Intensified efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 in Greater Copenhagen

New measures introduced in 17 municipalities in Greater Copenhagen based on recommendations from the COVID-19 Task Force, including the health authorities.
New measures in Greater Copenhagen

Several municipalities in Greater Copenhagen are severely affected by COVID-19. Consequently, the Government steps up efforts by introducing several new measures made in 17 municipalities. The new measures for Greater Copenhagen have been recommended by the Task Force, including the health authorities.

New measures in 17 municipalities in Greater Copenhagen
COVID-19 infection rates are high in Denmark, particularly in several municipalities in Greater Copenhagen. Therefore, the Task Force finds that new measures have to be taken in 17 municipalities in Greater Copenhagen which have a risk of escalating infection rates due to a combination of a high number of infections, population density and the time of year.

The Government has decided to follow the recommendations of the Task Force, including the health authorities. Against that background and within the framework of the national early warning system, stricter measures will be taken on four fronts in 17 municipalities in Greater Copenhagen. Some of the measures will apply at national level.

New data from the SSI (Statens Serum Institut) show that a significant number of infections in Greater Copenhagen are accounted for by children and young people. It is therefore essential to curb infections among this age group, including in connection with sports and recreational activities where the number of people allowed to gather is sharply reduced. At schools, it is also important to avoid infections among pupils who are normally not in the same class or team. Further, institutions of higher education will move to online teaching where possible. At the same time, it is essential to curb infections at private and public workplaces by making employees work from home to a greater extent. Finally, attention should be focused on reducing congestion and the risk of infections in shops and the retail trade.

Measures for Greater Copenhagen apply from 7 December 2020 until at least 2 January 2021

The new measures will replace the current local measures introduced on 2 November 2020 in the 11 municipalities in and around Western Copenhagen (Albertslund, Ballerup, Brøndby, Gladsaxe, Glostrup, Herlev, Hvidovre, Høje-Taastrup, Ishøj, Rødovre and Værløse). Accordingly, the new measures also apply in another six municipalities (Dragør, Copenhagen, Frederiksberg, Gentofte, Lyngby-Taarbæk and Tårnby).

The measures for Greater Copenhagen will apply from 7 December 2020 until at least 2 January 2021. The authorities will monitor developments closely.
New measures in Greater Copenhagen

**Workplaces**

**All workplaces**
- Public and private employers in the above-mentioned municipalities are strongly encouraged to make sure that employees work from home unless their jobs require physical attendance.
- Relevant job functions that can be performed from home to a great extent include administrative staff, case officers who have no contact with citizens or customers, employees in service functions and jobs in which contact with citizens or customers can be maintained online. This list is not exhaustive.

**Public workplaces**
- Public employers are also encouraged to assess whether tasks requiring physical attendance can be postponed until after New Year and, if so, to do that.
- Similarly, job centres and other workplaces carrying out tasks requiring contact with citizens are encouraged to introduce flexible frameworks for such activities where possible and to facilitate online contact to minimise physical attendance.

**Government workplaces**
- Government workplaces have taken a restrictive approach to physical attendance since this autumn. In the run-up to Christmas, focus will be on an even stricter approach to minimise physical attendance at workplace.

**Schools and education**

**Primary, secondary and adult education**
- Lessons for primary school pupils from several different classes are banned.
- Teaching and activities across classes at institutions of secondary and adult education are also banned.
- Music and sports classes at institutions of secondary and adult education should be cancelled.
- Meals should be taken in classrooms, not communal rooms.
- Pupils and students must have greater awareness not to attend physical classes if they have symptoms and to pay close attention to hand hygiene, cleaning, social distancing etc.

**Higher education**
- Online teaching at institutions of higher education where possible.
- Pupils and students must have greater awareness not to attend physical classes if they have symptoms and to pay close attention to hand hygiene, cleaning, social distancing etc.

**Children and recreational activities**
- The possibility that up to 50 people can attend sports and association activities for children and young people under the age of 21 will not be an option from 7 December 2020 to 2 January 2021.
- Therefore, in this period, no more than 10 people can gather simultaneously at the same location for sports and association activities.

