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Coronavirus (COVID-19) response update from Devon County Council

Friday 16 July 2021

Latest week in Devon

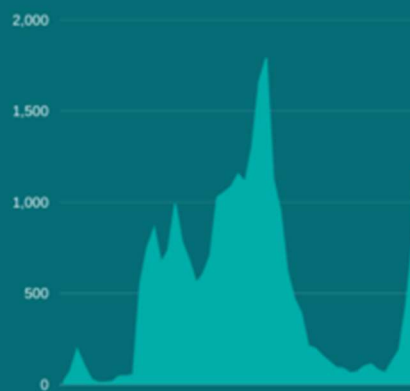
4 - 10 July 2021:

1,929 confirmed COVID-19 cases



For the latest local coronavirus data visit:

devon.cc/COVID-19



COVID-19 cases across Devon are increasing, which is to be expected given the easing of restrictions and greater freedom for people to socialise.

The highest rates remain in young age groups, mostly within younger working-age adults. This is reflected in Teignbridge which has a younger age population profile than the rest of Devon.

The weekly rate in Devon is now 240 per 100,000 of the population. Most areas are still below the national average (350), except Teignbridge, which is just above (352).

In this update:

- Director of Public Health Devon reiterates a message of caution
- How to stay safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 when restrictions end on Monday 19 July
- Heat-health alert issued by Public Health England for this weekend
- Protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19
- Funding available to help communities reconnect, rebuild and recover
- COVID-19 measures in care homes will continue beyond Monday 19 July



HM Government



From 19 July, limits on social contact will be lifted. Consider limiting close contact with people you do not live with.

Director of Public Health Devon reiterates a message of caution

Earlier this week the Prime Minister confirmed that Step 4 of the government's roadmap will proceed as planned. [Reacting to the statement, Steve Brown, Director of Public Health Devon reiterated a message of caution.](#) He said:

"Soon we will no longer be required by law to follow COVID-19 restrictions that include the wearing of face coverings and social distancing. Instead, it will be down to us all to be personally responsible for our behaviours and actions.

"I am pleased to hear clarification from our Prime Minister that the wearing of face coverings in crowded places – which would include public transport and any indoor space where there are other people – is still recommended, despite it no longer being a legal requirement.

"There's no question about us sitting back and doing nothing. We need to take personal responsibility, remain cautious, and continue with the efforts we have made so far in helping to stop the spread.

"The legal restrictions are lifting, but our responsibility as members of our family, friends and society has not changed. Please choose to do the right thing for yourselves and others to help keep everyone safe."



HM Government

NHS

**Meeting up?
Outside is safest.**

**You're much safer in the
fresh air because COVID-19
particles are blown away.**

  
HANDS FACE SPACE
FRESH AIR

How to stay safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 when restrictions end on Monday 19 July

The government has [confirmed that the majority of legal COVID-19 restrictions will end next week](#) and guidance will emphasise personal judgement and responsibility. People will be expected to consider and manage their own risk and protect themselves and others through informed choice and by exercising common sense.

Coronavirus will be a feature of our lives for the foreseeable future, so we need to learn to live with it, but while cases are high and rising, everybody needs to continue to act carefully and remain cautious. Remember, there is a risk that you could catch or pass on the virus, even if you are fully vaccinated.

While no situation is risk free, there are actions we can take to protect ourselves and others around us. Every action to help reduce the spread will reduce any further resurgence of the virus in the coming months:

- if you develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), self-isolate immediately and [get a PCR test](#), even if your symptoms are mild. If you test positive you must self-isolate for 10 full days - this is the law
- around one in three people with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms so could be spreading it unknowingly. Free rapid lateral flow device (LFD) testing twice a week increases the chances of detecting COVID-19 when a person is infectious - helping to make sure you don't spread it
- it is recommended that face coverings continue to be worn in crowded and enclosed spaces, such as on public transport, when mixing with people you don't normally meet
- wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day. Regular hand washing is an effective way to reduce your risk of catching illnesses, including COVID-19
- while the government is no longer instructing people to work from home, a return to the workplace should be gradual and businesses should [follow the published guidance](#)
- you must self-isolate if you are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace, for example if you have come into contact with someone who has tested positive. This remains [the law](#), regardless of your vaccination status. However, from Monday 16 August there will be an isolation exemption for contacts of positive cases, for under 18 year olds and for **double vaccinated** adults, with advice to take a PCR test as soon as possible instead
- all adults in England have now been offered at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. If you have not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine, you should [get vaccinated](#)
- the more fresh air, the less likely you are to inhale infectious particles. Consider meeting outdoors or, if you're indoors, think about how you can improve ventilation and let fresh air in

[Please visit the government's website for more advice on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread of coronavirus.](#)



Heat-health alert issued by Public Health England for this weekend

[Public Health England has issued a heat-health alert](#) as the Met Office forecasts high temperatures for the coming weekend.

