

## Q&A Regarding Essex moving to the COVID Local Alert Level: High

15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

<b>What is the government's new system of local restrictions?</b>	<p>The government has announced a new simplified system of three levels of restrictions aimed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The three levels are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• level 1 – MEDIUM is the level the majority of the country were in as at Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October.</li><li>• level 2 – HIGH includes some increased restrictions, particularly on different households meeting indoors</li><li>• level 3 – VERY HIGH is the highest level of restrictions and includes the closure of some hospitality business and venues, as well as travel restrictions.</li></ul> <p>Full details can be found in the <a href="#">government guidance on local COVID-19 alert levels</a>.</p>
<b>Why is Essex moving to Level 2 – High?</b>	<p>The numbers of COVID-19 infection are rising, so action is needed to bring the numbers down. The earlier action can be taken the quicker the numbers can be brought under control. The aim is to 'flatten the curve' of new cases. Modelling based on analysis of the data suggests that moving into level 2 can flatten the curve and potentially mean ending restrictions earlier.</p>
<b>What changes as a result?</b>	<p>The key change is that households cannot mix together indoors, unless within a support bubble. This includes within households and other indoor venues such as restaurants and pubs. Otherwise the rules remain as they are, including the rule of 6 in outdoor spaces.</p>
<b>What does this mean for childcare provision?</b>	<p>Under the COVID alert level: high, the following people can provide childcare support in private homes and gardens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• registered childcare providers, including nannies</li><li>• people in a support bubble</li><li>• people in a childcare bubble</li></ul> <p>A childcare bubble is where someone in one household provides informal (unpaid and unregistered) childcare to a child aged 13 or under in another household. For any given childcare bubble, this must always be between the same 2 households.</p>

	<p>Friends or family who do not live with you and are not part of a support or childcare bubble must not visit your home to help with childcare. Childcare bubbles are to be used to provide childcare only, and not for the purposes of different households mixing where they are otherwise not allowed to do so.</p>
<p><b>Can I still go to parks/open spaces/the seaside?</b></p>	<p>Yes, under medium and high level restrictions. Under very high level rules, there are restrictions on non-essential travel.</p>
<p><b>Will vulnerable people be asked to shield again?</b></p>	<p>Currently there is no change as a result of the move to level high that impacts on people who were previously advised to shield.</p> <p>If further advice or support is needed please visit the Essex Wellbeing Service or call them on 0300 303 9988.</p>
<p><b>Are face coverings now mandatory?</b></p>	<p>No, not in early years settings</p> <p>However, in education settings where Year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn by adults (staff and visitors) and pupils when moving around indoors, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing is difficult to maintain.</p> <p>Exemptions to this rule apply and no-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering.</p>