

Covid19 case rates having reduced to 218/100k are now back up to 434/100k in Devon, against the national average of 423/100k, but during July and August we topped 1,000/100k. You will remember that the first lockdown which took place in Leicester came about due to case rates of 60/100k. Currently we have 7 deaths last week.

Our Director of Public Health's advice is:

- Let fresh air in if you need to meet indoors. Meeting up outside is the safest way to protect your loved ones.
- Continuing to wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed settings is a small action you can take to protect yourself and others
- Get tested and self-isolate if required
- If you haven't already, get vaccinated

The availability of testing in the county is good, and the vaccination take up across all of the priority groups has been very high – 95% of the over 60 age group; 60% of 18-24 years olds are now fully vaccinated. Vaccinations are available for all people over 12 years of age. The Ambulance Service continues to be under pressure and military assistance is being given.

Devon Public Health are still advising residents who show no symptoms of having coronavirus to continue taking free, rapid, lateral flow device tests twice a week.

The most popular way is to collect a box of seven tests from your local pharmacy. But from this week, how you do that has changed. Before you call in to your nearest pharmacy to collect tests you now need a 'collect code'. This is a code that you need to show when you collect your test packs from your pharmacy and are only available to people aged 16 and over.

You can get your collect code by registering online at gov.uk/get-collect-code or if you're not online, you can call 119 (free from landlines and mobiles), to request a collect code. Lines are open from 7am to 11pm. At the pharmacy, someone will record your code, and give you the tests which you do and record in the normal way.

An important step towards achieving the county's zero-carbon ambition has been taken by Devon County Council. The Investment and Pension Fund Committee met to discuss the investments policy for the Devon Pension Fund – the pension fund for tens of thousands of public sector workers across Devon.

It will significantly reduce the Fund's exposure to fossil fuel companies, such as Shell and BP, and will also support companies transitioning their businesses in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

In a major move, committee members agreed that the Devon Fund, managed by the Brunel Pension Partnership, would shift to a new, greener set of investment portfolios. They have been working with FTSE Russell index providers to develop climate transition indices that will focus on companies that support the zero-carbon objective and will invest in these new funds from November.

Video footage of cars overtaking cyclists too fast and too close has been released by the Devon and Cornwall road safety partnership, Vision Zero South West. The video features four incidents which were captured on film by cyclists and submitted to Op Snap.

Research has shown that cyclists are vulnerable to being killed or seriously injured in road collisions – however, they are responsible for very little harm to other road users.

In the 2019 Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) study 'Who kills most on our roads', it states: "Pedestrians and cyclists, sometimes viewed as 'unsafe', pose very little risk to other road users. In fatal collisions between motor vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists, it is almost always the pedestrian or the cyclist who dies, not the occupants of the motor vehicle.

It was also recently announced that cyclists were to be given greater priority on the roads as part of a revised Highway Code which puts greater responsibility on users of vehicles that cause the most harm.

At the Police and Crime Panel held last month in Plymouth the Commissioner agreed to my suggestion to include footage from horse riders in Op Snap and to put the issue of incidents between horse riders and cars on her urgent work programme.

An innovative scheme which has allowed Devon's district councils to improve their waste collection and recycling rates has won a national award. The Devon Authorities Shared Saving Scheme was recognised as the 'Best New Idea' at the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee Awards 2021.

The award was accepted by the County Council working with five of Devon's waste collection authorities, East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, Teignbridge and Torridge District Councils. It has increased recycling rates and improved recycling collection for over 250,000 Devon households.

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