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Covid-19: Infection rates have risen in hotspot areas despite local lockdowns, analysis shows

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Almost all areas of England that have been under covid-19 lockdown restrictions for two months have seen an increase in infection rates despite the measures, an analysis by the Labour Party has shown.

Currently, 20 areas in England are under restrictions, which were announced from 29 June to mid-September. Many of these are in the north west of England. But Labour's analysis shows that 19 of these areas have seen infection rates increase since the restrictions were announced (see table).

Examples include Bolton, which has been under restrictions since 30 July but has seen its infection rate rise from 20 to 255 per 100 000 people; Bury, which has been under restrictions since 31 July but has seen its infection rate increase from 20 to 266 per 100 000; and Burnley, which has been under restrictions since 31 July but has seen its infection rate increase over 20-fold, from 21 to 434 per 100 000.

Labour's leader, Keir Starmer, urged Boris Johnson to get a grip on the rise in infections and do more to help get people in these areas out of lockdown.

"Angry and frustrated"

Speaking at prime minister's questions on 7 October, Starmer said, "The prime minister really needs to understand that local communities are angry and frustrated. So, will he level with the people of Bury, Burnley, and Bolton and tell them—what does he actually think the problem is that's causing this?"

"The prime minister can't explain why an area goes into restrictions. He can't explain what the different restrictions are, and he can't explain how restrictions end. This is getting ridiculous."

In response, Johnson accused Labour of abstaining on a vote last night to approve the government's "rule of six" policy.

He said, "The problem is, alas, that the disease continues to spread. The figures are no surprise. What we are doing is a combination of national and local measures, which one week he [Starmer] comes to the house to support and the next he decides to whisk his support away. That's not new leadership, that's no leadership."

| Covid-19 cases in areas of England under lockdown (source: Labour Party analysis)

Area under restriction	Date restrictions imposed	Infection rate when imposed (per 100 000)	Infection rate now (per 100 000)	Increase (n)	Increase (%)
Leicester*	29 Jun	118	133	15	13
Oadby and Wigston	30 Jun	37	128	91	246
Bradford	30 Jul	54	258	205	381
Calderdale	30 Jul	40	141	101	250
Kirklees	30 Jul	29	169	141	492
Bolton	30 Jul	20	255	235	1179
Bury	30 Jul	20	266	246	1203
Oldham	30 Jul	61	253	192	316
Rochdale	30 Jul	31	298	267	873
Stockport	30 Jul	28	193	165	583
Tameside	30 Jul	26	219	193	739
Trafford	30 Jul	35	223	188	537
Wigan	30 Jul	6	225	219	3653
Manchester	30 Jul	36	552	516	1429
Salford	30 Jul	26	286	261	1023
Blackburn with Darwen	30 Jul	79	218	139	176
Burnley	30 Jul	21	434	413	1938
Hyndburn	30 Jul	19	275	257	1388
Pendle	30 Jul	46	307	262	574
Rossendale	30 Jul	10	229	220	2241
Preston	7 Aug	41	312	271	662

* Although Leicester has seen an increase in its infection rate, its rate initially fell to 26 cases per 100 000 in the week ending 28 August. The week before the restrictions were announced it also reported higher figures of 157 cases per 100 000, which is higher than the current rate.