

Suffolk County Council

I think we are all worried and saddened to find ourselves going in a new lockdown. It is different from the spring: childcare centres and nurseries, schools, colleges and universities and libraries will stay open. The household waste recycling centres will stay open too – but do remember you need to book your visit. Outdoor playgrounds are open as well.

Before the new lockdown started, our Suffolk Director of Public Health were advised that the increasing infection rates in west Suffolk had indicated that without lockdown we would have been heading into a higher Covid Control Tier.

Our aim now is to work at keeping people safe and well throughout the next 4 weeks so that when lockdown is lifted, Suffolk stays in the lowest control tier so we can get our businesses back on track.

Senior officers are in planning discussions with the NHS, Army and others on how we would manage mass vaccination in Suffolk when it comes available. Across the country arrangements are being worked up for what will be the largest movement of civilians this country has seen since WW11.

However, while the main focus must still be reducing the spread of the virus – and that means – following the guidelines: HANDS; FACE; SPACE

Incidents of domestic abuse and child neglect increased during the first lockdown. The police and local councils want people to know that they can break lockdown if they are at risk of domestic abuse. Please share

Are you a victim of domestic violence and abuse?

If you need the Police: call 101 or 999 if it's an emergency. If speaking would put you in danger, you can call 999 and press "5 5" – and the police will know you need help

Call the 24-hour Suffolk Freephone Helpline 0800 977 5690

Are you hurting the one you love? Choose to stop. Call The Respect Phonenumber 0808 802 4040

Support during lockdown for residents in need:

The Suffolk Support and Advice Line has been set up to help people struggling financially.

It can help with debt advice, budgeting, mortgage, rent or credit card problems and employment queries. **The freephone number is 0800 068 3131 and is manned Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. People can also go to: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>**

Through this advice line, residents can be helped financially by our Local Welfare Assistance Scheme that funds supermarket, food and fuel vouchers; school uniforms; essential furniture items; white goods; oil heating refills etc

We have also re-established the Home But Not Alone freephone number for the most vulnerable needing help with food and prescriptions etc - **0800 068 3131** and open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Councils in Suffolk are helping administer a Government scheme to provide financial help to those on low incomes and benefits who must self-isolate. Details about the Test and Trace Support Payments, and how to apply, can be found on District and Borough Council websites.

If you have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate, you are under a legal obligation to do so, and could be eligible for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment.

Those who are eligible will need to meet all the following criteria:

- Told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- Employed or self-employed.
- Cannot work from home and will lose income as a result.
- Currently receiving at least one of the following benefits: Universal Credit; Working Tax Credit; income-based Employment and Support Allowance; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; and/or Pension Credit.

Applications are made for one person only and any further applications within the same household must be made by each individual. Payments are subject to tax but not National Insurance. People must make the application within 14 days of the last day of their NHS test and trace self-isolation period.

Applicants should ensure that they have the below information available before starting the application:

- NI number
- 8-digit test and trace ID number
- Recent bank statement, proof of self-employment, or wage slips.

Testing

If asked to do so by Test and Trace, you must self-isolate by law. Failure to do so will mean you are no longer eligible for the payment and steps will be made to recover the funds.

Please visit the [NHS Test and Trace](#) website for more details of the NHS Test and Trace self-isolation requirements for those:

- Testing [positive](#)
- Those who have been in [contact with someone](#) who has tested positive and now has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

Visit our District Council websites for details on how to apply for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment:

- West Suffolk Council www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

This lockdown is different from the last – schools are open from the outset as are dentists, opticians, children's outdoor playgrounds and the household recycling centres – though please remember to book your visit.

Communities

There are 38,000 vulnerable and 8,000 clinically extremely vulnerable residents in Suffolk. Letters will be going from Government to this latter group advising them of the precautions they should take to stay safe – and the top priority for them is to stay at home – and how to register for help.

Staying active

A rallying cry for people to remain active during the latest national restrictions has been issued by Cllr Graham Newman, the new Chairman of Suffolk County Council, in his first public statement as civic head for the organisation, "I know people are, understandably,

concerned and anxious at the prospect of more national restrictions and with the onset of colder weather and darker nights the idea of being active can be daunting.

“However, I would encourage everyone, if they can, to be as active as possible over the autumn and winter months. Being active is good for both your physical and mental health and can be a great antidote to the way we’re all feeling, at the moment.” Cllr Newman is particularly keen to highlight the resources available through the Keep Moving Suffolk campaign as an important source of information and advice.

The Keep Moving Suffolk campaign can be found at www.keepmovingsuffolk.com and includes details and links to the Love to Ride initiative.

14 October marked the launch of Adopt East, a regional adoption agency which has been established to recruit adopters across the East of England.

Adopt East will work across local authorities in Southend, Thurrock, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Bedford and Luton to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. Adoptionplus, Barnardo’s, and Adoption UK are also part of the partnership.

The Adopt East alliance will deliver the highest quality adoption service to children and families throughout the region by bringing together the expertise and skills of all its partners. The scale of the organisation means that adopters will have access to a larger number of children waiting for adoption. This will help partners to match children with the right family for them, at the earliest opportunity.

Adopt East is committed to providing good quality adoption support services to support all families with their adoption journey. To find out more about the Adopt East Alliance [visit the Adopt East website](#).

Last week we approved a new policy aimed at reducing the numbers of children and young people being permanently excluded from school. We will be working more closely with mainstreams schools – and providers “Alternative Provision” to ensure that children and young people who are subject to exclusion are given tailored support to get them back on track swiftly.

Mary Evans
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