The rise in confirmed COVID-19 cases is a fast-moving situation. Ongoing discussions are taking place locally, regionally and nationally as regards the number of COVID-19 cases and a very close eye is being kept on trends and data. We will be ready to respond in terms of how any new system affects Oxfordshire.

For now, work continues with partners to send increased and targeted communications that call on people to follow preventative measures and government guidance so we can contain the situation and reduce the rate of infection. We need everyone to take responsibility for their own actions as families, individuals, colleagues and neighbours. The only way we can drive down the number of COVID-19 cases is through collective action on the part of people.

**COVID Secure team**

To help ensure Government safety rules are being applied, a new COVID Secure team is now operating across Oxfordshire. Funded by Oxfordshire County Council’s NHS Test and Trace grant, and delivered jointly across all Oxfordshire councils, the team’s aim is to work with and support businesses to help them comply with the rules and guidance that applies to them and to ensure good infection control measures are in places which the public access.

A new local focused COVID-19 contact tracing system for Oxfordshire will be launched designed to support and compliment the national system.  It will provide another layer of support to help control the virus and #stopthespread. Collectively, Oxfordshire’s six councils will work to contact people that the NHS test and trace national system is unable to reach. People contacted will be advised to isolate, talked through how to access local support when isolating, and asked about details of their close contacts so these can then be followed up by the national team. The service will run seven days a week with calls coming from the council using a local (01865) phone number. Text messages will also be sent to people with mobile phones telling them to expect a call.

**#StopTheSpread**

* The [**NHS COVID-19 app**](https://covid19.nhs.uk/) is available – please download it if you can. The more people who use the app, the more we can keep each other safe and stop infection rates rising.
* If you have COVID symptoms, you must isolate for at least 10 days and get a test. Do not wait for a test or test result before self-isolating.
* The main symptoms of coronavirus are a high temperature, a new continuous cough, and a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms.
* If you have at least one of these symptoms, you should book a test by calling 119 or registering online at [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test). It is essential you do not go to A&E asking for test.
* **If you do not have COVID symptoms, please do not book a test** - you could be taking a test away from someone who really needs it, such as key workers. This is increasingly important as we head into Autumn and Winter, when more people will get colds and the flu.
* If another member of your household has symptoms, you must self-isolate. But you should only get a test if you develop symptoms yourself. Further guidance on self-isolation is available [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).
* If you have been in close contact with someone who has coronavirus and have been asked to self-isolate, you should only get a test if you develop symptoms yourself.
* If you have been abroad and are in quarantine, you should only get a test if you develop symptoms.

If you are self-isolating or in quarantine, then a negative test result does not mean you can end isolation early. The virus can take time to develop and so a test early on does not prove that you will not go on to develop the virus - you could still be at risk of spreading the virus to other people.

Please do not hesitate to contact me and keep safe.

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