



Staying Covid safe this winter

The winter weather is here and Christmas present shopping is well underway, so please wrap up warm and wear a face covering when heading out and enjoying festivities in West Sussex.

[See our #WinterReady campaign.](#)

Yesterday the government announced we're moving to Plan B to help slow the spread of Covid-19 and its Omicron variant.



As a result, face coverings are due to be required by law in most indoor settings from tomorrow, Friday 10 December.

Wearing a face covering is the one simple thing we can all do to help #KeepWestSussexSafe.

If you're going into a crowded space or visiting vulnerable friends and family, please test before you go. Lateral flow tests are quick and easy to use.

[There are plenty of ways to pick up or order a free testing kit.](#)

Government guidelines mean that if you're a contact of someone who may have been infected with the Omicron variant, you must self-isolate for 10 days, regardless of your age, vaccination status or any negative test results. If that's the case, you'll be contacted by NHS Test and Trace or your local council tracing team.

Here in West Sussex, Covid-19 case rates remain higher than both the national and South East regional averages.

[Use the postcode checker on our data dashboard](#) to check case rates where you live.

The Covid-19 vaccine and booster jabs remain our best defence against the virus and its Omicron variant. Our NHS colleagues are keen to see you as soon as you're eligible.

[See our webpage for further information, plus links to NHS availability and how to book](#)

Don't forget to get your flu jab as well, which is different to the Covid-19 vaccines.

Other [protection measures announced by the government](#) last night include:

- Office workers who can work from home should do so (due from 13 December, subject to any further national announcements).
- Certain venues and events will be required by law to check that all visitors aged 18 year or over are fully vaccinated, have proof of a negative test in the last 48 hours, or have an exemption (due from 15 December, subject to any further national announcements).

Washing hands regularly is another simple step we can all take to prevent the spread of viruses, as is keeping a safe distance from others and letting fresh air into indoor spaces.

Remember: hands, face, space and let fresh air in.

[More on Covid-19](#)

Support available

It's especially important at this time of year that we all keep an eye out for each other.

[West Sussex County Council's Community Hub](#) offers support, including to the most vulnerable in our community. If you or someone you know is in hardship, please contact the team using the details in the link above.

[Support if you're required to self-isolate](#). Please also consider sharing this information with friends and family who may need it.

[Our 'Staying safe and healthy during Covid-19'](#) advice page has further ideas and links to resources to help you look after your emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing.

[Keep Warm and Keep well](#) on the West Sussex Wellbeing website has more advice on how to stay healthy this winter.

More local information on Covid-19



Christmas shopping ideas



you're still looking for gift ideas, then check out our [Experience West Sussex](#) website.

Their [Shop Sussex pages](#) have plenty of inspiration, from spa breaks and West Sussex sparkling wine, to gift vouchers and tickets to local attractions. And best of all, by shopping local, you're supporting local businesses.

For those living in the [Chichester](#), [Horsham](#) and [Worthing](#) areas, please do visit these links for details of local initiatives this year. Remember, by buying local you are helping small companies survive and continue trading in these difficult times.

Safer roads campaign

Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) are campaigning to ensure road users think of a safe and legal way to travel during festive celebrations.

Throughout December, SSRP will be working with Sussex Police to prevent and detect incidents of drink and/or drug driving, providing motorists with thought provoking information on the risk and impact of driving whilst under the influence.



Road users will be encouraged to think about alternative modes of travel during the festive period, such as nominating a designated driver, booking a taxi, or walking home with friends. Motorists are also reminded of the effect of alcohol or drugs the morning after, and are encouraged to consider the impact if stopped or involved in a collision whilst over the limit.

[Read more about the SSRP campaign](#)

Holiday activities & food vouchers



A host of fun-filled activities and food are again being put on for West Sussex children over the Christmas holiday which eligible families can now book.

The Winter Holiday Activity and Food programme runs from 17 December 2021 – 4 January 2022.

West Sussex County Council is also again providing supermarket food vouchers over the Christmas school holiday for every child who receives benefits-related free schools meals. Eligible children will receive a £40 voucher (£20 per week) through their school.

[Book, search for clubs and find out more](#)

Schools autism project

West Sussex is one of two areas in the South East chosen to be part of national project to improve the support and awareness of autism in schools.



An initial 11 schools will be taking part from Crawley and Chichester districts. They will receive funding to allocate an Autism Champion who is trained to drive new and innovative measures that will support autistic children. A new Autism Schools Project Team has also been set up and is an exciting collaboration of West Sussex County Council's Autism and Social Communication Team, West Sussex SEND Commissioning Team, the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum, disability charity ASPENS and the West Sussex Youth Voice Group.

West Sussex County Council's successful bid for funding from NHS England will continue the Autism Schools Project into 2022, when a second cohort of 10 West Sussex schools will begin the training.

Read the full [‘Schools autism project’ press release](#).

Know someone who would like to receive this eNewsletter?

If you know anyone who would like to sign up for this bulletin, please forward this eNewsletter to them and they can [sign up here](#). Thank you for your support.



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