

COVID-19 Suffolk Weekly Briefing

21 October 2020

Summary

- Last month, the national alert level for the UK in relation to COVID-19 increased to level **4**. However, since that time, local [COVID alert levels](#) have also been introduced. Under these alert levels, Suffolk is classified as Medium Risk.
- In the 7 days up to the 19 October, there have been 295 new cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. Based on updated data, this is a decrease on the numbers in the previous week.
- The rate of new weekly cases in Suffolk has increased and is now, at 47.68 cases per 100,000 people. This is below the rates for the East of England region (71.84 / 100,000) and for England as a whole (169.42 / 100,000).
- In total, up to the 9th October, there have been 568 deaths in Suffolk where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate. There have been 0 COVID-19 related deaths in the last 7 days.
- The estimated 'R' value for the East of England is between 1.3 and 1.5, this is the same as the North West. Only the South West has a higher range of 1.3-1.6.

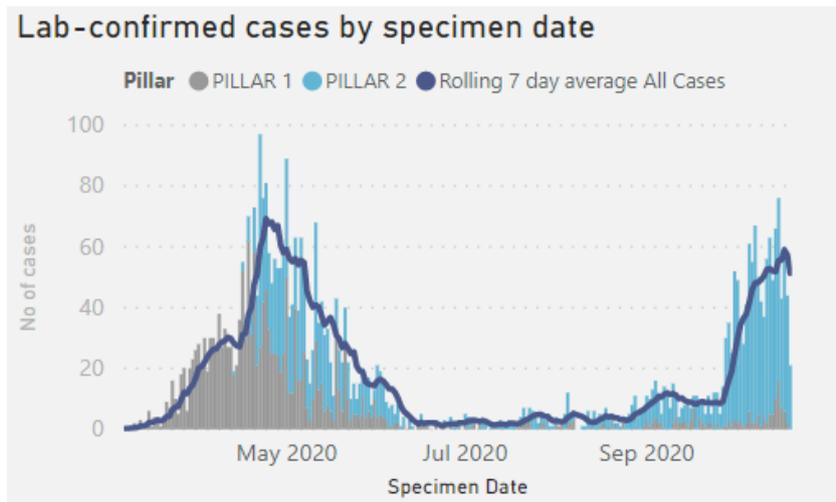
National alert levels

The UK has increased to alert level **4** in relation to COVID-19. On the 12th October a new three-tier system was introduced, which categorises areas as Medium Risk, High Risk or Very High Risk. All areas of Suffolk are designated Medium Risk as of the 20th of October.

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 7 days up to 19 October 2020 there were **295** new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This is a decrease on the previous week when looking at the most recent data (which has had more test results added to it). The 7 day rolling average case number (the dark blue line on the graph below) is increasing in Suffolk and but does still remain relatively low in comparison to other areas in England.



It is also 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 weekly case rate in Suffolk was 47.68 cases per 100,000 people. While the rate has increased, Suffolk’s rate is still lowest weekly COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

In the last week in Suffolk, 80 of the cases were diagnosed in West Suffolk, 73 in East Suffolk, 55 in Ipswich, 46 in Mid Suffolk and 41 in Babergh.

Total cases and rates

As of the 20th October there have been **4,049** total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 532 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. This is now 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 South West currently has the highest rate in England. (Source: University of Cambridge MRC Biostatistics Unit).

| Region | R value | Growth rate % per day |
|--------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| East of England | 1.3-1.5 | +4 to +8 |
| London | 1.1-1.4 | +2 to +5 |
| Midlands | 1.2-1.5 | +4 to +7 |
| North East and Yorkshire | 1.3-1.4 | +4 to +7 |
| North West | 1.3-1.5 | +5 to +7 |
| South East | 1.3-1.5 | +5 to +8 |
| South West | 1.3-1.6 | +6 to +10 |
| England | 1.2-1.4 | +4 to +7 |

Death Registrations to 9th October 2020

In Suffolk, there have been 568 deaths which mention COVID-19 in total. There have been no COVID-19 deaths in the most recent week of data. Currently deaths due to causes other than COVID-19 are occurring at similar 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 20th October, 76.6% of all Suffolk cases had completed the test and trace process, similar to the England average of 76.4%. 59.6% 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 78.2% once the contacts managed by PHE and locally are included. This is higher than the England average of 67.6%, but both the Suffolk and England numbers have fallen over time.