

Town planning and public health: shared competencies

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Returning to a regional tiered approach

North West Greater Manchester Very high (tier 3) While there has been continued improvement in Greater Manchester, weekly case rates remain very high, especially amongst those aged over 60, at around 260 per 100,000 people. The pressure on the local NHS is decreasing in some areas but remains a concern; Manchester University hospital and Pennine Acute Trust remain under significant pressure. Lancashire, Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen Very high (tier 3) While there have been improvements in some areas, case rates and the proportion of tests which are positive for COVID-19 remain high. Case rates in over 60s are very high (over 200 per 100,000) in 6 lower tier local authorities. There is still pressure on the NHS in this region. Liverpool City Region High (tier 2) There is continued improvement across the Liverpool city region. Case rates (including for the over 60s) are decreasing rapidly with some notable improvements in Liverpool, Knowsley and Sefton. Cases have fallen by 69% over 6 weeks. However, despite improvements, case rates in over 60s remain high at 150+ per 100,000 people in all lower tier local authorities. Cheshire (including Warrington) High (tier 2) Case rates are continuing to decline across Warrington and Cheshire, with a 27.4% fall to 209 people per 100,000, in line with Liverpool City Region. However, case rates in those over 60 remain high (175/100,000) though falling. Positivity is 8.1%. Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS foundation Trust has 150 inpatients with COVID-19. Cumbria High (tier 2) The picture in Cumbria is broadly improving although case rates in Carlisle and South Lakeland are increasing – with increases likely due to a large school outbreak. Case rates in over 60s are above 100 per 100,000 in Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness. These case rates are too high for allocation to tier 1 but Cumbria's

trajectory does currently not warrant inclusion in tier 3. **North East** Tees Valley Combined Authority Very high (tier 3) While case rates are now decreasing in all lower tier local authorities, they remain very high at 390 people per 100,000 across the region, with positivity also very high at 13.3%. The case rate in over 60s remains very high at 292 per 100,000. NHS admissions in the area have remained high in November. North East Combined Authority Very high (tier 3) The region continues to see very high case rates, overall 318 people per 100,000, although this figure is either stable or falling in all parts of the region. Case rate in over 60s remains very high at 256 per 100,000. NHS admissions in the area have remained high in November. **Yorkshire and The Humber** The Humber Very high (tier 3) The picture in Humber is improving with case rates now falling in 3 of the 4 lower tier local authorities. However, case rates in all ages and in over 60s remain very high (431/100,000 and 344/100,000 respectively). Positivity is 12.6%. There is ongoing pressure on the local NHS. West Yorkshire Very high (tier 3) This area is improving with case rates falling in all 5 lower tier local authorities. However, case rates in all ages and rates in over 60s remain very high (389/100,000 and 312/100,000 respectively). Positivity is 13.9%. South Yorkshire Very high (tier 3) This area is improving with case rates falling in all 4 lower tier local authorities. However, case rates in all ages and rates in those over 60 remain very high (274/100,000 and 223/100,000 respectively). Positivity is 11.0%. There is pressure on local NHS Trusts. York and North Yorkshire High (tier 2) Overall case rates (including for those over 60) in this region are improving in 7 of the 8 local authorities and lower than other parts of Yorkshire and The Humber but remain high overall (202/100,000 in all age groups and 145/100,000 for those aged over 60). Positivity is 8.5%. Rates in Scarborough are significantly higher than the rest of the region (334/100,000 in all age groups and 247/100,000 in those aged over 60) but falling rapidly. **East Midlands** Leicester and Leicestershire Very high (tier 3) Improvements have been seen in overall case rates in all but one lower tier local authority, but remain very high at 355 per 100,000, including in over 60s at 250 per 100k. The pressure on the local NHS remains very high. Derby and Derbyshire Very high (tier 3) There has been improvement in this area, but case rates remain very high at 275 per 100,000, and in those over 60 it is 220 per 100,000. The pressure on the local NHS remains high. Lincolnshire Very high (tier 3) There has been an overall improvement, but case rates remain high throughout the county, at 307 per 100,000 and in the over 60s it is 281 per 100,000. NHS pressures in Lincolnshire remain high and show signs of increasing, particularly for the units treating the more serious cases. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Very high (tier 3) There has been an improvement, but case rates remain very high in the over 60s at 211 per 100,000. The overall case rate is 244 per 100,000 and positivity is 10%. The proportion of hospital beds taken up by COVID-19 patients is high but appears to be falling. Northamptonshire High (tier 2) Although improvements in the overall case rates have been seen recently, there is a continued rise in rates of COVID-19 in the over 60s. Over 60s case rate is 154 per 100,000. There is some evidence that the local NHS is seeing the proportion of people with COVID-19 being admitted and subsequently occupying beds stabilising, however COVID and non-COVID patients occupying beds in units treating more serious cases is high. Rutland High (tier 2) This area is improving with a case rate of 125 per 100,000 and 118 per

