



April 2021 Report and Annual Report 2020-2021

My latest monthly update, drawing together relevant information relating to East Suffolk Council, our services and impacts caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and incorporating a brief report on the past year - Thank you to Pettistree Parish Council and residents for your continued hard work in our communities and supporting those in most need.

Cllr Carol Poulter

Councillor for the Wickham Market Ward East Suffolk Council

Step two in the Government's 'roadmap' out of lockdown

As you will be aware, the next stage in the gradual easing of restrictions has arrived on Monday 12 April. This is thanks in no small part to the vaccination programme which continues to be a success – not only nationally, but also locally, with Suffolk which is now one of the leading counties for roll out and take up.

The changes taking place from today will see non-essential retail allowed to re-open as well as hairdressers, outdoor hospitality venues and leisure centres. This is particularly good news for East Suffolk given the investment we have made in our leisure facilities across the district and I am pleased that a huge amount of effort has gone in to ensuring they can re-open safely.

Our Economic Development and Environmental Health teams have also been working closely with local businesses to ensure they are ready to re-open safely and the teams will continue to support them proactively as we all seek to navigate towards a return to more normal life.

Testing also remains a critical element of the national response and changes have been made to the way Suffolk continues to offer community testing.

The County has conducted over 57,000 tests at 28 sites however, the numbers of people using test centres (in Suffolk and across the country) has been lower than expected and the focus will now be given to targeted, vulnerable groups and promoting home testing.

With this in mind, the East Suffolk sites at Aldeburgh, Southwold, Woodbridge, and Bungay have now closed and those at Halesworth, Saxmundham and Debenham will close on April 16.



Sites will remain open at Lowestoft South, Lowestoft North, Felixstowe, Martlesham, Beccles and Framlingham.

And from today, everyone in England is to be given access to two rapid coronavirus tests a week. The lateral flow kits, which can provide results in around 30 minutes, will be available for free at testing sites, pharmacies and through the post.

Latest countywide figures and information

As of April 14 there have been 29,900 total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 3,918.7 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. This is the lowest overall COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

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	4	17	12.0	↓	3,838	4170.10	272
East Suffolk	2	42	17.2	↓	8,753	3508.80	292
Ipswich	3	61	58.4	↓	7,549	5513.70	196
Mid Suffolk	1	21	19.3	↓	3,260	3137.80	300
West Suffolk	11	35	22.9	↓	6,435	3594.10	288
Suffolk	21	175	25.6	↓	29,835	3,918.7	
East of England	198	1,506	28.3	↓	385,270	6,178.1	
England	2,304	17,943	38.6	↓	3,818,665	6,784.3	

Overview

In the week up to April 7 there have been 175 new cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This is a decrease on the numbers in the previous week.

The underlying rate of new weekly cases in Suffolk has decreased slightly and is now at 25.6 cases per 100,000 people. This rate remains below the rates for the East of England region (28.3 / 100,000) and for England as a whole (38.6 / 100,000).

Publication of the latest mortality data is delayed this week due to the Bank Holidays. In total, up to March 19, which remains the latest data from ONS, there have been 1,534 deaths in Suffolk where COVID-19 was recorded on the death certificate. There were eight COVID-19 related deaths in the seven days up to March 19.

The estimated 'R' value for the East of England is between 0.7 and 1.0. This value has stayed the same compared to the previous week. The estimated 'R' value for England as a whole, has also remained the same this week (0.8– 1.0). Any R value greater than 1 means



the epidemic is no longer decreasing.

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 April 7, 2021 there were 175 new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This number has dropped compared to the previous week.

In the last week of reported data, up to April 7 there have been 17 cases in Babergh, 42 cases in East Suffolk, 61 cases in Ipswich, 21 cases in Mid Suffolk and 35 cases in West Suffolk.

Supporting communities

Sue Medley from the Community Intervention Team (set up to support outbreaks and isolation and a whole range of Covid related issues) has been out and about spending time talking to people at the foodbank and on London Road South in Lowestoft as well as visiting several HMOs in the town. She will be working closely with the Environmental Health team to support East Suffolk businesses, particularly as they start opening back up from Monday 12 April.

