

NHS SERVICES

As reported in the news, the demand for all NHS and care services across Sussex has risen significantly due to the higher infection rates of COVID-19 in the community in recent weeks. Staff across the NHS and local authorities are working tirelessly to ensure they continue to provide safe consistent care. Whilst they are incredibly busy, they remain open.

David Liley, CEO of Healthwatch Brighton and Hove said:



In the 7 days up to 31st December, Brighton & Hove saw a 91% increase in COVID cases compared to the previous week. It is now estimated that 1 in every 45 people in the South East has the virus.

NHS Acute Hospitals in Sussex are facing unprecedented challenges as they deal with COVID-related demand. This is a combination of higher numbers of COVID-related admissions and some staff being unavailable due to ill health, their self-isolating or shielding.

People with serious health conditions are still being treated in our hospitals and you should continue to use GP, NHS 111, and Ambulance services. You should however only visit your local hospital if absolutely necessary, and NHS 111 should be everyone's first point of call.

We can all help by being tolerant of possible delays in response times and waiting times in hospital, and by following the current guidelines by staying at home as much as possible, isolating if you have symptoms, and by maintaining social distancing.

Healthwatch continue to work closely with city leaders, NHS services, and Commissioners throughout this period and we will share information with you as it becomes available.



Patients admitted in Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals

Latest data at **healthcare trust** level provided on 3 January 2021

Daily

36

Last 7 days

119

↑ 44 (58.7%)

People tested positive in Brighton and Hove

Latest data at **local authority (upper tier)** level provided on 8 January 2021

Daily

338

Last 7 days

2,147

↑ 595 (38.3%)

Data source: [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

YOUR HEALTHWATCH

(1) Healthwatch Brighton and Hove will host a further three webinars for Care Home Relatives



HOLD THE DATE:

Tuesday 26th January 2021 2pm - 3pm

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove in partnership with Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust will be hosting 3 monthly webinars for relatives/family carers with loved ones in Care Homes.

This follows on from our Sussex-wide event in November when almost 90 people came together to share their experiences of staying connected with their loved ones in care homes during the pandemic. You can read our report:

[Staying Connected Webinar Report December 2020](#)

(or copy the following link into your web browser:

<https://cdn.whitebearplatform.com/hweastsussex/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/21165956/Staying-Connected-Report-FINAL-18th-December.pdf>

The first webinar on Tuesday 26th January will focus on the Vaccination Roll out in Care Homes.

The webinars are for you to hear from other family carers, and contribute your thoughts and experiences. There will also be people on hand to answer some of your questions.

Two further webinars will cover the following themes:

- 22nd February, 3pm - 4pm, we will explore the impact of long-term restricted visiting/separation from loved ones is having on families
- 22nd March, 3pm - 4pm, there will an opportunity to join representatives from the Health and Care System in a Q & A session and future discussions around what could and should the system be doing to support relatives and Family carers.

Watch this space - further details released shortly!

(2) Dental services

healthwatch
Brighton and Hove



Healthwatch Brighton and Hove asked local people to tell us about their experiences of dental care from September to December 2020, and 56 people responded. We have produced a separate document (attached to this email) which summarises our findings.

We provided our findings to the Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9th December 2020 (for information on the role of the HOSC click [here](#)). We asked the Committee to exert pressure on NHS Commissioners to improve access to dental services and clarify important issues for the public which they have agreed to do. We have asked local MPs to table questions to the Secretary of State for Health and other government ministers, and they have also agreed to help. We have engaged with the NHS Sussex Commissioners to help us get more answers and action from NHS England who commission dental services and they are working with us to raise awareness.

On the 19th November 2020, the three local Healthwatch in Sussex met with NHS England where we raised our concerns. We will update you as we learn more.

You can read more about the impact which COVID-19 has had on dentistry on our [website](#).

(3) Non-emergency Patient Transport Services in Sussex

healthwatch
Sussex

In September 2020, Healthwatch teams across Sussex sought your views on the current Non-emergency Patient Transport Services in Sussex. 130 people told us what they thought and we have now published a series of reports which you can access by clicking [here](#).

This is the fourth time since 2016 that Healthwatch has reviewed this service. We are pleased to report improvements in many areas, although there are some areas which continue to require action; notably passengers continue to experience unacceptable delays in picking up from hospital after their medical appointment.

Through this review we also gathered your ideas for changing the service.

We have already shared our reports and recommendations with Sussex NHS Commissioners who are responsible for the service. The local service is due to be re-commissioned over the coming year, which represents an opportunity to rectify aspects of the service which are currently letting patients down, but also to improve and modernise the service and to ensure that past commissioning errors are not repeated.

Healthwatch in Sussex have made a number of recommendations which you can read [here](#), which is also where you can also access our reports.

We have attached to this email our public-facing report, plus a 2-page summary of findings which highlights the impact we are having.

Will continue to work with NHS Commissioners in 2021 as they develop the new contract to ensure that your views are reflected.

Key findings: what you told us about the current service.

- 78.5% of people said that they were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the service. This is lower than levels recorded by Healthwatch in 2017
- 86% of people who had used the service in 2020 would recommend family and friends to apply for it. This is higher than levels in 2017
- 84% of people who had used the service during the first COVID-19 lockdown were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with it
- Satisfaction levels and recommendation ratings varied across Sussex. Patients from West Sussex were the most satisfied (95%) whilst those from Brighton and Hove were the least satisfied (at just 56.5%, this is 27.5% lower than in 2017). Patients from East Sussex recorded a 12% drop in satisfaction levels (compared to 2017)
- 59% said they had experienced delays, changes, or problems (‘issues’) with their transport and/or journeys made using the service. Residents from Brighton and Hove experienced a greater number of issues compared to residents from East Sussex or West Sussex
- 68% of all passengers reported experiencing delays in being picked up from hospital.

