

A message from Lucy Wightman, Director of Public Health Northamptonshire County Council.



Dear Residents,

I am writing to you directly, as we enter the winter period, to inform you of the current situation relating to Coronavirus in Northamptonshire and specifically the areas in which you live. I'm also hoping to share some key tips to help you and your families stay safe during the winter period and how to access support if you need to self-isolate, if you become unwell, or if you require help with shopping, medication or loneliness.

We are currently seeing the largest rise in cases in Northamptonshire since the first national lockdown. Positive cases range across all age groups, but significantly are largest in the age groups from 10-59. We know that these age groups are amongst the most sociable, go to school, university or work, and may be involved in the care of others, children and/or older people.

Worryingly, we are also seeing a rise in cases amongst those aged over 60. This age group is the group that are most likely to become severely unwell should they get Coronavirus, they may need to stay in hospital and sadly, as we are starting to see once again, more of this age group are likely to die from the virus.

Transmission can easily spread within families, especially where children and parents mix with grandparents and particularly in indoor settings. Whilst we recognise the importance of social interaction, we would recommend that if you have to work with or care for someone who is older or more vulnerable, or if you ordinarily mix with grandparents, that you consider reducing your social contacts elsewhere, or move your interactions with those older, more vulnerable contacts to an online format where possible during the winter period.

The introduction of recent national lockdown guidance will help us to reduce community transmission of the virus. Community transmission is where the virus spreads in households with people mixing in indoor spaces in particular. We would recommend that where anyone enters your home, or you theirs, for example for childcare purposes, that everyone wears a face covering, maintains a two metre social distance, and keeps interactions as short as possible. Continue to wash your hands regularly and clean any surfaces or contact points such as door handles, cupboard handles and taps.

If you have any concerns about whether you may have COVID-19, how to get a test, how to get more support for someone who is vulnerable or the current guidance and what you can and cannot do, visit the County Council website. <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-updates/Pages/default.aspx>

We all need to work hard to ensure that case numbers reduce in our local area, to ensure that we keep the people we love safe, and so that we can return to a more normal way of living as soon as possible when the national measures come to an end. We are all in this together and all of our actions contribute to the outcomes we face. Let's continue to work together, to wash our hands regularly, to wear our face coverings and to keep two metres from others.

Lucy Wightman

Director of Public Health, Northamptonshire County Council