

# Covid-19 update – 7 January 2021

## National lockdown – what are the rules?

The current restrictions are similar to those we were under in March – the overarching message is to **stay home, protect the NHS, save lives**. The limited reasons to leave your home are as follows:

- To shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- To go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- To exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person, this should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area
- To meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- To seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- To attend education or childcare - for those eligible

Please help us to share these reminders in your community by sharing our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) posts.

## Coronavirus cases in South Cambridgeshire

We know the lockdown is going to be tough but it clearly isn't a decision the government has taken lightly – the rate of increase of positive cases nationally, and the number of people needing hospital treatment and also, sadly, dying means that this lockdown is really needed. You may have heard the Chief Medical Officer say earlier this week that 1 in 50 people across the country are currently infected.

The cases in South Cambridgeshire have risen too - up to 435 per 100,000 and we do have the new variant of the virus. You can view the latest information on [cases in South Cambridgeshire](#) on the Government's website if you search by 'local authority' and then South Cambridgeshire. Our hospitals are under an enormous amount of pressure and are encouraging people to only attend A&E, or call 999, for emergencies and life threatening situations – if it isn't an emergency, people are being asked to call 111 in the first instance. You may wish to share the local NHS [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) posts with your communities online.

You will have heard that the new variant of the virus is much more transmissible and it is vital that we all do everything we can to help people understand that lockdown really does mean lockdown, and to remind people of the guidelines and why it is important that we all play our part to stop the spread of the virus. We all need to remember the longstanding guidance to regularly wash our **hands**, wear **face** coverings, keep a safe **space** of 2 metres from anyone outside our household, and to keep our homes **ventilated** – this last thing could help prevent an infected person in your house from transmitting it to the rest of the household, so it is

worth trying to do it to protect our loved ones and to avoid any additional pressure on the NHS.

## **National lockdown – Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents**

Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people have again been asked to shield during the current lockdown (but people over the age of 70 who aren't CEV have not been asked to shield this time).

The Government is writing to everyone on this list to ensure that they are aware of the support that's available. Cambridgeshire County Council is also writing to the 32,000 CEV residents in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough with information about local support in each district, including the help from local community groups. As in November's lockdown, we will not be sharing lists of these individuals as, unlike in March, these individuals now have the knowledge and information to seek help if they need it. If we become aware of any individuals who do need support, we will (of course) contact your groups for assistance. More information can be found on the [CEV pages of the Government's website](#). This includes how to register and update their details.

## **Vaccination programme**

The really positive news at the moment is the speed with which the Government is intending to vaccinate people. Here are a few key points that it may be helpful for you to be aware of, to help guide and reassure residents:

- The availability of vaccination appointments is going to grow enormously over the next couple of weeks – whereas people were likely to have to visit a hospital to be vaccinated before Christmas, many more local GP surgeries are going to be able to invite people to be vaccinated
- If people are registered with a GP and they are in the priority groups identified, they will be contacted to arrange an appointment – the NHS is asking people not to enquire with their local GP about when they will be vaccinated (unless they are not currently registered with GP) – a 'don't call us, we'll call you' message is clear from the NHS
- People who are invited to have the vaccine will be written to as well as contacted by text/phone call – so it doesn't matter if people don't have a mobile phone to receive an invitation by text – they won't miss out
- There are, sadly, people trying to profit from the vaccination programme – please help to share the message in your communities about people being aware of scams – you could share these [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) posts from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, but the main thing to remind residents about is that they will never need to use a bank card for identification nor will they ever need to pay for the vaccine
- People who have appointments to be vaccinated can and should leave the house even in lockdown to attend these appointments.

## Help to access home schooling tech

The Council has provided funding to Cambridge Online, to help provide devices and data to children who are particularly affected during the pandemic and need support to access online education. For more information, visit [Cambridge Online](https://www.cambridgeonline.org.uk), email [help@cambridgeonline.org.uk](mailto:help@cambridgeonline.org.uk) or call the Cambridge Online helpline on 01223 300407, quoting 'South Cambs Winter Support Grant'. The [Cambs Youth Panel](#) is also working to help provide students with technology.

## Stay Well heating grants

[Grants of up to £300](#) are available for vulnerable individuals and families living in Cambridgeshire who are facing fuel poverty. These grants can be used towards future heating costs. For those who are homeless, other costs of keeping warm (such as sleeping bags) will also be considered. Grant recipients must be referred by an organisation - either voluntary sector or local authority - that has assessed the circumstances of the claim and can verify that the individual or family is in extreme crisis and in need of immediate assistance.

## Grants for groups supporting families with essential supplies

Grants are available for groups supporting families in South Cambridgeshire via the [CCVS website](#). If you are a small organisation that is supporting families with food, fuel or other essential items (or want to start doing so) then you can apply for funding to provide more help. This money can only be spent on families with at least one child under the age of 18, to help families with food, or fuel, or emergency supplies.

Some examples of how you could spend this money include, but are not limited to: food for your food hub scheme; preparing hampers or food parcels; vouchers for families to spend in their local shops or supermarkets (not cash); top up cards for gas or electricity costs; funds to pay gas or electricity bills or to buy fuel oil; providing things like children's coats, blankets or sanitary products. You can apply for up to £500.

### • A reminder of support available

If anyone in your community needs practical support (such as organising shopping or prescriptions) or help to cover their costs, there are a couple of options available: The small upfront grants of £100 to £400 we provided can be used for any one-off support for an individual or family that you come across

- Residents can call the Countywide Covid hub directly on 03450 455 219, or you can call them with a resident in mind, for support including food deliveries or regular phone calls to support residents' mental wellbeing
- Priority slots for supermarket deliveries for people who are shielding – individuals can [register](#)
- [Payments of £500](#) are available to support a loss of income during the self-isolation

- Anyone whose income has reduced should [check the government website to see what benefits they may be entitled to](#), and then also contact us to apply for Council Tax Support and to find out about other help we may be able to offer, such as through a Hardship fund
- Two hot food schemes are currently running, covering many villages in the district – please let us know of any residents who you think would particularly benefit from receiving a weekly meal and we can discuss whether any volunteer support would be needed to deliver these in your village
- A reminder of some answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) from previous lockdowns – covering topics such as collecting prescriptions for vulnerable people, signposting to resources to help people with their mental wellbeing, and other practical information.

Best wishes

Bill Handley

Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health & Wellbeing  
South Cambridgeshire District Council