

Media release

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Key figures unite to call for big effort to beat virus

Senior council, health and police figures across the city and county have today (Friday, 20th November) made an unprecedented commitment to work together to drive down infection rates in the final days of the second coronavirus lockdown.

At a briefing this morning, they all expressed deep concern about a worrying surge in Covid-19 cases – with the days now being counted down to the end of the national lockdown.

The prominent figures included the county council leader, Leicester's City Mayor, Leicestershire's chief constable as well as the chief executive of all three NHS clinical commissioning groups.

Cases in Leicestershire alone have quadrupled since early October – and they are above the national average.

With rates currently standing at around 500 per 100,000 of the population in Leicester, and very close to 400 per 100,000 of the Leicestershire population, public health chiefs fear this could leave both the city and the county facing further restrictive measures at the end of the lockdown on 2nd December.

Nick Rushton, leader of Leicestershire County Council, said: "I can't emphasis enough how serious the situation is, so I'm calling on everyone to do their bit to save lives. Get a test if you have symptoms and stick to the guidance to defeat this pandemic."

His concerns have been echoed by City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, who has issued a similar rallying cry for people to unite and beat the virus.

Sir Peter said: "These are difficult times for people who have already lived under restrictions for a long time, and for all of those families who have sadly lost loved ones, they are unbelievably tough.

"Despite the hard work of many, cases of coronavirus continue to rise across the city and county.

"We are therefore once again asking everyone to pull together to drive the virus down, to save lives and to prevent us from remaining under restrictions when the national lockdown ends."

Another concerning factor is the rise in hospital admissions, which are now at higher levels than during the first wave of the pandemic which has, so far, claimed more than 50,000 deaths

throughout the UK.

Andy Williams, CEO for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland CCGs, said: “We are now seeing the rise in coronavirus alongside annual winter pressures having a significant impact on health services.

“The number of people needing hospital treatment is higher than the peak in the first wave and hospital services are under extreme pressure.

“We have taken the difficult decision to stop some non-urgent operations to look after those with the most serious conditions, including emergencies and those needing treatment for cancer.

“The Emergency Department (Ed) at the Leicester Royal Infirmary is very busy. If your health condition isn’t serious, please contact NHS 111 first who can advise on the best way to treat you, and if necessary, make sure you go to the best place for your treatment.

“Please also remember that GP practices are open. They are busy but will provide an appointment if necessary. Help us to help you by keeping safe and following the guidance to control the spread of Covid-19.”

Over the next few days, councils, the police and partners in health will be further driving home the message with hard-hitting stories featuring the NHS and community leaders, supported by video clips of local leaders and key staff across social media channels with one clear message to residents – do your bit to help fight the virus.

People with symptoms are being urged to get a test. They must book an appointment by calling 119 or at <http://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>

Under the lockdown restrictions, people are being told to stay at home – apart from attending school, college, university, work or to go food shopping.

Pubs, bars, restaurants and non-essential retail across the county also close, but takeaways and click-and-collect shopping remain open.

Ends

Media Team

Leicestershire County Council

County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire, LE3 8RA

Tel: 0116 305 6274 | Email: pressoffice@leics.gov.uk

[@leicscountyhall](https://twitter.com/leicscountyhall)

leicestershire.gov.uk