Improvements and changes you said you would like to see.

You said a Patient Transport Service should:

- Notify you of any changes or delays to your journeys (95%)
- Give you an exact time for when your vehicle will be arriving (91%)
- Make it easy for you to speak with someone at any time to check where your vehicle is (85%)
- Create a dedicated service specifically for renal patients (83%)

You want the future service to provide you with:

- A text or call telling you when your vehicle is 30 minutes away (79%)
- A telephone call centre service with extended operating hours (open longer than 9am-5pm) (75%)
- An online account facility which allows you (or a person you nominate) to amend/cancel your bookings (63%)
- A mobile phone app which allows you to track the whereabouts of your vehicle (61.5%)

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE UPDATES

(1) Your views on cardiology and ophthalmology services in East Sussex



Do you use these services in East Sussex?

As part of the East Sussex Healthcare Trust's (ESHT) new "Building for our Future" programme, Cardiology and Ophthalmology have been highlighted as facing significant challenges. In order to improve and transform services, they want to hear from patients, former patients, and their carers to understand their experiences of the services and where they feel improvements can be made.

Two surveys are available which you access via the links below:

Cardiology

<https://yoursaysussexhealthandcare.uk.engagementhq.com/...>

Ophthalmology

<https://yoursaysussexhealthandcare.uk.engagementhq.com/...>

(2) Join a webinar on mental health and wellbeing services

You are invited to join the third in a series of four community engagement webinars discussing key factors believed to be responsible for the disparate health outcomes we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this event, the focus is on access to mental health and wellbeing services.

Views from members of the Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups are particularly sought.

The next community webinar on *'Access to Mental Health & Wellbeing Services'* will be held on the 13th of January (18:00-20:00 GMT).

You are invited you to come along and listen to a panel of experts discuss experiences and questions such as:

- Are mental health services accessible for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities?
- What are some of the key barriers that prevent underrepresented communities from accessing support?
- Are the services which are currently available adequate?

Please join on 13th January 2021 from 6 pm to 8 pm, on Zoom.

To receive your unique zoom joining link you will need to register [here](#)

Or alternatively, get in touch with us via e-mail: community@driorg.com and we will be happy to help you connect.

Diversity Resource International and Sussex Health and Care Partnership invite you to our 3rd Community Webinar

Date: 13th January 2021

Time: 18:00- 20:00 (GMT)

Access to Mental Health & Wellbeing Services



- Have you been able to access any mental health services?
- Do you think the support you received is adequate?
- Do you have any suggestions to make mental health services more accessible to others?

We invite you to share your experiences, concerns and suggestions by joining our interactive webinar. You will be speaking to an informed and influential group of people across Sussex including senior leaders in the Health and Care Partnership.

We want to hear your voices and your ideas for change.

For further information and how to register please email community@driorg.com

Register directly using this link: <http://bit.ly/3oY3LG3>

#SussexRaceEquality

COVID-19 vaccination

(1) News on COVID-19 vaccines

A reminder that we have created a dedicated webpage on the [Healthwatch Brighton and Hove website](#). Information is being released all the time and we will be regularly updating this dedicated page as more information about the roll-out of vaccines is released. The website explains how the vaccines are currently being rolled-out and includes latest news.

Please visit the Healthwatch website [here](#) for more information.

You can also read some further information about the vaccine programme in the separate attachment that we have provided with this bulletin.

To date, over 1.2 million people across the UK have now received their first dose. The government has set a target to offer vaccination slots to 15 million people who are [in the top four priority groups](#) - including all over-80s - by 15th February.

The priority list sets out the order in which people should receive the vaccine. The list covers around 30 million people who are thought to represent 90-99% of those at risk of dying from COVID-19. Broadly, vaccines are being given to the most vulnerable first, as set out in the priority list.

The list has been updated to include unpaid carers. The list recommends that carers who are in receipt of Carer's Allowance or are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer contracted COVID should be included in Priority 6 alongside people with underlying conditions.

The full priority list is as follows and those in groups 1 and 2 are currently receiving the vaccine:

1. residents in a care home for older adults and their carers
2. all those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers
3. all those 75 years of age and over
4. all those 70 years of age and over and [Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals](#).
5. all those 65 years of age and over
6. all individuals aged 16 years to 64 years with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of serious disease and mortality. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is authorised in those aged 16 years and over, and the AstraZeneca vaccine is only authorised for use in those aged 18 years and over. This group also includes those who are in receipt of a carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill.
7. all those 60 years of age and over
8. all those 55 years of age and over
9. all those 50 years of age and over

Healthwatch is working with local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure you get the information you need. You can now access some answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the vaccine by clicking [here](#).

If you have a specific question, please do get in touch at office@healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk

(2) COVID-19 Immunisation Champions volunteer role.

COVID immunisation champions will help cascade information on the vaccination, including myth busting and Frequently Asked Questions, help with answering simple questions and supporting people to take up the vaccine.

The volunteers will be trained and supported with both materials and an identified point of contact as the roles develop.

