

27 November 2020

Together We're Better Stakeholder Update

As you may know, like the rest of the NHS and across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, UHNM has been under increasing pressure. This is now causing challenges in providing high quality care and patient flow due to the high numbers of COVID-19 positive patients currently being cared for. All areas are under pressure and extreme levels of pressure in critical care are being experienced.

UHNM have already reached out to neighbouring NHS trusts for support with additional critical care capacity as part of the West Midlands Critical Care Network.

Despite the heroic efforts by all staff UHNM are now in a position in which patient experience will be compromised if action is not taken and difficult decisions are having to be taken to prevent any patient safety issues arising. Therefore, in order to continue to keep staff and patients safe, the decision has been made to move the Critical Care internal incident level to Level 4. This raising to a Level 4 is only in relation to critical care, with the rest of our hospitals remaining at Level 3. This will be reviewed on a daily basis.

Raising Critical Care internal incident level to Level 4 will mean that UHNM will not be accepting any tertiary major trauma patients. As in all areas where high levels of demand are being experienced staff are continuing to redeploy where they are available to support.

UHNM will move back to a Level 3 in critical care when it is safe to do so.

It was announced yesterday that Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are to move to the very highest tier for COVID-19 when the current national lockdown restrictions end on 2 December. These areas are one of three West Midlands sub-regions to be placed in the Very High Alert Level. The others are Birmingham and the Black Country and Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.

COVID seven-day case rates locally are currently around 300 per 100,000 population, still above the West Midlands and England averages.

The Very High Alert Level will come into force when lockdown ends on 2 December and this means:

- No mixing anywhere indoors with other households, unless part of your support bubble
- Up to six people can meet in public parks, but not in private gardens
- Hospitality such as pubs and restaurants to stay shut, apart for takeaway and drive-through services

- Gyms and non-essential shops to reopen
- Work from home if you can, avoid non-essential travel and no overnight stays outside the area
- Wedding receptions banned

Full details can be found at www.gov.uk

Staffordshire is also one of 66 local authorities to take part in the roll out of rapid COVID testing for people without symptoms – with up to 10 per cent of the population eventually set to be tested every week. Identifying more people who have the virus so they can self-isolate, will help to reduce the spread of infection this winter. So, if you have any symptoms, or are asked to get tested even though you have no symptoms, it is hugely important that you do so.

A local campaign has also been launched this week, urging people to stick to the rules and [Do it for What Matters](#) to them.

The festive period is an important time for many people to come together over the holidays. It is recognised that people will want to be with their friends and family over Christmas and the holiday period, particularly after an incredibly difficult year. For this reason, the government is changing some social contact restrictions for a short period of time. When following these new rules, we must each continue to take personal responsibility to limit the spread of the virus and [protect our loved ones, particularly if they are vulnerable](#). For many, this will mean that it isn't possible to celebrate Christmas in the way you normally would.

Between 23 and 27 December:

- you can form an exclusive 'Christmas bubble' composed of people from no more than three households
- you can only be in one Christmas bubble
- you cannot change your Christmas bubble
- you can travel between tiers and UK nations for the purposes of meeting your Christmas bubble
- you can only meet your Christmas bubble in private homes or in your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces
- you can continue to meet people who are not in your Christmas bubble outside your home according to [the rules in the tier where you are staying](#)
- you cannot meet someone in a private dwelling who is not part of your household or Christmas bubble