**Shops and retail trade**
- Fewer customers per square metre in large shops, shopping centres, department stores etc. (applies at national level).
- Signs stating the number of customers allowed in retail shops must be displayed (applies at national level).
- Large shops, shopping centres, department stores etc. must introduce a one-way system (applies at national level).
- Citizens are encouraged to do their Christmas shopping alone.
- Longer opening hours to reduce congestion.
- It is recommended to use trolleys instead of baskets to maintain social distancing.
- Trolleys and baskets must be disinfected after use.
- One-way pavements in pedestrian streets etc.

See the list of all measures for Greater Copenhagen in Appendix 1 below.
COVID-19 testing to be stepped up in Greater Copenhagen

Testing in Greater Copenhagen has been stepped up and will be intensified in the weeks ahead.

Additional mobile testing units will be made available locally to ensure access to testing for as many people as possible. Based on the spread of infections and an ongoing dialogue with the authorities of the municipalities comprised by the measures, the mobile testing units will be deployed in locations with the greatest need.

The intensified testing scheme comprises all citizens.

Announcements will be made locally as to where and when the new testing opportunities will be available. People are urged to await such announcements before booking tests unless the test is booked for other specific reasons such as mild symptoms and test slots for close contacts.

Further, particular efforts will be targeted at young citizens in Greater Copenhagen who typically account for the highest infection rates. All young people aged 15 to 25 in Greater Copenhagen are encouraged to take a test. Announcements will be made locally as to where and when the testing of those aged 15 to 25 is carried out.

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**Testing efforts in Greater Copenhagen**

**COVID-19 testing efforts stepped up**
- Testing efforts will be stepped up in the municipalities comprised by the measures.
- Additional mobile testing units will be deployed locally at places and hours where most people are expected to show up.
- Information about testing procedures will be distributed in various languages.

**All young people are encouraged to take a test**
- All young people aged 15 to 25 in the municipalities comprised by the measures are encouraged to take a test.
- Announcements will be made locally as to where and when the testing of those aged 15 to 25 is carried out. Mobile testing units will be deployed at educational institutions etc.

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**Intensified tracking and tracing of outbreaks**

The tracking and tracing of outbreaks will be intensified in Greater Copenhagen based on new, revised national guidelines, including a broader definition of close contacts and a recommendation to introduce screening tests of other contacts than very close contacts.

Moreover, outreach and proactive initiatives will be set up to improve the efficiency of tracking and tracing as well as isolation measures, including follow-up calls the day after an infected person has received a positive test result.

A massive information campaign targeted at citizens will be made to communicate recommendations for and guidelines on self-isolation and specific and situational action plans in different languages through various channels. Overall, the efforts will ensure that more people are tested, are tested earlier and comply with the current recommendations on self-isolation.

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**Tracking and tracing of outbreaks**

- The capacity available for tracking and tracing outbreaks will be increased again.
- The outreach and proactive initiatives will be expanded by making calls the day after an infected person has received a positive test result.
- Meals consumed in connection with voluntary isolation will be free (applies at national level).
The health authorities’ recommendations to the Government

The COVID-19 Task Force, including the health authorities, finds that particular attention should be paid to Greater Copenhagen which has a particularly high risk of escalating infections due to a combination of a high number of infections, population density and the time of year. This should be coupled with the existing high infection rates in Greater Copenhagen.

The Task Force, including the health authorities, considers the current COVID-19 situation in Greater Copenhagen to be serious.

In light of the risk assessment, the Task Force recommends that a series of local measures be introduced in 17 selected municipalities to curb the spread of the disease.

Brøndby, Copenhagen, Dragør, Frederiksberg, Gentofte, Gladsaxe, Glostrup, Herlev, Hvidovre, Høje-Taastrup, Ishøj, Lyngby-Taarbæk, Rødovre, Tårnby, Vallensbæk

The Task Force also recommends intensified efforts within testing, tracking and tracing and isolation measures as well as increased police surveillance to ensure that citizens and businesses comply with the current rules.