The Sussex Health and Care Partnership are anticipating the Champions will be in place by late January.

<https://www.sussexhealthandcare.uk/get-involved/covid-19-vaccination-champions/>

(1) A message from the Director of Public Health for our City

“ COVID-19 is spreading rapidly in Brighton & Hove. The weekly number of positive tests is now more than 10 times higher than at the end of November 2020. Every age group and every part of our city is affected.

The latest national ONS survey shows that roughly 1 in 45 people in the South East have got the virus.

In Brighton & Hove in the seven days up to the 31 December there were 1768 new cases in Brighton & Hove.

- equivalent to a weekly rate of new cases of 608 per 100,000 residents
- an increase of 91% compared to the previous week (318 cases per 100,000)
- higher than the rate for England (547 per 100,000) and slightly lower than the South East (651 per 100,000)
- like previous weeks, the numbers of confirmed cases of Covid-19 has risen in all age groups in the city

Sadly, more people are becoming very ill, hospital admissions are increasing fast and more local people will die as a result of the virus. In order to save lives, it is absolutely vital that we break the chain of transmission.

Everyone must follow the rules of the lockdown and stay at home. If you are outside of your home, you must adopt the measures necessary to prevent the spread of the virus: think hands - face - space.

And while the roll out of the second COVID vaccine this week is good news I ask you all to be patient. The NHS is working to a priority list of those most at risk first, and those who work closest with them. Please do not contact the NHS to get a vaccine. You will be contacted when it's your turn.

Alistair Hill, Director of Public Health



If you need support or advice during the pandemic the [Council](#) website has more information: [Brighton and Hove City Council Covid-19 pages](#)

A coronavirus help directory for Brighton & Hove is also available [here](#). Use this site to find support with food shopping, money, and work, COVID testing, and more. You can also use it to find help for friends, family, and neighbours.

For advice around attending school, college and universities please click [here](#). Answers to commonly asked questions are available [here](#).

Support available in Brighton & Hove

Emergency help with food, energy bills and other essentials

Local Discretionary Social Fund
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/emergency-help-with-bills 01273 293117 (option 1).

Debt advice if you are facing financial difficulties

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/debt-advice
Citizens Advice 0300 330 9033
Money Advice Plus 0800 988 7037.

Food, shopping and meal deliveries Brighton & Hove Food Partnership www.bhfood.org.uk/coronavirus-update.

Mental health Sussex Mental Healthline 0300 5000 101 (freephone).

Wellbeing Healthy Lifestyles team www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/healthylifestyles 01273 294589.

Carers The Carers Hub www.carershub.co.uk 01273 977000 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Loneliness Together Co www.togetherco.org.uk 01273 775888.

Older people Ageing Well www.ageingwellbh.org 07770 061072 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or call The Silver Line 0800 470 8090.

Domestic abuse The Portal www.theportal.org.uk 0300 323 9985.

Bereavement Cruse Bereavement Care www.cruse.org.uk 0808 808 1677.

Digital support and resources Digital Brighton & Hove www.digitalbrightonandhove.org.uk 07475 946084.

Adult social care Access Point www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care 01273 295555 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm).

Children or families Front Door for Families www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/front-door-families 01273 290400 (Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm, Friday until 4.30pm).
If you still need extra support and don't have anyone to help you at the moment, contact our community advice and support hub.
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/coronavirus-help
If you can't get online, call 01273 293117 (option 2) Monday to Friday, 10am to 4.30pm.

Do not leave home if you or someone you live with has any of the following:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

Self-isolate immediately and get a test.

Go to [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119.

(2) How and where to get a COVID test

Full advice from the Council is available [here](#).

There continues to very high demand for coronavirus tests. You are advised to keep trying to book through the government [website](#) or by calling 119. You must [Self-isolate](#) immediately for 10 days if you have symptoms, and all household members also need to stay at home.

A walk-in coronavirus test centre in East Brighton park is open. Anyone wanting a test must book an appointment, as with the mobile drive-through test centre currently operating from Withdean.

Click here to [get a coronavirus test](#).

If you do not have access to the internet, you can call 119 to book or order a test.

In the event that anyone with symptoms is unable to obtain a local test, it is not recommended that you travel long distances. Government advice is to try booking again in a few hours. A good time to try is 8.30pm when new slots are made available.

A test for suspected COVID-19 is free and NHS treatment for COVID-19 is free for all, including overseas visitors who are not usually entitled to free treatment from the NHS.

Symptoms

Anyone with [symptoms](#) can get a coronavirus test, whatever their age. Main symptoms are:

- **a high temperature:** this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough:** this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (a usual cough may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste:** this means you have noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

These websites contain all the information you need:

- [Brighton and Hove City Council](#) (including links to translated materials)
- [Coronavirus in children](#)
- This link to the [government website](#) explains all you need to know about how to get a test.
- More information explaining how Test and Trace works can be found [here](#). [The council has updated their advice about obtaining a test for COVID-19](#)
- [Testing for coronavirus at home](#) - How to use your coronavirus (COVID-19) home test kit.

Antibody testing is available for certain groups only.

You can get [a free at-home antibody test if all of these apply](#) you live in England , you are 18 or over and you work in paid adult social care.

