

## Weekly stakeholder update

Once again this week we have seen lots of developments nationally in the fight against coronavirus. The [NHS Test and Trace service](#) went live yesterday (28 May). The Test and Trace service will help identify, contain, and control coronavirus, reducing the spread and saving lives.

Anyone who tests positive for coronavirus going forward will be contacted and asked to provide information about their recent interactions. The service will then identify people at high risk of having been exposed to the virus, alert those people, and provide advice on what steps to take. This may include self-isolating for 14 days, even if the person does not have symptoms themselves.

The new service forms a central part of the government's recovery strategy, which seeks to return life to as close to normal as possible. It will be a step towards the easing of lockdown, through individuals self-isolating, rather than the whole nation. Last night the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced that, from Monday 1 June, groups of up to six people will be allowed to meet in private outdoor areas, such as gardens. However, we must all continue to observe national guidance, obeying 2-metre social distancing rules and continuing to wash our hands thoroughly and more frequently. Those that were contacted by the government and asked to shield must continue to do so. If spikes in coronavirus cases occur, local lockdowns will be enforced.

Earlier this week, we also heard the Prime Minister announce that retail stores will begin opening on a phased approach from next week. This will see things such as outdoor markets and car showrooms reopening from 1 June, with all other non-essential retail shops being allowed to reopen in England from 15 June. It is worth noting that this does not include places such as hairdressers or tattoo parlours, and the hospitality industry (restaurants, bars, etc.) will remain closed. Schools will also open from Monday, to children in nursery/early years, year 1 and year 6. Local councils are working hard to establish how outdoor markets, high streets and other retail stores across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent can open safely, maintaining measures like social distancing.

The major new antibody testing programme was also announced this week. These tests detect antibodies to coronavirus to see whether you have previously had the virus. This is done by taking a blood sample and differs from the swab test, which is used to see if you currently have the virus. Local areas are able to draw up their own plans on how this will be actioned, and we will give you more information on this as soon as these plans have been agreed. There is no strong evidence yet to suggest that those who have had the virus are immune to catching it again. Therefore, even if you have had a positive antibody test, you must still self-isolate for 14 days if told to do so by the NHS Test and Trace service.

It was also announced this week that a drug called remdesivir can now be used in the treatment of adults and adolescents who are hospitalised with severe coronavirus and meet additional clinical criteria. Although this drug does not cure coronavirus, clinical studies have shown that it can reduce the time of recovery.

Locally, Stoke City Football Club's Bet365 Stadium in Stoke-on-Trent was approved as a Regional Testing Centre this week. This means that, from today (29 May), local people experiencing a new, continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss or change in their sense of taste or smell can now book a coronavirus test closer to home. Previously, this site was only available to staff from health services, local authorities, police and fire. The capacity for this centre will now be expanded from 100 to 1,000 tests per day and will mean that local people no longer have to travel to Manchester, Birmingham or Nottingham for the nearest Regional Testing Centre. To book a test, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>.

You may have seen reports in the local news this week about the number of cases in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire seemingly decreasing. Although we are now cautiously optimistic about this downward trend, it is still extremely important that people maintain social distancing measures to avoid a second spike in cases in the area. By all sticking to national measures, we can overcome this virus together.

Many news channels are reporting that last night would be the last weekly clap for key workers. We would like to thank everyone that took to doorsteps, gardens and balconies over the past ten weeks to show appreciation for all the fantastic key workers in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Don't forget that you can still share your thanks with them on social media by using the hashtags #ThankYouKeyWorkers and #StaffsStokeHeroes.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest condolences to the families and colleagues of Lynn Talbot and Sylvia Tideswell. Lynn was a community support worker at Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, working in East Staffordshire, and sadly passed on 15 May. Nursing Assistant Sylvia had worked on the elderly care wards at Royal Stoke University Hospital since 2003 when she sadly passed on 25 May.

Across the local health and care system the latest updates are:

- All partners are continuing to encourage people to stay home where possible
- Partners are looking at ways in which local antibody testing will work in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent
- Councils are exploring how retail stores will reopen, whilst keeping staff and members of the public safe at all times
- Local councils are asking members of the public to dispose of masks and gloves responsibly. They are also asking that people do not contaminate their recycling bins with other household waste that should not be in there, as this cannot then be accepted by the recycling centres
- Staffordshire Borough Council has announced that the monthly Farmers Market in Stone will move to Westbridge Park when it returns in June, to aid with social distancing
- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue had troubles attending a fire at Chase Water due to cars being parked inconsiderately

**Useful resources available:**

- Public Health England guide on how older adults can stay active at home during coronavirus to maintain strength and balance:  
<https://www.twbstaffsandstoke.org.uk/publications/coronavirus/86-phe-active-at-home-booklet-21-may/file>
- Translated information leaflets for parents with new-borns during coronavirus:  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/maternity-leaflets-translated-versions/>
- Mental wellbeing whilst staying at home: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>
- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust mental health support and advice guide: <https://combined.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Combined-Health-and-Wellbeing-Guidance-Final-Version.pdf>
- Guidance on shielding: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19#what-do-we-mean-by-extremely-vulnerable>
- Blood donation materials: <https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/how-you-can-help/get-involved/download-digital-materials/>
- Stay Alert To Stay Safe materials: <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/stay-alert-to-stay-safe-/resources/>
- Symptoms materials: <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/Symptoms/resources/>
- Useful videos during coronavirus (including British Sign Language):  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC--BwSA7YoEdcV8Jtt2nLAQ>

For the latest information on coronavirus, please visit the [NHS](#) and [government](#) websites.