**Council ramps up reminders for Covid-19 precautions**

Islanders are being reminded that now is not the time to overlook virus prevention measures.

The Isle of Wight Council has urged residents to continue to take precautions against coronavirus as the number of new cases recorded locally has increased slightly in recent weeks.

Today's warning also coincides with new government rules on social gatherings, reducing the legal limit of groups from 30 people to six people from Monday.

To help keep figures low and protect the most vulnerable, Simon Bryant, the council's director of public health, said residents must continue to follow essential social distancing and health advice.

He said: "The slight rise in cases reminds us that the virus hasn't gone away. We can't afford to drop our guard. If we experience symptoms then we must self-isolate at home and get tested.

"I know it isn't easy but it's very important that if someone is infected, they isolate themselves being especially careful if they live with vulnerable people.

"Anyone in the same household also needs to self-isolate. Doing this saves lives.

“We can protect ourselves and those we live with by keeping two metres apart from others. Wearing a face covering when on public transport or when shopping also reduces the spread of the virus."

Mr Bryant said the pandemic required everyone to remain vigilant in their everyday lives, taking some simple steps to help slow the spread of Covid and protect themselves, their families and communities.

The steps include:

• Wash your hands often with plain soap and water and use tissues when you cough or sneeze.

• Maintain social distancing.

• Know what to do if you have symptoms.

• Follow the advice to self-isolate.

• Avoid close contact with people who are not from your household, even if they don’t appear sick, in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

Anyone displaying symptoms of coronavirus — no matter how mild — should book a free test immediately by visiting the NHS website or by calling 119.

Council leader Dave Stewart added: "I want to thank our colleagues in public health for the work they are doing, and urge residents — particularly the younger age groups — to take this update on board as we continue our fight to tackle the virus, stay safe and minimise the risk of a second wave of infections.

"I want to reassure residents that we, as a council, will continue to do all we can to protect our residents from this dreadful virus but we need everyone's help, so please follow the advice from our public health experts."

The advice is:

Stay at home

If you are getting a test, you and anyone you live with must stay at home and self-isolate until you get your result and follow advice after a test.

Anyone in your support bubble must also self-isolate until you get your result.

The council has created a self-isolation toolkit to help people prepare to self-isolate. Further NHS advice on self-isolation is available here.

Do not wait

Book a free and easy test as soon as you think you may have symptoms, such as a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Check NHS guidance on symptoms

Get a test

People are advised to book a test by either calling 119 or visiting NHS.uk

People on the Island should not travel to mainland testing sites when symptomatic. If the requesting system only offers a mainland testing site, you should either try again early the next day to book a test on the Island or request a home test. Please do not travel to the mainland for a test.

The coronavirus testing centre for the Island is based at Newclose County Cricket Ground, Blackwater Road, Blackwater, PO30 3BE.

NHS Test and Trace

You will be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service if you test positive for Covid-19.

You will be asked where you've been recently and who you've been in close contact with. Please help them to give good full information so they can help others.

This will help the NHS contact anyone who may have caught the virus from you.

The public needs to be alert to NHS Test and Trace and follow their advice.

Advice on Test and Trace

Download the NHS Test and Trace app

Doing so will help to control the spread of coronavirus on the Island.

QR check-ins at local businesses will let you know whether you have visited a venue where you may have met someone who later tests positive for Covid-19.

A symptom checker allows users to check if they have coronavirus symptoms and order a free test all in one place.