
Public Health COVID-19 Update: General Stakeholder briefing

16th November 2020



The situation in Plymouth: latest update

Data for the last seven days show that Plymouth's case rate, while lower than the England average, is still increasing and is higher than the South West as a whole. The number of cases per 100,000 (seven-day rolling average) is as follows:

Plymouth: 225
South West: 187
England: 267

Most people are doing their bit but there is no doubt that the remaining weeks of this lockdown will be a hard slog for many people and it is crucial we do not take our foot off the pedal. We need to maintain high levels of lockdown compliance across the city if we are to move into a tier with fewer restrictions when lockdown is scheduled to end in early December. The higher the level of compliance, the more likely it will be that we are able to see friends and family over the holiday season.

Our latest information shows that people tend to know and support lockdown restrictions and that they are generally trying to do the right things. But many are feeling isolated and sad, they miss physical and social contact and confidence is taking a hit. Maintaining good and physical mental health is going to be a significant challenge for many people.

We need your help in encouraging your friends, family and wider community contacts to do simple and easy things that will help them feel better.

Looking after mental health during lockdown

The NHS website outlines a number of tactics to maintain good mental wellbeing during the latest lockdown including:

Staying connected with others

Are there ways in which your community members can help each other stay connected by phone, messaging apps, videocalls or social media? We need your help to make sure that the most isolated people are reached and supporting as much as possible during these next few weeks.

Encourage people to talk about their worries.

Try to encourage people not to bottle things up. It's important that people share their concerns with those they trust so we need you to help people understand that it's normal to feel worried or scared and that talking about it can help.

Looking after physical health

Physical health has an enormous impact on how we feel. Eating healthily, undertaking regular exercise and avoiding smoking, drugs and excess alcohol will all help people feel better both physically and mentally. For those who are staying at home, there are lots of free online classes and workouts available on YouTube and other websites.

Carry on doing enjoyable things

Life is difficult for many at the moment and it's easy for people to forget to enjoy themselves. Encouraging people to set aside time for the things they enjoy – reading, jigsaws, board games, arts and crafts – can make a huge difference. You may also be able to encourage people to take up new hobbies using free online courses and tutorials.

Where possible, we also urge you to support local businesses. The impact of lockdown on many small business owners – in both financial and mental health terms - is severe and they need your support.

Lockdown won't stop the virus completely but it will prevent the NHS becoming overwhelmed. The R rate for the UK before lockdown was 3; it is currently between 1.1 and 1.3. With your help, by working together and supporting each other, we can get the R number back down under 1 and have the virus in retreat once more.

Help and support

- The Plymouth City Council's dedicated Covid-19 webpages are updated frequently: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/coronaviruscovid19information>
- There is help with food, money and supplies for anyone needing to self-isolate: <https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/coronaviruscovid19information/ineedhelp>

How you can help us?

Please help us to keep Plymouth safe. The more people we can encourage to be COVID-safe, the more we can protect each other and slow the rise in cases across the city. We all want to avoid a lockdown – we want children to be able to learn, families to see their loved ones, restaurants to stay open. The best way to avoid further restrictions is if everyone works together. Follow us on social media @plymouthcc, retweet our public health messages and campaigns, refer people to our website [here](#) and follow the guidance!

How can we help you and the communities you are in touch with?

We understand that everyone will have different needs or concerns and it is important for the Public Health Team to be able to address those, equipping everyone with the support they need in order to keep Plymouth safe. Part of our current insight work is looking how we can better help people across the city; if there is anything that we can provide which will benefit the communities you are in touch with, please share these with us:

COVID19@plymouth.gov.uk. You can also contact us with any queries you have too.