More information can be found in these links:

[How tests and testing kits for coronavirus \(COVID-19\) work](#)

[NHS Test and Trace: how we test your samples](#)

[Testing for coronavirus before hospital](#)

(3) What you can and cannot do during the national lockdown

You must not leave or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may only leave home to:

- shop for basic necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- exercise outdoors once a day with your household or [support bubble](#), or one other person (maintaining social distancing), and you should not travel outside your local area
- meet your support bubble or [childcare bubble](#) where necessary seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare - for those eligible
- Children can move between homes if their parents are separated.

Workplaces will stay open if people cannot work from home - including construction and manufacturing.

Colleges, primary and secondary schools will remain open only for vulnerable children and the children of [critical workers](#). All other children will learn remotely until February half term.

Early Years settings can remain open but [council-run nurseries will be closed to all but vulnerable children and children of critical workers from 7 January](#).

Higher Education provision will remain online until mid-February for all except future critical worker courses.

If you do leave home for a permitted reason, you should always stay local in the part of the city where you live. You may only leave your local area for a legally permitted reason, such as for work.

Support bubbles for people who live alone, and households made up of single parents and children can continue.

Childcare bubbles are allowed to enable parents to work (and not to enable social contact between adults).

You should only be spending time with those in your household or support bubble, but you can exercise outdoors once a day with someone from outside your household or support bubble, with social distancing.

You must stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household.

If you are at high risk from coronavirus (clinically extremely vulnerable) you should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. You will receive a letter with more details about what this means.

LOCAL COVID DATA

(1) Local data on COVID and statistics published by the Council

Key statistics for Brighton & Hove

You can find key local data showing confirmed cases of COVID-19 and deaths related to COVID-19 on the [Brighton and Hove Council website](#). We have reproduced some of this data below. The Council also provides links to other available data which can be accessed [here](#). The graphs below provide more detail.

CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 in Brighton and Hove

Numbers of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Brighton & Hove continue to increase. As of 6th January, the total number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 (recorded since February 2020) in Brighton and Hove stands at 8,990. This has increased by 4,248 - up from 4,742 as of 16th December (as shown in our last Healthwatch bulletin). In the 7 days up to 2nd January, there were 2,004 new cases.

Published data provides an average rate of new cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people over two time periods:

- a) the last 7-days
- b) the average since March 2020

The two averages are therefore different. For information, the population of Brighton and Hove is estimated by the [ONS](#) to be 290,885.

7-day average

This data is published by the [Public Health England](#) and population data by the Office for National Statistics. The rates are calculated by the Brighton & Hove City Council Public Health Intelligence team.

In the seven days up to 6th January 2021 there were 2,004 confirmed new COVID-19 cases in Brighton & Hove. This is equivalent to a **weekly rate** of new cases of 688.9 per 100,000 residents ($2,004/290,885 \times 100,000 = 688.9$). This weekly rate has increased from 101.4 as of 16th December (NB the rate was just 16.5 as of 2nd October 2020). At 688.9, this rate is higher than the national average for England of 612.2 but slightly lower than the South East average of 716.1.