In England, there are on average 2,000 heat related deaths every year and this year the risks may be amplified by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Temperatures indoors can be higher than those outdoors, and this year more people than usual may be staying inside, particularly if they have to self-isolate because they, or someone they are a close contact of, tests positive for COVID-19.

Look out for those who may struggle to keep themselves cool and hydrated this weekend. Older people, those with underlying conditions and those who live alone are particularly at risk.

Public Health England has published some top tips for staying safe in the heat, including staying out of the sun between 11.00am and 3.00pm when the UV rays are strongest; staying in the shade, applying sunscreen and wearing a wide brimmed hat when outdoors and closing curtains in rooms that face the sun to keep indoor spaces cooler.

[The NHS website has lots of advice about how to cope in hot weather.](#)



Please continue to wear face coverings on public transport and in enclosed spaces

Although it will no longer be a legal requirement for people to wear face coverings after Monday 19 July, the advice for everyone is to continue to wear them especially when indoors with people who you don't normally meet and in crowded spaces.

So, Devon's public are encouraged to continue wearing face coverings on public transport after Monday 19 July.

We've written to local public transport and patient transport operators, asking them to support this.

And students on council-operated school transport routes will also be advised to continue to wear face coverings (unless exempt), and to remain seated in their year groups, or in accordance with a seating plan if in place, until the end of the summer term. Enhanced cleaning on those vehicles will also remain in place for this period. It will be reviewed over the summer and we expect to issue updated guidance ahead of September.



Seeing a doctor or going to hospital? You still need your mask

Everyone accessing or visiting healthcare settings must continue to wear a face covering and follow social distancing rules.

Although COVID-19 restrictions will end in many settings in England from Monday, Public Health England's infection prevention control guidelines and hospital visiting guidance are set to remain in place for all staff and visitors.

That means [NHS visitor guidance will stay in place across all health services](#) including hospitals, GP practices, dental practices, optometrists and pharmacies to ensure patients and staff are protected.

Staff, patients and visitors will also be expected to continue to follow social distancing rules when visiting any care setting as well as using face coverings, masks and other personal protection equipment.

The NHS will continue to support staff in ensuring that the guidance is followed in all healthcare settings.



