

NEWS RELEASE



29 October 2020

Bracknell Forest remains tier 1 ‘medium risk’ from COVID-19

Bracknell Forest currently remains as a tier 1 ‘medium risk’ from COVID-19 area, with the local situation being continuously reviewed by council public health experts.

The most recent data available shows the number of cases in the last seven days (up to 22 October) was 90.6 per 100,000 population in Bracknell Forest; this compares to 217.1 per 100,000 for England and 94.6 per 100,000 for the South East. Sadly, there has been a total of 73 deaths due to COVID-19 since March, of these deaths 71 happened between March and the end of June and two have happened in the past month.

Bracknell Forest Council’s public health team closely monitors data and local intelligence daily, this includes but is not limited to, the seven day case rate per 100,000. The team carefully looks at:

- Positivity rate (which gives insight into community transmission)
- Doubling rate (which gives insight into how quickly rates are increasing)
- Hospital admissions (which gives insight into the impact on our services)
- Outbreaks in high risk settings, for example schools, and care homes (which gives insight into what is driving transmission)
- What is happening in neighbouring authorities (due to the virus not stopping at the borough boundary)

Given all that data and intelligence, the borough remains in tier 1. However we will continue to closely monitor the situation in conjunction with the Government, which will guide us as to whether a change in approach and a move to tier 2 is necessary to protect our residents and borough from the spread of the virus.

Locally we are aware that the majority of the spread is coming from people passing it between households, which is why residents have been reminded to make sure they are doing everything possible to protect their loved ones. The data (obtained from contact tracing and information around positive cases) shows that people are catching it either from people in their own household or from when they have people over to visit their home or they visit other people’s homes.

Cllr Marc Brunel-Walker, Chair of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board, said: “Bracknell Forest currently remains a tier one ‘medium risk’ from COVID-19 but we can’t be complacent as the number of positive cases in the borough has been rising – the most recent weekly data has shown a rise of 111 positive cases taking us to 835 positive cases since March. Very sadly we have also seen two people die from the virus in the borough over the past month.

“In total there have been 73 deaths from COVID-19 in Bracknell Forest and while our numbers are comparatively low we must remember that this is not just a number – this number represents 73 loved ones: grandmothers, grandfathers, mums, dads, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, friends, colleagues and neighbours. We all have a duty to do everything we can to protect our loved ones from the virus, we need to take action to stop the spread, we need to do it together and we need to do it now. That means keeping your distance from your loved ones unless they are in your direct household, sticking to the rule of six, wearing a face covering when you can’t keep a safe two metre distance and washing your hands regularly.

“Given the rate of infection, we know that tighter restrictions will be inevitable across most areas of the country. While we are not looking to enter tier two imminently we are keeping a close watch on all the data and intelligence available to us and we are keeping the line of communication open with central government. We will move to a higher risk level as soon as the facts and evidence shows that we need to take further steps to safeguard our community from the spread of the virus. However, at the moment we are asking the community to work with us to slow the spread so we can remain as medium risk.”

The council’s decision-making Executive, Local Outbreak Engagement Board and local community will be advised as/when a change in approach is necessary. Updates will be made via the council’s website, social media channels and newsletters.