The East Suffolk Bounce Back fund is being adopted at a Suffolk level as a new Community Restart programme which also includes specialist advice and support (including with risk assessments) to enable community buildings and community groups to open back up safely. Funded through the Control Outbreak Management Fund, more information about the whole programme will be available shortly.

Community Action Suffolk have launched their new Covid Support Buddies Programme. This is a county wide scheme (also funded through the COMF) but supplemented with just over £10k funding from the East Suffolk Community Partnership Board to boost the offer locally. A network of Covid Support Buddies will help people to get back out into the community - for example one could accompany to a lunch club for the first time since lockdown. Covid Support Buddies will be linked to existing community groups (GNSs or Covid Response Groups) and a Covid Support Buddy Pack has been developed. Our development officer is Dave Moore (who some of you may know from the Rendlesham Good Neighbour Scheme).

The deadline for applications for the final round of funding from the Hidden Needs grants programme is next Friday 16th April. If you know of any groups in your ward which would



benefit from funding of between £2,500 and £10,000 to tackle social isolation and loneliness, the guidance notes and application form can be found at: [Hidden Needs grant programme » East Suffolk Council](#).

Framlingham and Wickham Community Partnership

I chair the Framlingham and Wickham Market Community which covers Pettistree and in partnership with our County Council and Wickham Market and Framlingham Parish Council colleagues have obtained funding for projects which include:

- Wickham Market youth outreach provision
- Katch/Electric taxi bus service
- £15,000 funding for a new WAV for the Hour Community in Framlingham

Grants, funding, and business matters

Covid Business Grants

In total, since the launch of a plethora of new business grants in November 2020, East Suffolk Council has made over 18,700 separate payments totalling almost £39.1m to businesses struggling due to enforced closure or severe restrictions on trading. In terms of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) this means we have now allocated over 73% of East Suffolk Council's total pot, which is well above the national average and on course to meet the government's 30 June deadline to have allocated all ARG monies. Since the beginning of the pandemic the Council has allocated £105m of grants.

Businesses in the East Suffolk hospitality sector are also 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. £1.7m has now been issued to 336 businesses in the hospitality sector through this new grant.

The new Restart Grants scheme launched on 1 April and is aimed at supporting the re-opening 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. These will be one-off payments and only for businesses who are on the ratings list. Businesses which are not rated will receive a similar payment from the ARG fund. East Suffolk Council has been recently informed by government that this fund will be topped up by £1.74m dependent on the current allocation of £7.2m being fully distributed to businesses by 30 June.



The government has also recently announced the 'Welcome Back Fund' - £56m being made available to Councils to safely welcome back residents and visitors to high streets and coastal resorts. The funding can cover temporary measures such as signage, public realm improvements, promotional campaigns, and support for events for up to 12 months or for as long as restrictions are in place. East Suffolk Council has been allocated £287k and the Economic Development team will be working with Town Councils and Business Improvement Districts to develop plans for the effective implementation of this fund.

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 East Suffolk Council 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.

Business Support

East Suffolk Council will shortly be implementing longer-term business support measures to support local businesses through the reopening and recovery period. The Economic Development team have developed draft business support proposals that are in line with our current economic growth priorities and build on the District's economic strengths. The areas of support cover:

- Digital Transformation
- Town Centre Recovery
- Business Start-up

Cabinet recently approved these new business recovery support programmes, and they will be fully developed and implemented in the spring/ summer.

Test and Trace Payments

These £500 payments to people on low incomes required to self-isolate as part of the Test and Trace arrangements continue to provide important financial assistance to people, helping to ensure that they self-isolate and suppress transmission of the virus.

As cases generally have continued to fall, payments have been at a relatively low level, although applications are now being processed for parents and guardians of children required to self-isolate.

As at 28 March £173,000 has been paid out of a total allocation of £406,500, and the scheme will operate until 30th June 2021.