The Task Force particularly notes that:

- 48% of all cases (all positive test results at national level) are from the Capital Region.
- On 1 December 2020, the incidence rate in the 17 municipalities in Greater Copenhagen was estimated at 286 new confirmed cases per 100,000 inhabitants in the past seven days. The incidence rate at national level on 1 December 2020 was estimated at 156 per 100,000 inhabitants.
- Citizens in Greater Copenhagen accounted for 41% of all confirmed cases nationwide in the past week (22-28 November 2020). By comparison, citizens in the 17 municipalities account for 23% of the entire population.
- The rate of positive test results (the number of infections as a proportion of all tests) in Greater Copenhagen was 2.5% in the week beginning on 23 November 2020. By comparison, the rate of positive test results at national level was 1.7% in the week beginning on 23 November 2020.
- In the past week, 43% of all confirmed cases in Greater Copenhagen were seen among people aged 10 to 29, corresponding to 1,642 cases. Altogether, the 10 to 29 age group accounts for 29% of the population in the 17 municipalities.
Appendix 1. Detailed review of measures introduced in Greater Copenhagen

On 2 November 2020, several local measures were introduced in 11 municipalities in and around Western Copenhagen (Albertslund, Ballerup, Brøndby, Gladsaxe, Glostrup, Herlev, Hvidovre, Høje-Taastrup, Ishøj, Rødovre and Vallensbæk).

The new measures replace the measures currently applicable in the 11 municipalities and will also apply to another six municipalities (Dragør, Copenhagen, Frederiksberg, Gentofte, Lyngby-Taarbæk and Tårnby).

The measures will apply from 7 December 2020 until at least 2 January 2021.

Shops and retail trade
- There must be fewer customers per square metre in the shops across the country. Accordingly, the recommended square metres set out in the sector partnership guidelines are increased and will be stipulated as a requirement in an executive order. The minimum square metre requirements will be as follows:
  - Durable goods shops, hypermarkets, shopping centres, department stores, shopping arcades, bazaars etc. with a floor area of between 2,000 and 4,999 square metres can allow access to no more than one person per 10 square metres of indoor floor area open to the public.
  - Durable goods shops, hypermarkets, shopping centres, department stores, shopping arcades, bazaars etc. with a floor area of between 5,000 and 9,999 square metres can allow access to no more than one person per 12 square metres of indoor floor area open to the public.
  - Durable goods shops, hypermarkets, shopping centres, department stores, shopping arcades, bazaars etc. with a floor area of more than 10,000 square metres can allow access to no more than one person per 25 square metres of indoor floor area open to the public.
- In addition, it will be stipulated as a requirement in an executive order that signs must be displayed in retail shops across the country stating the maximum number of persons allowed in the shop.
- It will be stipulated as a requirement in an executive order that a 'one-way system' must be clearly marked in department stores, shopping centres and shops with a floor area of more than 2,000 square metres across the country. The requirement can be observed if customers are instructed to keep to the right.

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Department stores and shops are encouraged to expand opening hours and actively inform customers of the least busy hours.

Retail shops are encouraged to disinfect trolleys and baskets before they are made available to the next customers.

Retail shops with trolleys are encouraged to remove their baskets and instead only make trolleys available to customers to facilitate social distancing.

**Schools and education**

**Higher education**
- It is recommended to move to online teaching and exams where possible. Special attention should be paid to the students’ possibility to make progress and the quality of classes.
- Educational institutions are encouraged to reduce physical attendance overall.
- Students at institutions of higher education must have greater awareness not to attend physical classes if they have symptoms and to pay close attention to hand hygiene, cleaning, social distancing and to wearing face masks.
- Focus should be on well-being and online fellow students.
- Individual dialogues will be initiated with the relevant institutions and education providers in the vicinity of Copenhagen receiving many commuters from Copenhagen, such as Roskilde University.

**Primary, secondary and adult education**
- It is recommended that meals in primary schools and institutions of secondary and adult education are taken in classrooms, not in communal areas.
- It will be stipulated in an executive order that the teaching of pupils from several different primary school classes is banned. This will be combined with the possibility of remote teaching for the oldest pupils. In some cases, there will be emergency teaching at most schools.
- It is still recommended not to organise activities for pupils from several different classes etc. (both lessons and other activities) at institutions of secondary and adult education. This entails emergency teaching at most schools.
- At institutions of secondary and adult education, it is recommended to cancel all classes involving a great risk of droplet transmission of infection, such as sports and music classes, if the classes can be postponed. An exception is made for subject courses with an upcoming exam. In some cases this may warrant emergency teaching instead.
- Primary school pupils and students at institutions of secondary and adult education must have greater awareness not to attend physical classes if they have symptoms and to pay close attention to hand hygiene, cleaning, social distancing etc. All schools and educational institutions should have dedicated staff assisting in the prevention of infections.
- Attention should be paid to dialogues with pupils in the 7th to 9th grades and in secondary schools about being a young person during the coronavirus pandemic, including how to maintain friendships while complying with the recommendations and restrictions.