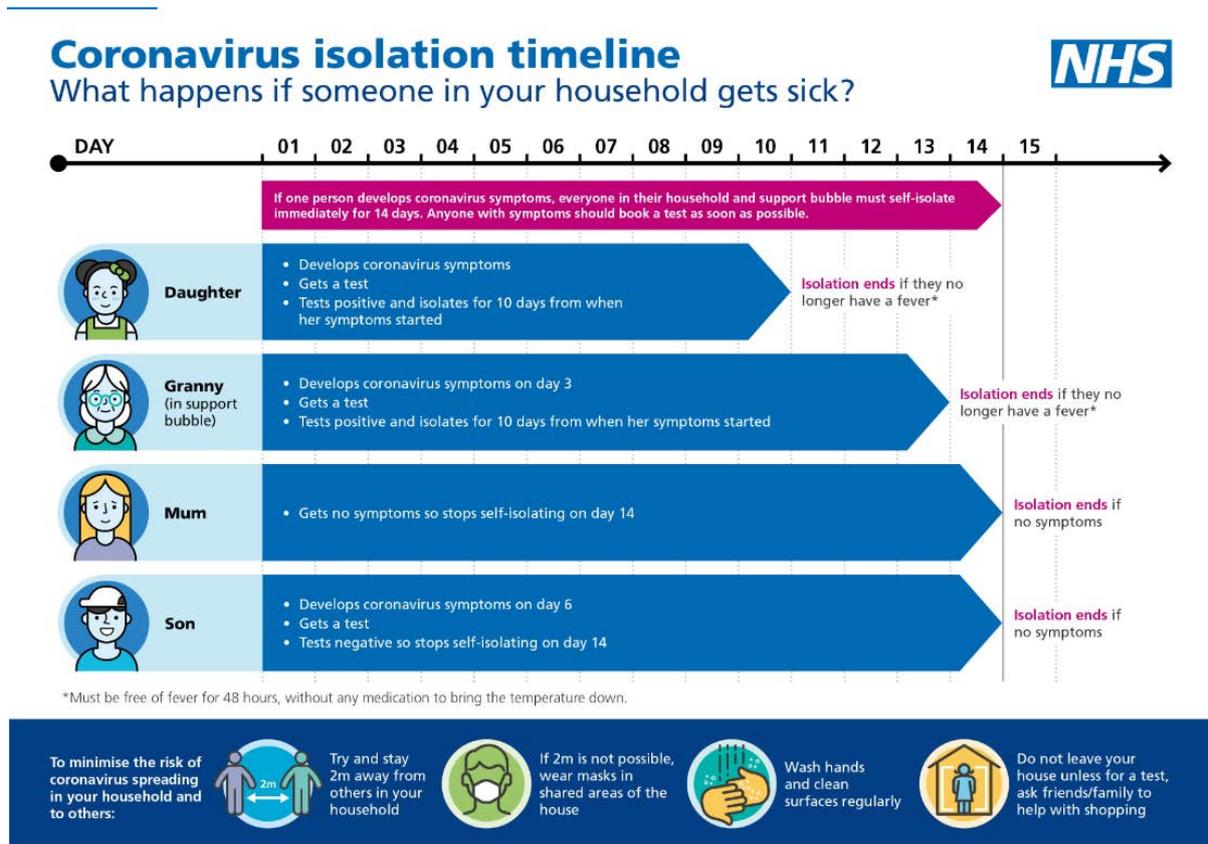
You should travel to meet those in your Christmas bubble and return home between the 23 and 27 December. Anyone travelling to or from Northern Ireland may travel on the 22 and 28 December.

You can find further guidance [here](#).

Don't forget to keep following the three simple actions we all still must do to keep on protecting each other.

- Wash hands**
keep washing your hands regularly
- Cover face**
wear a face covering in enclosed spaces
- Make space**
stay at least 2 metres apart - or 1 metre with a face covering or other precautions

If someone in your household gets Coronavirus symptoms there is a diagram below that may help to advise on the family's isolation timeline.



Another topic in the news currently is the coronavirus vaccine. Partners across the system are working with the national NHS team on preparing for the coronavirus vaccination if one becomes available.

This vaccination programme is likely to be led nationally, however there is an opportunity for you to share your intentions on having the vaccine and if there is

something you think that needs to be considered locally. If you would like to share your comments, please complete this short survey [here](#) – please note it closes on 30 November.

Have you got what it takes to join us in the fight against coronavirus? The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Health and Care People Hub are searching for caring, compassionate and dedicated individuals who are looking for paid work, to support health and care by becoming a key worker.

You'll be joining a hub of likeminded people, registered and non-registered, ready to help and support the coronavirus effort through a variety of key roles, with placements of varying length (some roles may be required for 3-12 months and others ad hoc to support based on urgent pressures).

You don't need healthcare experience to apply! You'll set your working preferences and we'll share available and urgent placements that match to you. Follow [this link](#) to find out more.



Moving away from COVID-19 related matters, NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) published their annual performance assessments for all CCGs on Wednesday 25 November. The assessments rate the CCGs' performance during 2019/20 as commissioning organisations and do not reflect the services patients receive or the commitment of staff. Due to the financial position, five of the CCGs in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent have been rated as Inadequate, the same as last year and East Staffordshire CCG has been rated as Requires Improvement.