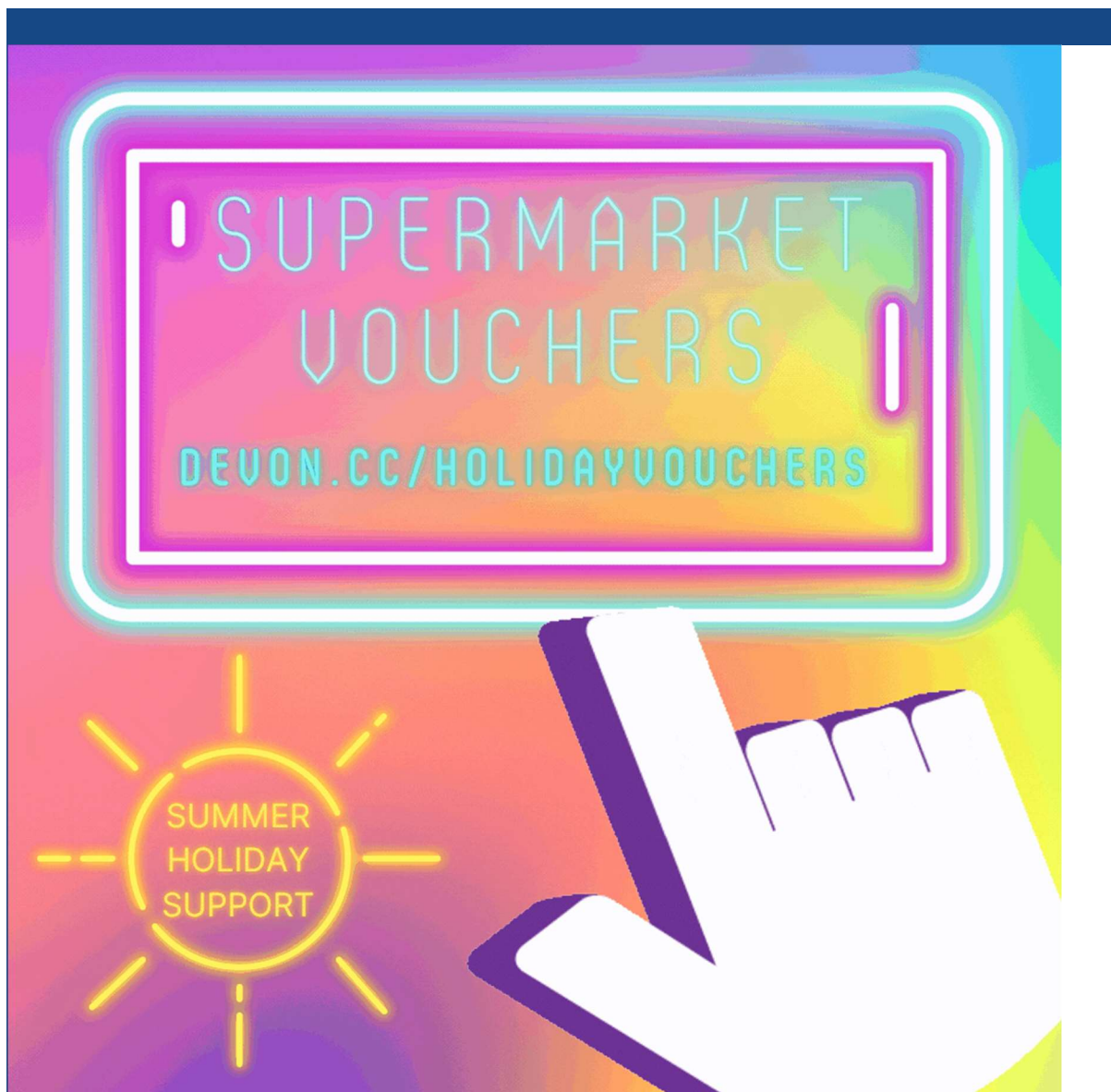
Protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from COVID-19

The ongoing restrictions have been difficult for everyone, but especially if you were identified as clinically extremely vulnerable and told you're at a higher risk of becoming seriously ill if you were to catch COVID-19.

The government has [updated its guidance on protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable](#) to include advice on what to do to lower your risk of infection and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 once most legal restrictions end on Monday 19 July. It includes:

- [ensuring you have your first and second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine](#). For some with immunosuppression it may only be with your second dose that a significant immune response is triggered
- taking precautions when meeting people you don't live with, such as meeting outside or [somewhere well ventilated](#), continuing to socially distance or considering their vaccination status (single or double jabbed or not vaccinated)
- asking friends and family to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test before visiting you to check they don't have coronavirus without realising
- going to the shops and pharmacy at quieter times of the day.

[You can read the guidance in full on the government's website.](#)



Supermarket vouchers to help families buy food over the summer holiday

Nearly 17,000 children across Devon [have been sent supermarket vouchers](#) ahead of the upcoming school summer break to help their families buy food over to replace the meals they would have received at school during term-time.

The vouchers – worth £15 per week for each child – can be redeemed in major supermarkets across Devon. Arrangements are in place for families who cannot get to a supermarket.

We also issued supermarket vouchers for the May half-term break, but some of them remain unspent. Families are urged to check their vouchers and redeem them as soon as possible before they expire.

Many families in Devon have seen their financial circumstances change due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. If you didn't previously qualify for free school meals but

your income has recently reduced or stopped, [please apply online through our website](#) to check if you are eligible for this support as soon as possible. It's the quickest and easiest way for your eligibility to be assessed and you will get an instant decision. You can also call [0345 155 1019](tel:0345 155 1019).

[More information about the free school meals holiday voucher scheme is available on our website.](#)



Funding available to help communities reconnect, rebuild and recover

Community-led facilities and activities, like many things, were quickly suspended during the onset of the national coronavirus lockdown.

As the country begins to return to some degree of normality, we are keen to help local communities get back to doing the things they love safely and confidently, so we've created a special fund to support them.

