

New COVID-19 advice agreed for all of Cumbria

Following a doubling of the new COVID-19 cases within Cumbria over the last week, new public health advice for the county has now been introduced.

By law in England people must not meet indoors or outdoors in groups of more than six people. In addition, from today people living in Cumbria are being strongly advised that groups of six should include people from no more than TWO households.

The new advice was agreed by local political leaders through the county's Area Outbreak Board, following recommendations from the multi-agency Health Protection Board. It will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Health Protection Board.

The new advice is not law and the exemptions that apply to the national 'Rule of Six' still apply; exceptions such as for work, or the provision of voluntary or charitable services, registered childcare, education or training, exercise classes, organised outdoor sport or licensed outdoor physical activity, and supervised sporting activity (indoors or outdoors) for under-18s.

(Full guidance available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing>)

Public communication of the new advice will happen this afternoon.



Colin Cox, Cumbria's Director of Public Health, said:

"The number of COVID-19 cases in the county has doubled in a week and hospitalisations are increasing. But we are not yet in the position of other areas in the north west and we have a small window of opportunity to act to slow the spread, protect our communities, and avoid becoming the next area in local lockdown and protecting our local economy.

"We know that limiting contact between households can reduce transmission. The 'two-households' advice we're issuing today doesn't have the force of law behind it, but we're calling on everyone living in Cumbria to take it seriously and act accordingly. This is about local people taking responsible, proportionate, action to protect themselves, their families and their communities from this disease.

"We can see now that the virus is spreading through the county with increasing speed, following the same pattern from the first wave, with almost all districts reporting increased cases. Without action we can expect the number of cases, disruption to schools and businesses, hospitalisations and ultimately deaths to continue to rise. Following the 'two-households' advice, alongside hand washing, face coverings and social distancing, can make a difference, but we need everyone to take heed and act."

Latest COVID-19 situation report

The local COVID-19 situation report for Cumbria is available at www.cumbria.gov.uk/stopthespread

The report shows that :

- A total of 11,358 tests carried out (positive/negative/void results), a slight decrease from the previous week;
- 209 new cases were reported in Cumbria (compared to 109 cases in previous week);

- For the fourth consecutive week Barrow-in-Furness had the greatest number of new cases (+61 new cases), followed by Carlisle (+49 new cases);
 - Barrow-in-Furness also had the highest rate of new cases (+61 new cases = 91 new cases per 100k population), well above the national average (England = 57 new cases per 100k);
 - The number of new cases increased from the previous week in all Cumbrian districts except Eden, with Carlisle experiencing a particularly large increase;
 - The greatest number of new positive cases are those aged 15-29 years, however, cases are increasing across most age groups.
 - 19 care homes currently have positive COVID-19 cases, (including 5 homes with one or more residents testing positive).
 - 27 schools currently dealing with positive cases (1 confirmed case per setting), and 6 dealing with outbreaks (2 or more confirmed cases per setting).
 - 170 cases have been dealt with by local contact tracers, with 374 contacts traced.
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