

COVID-19 Suffolk Weekly Briefing

23 February 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 23 February 2021 there were 456 new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This number has decreased compared to the previous week.
- The underlying rate of new weekly cases in Suffolk has decreased and is now at 66.99 cases per 100,000 people. This rate remains below the rates for the East of England region (102.08/ 100,000) and for England as a whole (122.74 / 100,000).
- In total, up to the 12 of February, there have been 1,393 deaths in Suffolk where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate. There have been 87 COVID-19 related deaths in the last 7 days up to 12 of February.
- The estimated 'R' value for the East of England is between 0.6 and 0.8. This has decreased compared to the previous week and is now below the estimated 'R' value for England as a whole (0.7– 0.9).

National alert levels

On the 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 the 23 February 2021 there were **456** new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This number has decreased 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 66.99 cases per 100,000 people. This case rate has decreased compared to the previous week and 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 23 February there have been 49 cases in Babergh, 133 cases in East Suffolk, 112 cases in Ipswich, 42 cases in Mid Suffolk and 120 cases in West Suffolk. All areas have had a decrease in cases since last week except Mid Suffolk which has had the same number of cases this week as last week.

Total cases and rates

As of the 23 February 2021 there have been **28,183** total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 3,701 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. This remains 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 (Source: University of Cambridge MRC Biostatistics Unit).

Region	R value	Growth rate % per day
East of England	0.6 to 0.8	-7 to -4
London	0.6 to 0.8	-8 to -5
Midlands	0.6 to 0.9	-7 to -3
North East and Yorkshire	0.7 to 1.0	-5 to -1
North West	0.6 to 0.9	-7 to -3
South East	0.6 to 0.8	-9 to -5
South West	0.6 to 0.9	-7 to -3
England	0.7 to 0.9	-6 to -3

Death Registrations to 12 February 2021

In Suffolk, there have been 1,393 deaths which mention COVID-19 on the death certificate in total. There have been 87 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 a lower level 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 22 February, 101.1% of Suffolk cases had completed the test and trace process in the last 7 days, with 89.3% of all Suffolk cases having completed test and trace since the programme began. 95.3% of Suffolk contacts of cases had completed the test and trace process in the last week of data, with 87.0% of all Suffolk contacts of cases having completed the test and trace process since the programme began. All these numbers are similar to the East of England and England averages.