

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Stephen Burroughes – April 2021



• LATEST COVID - UPDATE

As of 25 March there have been 29,419 total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 3,864.1 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. This is the lowest overall COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

District case rate as of 25 March 2021:

Area name	Daily Cases reported	Weekly Cases reported	Weekly case rate*	Wk on wk trend*	Cumulative cases	Cumulative case rate	National Rate Rank (of 315)
Babergh	3	17	17.4	↓	3,808	4137.50	272
East Suffolk	10	60	28.5	↓	8,651	3467.90	292
Ipswich	14	110	75.2	↑	7,407	5410.00	198
Mid Suffolk	3	25	37.5	↑	3,216	3095.40	300
West Suffolk	6	56	29.0	↓	6,337	3539.30	289
Suffolk	36	267	36.9	↑	29,419	3,864.1	
East of England	344	2,772	43.4	↓	381,447	6,116.8	
England	4,615	32,157	55.7	↓	3,773,224	6,703.5	

Overview

In the week up to the 24 March, there have been 267 new cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This is a slight increase on the numbers in the previous week.

The underlying rate of new weekly cases in Suffolk has increased and is now at 36.9 cases per 100,000 people. This rate remains below the rates for the East of England region (43.4 / 100,000) and for England as a whole (55.7 / 100,000).

In total, up to March 12 there have been 1,526 deaths in Suffolk where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate. There have been 25 COVID-19 related deaths in the seven days up to March 12.

The estimated 'R' value for the East of England is between 0.6 and 0.9. This is stable compared to the previous week and is now the similar to the estimated 'R' value for England as a whole which has remained at (0.7– 0.9) for this week.

Weekly Cases and Rates

COVID-19 cases are identified by taking specimens from people and sending them to laboratories around the UK to be tested. If the test is positive this is referred to as a lab-confirmed case.

In the week up to March 24, 2021 there were 267 new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This number has risen compared to the previous week.

It is possible to calculate a case rate by dividing the number of cases by the number of people in a given

population – this makes it possible to compare cases across different areas. The most recent underlying weekly case rate in Suffolk was 36.9 cases per 100,000 people.

This case rate has risen slightly compared to the previous week. In the last week of reported data, up to March 24 there have been 17 cases in Babergh, 60 cases in East Suffolk, 110 cases in Ipswich, 25 cases in Mid Suffolk and 56 cases in West Suffolk.

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

Covid Business Grants

In total, since the launch of a plethora of new business grants in November 2020, East Suffolk Council has made over 17,800 separate payments totalling £37.2m to businesses struggling due to enforced closure or severe restrictions on trading. Since the beginning of the pandemic the Council has allocated over £103m of grants.

Following the PM's announcement on the route map out of lockdown a further £9.4m of Covid business grant funding has been allocated to ESC to cover the period 16 February – 31 March. The majority of these payments have now been issued and in most cases automatically to all eligible businesses.

Businesses in the East Suffolk hospitality sector are also now receiving the new hospitality grant worth up to £9k per business. This is not a central government mandated grant but instead a decision taken by East Suffolk Council reflecting the severe pressure this sector had faced and its importance to our local communities and the visitor economy. Over £1.67m has now been issued to businesses in the hospitality sector through this new grant.

From 1 April Restart grants will be launched aimed at supporting the reopening of non-essential retail and hospitality/ accommodation providers, leisure, personal care and gyms. For non-essential retail grants will be worth up to £6k and for hospitality etc will be worth up to £18k. The current allocation of £7.2m has to be fully distributed to businesses by 30 June.

In order to simplify the process for businesses there is now a streamlined application process which can be found on the Council's Covid business support webpage [COVID-19: business grant funding » East Suffolk Council](#). Once completed ESC will determine which grant businesses are eligible for and make the appropriate payment. In a further bid to simplify and make the process more efficient businesses who have successfully applied for previous Covid grants will receive automatic payments from the current grant schemes.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Two teams in Environmental Services and Port Health are bracing themselves for when restrictions begin to ease for very different reasons. Food & Safety have had a constant relationship with hundreds of businesses on Covid-19 matters for the past 12 months, working with the Health & Safety Executive and LA partners to support and advise businesses on the frequently changing rules.

Meanwhile, Environmental Protection have received more nuisance complaints as a result of more people working from home, whilst noise issues from retail and leisure sectors have diminished due to many places being closed.

HOUSING

East Suffolk Council launched its 'myHome' East Suffolk Portal on 1 February and since then, 196 tenants have signed up and use it to manage their accounts online, enabling them to check their rent account, make payments, set up direct debits, log repairs and message their Rent or Housing Officer.

The portal has been advertised via the Council's social media channels, tenant magazine, annual rent letter and over the telephone with Tenants Services and Customer Services. Building maintenance operatives are also promoting via leaflets when they visit tenants and the team are also looking at the option to use vinyl decals for their vans and designing a short video to introduce the service.

The team is really pleased with progress and will continue to promote the service to tenants and expand the portal to include booking repair appointments later in the year. The portal is so good that even 8 people who are not tenants have tried to sign up to it!

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