

Latest Covid-19 advice for the borough of Bury – 11 February, 2021

Bury's Covid-19 cases continue to fall – but we need to remain on guard

The number of new Covid-19 cases in Bury has continued to fall, with the borough's infection rate currently below average for Greater Manchester and the North West. For the week ending 6 February the rate of new cases was 188.5 per 100,000 people.

This is really welcome news, especially as the vaccination programme continues apace and the wide range of testing options in the borough is being well used.

However, we must all continue to follow the restrictions and maintain 'hands, face and space' guidance, especially as most cases of Covid-19 in Bury are of the new more transmissible 'Kent' variant.

Lesley Jones, Bury's Director of Public Health, said: "For the first time since well before Christmas, our case rates have dropped below 200 per 100,000, and we're below average in Greater Manchester and the wider North West.

"However, the rate of decrease in some Greater Manchester boroughs and the North West is generally slower than in the rest of country, which sends a strong signal to the people of Bury that we are going to need to maintain vigilance if we want to see an end to this.

"The more transmissible variant is in wide circulation locally now, so sticking to restrictions around social contact and maintaining 'hands face space' is vital if we're going to keep driving cases down.

"It'll be a few weeks before we begin to see the effects of the vaccination programme on preventing severe illness among our older residents and a while longer before we understand the impact on reducing spread.



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“The reality is that rates will need to be much lower to enable easing of restrictions, and we all have a role in making that happen - otherwise we’ll just be back where we started.”

The fall in the number of new cases of Covid-19 in Bury is consistent with the continued success of the lockdown measures in controlling the virus.

There is some evidence that the number of people in local hospitals with Covid-19 may be starting to fall, but hospitals remain under substantial pressure. We continue to see deaths registered in Bury with Covid-19 on the death certificate.

Week ending 6 February: infection rate 188.5 (360 new cases)

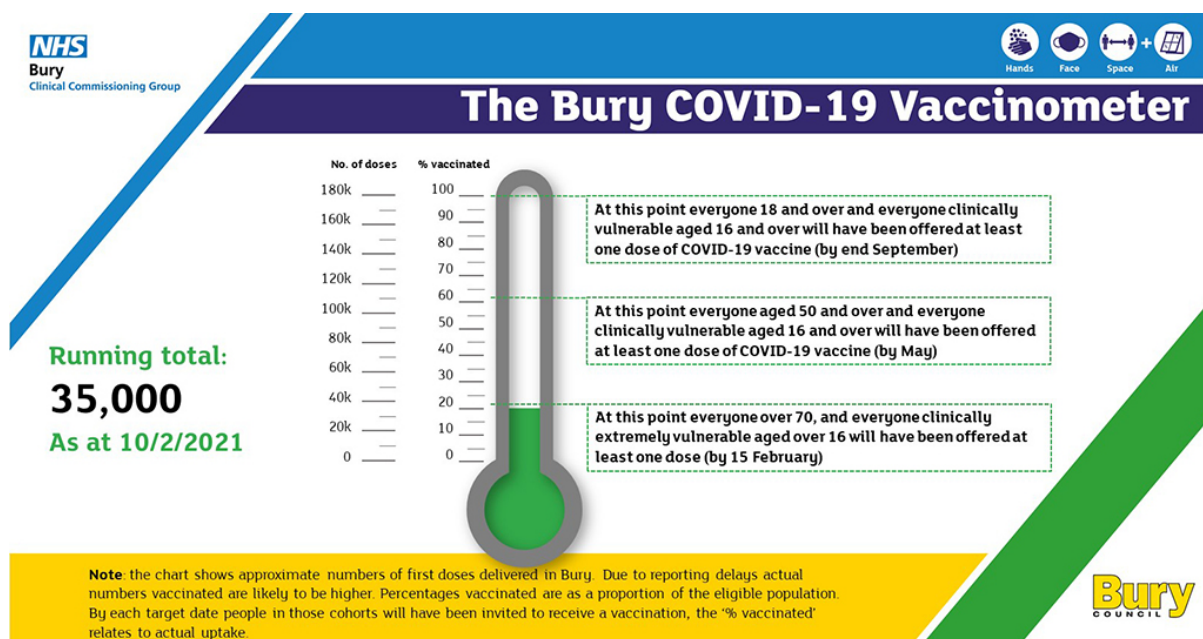
Week ending 30 January: infection rate 237.1 (453 new cases)