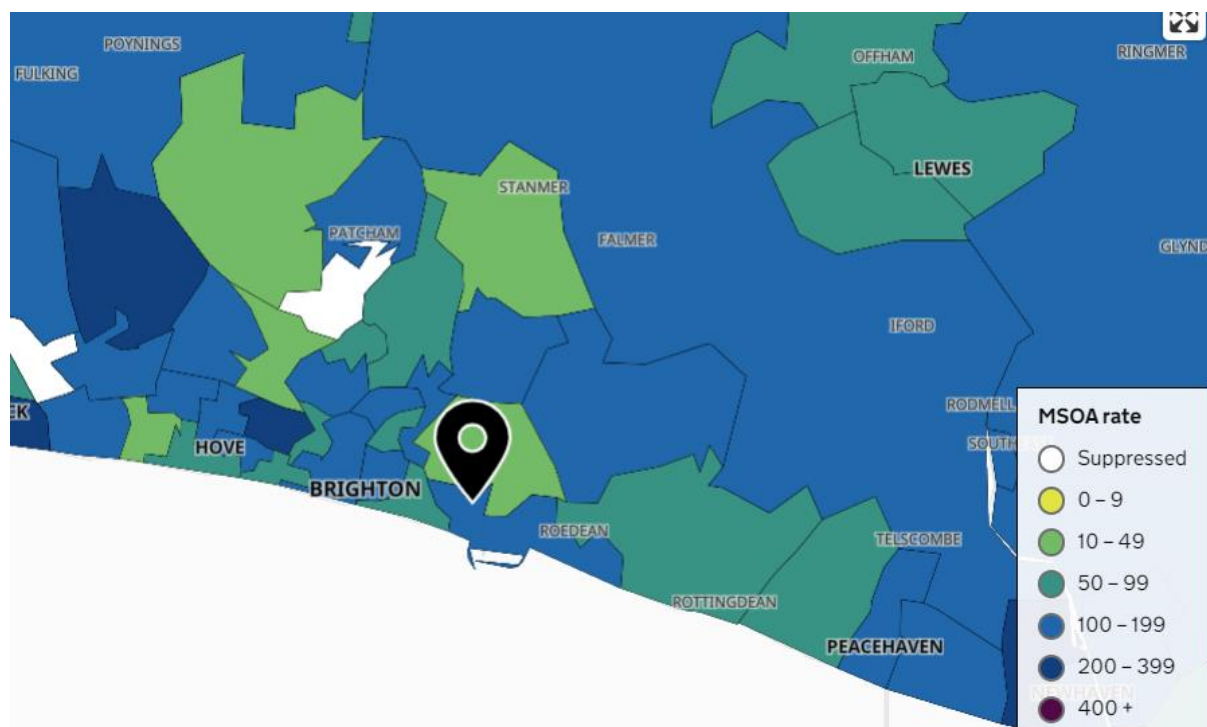
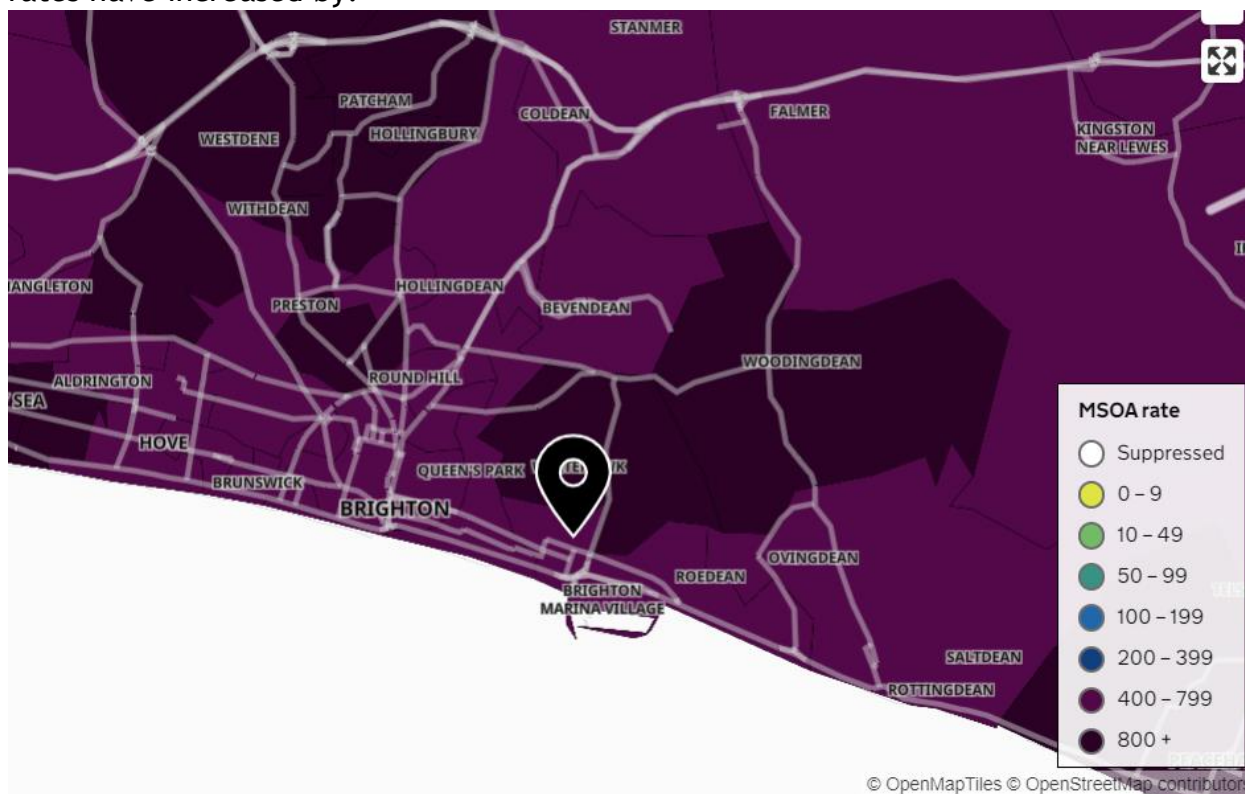
Average rate since February 2020

This data is published on the [government website](#). As of 6th January, the **total rate** of confirmed cases in Brighton and Hove since February 2020 is equivalent to 3,091 cases per 100,000 residents ($8,990/290,885 \times 100,000 = 3,091$). This number has increased from 1,630 as of 16th December (NB the rate was 377.5 as of 2nd October). This rate is higher than the national average for England of 2,957.2 and the South East average of 2,002.

In the last few weeks, we have seen an increase in numbers of recorded deaths, which now stands at 208.

Where are the highest rates of infection in the city?

