

Stronger measures introduced in parts of the North East to tackle rising infection rates

- Parts of the North East escalated to an area of intervention
- New restrictions introduced across the region to curb rising infection rates, agreed in collaboration with local leaders
- Regulations and guidance to come into force on Friday

Following further discussions with local leaders, the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), and the Chief Medical Officer for England have agreed to escalate parts of the North East – namely, Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland and County Durham – to areas of national intervention.

From Friday 18 September, regulations will ban the following:

- residents must not socialise with other people outside of their own households or support bubble in private homes and gardens
- hospitality for food and drink will be restricted to table service only
- late night restriction of operating hours will be introduced, with leisure and entertainment venues required to close between 10pm to 5am

Residents are also advised to adhere to the following guidance to further reduce rates of infection:

- not to socialise with other people outside of their own households in all public venues.
- only to use public transport for essential purposes, such as travelling to school or work
- take holidays only within your own household or support bubble
- avoid attending amateur and semi-professional sporting events as spectators

Changes come as cases in the North East have risen to the second highest in the country, after the North West. This decision has been made in close collaboration with local leaders.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

After seeing cases in the North East rise to a concerning level, local authorities requested support for tighter restrictions and we have taken swift action to accept their recommendations.

We do not take these decisions lightly but I know the people of the North East will work together and break the chains of transmission.

I urge those from affected areas: please, get a test if you are symptomatic, stay at home if you are required to self-isolate, and think: hands, face, space. This is the only way for us to return to a more normal way of life and avoid further restrictions.

These changes are in addition to the nationwide 6-person limit on social gatherings that came into force on Monday. This rule is in place across the country and will sit alongside additional restrictions in some local areas.

Public Health England, the JBC and NHS Test and Trace are constantly monitoring the levels of infection and other data on prevalence of the virus across the country. As has always been the case, measures are kept under constant review to reduce the spread of the virus and save lives.