Week ending 23 January: infection rate 287.4 (549 new cases)

Week ending 16 January: infection rate 392.7 (750 new cases)

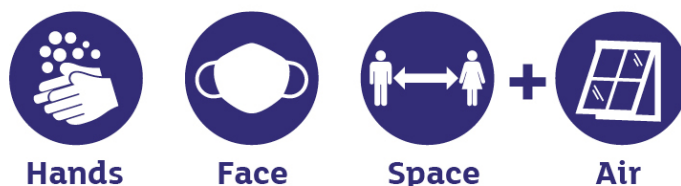
Vaccinations in Bury now topping 35k

Around 35,000 people registered with a Bury GP have now been vaccinated against coronavirus. This means that more than 19% of the eligible population (182,100) have been given at least one of the two jabs necessary to protect against this potentially fatal illness.



The continued pace of Bury’s programme means that the majority of cohorts 1-4 (everyone aged 70+ and clinically extremely vulnerable people over 16) have now either had their jab or have an appointment booked.

Anyone who is in the Top 4 tiers (i.e. over 70) and has not been invited for a vaccination should contact their GP.



A programme of vaccinating eligible housebound people is well under way, and the council is also offering transport to people who are clinically extremely vulnerable and cannot easily get to the vaccination centres as part of its humanitarian work with the group.

Bury's jabs are being carried out by medical staff at four vaccination centres run by the Primary Care Network: the Elizabethan Suite in Bury, Bealey's in Radcliffe, Ramsbottom Civic Hall, and Prestwich Walk-in Centre.

Vaccination targets:

- By 15 Feb: everyone aged 70+ and clinically extremely vulnerable people over 16 = 39,400 people.
- By May: everyone aged 50+ and clinically vulnerable people over 16 = a further 72,700 people.
- By end September: everyone 18+ and clinically vulnerable people aged 16 and 17 = the remaining 70,000 people.

Frontline health and social care staff are also being vaccinated as priority groups.

Bury's vaccination figures will be higher once results from hospital and mass testing sites are added in.

Remember:

- Vaccinations are given to people in the priority order set by the Government
- When it's your turn, you will be invited by your GP to have a vaccination (over 70s are now asked to call their GP if they've not had their vaccine)
- Remember to go back for your second jab, up to 12 weeks from your first, once you are given an appointment for it, in order to have increased protection
- You must still follow the Covid-safe rules even if you have been vaccinated – it takes several weeks for the vaccine to work, and you may still be able to catch the virus and pass it on.

More about getting a vaccination in Bury here:

www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-vaccine

Getting tested in Bury

If you have any of the three most common symptoms of coronavirus - a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste - we urge you to get tested to protect yourself and the people around you. Please get tested within the first 3-5 days of symptoms.

A range of testing options is available right across the borough:

No appointment needed at Bury's walk-through testing centre, open 10am-3pm, Monday - Friday: Chesham Fold, 95 Chesham Fold Road, Bury BL9 6JZ.



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By appointment 8am-8pm, with some locations open seven days a week, at Department for Health & Social Care testing centres:

- The former Radcliffe Pool car park, Blackburn Street, Radcliffe
- Whitefield Library, Pinfold Lane, Whitefield
- The Metro Christian Centre, 13 Parkhills Road, Bury
- Longfield Centre car park (via Rectory Lane), Prestwich
- Great Eaves Road test site, Great Eaves Road, Ramsbottom

Bury's drive-through testing site at Waterfold Business Park is open by appointment only.

For the latest information about testing and availability visit www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing or call 0161 253 5515.

Rapid community coronavirus testing

In Bury we are offering a targeted community testing programme which aims to identify people from certain settings or higher risk occupations who do not have coronavirus symptoms, but could have the infection and therefore could pass the virus on to others without knowing it. The test is known as a 'lateral flow antigen test' and takes approximately 5 minutes at one of our testing facilities, the results are available in around 30 minutes and sent direct by email or SMS to the person's mobile device. There is no need to wait at the testing site for the result.

Targeted community testing is offered to businesses and critical workers who cannot work from home; this includes taxi drivers, delivery drivers, blue light and health and social care staff, staff at schools and early years providers and essential retail and public transport, to name but a few.

Across the borough's two testing sites (Waterfold Business Park and Mosses Community Centre) there is capacity to undertake around 200 tests per day. Access to targeted community testing is by appointment only.