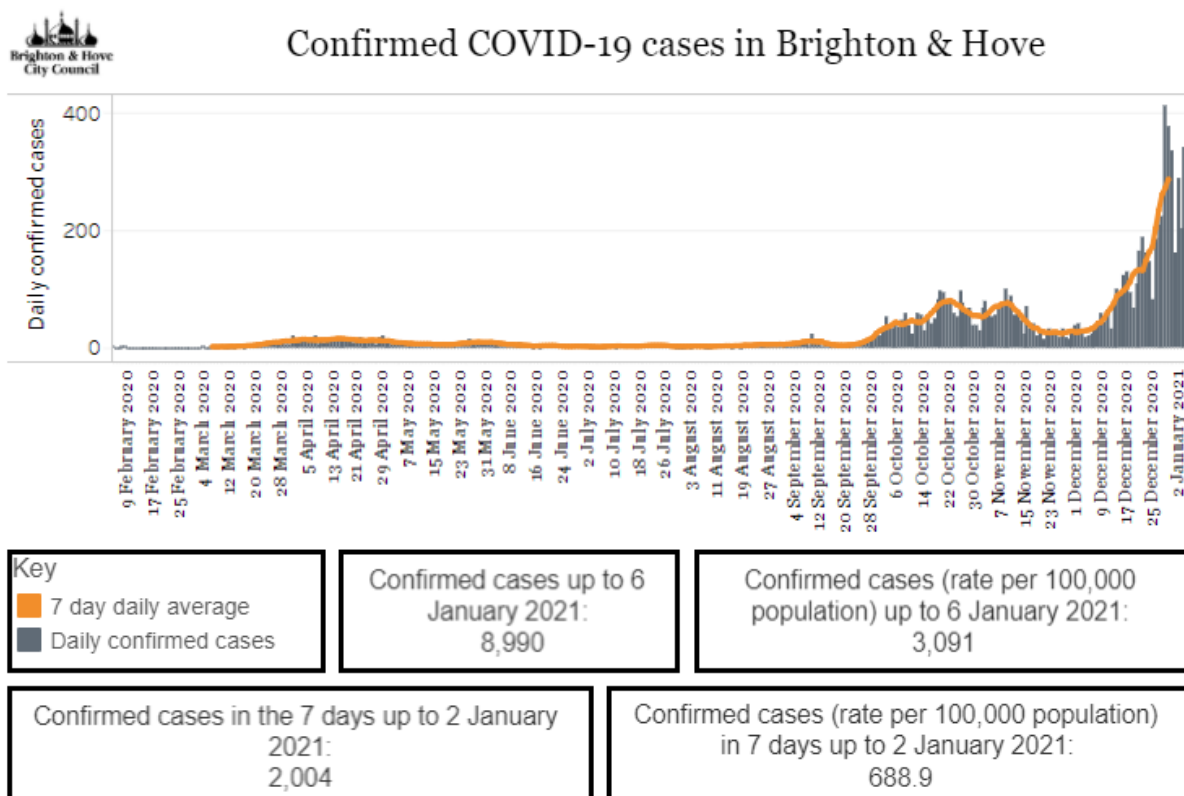
This government [map](#) displays weekly data, including seven-day case rates and direction of change ending on 7th January 2021. This shows that the whole city is showing rates of infection of 400 per 100,000 people and above. Woodingdean, Withdean, Patcham Hollingbury, Roundhill and Whitehawk have rates of 800 and over. The second map below shows what the position was on 17th December and how much rates have increased by.



Government data showing confirmed COVID-19 cases in Brighton and Hove:

Date	No of confirmed cases	Total number of confirmed cases
6.1.21	10	8,990
5.1.21	177	8,980
4.1.21	341	8,803
3.1.21	204	8,462
2.1.21	289	8,258
1.1.21	160	7,969
31.12.20	334	7,809
30.12.20	377	7,475
29.12.20	412	7,098
28.12.20	222	6,686
27.12.20	210	6,464
26.12.20	184	6,254

COVID-10 confirmed cases following a test conducted within the those carried out by commercial laboratories (data obtained from the [Brighton and hove Council website](#)).

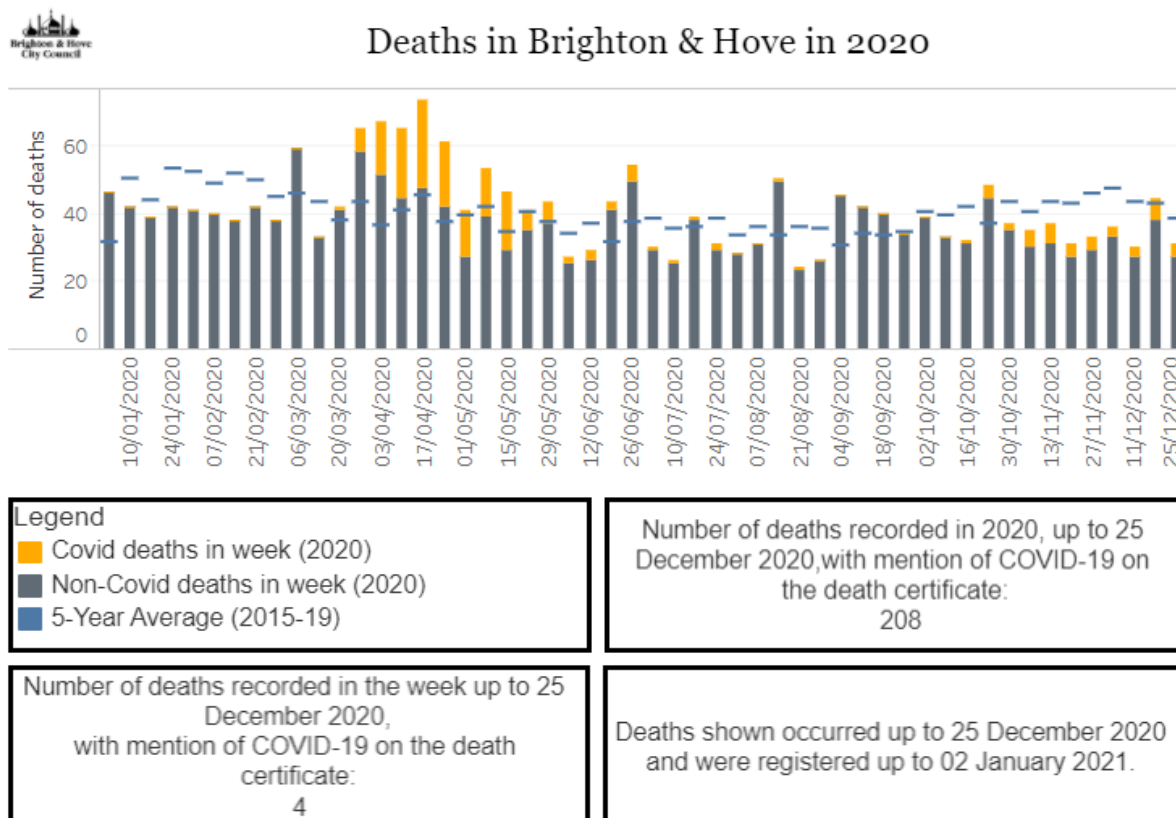


Most recent days subject to reporting delay. Last available data: 6 January 2021

Deaths related to COVID-19 in the city.

