

City Leaders unite in a public letter urging Plymouth to protect jobs and businesses from COVID-19 As levels of COVID-19 remain high across the city, Plymouth City Council, HM Naval Base, Babcock, the Theatre Royal, Princess Yachts, Marjon University, the Plymouth College of Arts and Plymouth Social Enterprise Network, Plymouth Octopus have come together to urge local people to protect businesses and jobs this winter from the impact of Coronavirus.

Dear Fellow Plymothians,

The last 18 months has been challenging for us all. There won't be one person in our wonderful City that has not been impacted by COVID-19.

The changes to COVID-19 restrictions earlier this year saw us all breathe a sigh of relief that things would return to normal. Businesses across the City could try and recoup and rebuild.

However, whilst these changes gave us more freedom, we are not out of the woods yet and it would be foolish of us all to think that COVID-19 has gone away. Things are not normal.

The number of positive cases in Plymouth has continued to be very high, and in recent weeks and months we have been a lot higher than the national average. We are also seeing higher numbers of COVID-related hospital admissions among younger adults (many of whom have not been vaccinated).

Derriford Hospital has declared a 'critical incident' due to the pressures on its services, partly caused by the rise in COVID-19 cases, as well as a higher than average number of emergency department patients.

This is a sobering reminder that COVID-19 has not gone away, and the need to take steps to protect ourselves, our families and those around us. If we don't get the virus under control by winter – the consequences could be devastating. Certainly more people will be hospitalised and have to deal with longer term impacts such as long-Covid.

For the business community there could also be serious consequences. We do not want to see mandatory measures being brought back. If they are, we could see local businesses close and local people lose their jobs.

Together, our organisations have agreed that we will take steps to do our bit to slow the pace of transmission of this virus. But we need your help.

We are asking all our staff to play their part in protecting themselves, their colleagues, our customers or visitors. But you also need to take responsibility.

Face coverings and social distancing may no longer be compulsory, but they will still protect us. We know that these measures are effective at helping to reduce transmission and we would ask you to continue with these in settings such as shops, on public transport and in cinemas and theatres. We will also ask you to wear a mask when you visit our buildings. These measures not only help to protect you, they reduce the risks for others around you, including those who are vulnerable or anxious.

The truth is that COVID-19 will be with us for a considerable time to come. But with the lessons we have learned throughout the pandemic, coupled with the testing and vaccines, we can restrict the spread and live with the virus sensibly.

We must be responsible and continue to protect one another and particularly the vulnerable and continue the good work so far.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for everything you have done and will do to protect Plymouth.

Please stay safe, think about how you act and stay healthy.

Kind Regards

**Ruth Harrell**

*Director of Public Health for Plymouth*

**Tracey Lee**

*Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council*

**Commodore Peter Coulson**

*Commander of HM Naval Base Devonport*

**Adrian Vinken OBE**

*Chief Executive of Theatre Royal*

**Adrian Bratt**

*General Counsel and External Affairs Director at Princess Yachts*

**Professor Rob Warner**

*Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Plymouth Marjon University*

**Professor Andrew Brewerton**

*Principal of Plymouth College of Arts*

**Louise Manico**

*Director of Plymouth Social Enterprise Network*

**Matt Bell**

*Chief Executive of Plymouth Octopus*

**Elinor Firth**

Head of Public and Partner Relations

Communications and Engagement

Plymouth City Council

Ballard House

West Hoe Road

Plymouth

PL1 3BJ