100,000 for the over 60s, which while elevated is different from the surrounding areas. Positivity is 6.4%. **West Midlands** Birmingham and Black Country Very high (tier 3) While case rates are improving (down 8.3%) they remain very high (390/100,000). There is a similar trend for positivity. Pressure on the NHS remains high. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Very high (tier 3) While the situation is improving with case rates down 13.4%, case rates and test positivity are both very high across this area (391/100,000 and 11.1% respectively). The pressure on the local NHS remains very high, including in units treating the more serious cases.

Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Very high (tier 3) The case rate remains very high (though falling) across this area at 236/100,000. The case rate in over 60s remains very high at 182/100,000. There is a clear upward trend in case rates in over 60s in 3 of the 7 local authority areas. Positivity is 9.0%. The pressure on the local NHS remains high. Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin High (tier 2) The case rate remains high (though falling) at 200/100,000. The case rate in over 60s remains high at 139/100.000 and is falling. Positivity is 7.2%. Herefordshire High (tier 2) Herefordshire has a high case rate at 160.3/100,000. These rates are too high for allocation to tier 1 but the slight downward trajectory – a fall of 1.9% – does currently not warrant inclusion in tier 3. Worcestershire High (tier 2) While there has been a decline in case rates in all lower tier local authorities they do remain high (201/100,000), including in the over 60s (141/100,000), These case rates are too high for allocation to tier 1 but the downward trajectory – with a fall of 18.3% – does currently not warrant inclusion in tier 3.

Hospital admissions of patients with COVID-19 have started to stabilise **London** London High (tier 2) The trajectory of key indicators of COVID-19 in an area (including all age case rates, over 60s case rates and positivity) have been increasing until very recently. The situation in London is not uniform throughout the city. 13 of the 33 boroughs have case rates which are 10% or more higher than a week ago and ten boroughs where case rates for over 60s are above 150 per 100,000. Hospital admissions continue to increase in the East and North London in particular, although they are still well below the spring peak. Taken as a whole, the situation in London has stabilised at a similar case rate and positivity to other parts of the country in tier 2.

East of England Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes High (tier 2) The overall case rate is still increasing in two of the 3 lower tier local authorities. The overall case rate is high at 178/100,000 and it is 113/100,000 in the over 60s although this rises to 185/100,000 in Luton. Positivity 6.9%. There is pressure on the local NHS. Essex, Thurrock and Southend on Sea High (tier 2) Overall the rate is 159/100,000 and rising. The rate in over 60s is 100/100,000 and falling. Positivity is 6.4%. Norfolk High (tier 2) The majority of Norfolk is improving. Case rates are 123/100,000 and positivity is 5.0%. Case rates for over 60s remain over 100 per 100,000 in Great Yarmouth, Norwich and South Norfolk (with increasing trajectories in the last two areas). Cambridgeshire and Peterborough High (tier 2) An improving picture with decreasing case rates across 5 of the 6 local authorities although the case rate is still high at 123/100,000 overall). Case rates in over 60s are also decreasing (58/100,000). Positivity has dropped to 5.2%. Hertfordshire High (tier 2) There is an improving picture across the majority of Hertfordshire – the case rate has fallen to 147/100,000 overall with drops in rates in 9 of the 10 local authorities. Case rates in over 60s are falling

