccination or a recent negative test will be required.

### **Care home visits from 21 June – see above section**

### **Overnight trips for out-of-school groups from 21 June**

- Out-of-school settings can organise domestic residential visits in consistent groups of up to 30 children.

This week's Covid Catch up film presented by former BBC news correspondent Clinton Rogers focuses on the fact we remain in Step 3 and you can watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hmGguDNnTQ>

**Self-Isolation guidance:** If someone tests positive for Covid-19 it is vital they self-isolate to prevent the spread. By doing this as quickly as possible it helps to protect friends, family and the local community.

Those isolating may be eligible to access the test and trace support payment scheme, which provides a £500 payment to help during their isolation.

If they do not meet the eligibility criteria for the test and trace support payment, there are other local organisation such as the [Village Agents](#) who will explore what other support options are available based on the individual needs.

Full information, including how to apply for the £500 grant can be found here: [Self Isolating Guidance](#)



**Access to GP Services:** We are hoping the people of Somerset will continue to be patient and perhaps consider one of the alternatives to using a GP. These include:

**Pharmacy** - As lockdown eases, don't forget your local high-street [pharmacist](#) can provide health advice and help with minor illnesses like coughs and colds, sunburn, hay fever and diarrhoea. You don't need an appointment and they can even provide you with the right medicines at the same time.

**Mindline** - if you, or someone you know, is struggling with their mental wellbeing, our 24/7 [Mindline](#) is open to people of all ages. Just ring 01823 276 892.

**111 First** - The 111 service is available 24/7 to provide advice, treatment and care. Just ring 111 or visit <https://111.nhs.uk/> and the service will provide advice and refer you to another service if you need it; if you need to be seen in person they can book you a time slot.

**Minor injury units** - Don't forget - A&E is for life-threatening emergencies. There's also a network of [Minor Injury Units](#) to provide the treatment you need – often they'll see you quicker and closer to home.

You can read an open letter from the NHS regarding this by following this link: [Please support our GP practices - open letter to everyone in Somerset - Somerset CCG](#)

**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 share our posts with your networks to help us in communicating these important messages. Follow our Director of Public Health account too [here](#).