Helping people through the toughest time

Support in the community

Support for clinically extremely vulnerable residents who have been asked to shield, other vulnerable residents and residents who need to self-isolate continues through the Bury Community Hubs.

The hubs can help with food shopping and collecting prescriptions as well as telephone befriending and support to get online for things like priority supermarket delivery slots.

The Community Hubs are working with partners in mental health, Bury VCFA, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Age UK and Bury Community Support Network which includes access to foodbanks in Bury. We have a network of individual volunteers in every part of Bury who we can 'buddy' you up with for regular chats, support to get online, help to collect your prescriptions and medication, and they can help with your shopping too.



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Call 0161 253 5353 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) for information or to talk to us about what support you might need.

Mental health support

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, life has changed for all of us and it's natural that this may cause you to feel worried or anxious, lonely or frustrated. If you feel you need some extra support, Bury's Getting Help Line is a confidential telephone service run by the voluntary sector for people of all ages who are experiencing difficulties with their mental wellbeing.

You can access advice, guidance and signposting to local services by calling the Getting Help Line on 0161 464 3679. Find out about other mental wellbeing support at www.bury.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing

That's champion!

It's almost a year (on 1 March) since the first Covid-19 case in Greater Manchester was found in Bury, and in those early days of the pandemic our community galvanised itself to deliver an 'above and beyond' response.

That sense of togetherness continues to this day. Thanks to initiatives like Bury Community Hubs and the community work of Bury Council's ward councillors and officers, relationships forged between public bodies and different sections of our community are stronger than ever.

But there is much more that we can do. And in the coming weeks we will be launching a 'Community Champions' scheme to better connect Bury and begin to address the unequal impact Covid-19 has had on certain parts of society.

Funding from the Ministry of Housing and Local Communities will be used to:

- Create a Community Champions network of up to 250 individuals representing places, groups and faiths
- Create a dedicated Community Champion within each of Bury's five Community Hubs to co-ordinate our engagement work
- Invest in community networks – helping existing groups to extend their work and reach as community connectors, passing on information and feeding back issues.
- Making funding available to help mitigate the impacts of Covid-19
- Increasing understanding of Bury's communities to then be able to plug any gaps.

Further details will be unveiled soon - watch this space for further information!



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Grant payments reaching businesses in need

Grant payments continue to be made to Bury businesses coping with the financial effects of the coronavirus lockdown.

The council's economic development team has worked with local businesses to develop three grant support packages aimed at supporting companies whose survival is crucial to Bury's economy and local jobs, and at those who have not received help so far.

Several million pounds is currently being distributed through the latest tranche of Additional Grant money, in the following three areas:

1. Key strategic businesses which if they were to close would harm the borough's economic capacity, such as manufacturers and producers affected by restrictions affecting national and international markets.

Payouts of between £10,000 and £25,000 can be made, depending on the company's rateable value.

2. Key employment generators, particularly in manufacturing, logistics, creative and digital industries, and business, professional and financial services, employing 10 or more people.

Multi-national outfits would not qualify and companies must be based in Bury. The cap for this fund is £1m and applicants would need to demonstrate what effect lockdown has had on their prospects.

3. Small and micro businesses who have not previously benefitted from support programmes. This will extend support to many self-employed people who can demonstrate that they have a trading business.

This fund is to support businesses that do not have monthly commercial property costs but can provide evidence of monthly fixed asset costs that are fundamental to the operating of the business. These could be: company vehicles, storage space, specialist equipment or the rent of a chair or table in a health or beauty business.

The fund will be open to licensed taxi drivers who can demonstrate that they own or lease a vehicle. Support will also be extended to daily licence traders on Bury Market, following previous grants to traders with permanent leases.

And a 'special cases' panel has been set up to distribute grants to applicants who have a worthy claim but are not eligible under government criteria for help.

There are estimated 7,755 enterprises in Bury, employing from zero to nine people, who could benefit on application. Payments could be either £677 or £1,334 depending on the rateable status of the company, paid every 28 days until restrictions are lifted.

Information on the various grants and other support available is on the Bury Means Business website: <https://burymeansbusiness.bury.gov.uk/> and help and advice is available by e-mailing Investin@bury.gov.uk



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Next update due Thursday 18 February, 2021.
Find up-to-date information at bury.gov.uk/coronavirus



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