

Update from Martin Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

Protect yourself, others and the NHS

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Dear Resident,

It is only a week since I last wrote to you but the situation continues to change quickly. You will be aware from television and radio how swiftly the Covid infection has spread across the north of England and London. Last week I warned that rates were now rising rapidly within Buckinghamshire and asked for your help in reducing the spread.

Unfortunately, I have to tell you that infection rates have continued to increase. From very low rates in August, the rate has now risen to 109.7 per 100,000 population for Buckinghamshire as a whole. The former South Bucks District area continues to have an extremely high rate with 161.8, up from 122.1 last week. Worryingly the rates are now increasing in all parts of Buckinghamshire, not just the south. The full details by former District area may be found on our coronavirus webpage (<https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-AoKA-1DX5Q6-6WTQR-o/c.aspx>). This is updated weekly.

As I said last week, I am completely aware than infection rates are not the same as hospital admissions and at present most cases remain in the younger age ranges, so hospital admissions remain low. However, this virus is continuing to spread into older age groups. This could mean a rise in hospital admissions in 3 or 4 weeks time as more vulnerable groups are infected. This would coincide with when hospitals are at their busiest during winter months. Therefore, Buckinghamshire is increasingly on the Government list as an area of concern and for potential movement into 'Tier 2', with extra restrictions across a range of our everyday freedoms and impact on jobs.

What we are doing

Buckinghamshire Council, in partnership with Buckinghamshire Public Health and the Buckinghamshire NHS, have launched a campaign this week to make people aware of how serious the situation is and ask them for their cooperation on how they act. You hopefully will have seen the street banners that are being placed in many high streets and outside schools. In addition, we are asking shops to display posters and leaflets. To reach everyone we are writing to every household to making them aware of the seriousness of the situation and asking for their support.

How we can all help

I am concerned at the number of people who continue to ignore the basics and seem to believe that Covid has either disappeared or poses no threat to them. To protect each other we all have a role to play. Please help by:

Staying at home if you have symptoms and booking a test, even if your symptoms are only mild
Observe the rule of six indoors and outdoors
Always stay 2 metres (6 feet) apart
Wash your hands thoroughly and often
Wear a face covering where required (unless you're exempt)

In addition, we are asking you, where possible, on a voluntary basis to avoid socialising with other households indoors at home – meet up outside instead or in a Covid safe environment. This would make a big difference.

If we all follow this guidance, we still have a chance to get the virus back under control.

Testing

Most of the constraints on the availability of testing for Covid have now been removed. If you have coronavirus symptoms, no matter how mild, please book a test immediately. You can do this by going to GOV.UK (<https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-AoKA-1DX5Q6-6WTQS-o/c.aspx>) or by calling 119.

Providing a 'Helping Hand' over half term

Buckinghamshire Council is determined that no child goes hungry over half term. We have therefore set up the 'Helping Hand' programme to help those who need the extra support. This is financed by contributions from both the Government's Hardship Fund and Buckinghamshire Council.

Our 'Helping Hand' team can help direct people to the support that is right for them. This may be from the voluntary or community sector or direct from ourselves.

If you're worried about food over half term, and not sure what help is available, please contact our 'Helping Hand' support line on 01296 395000. You can also speak with a member of staff at one of our Council Access Points (<https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-AoKA-1DX5Q6-6WTQT-o/c.aspx>) – these are the Council offices in Aylesbury, Amersham and High Wycombe. Information on wider food support available to residents can be found on our online directory (<https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-AoKA-1DX5Q6-6WTQU-o/c.aspx>).

Stay safe and protect Bucks,

Martin Tett
Leader of Buckinghamshire Council

We have used your contact details to provide you with information from Buckinghamshire Council related to the coronavirus pandemic. This is why this email has been sent to you and this is the only other use of your contact details. Please unsubscribe if you do not wish to receive future emails about the coronavirus emergency from Buckinghamshire Council.

(<https://enews.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/5438-AoKA-1DX5Q6-6WEAL-o/c.aspx>)

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Buckinghamshire Council

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