**Workplaces**
- Public and private employers in the above-mentioned municipalities are strongly encouraged to make sure that employees work from home unless their jobs require physical attendance.
- About one fourth of the slightly more than 800,000 people working in the 17 municipalities comprised by the measures are doing office work.
- Relevant job functions that can be performed from home to a great extent include administrative staff, case officers who have no contact with citizens or customers, employees in service functions and jobs in which contact with citizens or customers can be maintained online. This list is not exhaustive.
- Public employers are encouraged to assess whether tasks requiring physical attendance can be postponed until after New Year and, if so, to do that.
- Similarly, job centres and other workplaces performing tasks requiring contact with citizens are encouraged to introduce flexible frameworks for such activities where possible and to enable online contact to minimise physical attendance.
- The executive managements of both public and private workplaces are expected to review the job functions at their workplaces to make sure that as many employees as possible work from home.

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**Sports and recreational activities for children and young people**
- The possibility that up to 50 people can attend sports and association activities for children and young people under the age of 21 does not apply from 7 December 2020 to 2 January 2021. Therefore, in this period, no more than 10 people can gather simultaneously at the same location for such activities. It is still possible for up to 50 people to attend activities for socially vulnerable children and young people under the age of 21 simultaneously at the same location.

**Gatherings**
- Citizens are encouraged to socialise with as few people as possible.
- The possibility that 500 people can gather at events etc. when seated etc. is restricted. The exception now only applies to activities held by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark and other religious communities, sports and recreational events etc., including matches, plays and concerts, business-related activities, such as conferences and general meetings, as well as lectures, courses, education, citizens' meetings and the like (applies at national level).

**Testing stepped up; young people are encouraged to take a test**
- Testing has been stepped up in the municipalities comprised by the measures and will be further intensified in the weeks ahead.
- All young people aged 15 to 25 are encouraged to take a test, and more mobile testing units will be deployed in selected districts etc.
- Announcements will be made locally as to where and when intensified testing will be carried out. People are urged to await such announcements before booking tests unless the test is booked for other specific reasons such as mild symptoms and test slots for close contacts. For example mobile testing units at educational institutions.
- Additional mobile testing units will be deployed locally based on the spread of infections and an ongoing dialogue between the municipalities comprised by the measures, the Patient Safety Authority (Styrelsen for Patientsikkerhed) and the regional authorities.
- The Patient Safety Authority will contact the local authority in case infection rates increase in a particular district of the municipality, and general counselling and guidance will be provided in that district.
- Information about testing procedures will be distributed in various languages.

**Greater track and trace and isolation efforts**
- The Task Force headed by the Patient Safety Authority will be expanded from the current 11 municipalities to include the 17 municipalities. The Task Force will continue to assist the municipalities comprised by the measures in taking local and outreach activities to the highest level. (Announced on 26 November 2020).
- The tracking and tracing of outbreaks will be intensified based on new, revised guidelines building on the most recent international know-how and experience, such as a broader definition of close contacts and a recommendation to take screening tests of other contacts than just close contacts (applies at national level).
- The collaboration between local authorities and the Patient Safety Authority will be strengthened in order to increase the capacity available for tracking and tracing outbreaks and for outreach and proactive activities to improve the efficiency of tracking and tracing as well as isolation measures, including follow-up calls the day after an infected person has received a positive test result. Efforts are being made to grant the Patient Safety Authority the powers necessary to pass on information to local authorities enabling them to take proactive measures.
- The Danish Health Authority (Sundhedsstyrelsen) will run a massive information campaign targeted at citizens with focus on communicating recommendations for and guidelines on self-isolation and specific and situational action plans in different languages through various channels.
- The flow of information about specific outbreaks from the Patient Safety Authority to the local authorities will be expanded.
- User's fees for meals in connection with voluntary isolation are removed (applies at national level).

**Police surveillance to be intensified**
- The police will increase its efforts to enforce the rules on gatherings, opening hours at restaurants, bars cafes etc., alcohol sales after 10.00 pm and the requirements applicable to retail shops.

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