

## Coronavirus update from Somerset County Council 31.7.2020

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All our help and information is now available in a single place on the SCC website <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-latest-advice/>

This page is refreshed through the day so please check in regularly to keep across developments and news.

### Top stories today:

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## Shielding advice changes this weekend

From tomorrow (1 August), the government's shielding programme will pause, unless the transmission of COVID-19 in the community starts to rise significantly. This means the support from the National Shielding Service, including free food parcels and medicine deliveries will stop.

However, supermarket priority delivery slots will remain and in Somerset the Coronavirus Support Helpline number, 0300 790 6275, will also continue to provide help and support 7 days a week between 8am and 6pm.

This helpline, set up by the five councils in Somerset at the start of the pandemic, makes it easier for people to access any local authority help they may need,

including emotional support.

Since March, communities have rallied round, with volunteers helping those who have most needed help. Many of those charities, local groups and volunteers, are still there and still able to help. [Spark Somerset](#) has been bringing volunteers together and has advice. [Corona helpers](#) are another valuable source of help. People can also contact their [village agent](#) for support.

For many of us, easing the strictest lockdown has been a gradual process, and most people will now be relatively used to our new normality of social distancing and face coverings. But many residents who have been shielding, and haven't really left their homes since March, may be feeling a little uneasy about the end of this period.

Venturing back out and being around other people, for example at the shops, with face coverings and one-way systems, is a daunting prospect and the transition could be as difficult as the sudden lockdown was in March. And just as it took a while to adjust back then, it will take a while to adjust now as shielding lifts.

Take it at your own pace, share any concerns or anxieties with those closest to you and remember that the friends and neighbours that have helped you over the last few months are still your friends and neighbours even after the shielding ends and they are still there for you.

[NHS Volunteer Responders](#) will carry on delivering the groceries you buy and prescriptions if you need it. You can call them on 0808 196 3646 (8am to 8pm).

There is also support available to help people who are feeling anxious about leaving the house. You can access this online on the [NHS website](#).

So, for those who have been shielding and are worried about venturing-forth from this weekend, please know that you are not alone, and support is available. And for the rest of us now going about our slightly less restricted lives, please continue to look out for those we know who have been shielding - they may need your

continued reassurance as they become as independent again as possible.

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## Changes announced today

Some measures to ease restrictions in England, due to come into force on 1 August, have now been put back until at least 15 August:

- Indoor venues such as casino, ice rinks and bowling alleys, which were due to reopen, will remain closed
- Live indoor theatre and concerts, which were due to resume with socially distanced audiences, will not take place
- Pilot sporting events allowing limited numbers of spectators will not go ahead
- Wedding receptions with up to 30 guests cannot yet happen

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## Wearing a face covering

It is now law in England to wear face coverings in enclosed spaces such as shops and supermarkets.

The government is adding museums, galleries, cinemas and places of worship to the list of places where face coverings should be worn in England. It is currently a recommendation but will become law on 8 August.

It has been compulsory to wear them in shops since 24 July. Face coverings are also mandatory on public transport.

However, there are exemptions for those who may have health issues or are too young. Some people who are exempt may feel more comfortable showing something that says they do not have to wear a face covering. This could be in the form of an exemption card, badge or even a home-made sign. You can print off a card via: <https://tinyurl.com/maskexempt>

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## Hidden heroes of Somerset's independent care market

Most people are familiar with independent retail – small, often boutique-style shops which offer specialist products and services – but what about independent care? In Somerset, bespoke, independent care is an emerging part of the care market, where Micro-providers – a growing network of self-employed care and support workers – have been supporting almost 4,000 people across the county.

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## Get tested as soon as you show symptoms

NHS Test and Trace is launching a new campaign to encourage everyone to get a free test as soon as they get symptoms, alongside a new business plan to expand testing capacity and prepare the nation for winter.

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## Send to a friend

These coronavirus bulletins are now available to anyone. Please send to a friend who would like to stay up to date with the latest developments. To sign up simply visit [www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus).

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**STAY AT  
HOME** 

**PROTECT  
THE NHS**

 **save  
lives**