

15 January 2021

Together We're Better Stakeholder Update

Did you know that the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme has been the equivalent of establishing a medium sized supermarket over the entire country in a matter of weeks? This week has been another milestone week for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent with another six Primary Care Network (PCN) sites being stood up at:

- St. Paul's Church, Stoke-on-Trent
- Newcastle-under-Lyme College
- Biddulph Town Hall
- Lichfield Cathedral
- Roman Way Hotel, Cannock
- The Coton Centre, Tamworth

And of course, the Moderna vaccine has now been authorised and is ready to bring on stream later this Spring. Increasing vaccine supplies, which will remain constrained for a month or so, means the NHS can deliver more jabs each week from the established centres and once vaccination supply increases sufficiently, we can open more centres and protect even more people.

As of the 8 January the seven-day case rate for Staffordshire is around 506.8 per 100,000, although there is still variation across the county and the new variant from Kent seems to be driving numbers in the south with Cannock Chase and South Staffordshire at around 620 per 100,000.

In a reversal of the position in the lead up to Christmas, Stoke-on-Trent is slightly lower at 456.4 per 100,000 and our Public Health leads are hoping that the lockdown came in time to slow the spread of the new variant. This does seem to be reflected in the latest trajectories.

We know it can be difficult to remain positive when you are dealing with a situation like this, but there are always things to hold on to. It was fantastic to hear that in a regional breakdown on England's vaccination roll out, the Midlands is leading the way in the number of jabs administered.

Data released yesterday shows that of the 2,371,407 doses that have been given out across the country, most vaccines (447,329) have been delivered in the Midlands, followed by 433,045 in the North East and Yorkshire and 411,257 in the South East. This is an incredible achievement for us as a region and we are confident that the pace in which we have rolled out the vaccination programme locally in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and the herculean efforts of all involved, including our PCNs, clinicians, the primary care team and many others, have contributed significantly to it. We would like to thank everyone involved.

Unfortunately, there has also been footage of elderly patients waiting in cold and icy conditions and queuing where at times social distancing was compromised. There were a few local issues with queues, but this was largely due to patients turning up early for appointments. If you or a family member have a vaccination booked, please remember (and remind your loved ones) to turn up only at the specified appointment time. Though we are a nation of queuers, turning up early may lead to people having to stand outside – a thought uncomfortable to most given the weather we are currently experiencing.

This week a national directive has been given. All of our sites have now moved to the first dose strategy for all eligible groups, with the second dose towards the end of the 12-week period. This has meant that a number of our PCN sites have had to rearrange appointments for both patients and staff at very short notice. Thank you to those affected for your understanding, we recognise that cancelling appointments is challenging and that some patients may be concerned. However, we want to offer reassurance that this has been recommended by the Chief Medical Officers as the best way to offer the greatest protection for the community as a whole.

This public health approach is centred on doing as much good for as many people as possible in the shortest possible time. Given the high level of protection afforded by the first dose, expert clinical modelling shows that vaccinating a greater number of people with a single dose will prevent more deaths and hospitalisations than vaccinating a smaller number of people with two doses.

We are now receiving data on a site-by-site basis and by next week this data will be published. There will be full visibility of the number of vaccinations given by site and the breakdown of cohorts. If you're curious to see how we're doing, then you can find the daily vaccination statistics on the [COVID-19 dashboard](#).

Good news came with the seven large vaccination sites going live across the country. This was quickly followed by a letter being sent to people aged 80 and over who live 30 – 45 minutes' drive from one of the seven new sites to explain how they can book a slot. Unfortunately, this caused some confusion. In our area this will mainly affect those who live in the north and south of the county, with people being invited to Millennium Point in Birmingham or to Manchester's Etihad Tennis Club.

The centres offer an additional option for patients to get vaccinated and will each be capable of delivering thousands of vaccinations each week, scaling their operations up and down according to vaccine supplies and demand. We want to assure you that people can still choose to attend their local PCN site closer to home if they prefer and will be contacted in the coming weeks – this is just a quicker option if they can get there. If you do not want to attend a vaccination centre and instead want to go to a local site, you don't need to do anything - just wait for the NHS to contact them in the coming weeks. If they have received a jab since the letter was sent, you can simply ignore it. You won't be taken off any lists locally.

The care home vaccination programme remains one of our highest priorities and the programme is rapidly progressing as we work toward the Prime Minister's target to have all care homes vaccinated by the end of January.

It is important for everyone to keep following the guidance even if they have received the vaccination:

- A national lockdown is now in place. You must not leave your home or be outside of your home except where necessary. Stay home. Protect the NHS and Save lives.
- You must not meet socially with anyone you do not live with or are not in a support bubble with.
 - A support bubble is a support network which links 2 households. You have to meet certain [eligibility rules](#) to form a support bubble.
 - Once you're in a support bubble, you can think of yourself as being in one 'household'. It means you can have close contact with the other household in your bubble as if they were members of your own household and you do not need to maintain social distance with people in your support bubble.
 - You should not form a support bubble with a household that is part of another support bubble.
 - You might be able to form a childcare bubble to provide or receive childcare from one other household if you live with someone under the age of 14. However, you must not meet socially with your childcare bubble, and must avoid seeing members of your childcare and support bubbles at the same time, unless otherwise permitted by gathering limits in your tier.

Further information about support bubbles can be found [here](#).

- You may exercise on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble. Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household.
- The national lockdown will help save lives and protect our NHS. Stay at home and if you do need to go out for essentials, remember, Hands. Face. Space.
- We are working hard to vaccinate the priority groups, but must still be careful when out for essential shopping etc. Wash your hands, cover your face, make space and get tested.

You can find more information on the COVID-19 vaccination programme in our [vaccination briefing bulletin](#).

Emergency COVID-19 winter support is available to help keep residents warm at home. Families who are struggling financially could get up to £200 financial help to pay their heating bills. This support is part of the COVID-19 winter grant scheme. Financial support will be given to families as pre-paid meter credit or be paid directly to their energy provider to add credit to their account or to clear prior debt.

Families in an emergency situation who do not have heating, will also get portable heaters delivered within one week and a winter warmth pack including hats, scarves, blankets and gloves. Their information will also be shared with the [Staffordshire Warmer Homes scheme](#) which will help to get a long term heating solution in place.

This fund is limited and will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Residents can apply online at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/covidwintersupport. If residents do not have access to the internet, frontline staff can make referrals through the website with their permission, or they can apply over the phone by contacting 'Beat The Cold', a local charity who are helping us to deliver this scheme on 01782 914915.

Looking after your physical and mental health and wellbeing is important and especially in the current climate to help you live a healthier, happier life. You can find some easy steps that you can take in order to improve how you feel each day and ensure you're keeping active - whatever your age, ability or fitness level on the 'Do it to feel good' web page. You can sign up [here](#) to receive hints and tips on boosting your levels of physical activity and nurturing your mental health and wellbeing.

Useful Resources

A range of assets to target key behaviours and to promote the core message 'Hands. Face. Space' can be downloaded from the [PHE Campaign Resource Centre](#).

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:

- [Tiering](#)
- [COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [University end of term](#)
- [Local Alert Level resources](#)
- [Hands. Face. Space resources](#)
- [Stay Alert to Stay Safe](#): new youth messaging focusing on 'consequences' - social animations
- [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](#): 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/>