

COVID-19 Suffolk Weekly Briefing

31 March 2021

Summary

- In the week to the 31 March 2021 there were 248 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 slightly and is now at 34.1 cases per 100,000 people. This rate remains below the rates for the East of England region (43.9/ 100,000) and for England as a whole (55.8 / 100,000).
- In total, up to the 19 of March, there have been 1,534 deaths in Suffolk where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate. There have been 8 COVID-19 related deaths in the last 7 days up to 19 of March.
- The estimated 'R' value for the East of England is between 0.7 and 1.0. This value has increased compared to the previous week. The estimated 'R' value for England as a whole which has also increased this week (0.8– 1.0). Any R value greater than 1 means the epidemic is no longer decreasing.

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 31 March 2021 there were **248** 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 34.1 cases per 100,000 people. This case rate has increased by a small amount compared to the previous week. Suffolk's rate is now the second lowest weekly COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

In the last week of reported data up to 31 March there have been 16 cases in Babergh, 64 cases in East Suffolk, 84 cases in Ipswich, 26 cases in Mid Suffolk and 59 cases in West Suffolk. Cases have decreased in all areas except West Suffolk.

Total cases and rates

As of the 31 March 2021 there have been **29,631** total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 3892 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	0.7 to 1.0	-5 to 0
London	0.7 to 0.9	-5 to -1
Midlands	0.7 to 1.0	-5 to 0
North East and Yorkshire	0.8 to 1.0	-4 to 0
North West	0.7 to 1.0	-4 to -1
South East	0.7 to 1.0	-5 to 0
South West	0.7 to 0.9	-6 to -1
England	0.8 to 1.0	-4 to 0

Death Registrations to 19 March 2021

In Suffolk, there have been 1,534 deaths which mention COVID-19 on the death certificate in total. There have been 8 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

As of the 15 March, Suffolk's Public Health Team has taken on responsibility for all contact tracing for new cases in Suffolk. In the data as of 30th March, 90.1% of Suffolk cases had completed the test and trace process in the last 7 days, with 89.7% of all Suffolk cases having completed test and trace since the programme began. 97%.1 of Suffolk contacts of cases had completed the test and trace process in the last week of data, with 87.2% 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 higher than the England averages.