

## **South Gloucestershire Council News Release**

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### **Covid-19 Cases at All-Time High: If We Don't Follow the Rules Now, Restrictions Will Last Longer**

With Covid-19 cases at an all-time high across our area, we are urging everyone in South Gloucestershire to act now, abide by the national restrictions and stay at home as much as possible to prevent tougher local restrictions being in place for longer.

The number of positive Covid-19 cases in South Gloucestershire has now reached more than 300 per 100,000 people.

Director of Public Health, Sara Blackmore, said: "What we do now will determine which alert level we are placed in when nationwide restrictions are due to end on 2 December.

"We are seeing the highest infection rate we have seen in our area since the start of the pandemic, meaning there is a higher risk to us all of catching Covid-19.

"Our rate is higher than the all-England average and double the rate in the South West region.

"Hospital cases are rising, with a resulting strain on our local NHS, our adult care services and of course our vulnerable residents and families.

"It is absolutely vital that everyone follows the guidance to keep themselves safe, their friends and families safe, and those most vulnerable to worst effects of the illness safe.

"If we don't do the right thing now, it is likely that we will face continued strict restrictions on being able to go out and live our lives normally even after the end of the national lockdown period."

Leader of South Gloucestershire Council, Toby Savage, said: "Nobody wants restrictions to last longer than necessary, but they are what is needed now for us to get the virus under control and reduce the risk to our whole community. And they will only work if everyone does the right thing to keep South Gloucestershire safe.

"This is tough for everyone. We all want to be able to see friends and family again, for our children to be able to participate in their sports and clubs, to support our local economy, protect the NHS and adult social care, and most importantly prevent the spread of infection and save lives.

"We want to be able to look forward to as normal a Christmas as possible and we can make a difference if we all act now. Please, follow the rules and help us to keep South Gloucestershire safe.

“And if you need support, we can help. Whether that is by putting you in touch with community groups who can help with shopping and other errands, or whether you need access to financial support if self-isolation means you cannot work or your income is reduced. Call our freephone number 0800 953 7778 for more information about the help and support that is available.”

We understand that it can be confusing knowing exactly what to do, given the changing restrictions locally and nationally. We are doing our best to help you through this complex situation and we would ask you to do your bit to help us inform others by sharing our messages and stopping the spread of misinformation.

Please remember to keep South Gloucestershire safe:

- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Only shop for essential items.
- Do not mix indoors with anyone from outside your household or support bubble.
- Only meet with one other person outdoors and limit the different people you see to prevent the risk of spreading the virus.
- Avoid busy places.
- Always remember Hands, Face, Space.
- If you have Covid symptoms (high temperature, loss of taste or smell, a new continuous cough) stay home and book a test. All members of your household also need to isolate.
- Check-in on and support high-risk family members where you can. Your support here can make a huge difference.

Prior to the announcement of the current national lockdown, the council had written to Government, requesting to be placed into the tier 2 or High level of alert. We did not do this lightly. It was in response to the rising number of cases across all age groups and the associated increases we were seeing in hospital admissions for Covid-19, including intensive care beds.

Our request was superseded by the announcement of the national restrictions but it is clear from our figures now, that if we don't manage to slow the rate of infection, we are likely to move from national restrictions into tier 2 at least and probably tier 3, which is the Very High alert level after the four weeks end.