

COVID-19 Suffolk Weekly Briefing

6 January 2021

Summary

- A new national lockdown in England began on Wednesday 6 January for an indeterminate period. The national COVID-19 alert tiers are suspended while the national lockdown is in place.
- In the week to the 5 January there were **3,728** new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This number has nearly doubled compared to the previous week.
- The underlying rate of new weekly cases in Suffolk has increased and is now at 411.77 cases per 100,000 people. This rate remains below the rates for the East of England region (723.05 / 100,000) and for England as a whole (546.85 / 100,000).
- In total, up to the 25 December, there have been 774 deaths in Suffolk where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate. There have been 44 COVID-19 related deaths in the last 7 days up to 25 December.
- The estimated 'R' value for the East of England is between 1.2 and 1.5, the range has increased in the last week, and is higher than the 'R' value for England (1.1– 1.4).

National alert levels

On 6 January 2021 a new national lockdown began, covering all of England. This means the previous alert tiers are now suspended.

Weekly cases and rates

COVID-19 cases are identified by taking specimens from people and sending them to laboratories around the UK to be tested. If the test is positive this is referred to as a lab-confirmed case.

In the week to 6 January there were **3,728** new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This number has almost doubled compared to the previous week.

It is possible to calculate a case rate by dividing the number of cases by the number of people in a given population – this makes it possible to compare cases across different areas. The most recent underlying weekly case rate in Suffolk was 411.77 cases per 100,000 people. This case rate is almost double the rate from the previous week although Suffolk's rate remains the lowest weekly COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

In the last week of reported data up to 6 January there have been 542 cases in Babergh, 1,067 cases in East Suffolk, 854 cases in Ipswich, 470 cases in Mid Suffolk and 795 cases in West Suffolk. All areas have had a significant increase in cases since last week.

Total cases and rates

As of 6 January there have been **16,210** total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 2,129 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. This is the lowest overall COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

Regional 'R' Number and growth rate

What is the R number? R represents the average number of onward infections that will be generated by a single infectious individual. R tells us if the epidemic is getting bigger (>1) or smaller (<1) but now how large the epidemic is overall, and therefore shouldn't be used as the sole indicator of the threat posed by an epidemic at any single point in time. R cannot be measured directly, and there is always uncertainty about its exact value.

The current estimated regional 'R' numbers are below –alongside London, the East of England currently has the highest rate in England. (Source: University of Cambridge MRC Biostatistics Unit).

Region	R value	Growth rate % per day
East of England	1.2-1.5	+4 to +7
London	1.2-1.5	+4 to +8
Midlands	1.0-1.2	0 to +3
North East and Yorkshire	0.9-1.1	-2 to +2
North West	0.9-1.1	0 to +3
South East	1.2-1.4	+4 to +7
South West	1.0-1.2	+1 to +4
England	1.1-1.4	+2 to +5

Death Registrations to 25 December 2020

In Suffolk, there have been 774 deaths which mention COVID-19 in total. There have been 44 COVID-19 deaths in the most recent week of data. In the last week deaths due to causes other than COVID-19 have occurred at higher levels compared to the five year average for Suffolk.

Contact Tracing

The majority of contact tracing as part of test and trace in Suffolk is being done by Public Health England and the NHS Test and Trace Service, with the Suffolk Public Health team involved in some more complex cases. In the data as of 4 January, 78.7% of all Suffolk cases had completed the test and trace process in the last 7 days. 85.5% of Suffolk contacts of cases have completed the NHS test and trace process in the last 7 days.