

# COVID-19 Suffolk Weekly Briefing

16 December 2020

## Summary

- 4 week national restrictions in England were in place from 5 November until 2 December. This ended at midnight on 2 December. Following national lockdown Suffolk has been placed into Tier 2 – High Alert.
- In the 7 days up to the 14 December, there have been 893 new cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This is an increase on the numbers in the previous week.
- The underlying rate of new weekly cases in Suffolk has increased and is now at 95.88 cases per 100,000 people. This rate remains below the rates for the East of England region (202.96 / 100,000) and for England as a whole (183.98 / 100,000). However, rates in Ipswich in the last week
- In total, up to the 4 December, there have been 663 deaths in Suffolk where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate. There have been 31 COVID-19 related deaths in the last 7 days.
- The estimated 'R' value for the East of England is between 0.9 and 1.1 which has increased in the last week, and is higher than the 'R' value for England (0.8– 1.0).

## National alert levels

On 2 December a new three-tier system was introduced, which categorises areas as Tier 1 (Medium Alert), Tier 2 (High Alert) or Tier 3 (Very High Alert). Suffolk remains in Tier 2 (High Alert).

## 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 14 December there were **893** new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This is a significant increase 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 95.88 cases per 100,000 people. This case rate is higher than the previous week although Suffolk's rate remains the second lowest weekly COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

In the last week there have been 112 cases in Babergh, 245 cases in East Suffolk, 289 cases in Ipswich, 86 cases in Mid Suffolk and 161 cases in West Suffolk. All areas have had an increase in cases since last week.

## Total cases and rates

As of 7 December there have been **8,904** total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 1,170 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 – the East of England currently has one of the higher rates in England. (Source: University of Cambridge MRC Biostatistics Unit).

Region	R value	Growth rate % per day
East of England	0.9-1.1	-1 to +2
London	0.9-1.1	-1 to +1
Midlands	0.8-1.0	-3 to -1
North East and Yorkshire	0.7-0.9	-4 to -2
North West	0.7-0.9	-4 to -2
South East	0.9-1.1	-1 to +1
South West	0.8-1.0	-4 to 0
England	0.8-1.0	-2 to 0

## Death Registrations to 4 December 2020

In Suffolk, there have been 663 deaths which mention COVID-19 in total. There have been 31 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 14 December, 80.5% of all Suffolk cases had completed the test and trace process. 69.2% of Suffolk contacts of cases have completed the NHS test and trace process, with the overall percentage of contacts completing the test and trace process rising to 76.1% once the contacts managed by PHE are included.