The Reconnect Rebuild Recover Community Fund will provide grant funding of up to £1,000 for smaller projects and between £1,000 and £3,000 for larger projects that help local people to reconnect, rebuild and recover their community-led facilities and/or social activities.

[You can find out more, including how to apply, on our website.](#)



All adults urged to have second jab at eight weeks

People in Devon are [being urged to bring forward their second COVID-19 vaccination](#) to reduce the interval between doses to eight weeks. You can either rebook your appointment or attend one of the many walk-in clinics being held around Devon.

The government recently shortened the dosing interval to eight weeks for those under 40 years old, which means all adults are now eligible to have the second dose of their COVID-19 vaccination eight weeks after the first and will have had the opportunity to get a full course of vaccine by mid-September.

Details of walk-in clinics are being regularly shared on the [social media pages of the NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group \(CCG\)](#) and you can find your nearest walk-in clinic [on the NHS website](#).

Booked appointments can be made through the [National Booking Service](#) or by calling 119. If you attend a walk-in session and have a booked appointment for a second dose, please remember to cancel it.



COVID-19 measures in care homes will continue beyond Monday 19 July

Devon's care home providers say measures to control the spread of coronavirus will remain in place in care homes beyond Monday 19 July.

Care home providers say their residents are extremely vulnerable. Visits from family and friends are important but it is vital that they protect residents from COVID-19 and other infectious illnesses that are currently circulating in the community.

They say that care homes will continue following public health measures at a local level, to protect the health of their residents and staff. Those measures are likely to include the requirement for visitors to wear face coverings unless exempt, to socially distance, to wear personal protective equipment if needed, to follow hand hygiene guidance, and to check-in for Test and Trace purposes.

[You can read the full story on our News Centre.](#)



Concerns for pregnant women as restrictions ease

There are concerns that the combination of restrictions easing next week, increasing prevalence of COVID-19 in the community and hesitancy to get vaccinated will lead to a further increase in infections among pregnant women.

The warning comes from [the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists \(RCOG\)](#) and the [Royal College of Midwives \(RCM\)](#).

Pregnant women are at risk of getting severely ill with COVID-19, particularly in their third trimester. With a rise in COVID-19 cases across the UK, national data suggests the numbers of pregnant women being admitted to hospital each week are now more than three times greater than they were at the end of May.

Doctors and midwives are urging those who are pregnant, or considering pregnancy, to seriously [consider getting the vaccine as soon as possible, and to book their second dose as soon as they are eligible](#). Evidence shows that having the COVID-19 jab is safe for pregnant women, and they should be offered the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines where available.

They are also advising that unvaccinated or partially vaccinated pregnant women should take steps to avoid COVID-19 infection by continuing to practice social distancing, particularly in their third trimester. Everyone can help pregnant women stay safe by wearing face coverings in indoor spaces, taking tests as appropriate and self-isolating when required.



Devon's libraries offer warm welcome

Devon's libraries are offering a warm welcome and encouraging visitors to continue wearing face coverings after Monday 19 July when using their library. Other COVID-19 safety measures, including hand sanitisation stations, ventilation of the library space and regular cleaning will remain, as well as the NHS Test and Trace check in.

Book borrowing is now available in 53 of Devon's 54 libraries and mobile libraries. Chulmleigh Library is offering Choose and Collect only, but plan to reopen on Thursdays from 9.00am to 3.00pm, from Thursday 22 July.

Other library services that have returned include free access to computers, with some libraries starting to offer two hour sessions, bookable in advance. The cafes in Exeter, Newton Abbot and Cullompton are open again, meeting rooms are available for hire without restrictions and soon libraries will also start to introduce more in-person events, like the Summer Reading Challenge for children.

Don't forget the Home Library Service is available for people unable to leave their house - please contact your local library to find out more.

[For more information visit the Libraries Unlimited website.](#)



GO FOR THE FLOW



Make twice-weekly rapid lateral flow tests part of your routine



The latest national advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) is available on the [government website](#) and [NHS website](#).

You can find local guidance and information about the impacts on our services on the [Devon County Council website](#).

Please forward this email to anyone you think would find it useful and [encourage them to sign up](#).

Please note that all of our sites and offices are closed to the public, except for necessary prearranged visits, but you can still [contact us if you need to](#).

For the latest coronavirus advice in Devon:
devon.cc/covid-19

Stay at home | Protect the NHS | Save lives



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with the latest information from other local authorities in Devon



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