The number of deaths of Brighton & Hove residents where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate (yellow) is shown in the graph below (data obtained from the Brighton and Hove Council [website](#))

As of 25th December, the total number of deaths of Brighton & Hove residents where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate stands at 208 (recorded since February 2020). These are deaths which occurred up to 25th December and registered up to 2nd January 2021. In the last 7 days up to 4th December, there were 4 new deaths recorded.



Deaths recorded by NHS Trusts.

The total number of deaths recorded by Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust since the beginning of the outbreak is 210. Numbers across all NHS Trusts have increased in since our last bulletin. This data is published by [NHS England](#) and is available here: [COVID 19 total announced deaths 17 December 2020](#)

For interest (comparisons are not appropriate) other Sussex Trusts have recorded the following numbers of deaths:

Brighton and Sussex University NHS Trust 258 (previously 210)
 East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust 302 (143)
 Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust363 (307)
 Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust 25 (23)
 Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust152 (127)

(2) Data on COVID in care homes

The Office for National Statistics began publishing data on deaths in care homes in late July.

For Brighton and Hove the number of deaths in care homes linked to COVID-19, as of 11th December, stood at 76. This is against a total of 208 COVID-related deaths in the city which had occurred up to 25th December and registered up to 2nd January 2021 [This data is available on the Brighton and Hove website.](#)

NATIONAL COVID NEWS

(1) A third vaccine has been approved

The COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna has today (8th January 2021) been given [regulatory approval](#) for supply by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). This follows a thorough and rigorous assessment by the MHRA's teams of scientists, including advice from the independent [Commission on Human Medicines](#), which reviewed in depth all the data to ensure this vaccine meets the required standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.

This is the third COVID-19 vaccine to be approved for use by the MHRA.

This Moderna vaccine works by injecting a small part of the COVID-19 virus' genetic code, which triggers an immune response and creates antibodies in the human body able to fight the virus. The dosage for this specific vaccine requires two doses to be given. It is recommended to administer the second dose 28 days after the first. It is approved for use in people 18 years and over, and it can be used by pregnant and breastfeeding women following a discussion with their healthcare provider on the benefits and risks. It can be stored at -20° C for up to six months.

(2) Two more lifesaving COVID-19 drugs discovered

Two more life-saving drugs have been found that can cut deaths by a quarter in patients who are sickest with COVID-19.

The anti-inflammatory medications, given via a drip, save an extra life for every 12 treated, say researchers who have carried out a trial in NHS intensive care units. Supplies are already available across the UK so they can be used immediately to save hundreds of lives, say experts.

There are over 30,000 COVID-19 patients in UK hospitals - 39% more than in April. The UK government is working closely with the manufacturer, to ensure the drugs - tocilizumab and sarilumab - continue to be available to UK patients.

As well as saving more lives, the treatments speed up patients' recovery and reduce the length of time that critically ill patients need to spend in intensive care by about a week.

[Click here](#) to read more.

(3) South Africa coronavirus variant: What is the risk?

A new variant of coronavirus circulating in South Africa is now being seen in other countries, including the UK. Experts are urgently studying it to understand what risk it poses. All viruses, including the one that causes Covid-19, mutate.

Both the new South African and UK 'Kent' variants appear to be more contagious. It is too soon to say for sure, or by how much, until more tests are completed, although it is extremely unlikely the mutations would render vaccines useless.

[Click here](#) to read more.

Overseas arrivals must test negative.

International passengers - including British nationals - will have to **provide a negative Covid-19 test result** taken within 72 hours of departure before travelling to the UK. The measures are aimed at stopping the spread of "new strains" of coronavirus.

(4) Updated guidance for shielding patients

[COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#)

This guidance is for clinically extremely vulnerable people, with additional information to help protect you from coronavirus (COVID-19).

The government is sending [COVID-19: letters to clinically extremely vulnerable people](#). This letter is to let you know about the new guidance that will be in place for clinically extremely vulnerable people.

We cannot reproduce all of the information in this bulletin, but you can read the guidance [here](#)

(5) Wider impacts of COVID-19

In this section we have provided several articles or publications which describe the effects that COVID-19 has had on society. These primarily relate to health and social care, but some go wider.

[Wider impacts of COVID-19 on health monitoring tool](#)

National monitoring tool that brings together metrics to assess the wider impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19) on health.

NATIONAL COVID DATA

(1) COVID-19 national data

National COVID-19 surveillance reports

The government publishes a series of [weekly summary](#) reports which display the following data:

- National and regional rates of infection
- Recorded death rates within 28, and 60 days
- Deaths by ethnicity
- Testing levels and results
- Hospital admissions

Death rates

There are 2 definitions of a death in a person with COVID-19 in England, one broader measure and one measure reflecting current trends:

- 1) A death in a person with a laboratory-confirmed positive COVID-19 test and died within (equal to or less than) 28 days of the first positive specimen date.
- 2) A death in a person with a laboratory-confirmed positive COVID-19 and either: died within 60 days of the first specimen date or died more than 60 days after the first specimen date, only if COVID-19 is mentioned on the death certificate.