also (102/100,000) but they are greater than 100/100,000 in 6 local authorities. Positivity is 6.3% falling. Suffolk High (tier 2) There is an improving picture across the majority of Suffolk. The case rate has fallen to 82/100,000 with drops in rate in 4 of the 5 local authorities. There has been a >40% increase in weekly case rate to 128/100,000 in Ipswich compared to the previous week. Across Suffolk, case rates in over 60s are also falling (72/100,000). Positivity is 3.7%. **South East** Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton. High (tier 2) There is a mixed picture across this area although the overall case rate is now 152/100,000 and falling in almost all areas. NHS admissions were increasing rapidly until mid-November and are now stable. Isle of Wight Medium (tier 1) The case rate is low and decreasing at 71 per 100,000 and lower in over 60s at 44 per 100,000. COVID-19 pressure on the NHS is low. East and West Sussex, and Brighton and Hove High (tier 2) Case rates in Sussex are at 120 per 100,000 with a total positivity of 4.5%. However, the trend is increasing in several areas. NHS admissions have been fairly stable in the last month but there is increasing occupancy in units treating more serious cases. Surrey High (tier 2) Case rates are stable or improving in all areas with the overall rate at 139 per 100,000. The most concerning lower tier local authorities are those that neighbour London (Spelthorne and Runnymede) with case rates over 200 per 100,000, and high case rates in the over 60s are observed in neighbouring Surrey Heath and Woking. Surrey Heartlands Health & Care Partnership (STP) report admissions to hospital from COVID-19 patients were fairly stable in the last month. Reading, Wokingham, Bracknell Forest, Windsor and Maidenhead, West Berkshire High (tier 2) An improving picture across the area with the exception of Slough and Reading. Slough has high case rates (326 per 100,000 overall and 219 per 100,000 for the over 60s) and relatively high positivity of 12%. The case rate and positivity away from Slough do not justify inclusion at tier 3.

Slough Very high (tier 3) The weekly case rate in Slough is much higher than surrounding areas at over 320 per 100,000 people compared with 155 per 100,000 in the rest of Berkshire and 138 in Buckinghamshire. Test positivity is also much higher at 12%. Buckinghamshire High (tier 2) A broadly stable or improving picture across Buckinghamshire with a case rate at 138 per 100,000 and positivity at 6.4%. These case rates remain too high for allocation to tier 1. Oxfordshire High (tier 2) Positive improvements across key indicators across all areas in Oxfordshire, but case rates still too high for tier 1. Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire And Berkshire West STP hospital admissions have been fairly stable in recent months. Kent & Medway Very high (tier 3) Case rates are high and continuing to rise with large increases in case rates in almost all areas in the last 7 days. Some of the highest case rates in the country are currently seen in Kent. Rising case rates in people aged over 60 are a particular concern. Positivity is also increasing in 10 of the 13 lower tier local authorities. Kent And Medway STP are reporting hospital admissions are increasing and mutual aid necessary across the county. **South West** Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset Very high (tier 3) The overall picture remains concerning with very high case rates overall (325/100,000) and in the over 60s (208/100,000). Positivity is 10.4%. Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and North Somerset are part of a wider travel to work area and thus form a natural geographic grouping, separate to the surrounding area. Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset High (tier 2) There are very small increases in the case rates in this area, however

