

COUNCILLOR MARK ALLISON
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
(Labour, Lavender Fields Ward)



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Date 20th December, 2020

Dear Resident,

Covid-19 is spreading fast in Merton

Following a rapid increase in Covid-19 infections across the borough, Merton has, with the rest of London, moved into Tier 4 – the new highest level of Covid-19 restrictions.

This means our celebrations over the festive period now need to be at home, with just our household members – and the one person who is in our support bubble if we have one and would otherwise be on their own.

I fully understand this is devastating for many – it will affect thousands of families' hopes of seeing loved ones, cause concern for anyone who is vulnerable or isolated, and hit our local businesses hard yet again. It is a bitter blow for everyone.

But this virus is still taking lives in our borough every week – more than 200 people have died in Merton since the start of the pandemic, and infection rates are starting to rise again.

I am therefore writing to ask that we all do everything possible to keep Merton safe. **It is vital we all follow the “Hands, Face, Space” guidance – and that we get a test locally if we develop any Covid-19 symptoms.**

The new rules in Merton mean:

1. We must stay home unless making essential journeys
2. All non-essential shops and close contact businesses, including hairdressers, nail salons and gyms in the borough will close
3. People should work from home if they can
4. No mixing of households allowed indoors
5. No overnight stays outside your household or support bubble in Tier 4
6. We should not travel outside of your local Tier 4 area
7. We are allowed to meet one other person outdoors

If you, or anyone you know, are isolated and at risk as a result of these changes, the council has been working closely with local volunteers to provide a Merton Covid-19 Community Response Hub. Staff at the Hub will help with shopping and prescriptions, advice and support to stay independent. Call 020 8685 2272, email help@mvsc.co.uk or visit the website at www.mvsc.co.uk/coronavirussupport for details.

How to get a test locally

If you have symptoms of Covid-19, you must get tested. These symptoms are:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough, and
- a loss or change in your sense of smell or taste.

To book a test visit www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms or call 119.

If you test positive, you will need to give your details to those who are tracing your contacts. You can call our local Merton case tracing team on 020 8274 5722.

You can stay informed about changes locally by visiting www.merton.gov.uk/coronavirus, which will always have the latest rules and guidance.

Please visit this website as this is where you can sign up for regular email updates, which will help us stay in touch with you if there is further news.

I know these are incredibly difficult times for everyone. This virus has tested us but it has also brought out the best in our community – the way we have come together and supported each other has been a source of enormous pride to me. This is a great borough, and you have helped make it so.

Thank you for your support, and please have a safe holiday season.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'M. Allison', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**Cllr Mark Allison, Leader of the Council
London Borough of Merton**