Coronavirus deaths and cases give a sense of the spread of the epidemic. Deaths are counted where a lab-confirmed positive coronavirus test result is reported in any setting. This means that not all deaths reported here are caused by coronavirus.

In England, as of 7th January 2021, the **number of deaths** of people who had had a positive test result for COVID-19 and died within 28 days of the first positive test stood at 78,508. The weekly rate per 100,000 people is 121.7.

In the South East **the total number of deaths stood 8,974 cases**, which is a weekly rate of 97.8.

Data on death rates are published on the [daily dashboard](#). Additional data is available here: [Coronavirus cases in the UK: daily updated statistics](#)

(a) Infection levels

The data reveals that as of 7th January 2021:

- the **total number of lab-confirmed UK cases of COVID-19 stood at 2,889,419** (this has increased from 1,948,600 as included in our last Healthwatch bulletin dated 22nd December 2020). This is the total number of people who have had a positive test result. The weekly rate per 100,000 people is 612.2.

- in the South East, the total number of lab-confirmed UK cases of COVID-19 stood 67,786 cases, which is a weekly rate of 716.1

For up-to-date numbers of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and risk in the UK, click [here](#). You can also view the [coronavirus dashboard](#) which is updated daily.

(b) R-number and growth rates

[Last updated on Friday 18th December 2020](#)

The latest R estimate for the UK is between 1 - 1.4 and the growth rate for the whole of the UK is between 0% to +6%.

An R number between 1 and 1.4 means that, on average, every 10 people infected will infect between 10 and 14 other people.

A growth rate between 0% and +6% means that the number of new infections is growing by between 0% and 6% every day.

In the South East the latest R estimate is between 1.1 - 1.4 and the growth rate is between +1% to +6%.

What do these numbers mean?

[The reproduction number \(R\)](#) is the average number of people one person who is infected with COVID-19 may go onto infect. A high R number implies the transmission rate from person to person is increasing, a low number means it is declining (for up-to-date numbers of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and risk in the UK, click [here](#)). Brighton and Hove Council has previously confirmed that it is not possible to calculate meaningful R values at a very local level.

[The growth rate](#) reflects how quickly the number of infections is changing day-by-day. If the growth rate is greater than zero (+ positive), then the disease will grow, and if the growth rate is less than zero then the disease will shrink. The size of the growth rate indicates the speed of change. A growth rate of +5% will grow faster than one with a growth rate of +1%. Likewise, a disease with a growth rate of -4% will be shrinking faster than a disease with growth rate of -1%.

(c) Test and trace

You can access data here from the [NHS Test and Trace \(England\) statistics: 3 December to 30 December 2020](#)

311,372 people tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) at least once in England between 24th December and 30th December, a 24% increase compared to the previous week. The number of people testing positive has increased over the last 4 weeks. 1,848,899 people were tested at least once between these dates, a 29% decrease compared to the previous week

(2) Government announcements

The current situation means that new guidance is being issued daily. Below we have provided links to some announcements which may be of interest.

[National lockdown: Stay at Home](#)

[Covid-19: Boris Johnson makes daily jab pledge](#)

[Moderna vaccine becomes third COVID-19 vaccine approved by UK regulator](#)

[Seven mass vaccination hubs announced for England](#)

[Prioritising the first COVID-19 vaccine dose: JCVI statement](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): travel corridors](#)

List of countries, territories and regions from where you can travel to England and may not have to self-isolate.

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove information and advice

The following Healthwatch COVID-19 guides are available (these are being regularly updated):

[Vaccinations for COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 information and advice webpage](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccination webpage](#)

[Answers to Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Maternity and pregnancy advice and information](#)

[Services open over Christmas and New Year, and tips for staying well during winter](#)

[Top tips for staying active and looking after your mental health.](#)

Guides which provide information about:

- visiting a [dentist](#)
- [seeing a GP](#)
- [collection of prescriptions](#)

Plus, accessibility resources to help you communicate about COVID-19.

- **NEW:** [Beyond Words is providing free picture stories and illustrated guides to support people with learning disabilities and autism through the coronavirus pandemic](#)
- A series of videos aimed at encouraging people to continue to use health services if they are unwell. They are available in [English](#), [Arabic](#), [Farsi](#), [Kurdish](#) and [Sylheti](#).
- [Resources from Learning Disability England](#)
- [Signhealth has made their InterpreterNow remote BSL interpretation service available for free across all healthcare services](#)
- [Signhealth is providing a video of summaries of key coronavirus guidance in BSL](#)

- [Signhealth advice for testing](#)
- [Public Health England stay at home guidance](#), translated and in easy read
- [NHS guidelines translated into up to 50 languages by Doctors of the World](#) and find video advice [here](#)
- [Easy read information on COVID-19](#) from Mencap
[About the NHS Test and Trace scheme](#)
[What to do if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace](#)
 The NHS have also created [easy read posters like this](#) so people know when and how to get a test for coronavirus.
- [Public Health England resources](#) in accessible formats
- [COVID-19 guidance for providers of services for people experiencing rough sleeping](#)
- The [handwashing rap](#), produced to help people who have a learning disability



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