overall case rates and those in over 60s remain high (154/100,000 and 102/100,000 respectively). Positivity is stable at 5.5%. Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole High (tier 2) Case rates are falling across the area (131/100,000 in all cases and 99/100,000 in the over 60s). However the over 60 case rate is still high at 151/100,000 in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Positivity is 5.2%. In addition, the Dorset STP reports daily admissions to hospitals are increasing. Gloucestershire High (tier 2) Case rates in Gloucestershire remain high at 162/100,000. While a decline has been seen in the case rate in the over 60s, this remains at 92/100,000. Positivity is 6.3%. Wiltshire and Swindon High (tier 2) Case rates continue to fall in Swindon but are increasing in Wiltshire. Overall case rates are 143/100,000 and 93/100,000 in the over 60s. Positivity is 6.2%. Swindon and Wiltshire STP are reporting increasing admissions to hospital. Devon High (tier 2) Case rates are 121/100,000 overall though there are higher rates in Plymouth, Torbay and Exeter. The case rate in the over 60s is 85/100,000 though significantly higher in Exeter (155.9/100,000). Positivity is 4.2%. There is pressure at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Medium (tier 1) There are low case rates and test positivity in Cornwall and the case rates in all age groups are stable or declining. There have been no cases in the Isles of Scilly in the last 7 days meaning there is strong evidence to make an allocation to tier 1.

Loveday Ryder appointed as DVSA's new Chief Executive

News story

Loveday Ryder will become the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's Chief Executive on 1 January 2021.



Loveday Ryder has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and will be starting her new role on 1 January 2021.

DVSA's purpose is to help everyone stay safe on Britain's roads. The agency

carries out driving tests, approves people to be driving instructors and MOT testers carries out tests to make sure lorries and buses are safe to drive, carries out roadside checks on drivers and vehicles, and monitors vehicle recalls.

Department for Transport Permanent Secretary Bernadette Kelly said:

I'm delighted to welcome Loveday Ryder to the department in her role as Chief Executive of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency.

DVSA's work affects everyone in the country, and Loveday's wide range of business change and performance improvement experience will be invaluable in helping DVSA overcome the operational challenges created by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

I would like to express my thanks to Gareth Llewellyn for his immense contribution as Chief Executive, and wish him every success for the future.

Loveday Ryder was appointed as BPDTS Ltd's Chief Executive Officer on 22 January 2018. BPDTS provides specialist digital technology services to the Department for Work and Pensions.

Previously, Loveday spent 12 years in the Ministry of Justice, where she successfully served in several senior roles in organisation design, change management and programme delivery,

Before joining the Civil Service in 2006, Loveday worked within a specialist management consultancy.

Loveday Ryder said:

I'm thrilled and excited to be joining DVSA, whose people are so passionate about helping everyone stay safe on Britain's roads.

I want to help build on the successes already achieved through DVSA's 5-year strategy. DVSA will continue to change, improve and modernise services for customers, embrace smarter ways of working and make the most of new technology while making sure road safety remains at the heart of everything we do.

I'm looking forward to supporting DVSA colleagues in the vital work they do to help achieve the vision we all share – safer drivers, safer vehicles and safer journeys for all.

Marketing boss banned after thousands of nuisance calls

Elia Bols (32) now living in Australia, was director of AMS Marketing Limited, a telephone marketing company incorporated in January 2016.

The Telephone Preference Service (TPS), however, received 71 complaints between October 2016 and October 2017 about AMS Marketing's unsolicited calls. A further 32 complaints were received by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), who informed Elia Bols that a fine of £100,000 would be issued.

In April 2019, AMS Marketing was wound-up in the courts, with the fine outstanding. Further enquiries by the Official Receiver established that for just over a year between October 2016 and December 2017, Elia Bols' had caused AMS Marketing to make more than 75,000 unsolicited direct marketing calls to numbers around the UK.

AMS Marketing Limited should have used the TPS list before making such calls to remove the numbers of individuals who had elected not to receive unsolicited contact.

On 28 October 2020, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Elia Bols after he did not dispute that he had caused his company to breach Regulation 21 of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations in making the marketing calls.

Effective from 18 November 2020, Elia Bols is disqualified for 6 years from acting as a director or directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

Andy Curry, Head of Investigations at the ICO said:

Our work with the Insolvency Service has seen the successful disqualification of 17 directors who have shut their business down to try and avoid paying a fine for illegal marketing activity.

Nuisance calls, emails and texts can be a huge problem and often cause people real distress. By taking unscrupulous directors out of action, we can help protect the public and their privacy.

