



23 December 2020

Norfolk to enter Tier 4 restrictions

Sent on behalf of the Norfolk Resilience Forum

Norfolk is to move into Tier 4 coronavirus restrictions from Boxing Day, following the continued rise in Covid 19 transmission in the county

The government's decision means that people cannot leave or be outside of the place they are living unless they have a reasonable excuse. People cannot meet other people indoors, including over the Christmas and New Year period, unless they live with them, or they are part of their support bubble. Only two people from different household can meet in public outdoor spaces.

Non-essential businesses, including hospitality venues, are required to close aside for sales by takeaway or other click and collect services.

You can only leave home for work purposes where you cannot work from home, and for essential activities including:

- Buying food and medicines
- Fulfilling legal obligations
- Education and childcare
- Exercise and recreation

Where you do leave home for any of these reasons, you should stay local.

Under Tier 4 rules, you must not stay away from home overnight except in very specific circumstances, and travel out of a Tier 4 area, or into one from a lower tier, is not allowed except for in a small number of cases listed on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

The seven day incidence of the virus in Norfolk for the week to 18 December was 193 per 100,000 up from 120 the previous week. There are now 372 people being treated for the infection in hospitals in Norfolk and Waveney and rates in the over 60s are rising at 124 cases per 100,000 in the week to 18 December.

Cllr Andrew Proctor, Leader of Norfolk County Council, said: "With our hospitals under increasing pressure and rates of the virus in the county continuing to rise over a number of indicators, the news of tougher restrictions for Norfolk isn't what we wanted to hear but in those circumstances doesn't come as too much of a surprise. Looking on the brighter side our case rates are still lower than other areas of the country, particularly the south east,

"Norfolk has made a collective effort to keep the virus at bay as best we can and it's essential we continue to do that. It's the impact on our hospitals that's driving this change and we can't afford to overwhelm them preventing our hard-pressed doctors and nurses from treating people and saving lives.

"I know this isn't the news people want to hear at any time and particularly in the run up to Christmas, but the new variant of the virus means that it is more important than ever that we work together to protect our loved ones, protect the NHS and protect Norfolk.

“We know there’s a vaccine just round the corner but until many more people have had the jab the precautionary steps everyone must take of hands, face and space must continue. I hope that we can all take personal responsibility to do just that.

“We’d like to see family and friends on Christmas Day within the guidelines, but with Covid cases in our county rising rapidly we have to ask ourselves ‘is it necessary?’, ‘can the time together be shorter?’ and ‘can our gathering be smaller?’ as well as: ‘is it safe?’ and ‘is it sensible?’. We all want 2021 to be a better and brighter year and that means we need to celebrate Christmas and New Year with all those points in mind. By asking ourselves those questions particularly over the coming days, we can help to protect ourselves, protect others and protect Norfolk.”

Work conducted by the Quadram Institute shows that the new variant of Covid 19, discussed by the Prime Minister in his regular updates, has caused around 45% of all positive samples in the community in Norfolk in the first week of December. The findings also revealed the mutation accounted for 36% of new cases at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital during the second week this month.

This new variant is believed to transmit much more easily, although there is currently no evidence that it makes people more unwell.

The public health measures to minimise contact with others remain in place, keep washing hands, maintaining social distancing reducing the contact we have with other people and wearing a face covering indoors continue to help reduce transmission of the virus.

Anyone who has symptoms or tests positive is reminded to isolate and should not make a Christmas bubble.

Chief Constable, Simon Bailey, said: “Reports of increasing infection rates associated with a new variant of COVID-19 will naturally cause concern among our communities. While traditionally this time of year lends itself to time with family and friends, the greatest gift we can give to our loved ones is respect and adherence to the regulations. I would encourage everyone to work together; we must follow the rules as it’s the only way to help stop the spread of the virus and reduce infections.”

The rules around support bubbles (where a single-adult household or a household that include young children or with continuous care needs can group with another household as if they were one) remain in place. There is also a set of rules around childcare bubbles that apply to families with children under the age of 14 (as well as vulnerable adults). For full details see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household>

Information on the national tiers is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

ENDS

District statistics

Rates per 100,000 for the week to 18 December (previous week in brackets):

- Breckland: 151 (96)
- Broadland: 211 (138)
- Great Yarmouth: 194 (165)
- King’s Lynn and Norfolk: 221 (143)
- North Norfolk: 146 (62)
- Norwich: 249 (136)
- South Norfolk: 165 (98)

Outbreaks

- Care providers: 55
- Businesses: 48
- Education: 40

For political comment

For details of cabinet members, committee chairs and agendas, please see: www.norfolk.gov.uk/cabinetandchairs
Group leaders' and councillors' contact details are available at: www.norfolk.gov.uk/countycouncillors

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