

# NEWS RELEASE



**26 November 2020**

**News release**

## **Bracknell Forest placed in tier 2 'high' risk**

As the country comes out of national restrictions and returns to the regional tier system, residents in Bracknell Forest are once again being called upon to play their part in helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

From December 2, the borough will be rated as tier 2 'high' risk and so residents will need to follow the rules for that tier from Wednesday.

Following national restrictions, the rate of transmission rate of COVID-19 in Bracknell Forest has reduced to 87.3 per 100,000. Local transmission is now much lower than the South East and national average but we have to remain vigilant to ensure our rates don't return to the levels of transmission we were experiencing prior to lockdown.

From Wednesday residents will be able to:

- Meet in groups of up to six outdoors (no indoor meetings should take place)
- Visit entertainment venues
- Visit personal care businesses like hairdressers and beauty salons
- Visit gyms and leisure facilities
- Visit pubs and restaurants that are serving food.
- Visit essential and non-essential shops
- Visit places of worship

Residents must only socialise indoors with people who they live with or who are in their support bubble (whether at home or at indoor venues).

Residents should continue to work from home where possible and should avoid travelling between tiers unless absolutely necessary. Travel into tier 3 areas should be avoided other than where necessary (for work, education, youth services, for medical treatment or for caring responsibilities).

Cllr Paul Bettison OBE, Leader of Bracknell Forest Council and Chairman of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board, said: "The recent national restrictions have seen a drop in cases in Bracknell Forest and so I'd like to thank residents for consistently playing their part in reducing the spread of the virus and doing all they can to keep their loved ones safe.

"Despite our current rate being lower than the regional and national average and one of the lowest in Berkshire, we have been placed in tier 2 'high' risk by the Government.

"I know that this will be frustrating for many of our residents and we understand that frustration. Unfortunately, councils have not been involved in discussions around which tier they have been placed in by Government. It

is likely we have been placed in this tier due to our geographical proximity to places with much higher transmission rates than our current 87.3 per 100,000 population.

“Despite the frustration we all have a duty to be diligent in protecting ourselves, our families and our friends and our borough by sticking to the rules and keeping up good health and hygiene practices, which have shown to have had a positive impact locally in recent weeks.

“While the prospect of a vaccine is getting ever closer it is still essential that people get tested if they have symptoms and isolate if they have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive.

“The hands, face, space message is still key, and this had now been enhanced with the addition of ventilate and isolate. It has been recognised that the majority of the spread is through household transmission and keeping homes well ventilated can help reduce this spread.

“The reopening of shops before the festive period is great news, however we urge people to be mindful of social distancing and respectful of other shoppers. We all want to enjoy this time and by following the advice we can work together to stay safe.”

To help reduce the spread it is important for all residents to follow the hands, face space, ventilate and isolate rules:

- hands – wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds
- face – wear a [face covering](#) in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet
- space – stay two metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or one metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors)
- ventilate – open windows to maintain a flow of fresh air indoors
- isolate – if you have symptoms or have been in close contact with somebody who has tested positive, isolate and arrange for a test

It is also important to follow the rule of six when outside.

When seeing friends and family you do not live with (or who are not part of your [support bubble](#)), you must only meet outdoors and in a group of no more than six. In England, this limit of six includes children of any age.

Find out more about the [tier system](#) on GOV.UK

You can find the latest statistics for Bracknell Forest at: [www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk/covid-19-dashboard](http://www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk/covid-19-dashboard)

Notes:

Tier placement is directed by the Government based on:

- the number of cases locally;
- the rate at which cases are rising or falling;
- the proportion of positive cases detected from all tests taken;
- the pressure on the NHS.

Other considerations such as the broader economic and practical implications like movement between

areas are also taken into account. Tier allocation is not subject to local negotiation.