

Local COVID alert level update for South Yorkshire

Following close discussions with local leaders, South Yorkshire will move from local COVID alert level high to very high from 00.01 on Saturday 24 October. This means that new measures will come into place including:

- people must not socialise with anybody they do not live with, or have formed a support bubble with, in any indoor setting or in any private garden or at most outdoor hospitality venues and ticketed events
- people must not socialise in a group of more than 6 in an outdoor public space such as a park or beach, the countryside, a public garden or a sports venue
- all pubs and bars must close, unless they are serving substantial meals
- people should try to avoid travelling outside the very high alert level or entering a very high alert level area, other than for work, education or for caring responsibilities or to travel through as part of a longer journey
- residents should avoid staying overnight in another part of the UK, and others should avoid staying overnight in the very high alert area

In addition, following discussions with local leaders it was agreed that from 00.01 on Saturday 24 October additional closures will include:

- betting shops
- adult gaming centres
- casinos
- soft play centres

The rate of COVID-19 infections is rising rapidly across the UK.

The case rate in England stood at 169 people per 100,000 from 9 October to 15 October, up from 100 people per 100,000 for the week 25 September to 1 October. Cases are not evenly spread, with infection rates rising more rapidly in some areas than others.

In South Yorkshire rates are among the highest in the country and continuing to rise rapidly with case rates ranging from 285 people per 100,000 in Doncaster up to 402 people per 100,000 in Sheffield.

Although originally focused on the younger population, we are seeing rises in the older population now as well. In order to reduce these numbers and ensure that the NHS isn't overwhelmed and has capacity to treat other conditions we need to act now.

To support the local authority during this period, the government will be providing a financial support package. In addition to the £ 1 billion of funding the Prime Minister set out on Monday 12 October. This includes additional funding of £11.2 million for local enforcement and contact tracing

activity.

Additional financial support will also be provided for local companies – recognising the additional strain these measures will place on businesses.

Local COVID alert level very high will take effect across all parts of South Yorkshire. It will cover:

- Barnsley
- Doncaster
- Rotherham
- the City of Sheffield

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I'm very grateful to the local leadership in South Yorkshire who have worked together closely, cross party, on the need for additional measures to protect lives and livelihoods. A failure to act now would only lead to tougher and longer lasting restrictions later.

I understand the sacrifice people in South Yorkshire have already made and the enormous impact further measures will have on people's lives. That is why we are also providing support to businesses and contact tracing activity across South Yorkshire.

Now is the time for us all to work together to get this virus under control.

Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

I would like to thank the Mayor of the Sheffield City Region Dan Jarvis and the leaders of the local councils of South Yorkshire for the constructive discussions we have had about how to get the virus under control in the region.

Given rates are amongst the highest in the country I am pleased that we were able to reach an agreement that ensures swift action is taken in accordance with the public health advice. I fully recognise the huge impact this will have on communities in the area and the sacrifices people will be making. That's why we have agreed an extensive package of support for local people, businesses and councils.

The restrictions we have agreed together will only be in place for as long as they are absolutely necessary. They will be reviewed jointly in 28 days' time.

The government is totally committed to working with local leaders as we tackle this challenge, for the benefit of all the people of

South Yorkshire.

All available data for the areas that will move to local COVID alert level very high at 00.01 on Saturday 24 October have been assessed by the government, including the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace including the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), Public Health England (PHE), the Chief Medical Officer and the Cabinet Office. Data assessed includes incidence, test positivity and the growth rate of the virus.

It is essential that these outbreaks are contained to protect lives and our NHS, and prevent greater economic damage in the future. We face a new challenge as we head into the winter, and we know that even mild cases of COVID-19 can have devastating consequences for people in all age groups, along with the risk of Long COVID. Our strategy is to suppress the virus while supporting the economy, education and the NHS, until an effective vaccine is widely available. Local action is at the centre of our response, and engagement with local authorities is, and will continue to be, a key part of this process.

The 7-day case rates per 100,000 for South Yorkshire are as follows:

- Sheffield: 402
- Barnsley: 367
- Rotherham: 341
- Doncaster: 285

On 12 October, the government introduced a new, simplified framework for local interventions based around 3 new local COVID alert levels.

The [postcode checker](#) shows which alert level applies in each area.

The NHS COVID-19 app will also direct people to this information.

We have provided £3.7 billion of funding to local authorities in England to respond to pressures in all their services.

The Prime Minister also announced on Monday 12 October additional COVID funding of around £1 billion which will provide Local Authorities with additional money to protect vital services. The Government will set out further information in due course on how this new funding will be allocated.

See guidance on each [local COVID alert level](#).

Throughout the pandemic, the government has listened carefully to the views of the scientific community, in particular the information from the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and its sub-groups when taking decisions on the best way to tackle the pandemic.