Robert Clarke, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

Elia Bols had a complete disregard of protective regulations and thanks to the joint work with the ICO, we have secured a ban which

reflects the seriousness of this offence.

When directors of a company do not comply with regulations that are designed to protect the public, we will fully investigate the circumstances and take action where appropriate.

Elia Bols is from Perth, Australia and his date of birth is April 1988.

He was the director of AMS Marketing Limited (Company number 09967423)

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

COVID-19 refunds: CMA warns wedding firms over unfair practices

News story

The CMA has issued new warnings to firms over concerns that couples are still not receiving fair refunds for weddings that could not go ahead during the pandemic.



Following the [publication of its statement on wedding cancellations and refunds](#), the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [took action against Bijou Weddings Group](#) to secure fair refunds for its customers. However, the CMA has continued to receive new complaints from couples who had their big

day booked with other wedding party providers, prompting the CMA to write directly to several firms which may have broken consumer law. Couples have complained about being misled about the level of refund they are entitled to or being offered the opportunity to rebook but only at a higher price.

These businesses are being asked to review their practices to ensure they comply with the law, or risk enforcement action if they fail to do so – including being required to provide refunds.

As a result of concerns highlighted by the most recent complaints, the CMA is also making its views clear to all wedding firms:

- businesses should not make deductions from the refund unless they can prove those costs were incurred directly for the wedding in question and have provided a breakdown of those costs. Where a contract is for venue hire only, the CMA would generally not expect there to be any deductions. The CMA has not set a 'benchmark' amount when it comes to providing refunds and each case must be assessed on an individual basis
- businesses need to meet their legal obligations promptly and should not unreasonably delay or refuse to provide refunds to couples when they are due
- couples should not face additional charges when they voluntarily agree to reschedule their wedding to a comparable date and service, instead of seeking a refund

All wedding firms are being urged to look at their policies on refunds and cancellations and make changes where needed.

Andrea Coscelli, CEO of the CMA, said:

It's not right that couples are facing an uphill battle over costs for weddings which couldn't go ahead due to the pandemic. We know that businesses are continuing to face the impact of coronavirus, but consumers cannot be expected to lose out as a result.

Many couples will be entitled to a full refund, but in the cases where they are not, we are absolutely clear there is no 'one size fits all' approach to retaining costs. Any proposed deduction should only cover costs already incurred in relation to the particular wedding in question, and those costs should be proven by the firm and clearly broken down. All wedding firms need to take note of the CMA's action in this area and provide refunds where they are due, without unnecessary delay. Those who refuse to do so risk enforcement action.

This update on the wedding sector is part of a wider programme of CMA investigations into businesses that have reportedly failed to respect refund rights during the pandemic.

All updates on the CMA's work on refunds can be found on the [COVID-19 response page](#).

Notes to editors

1. The key pieces of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation are the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA) and the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). The CRA prohibits the use of unfair terms in contracts between businesses and consumers. The CPRs prohibit unfair commercial practices by businesses towards consumers.
2. In some cases, where lockdown laws prevent a business from providing a service or the consumer from receiving it, the business may be able to deduct a contribution to the costs it has already incurred in relation to servicing the specific contract in question (where it cannot recover them elsewhere). Read more in [the CMA's statement on weddings](#).
3. When calculating the amount Bijou Weddings must refund, the CMA calculated that 37.2% of the contract price was the maximum amount Bijou could deduct from its refunds to any customer. However, this amount was dependant on how close the wedding date was to the start of lockdown. As it turned out, there were no cases in which Bijou was entitled to retain 37.2%. The average amount that Bijou was able to deduct was 28% – just over a quarter. The CMA has at no point advised or implied that this calculation is a standard to be used across the sector. On the contrary, the CMA has made clear that each case must be considered individually. The CMA considers that any sums retained by a wedding business must have already been incurred in relation to that particular wedding, and this must be proven.
4. For more information about the CMA's work on weddings, [visit the inquiry page](#).
5. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

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