Reducing the financial deficit has been a priority for the CCGs during 2019/20 and there have been improvements and increased collaboration across all health and care partners, however the CCGs continue to spend more money than they receive.

As NHS commissioners the CCGs' principal aim is always to achieve the best outcomes for our patients. However, we cannot get away from the fact that as commissioners our task is to buy those services within our budgets. A great deal of our focus has to be on finance and making sure every pound spent is used to bring maximum benefit.

Work is continuing with providers to tackle the deficit and the adoption of the Intelligent Fixed Payment System has received considerable recognition as a model

to collectively manage risk and work towards the delivery of system wide clinical and financial sustainability.

Some good news is that North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS trust has announced the biggest investment in acute and community mental health services in its history. The £15 million investment dwarfs any previous single investment in acute and community mental health services across North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The results of this record investment will begin next year and continue until 2025. Follow [this link](#) to find out what the investment will deliver.

The six CCGs across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are gathering views about the current wheelchair service and are particularly interested in learning from service users and their family and/or carers, with experience in this area of service provision. The feedback and comments gathered from this exercise will help to improve (where necessary) the current service specification. [Click on this link to access the online survey](#). The survey closes on Friday 04 December.

The CCGs and the County Council have launched a joint consultation on the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy) which is now available for you to read and give feedback on.

You can read the first draft of the SEND Strategy by clicking on the links below:

- [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy](#)
- [Audio Reading - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy](#)

Once you have read the SEND Strategy, you should share your views in the public consultation. The consultation will remain open until 24 January 2021. [Click here to complete the consultation](#)

Virtual focus groups are also being held online where you can share your thoughts 'face to face' with us through your webcam. You can sign up to one of the events below.

- [Thursday 3 December 2020 at 12:00pm - 13:00pm](#)
- [Wednesday 9 December 2020 at 12:30 - 13:30pm](#)
- [Thursday 17 December 2020 at 12:00pm - 13:00pm](#)

If you would like to find out more about the development of the SEND Strategy you can visit www.staffordshire.gov.uk/SENDStrategy. If you need to get in touch, please email sendtransformation@staffordshire.gov.uk

Useful resources

National lockdown restriction resources can be found [here](#).

Materials are available for the following campaigns; please can we ask for your help to promote them across your networks:

- [Local Alert Level resources](#)
- [Hands. Face. Space. resources](#)
- [Stay Alert to Stay Safe](#) – new youth focused ‘consequences’ social animations are now available on the campaign resource centre
- [Stay Alert to Stay Safe posters](#): White background easy print for face coverings and distance
- [NHS Test and Trace posters](#): White background easy print for drive through testing and self-isolate
- [Symptoms posters](#): White background easy print for taste and smell

[NHS COVID-19 App resources](#)

[Wearing a face mask – translations](#) (Arabic/French/Kurdish/Lithuanian/Pashto/Polish/Portuguese/Romanian/Russian/Spanish/Tigrinya)

[Test and Trace materials](#) are available to use on the Public Health England Campaign Resource Centre. This includes BSL, easy read and large print formats [here](#).

[Signposting materials](#) with useful information on how people can contact their GP, order repeat prescriptions and manage wellbeing and existing conditions at home: <https://coronavirusresources.phe.gov.uk/nhs-resources-facilities/resources/health-at-home/>

[Public Health England guide on how older adults can stay active at home during coronavirus to maintain strength and balance](#)

[Translated information leaflets for parents with new-borns during coronavirus](#)

[Mental wellbeing whilst staying at home](#)

[North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust mental health support and advice guide](#)

[Guidance on shielding](#)

[Blood donation materials](#)

Public Health England has updated its coronavirus guidance in light of changes to the government’s advice and continue to ensure guidance for the public is timely and up to date. All guidance for members of the public, as well as for people in clinical and non-clinical settings, is published and updated regularly on the GOV.UK collection page.

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

Together We're Better is the partnership of NHS and local government organisations, alongside independent and voluntary sector groups, that is working together to transform health and care services. You can find out more about us on our website: <https://www.twbstaffsandstoke.org.uk/>